

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

----- X

January 28, 2019
Start: 1:14 p.m.
Recess: 3:35 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City all

B E F O R E: CARLOS MENCHACA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Daniel Dromm
Mathieu Eugene
Mark Gjonaj
Robert F. Holden
I. Daneek Miller
Kalman Yeger

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

Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner, New York City Mayor's
Office of Immigrant Affairs, MOIA

Yleana Roman, Staff Attorney, Health Justice &
Immigration, New York Lawyers for the Public
Interest, NYLPI

Amaha Kassa, Executive Director, African Communities
Together and Immigration Attorney

Sammi, Immigration advocate, Arab-American
Association of New York

Jodi Ziesemer, Director, Immigrant Protection Unit,
New York Legal Assistance Group

Melissa Chua, Assistant Director, Immigrant
Protection Unit, New York Legal Assistance Group

Traci Lawson, Attorney in charge of the Raising
(sic) Communities Project, Immigration Practice,
Brooklyn Defender Services

Margaret Garrett, Staff Attorney, Legal Aid Society
of New York

Narbada Chherti, Director of Organizing & Programs,
Adhikaar

Prathana Gurung, Campaigns & Communications Manager

2 [sound check] [pause] [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Buenos tardes,
4 everyone. My name is Carlos Menchaca. I'm the Chair
5 of the New York City Council's Committee on
6 Immigration. Before beginning, I'd like to
7 acknowledge the members of the committee. They're
8 not here yet, but I will make sure that I give shout-
9 outs to them. We are joined by my folks in the
10 audience right now who are advocates, who are people
11 impacted by the conversation that we're going to be
12 having today. We will be examining the city's
13 support, and services for recipients of Temporary
14 Protected Status or TPS. This hearing comes at a
15 very important and critical time not just for the
16 city, but for our nation. Between the fall of 2017
17 and the summer of 2018, President Trump directed the
18 Department of Homeland Security to end TPS
19 designations for six countries. While this de-
20 designation is part of the federal's—federal
21 administration's attack on immigrant communities, its
22 specific action is unprecedented. It threatens to
23 deport nearly 500,000 recipients to face potentially
24 dangerous conditions from which they were initially
25 granted the protection. Temporary Protected Status,

2 TPS exists for one reason: As a temporary immigration
3 status that is granted to eligible nations of TPS
4 designated countries residing in the United States.
5 It is based on an—on an in-country conditions that
6 the Department of Homeland Security has deemed to be
7 unlivable, conditions like environment disasters,
8 ongoing armed conflict and other extraordinary and
9 temporary conditions that prevent safe return. The
10 U.S. currently provides TPS to approximately 437,000
11 foreign nationals from 10 different countries, El
12 Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia,
13 Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, but President Trump
14 is committed expelling TPS recipients, and has set
15 for the following termination—termination dates for
16 six of the ten countries: Sudan on November 2—
17 November 2nd, 2018; Haiti on January 5, 2020;
18 Nicaragua on January 5, 2019; El Salvador on
19 September 9, 2019; Nepal on June 24, 2019; and
20 Honduras on July 22, 2019. This De-designation will
21 impact 428–258,000 TPS recipients or approximately
22 98% of the current TPS beneficiaries. Thankfully, we
23 have advocates across the nation including here in
24 New York City who are doing everything within their
25 power to challenge the federal government's arbitrary

2 terminations of TPS. Various lawsuits have been
3 filed, the basis of which range from racial
4 discrimination violations of the Immigration and
5 Nationality Act and Administrative Procedures Act,
6 and infringement on the Constitutional rights of TPS
7 beneficiaries. On October 3, 2018, a U.S. District
8 Judge in the Northern District of California issued a
9 preliminary injunction halting the end of TPS
10 designation for Sudan, Haiti, El Salvador and
11 Nicaragua until a final ruling on the merits is
12 issued. As a result, TPS recipients are currently in
13 limbo. While they are safe pending this final
14 ruling, they face the terrifying uncertainty that
15 their lives will be uprooted, fearing a tomorrow
16 where some will have to return to potentially
17 dangerous passport countries leaving their families
18 and homes behind. If you've seen the news lately,
19 circumstances haven't suddenly become livable in
20 Syria or Yemen or Sudan or South Sudan and Honduras,
21 El Salvador or Haiti. It would not only be only be
22 harmful to TPS recipients to deport them to dangerous
23 conditions in their passport countries, but it would
24 also hurt communities across the United States
25 including here in our own city of New York. TPS

2 recipients are deeply integrated into our communities
3 providing emotional and financial support to their
4 children and loved ones, and playing vital roles in
5 our communities, our schools and our businesses. TPS
6 recipients also play an important role in our
7 nation's economy with the labor for its participation
8 rate of 88.5% and then TPS would have significant and
9 far reaching impacts on a larger community socially,
10 emotionally and financially. Here in New York City
11 there are 15,000 TPS recipients, 15,000 New Yorkers.
12 Many of our TPS recipients have lived in the city an
13 average of 15 years. These aren't strangers. They
14 are our colleagues, our neighbors, our parents of
15 children. There are—and there are 8,000 U.S. born
16 children in the—in the city living in families with
17 at least one TPS recipient. I'm going to read that
18 again. There are 8,000 U.S. born children, U.S. born
19 children in the city living in families with at least
20 one TPS recipient. Terminating TPS could mean
21 negatively impacting the economic stability of these
22 families by removing the breadwinner and the
23 breadwinner's work authorization ultimately
24 separating the parents from the children. Yet, once
25 again we're separating children from their families.

2 The New York City Council is committee to ensuring we
3 protect our immigrant communities and families, and I
4 will not stand idly by as the federal administration
5 targets our families. Today, we will hear from
6 members of the public, advocates and the mayoral
7 administration. We hope to hear what is being done
8 to ensure that all TPS recipients are being connected
9 and supported by legal screenings so that they are
10 prepared for the worst even as we hope for the best.
11 Thank you to the staff who prepared for this hearing
12 today. The whole staff of the Committee on
13 Immigration, my Committee Counsel Harbani Ahuja,
14 Committee Policy Analyst Elizabeth Cronk; Finance
15 Analyst Jim Lee and my staff—my Chief of Staff
16 Sicheatta Meng, and Communications Director Tony
17 Charito. Thank you for Queens Member Bob Holden
18 who's here with us today, and with that, I want to
19 call the Administration up, our Commissioner Bitta
20 Mostofi, anyone else on—on your team? Okay. We're
21 going to swear you in. Thank you so much for being
22 here.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: [coughs] Please raise
24 your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth,
25 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your

2 testimony before this committee, and to respond
3 honestly to Council Member questions?

4 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: I do.

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

6 Thank you. [pause] So bear with me. I
7 have a bad—I have a cold, as you know. I will do my
8 best. [coughs] Okay. Thank you to Chair Menchaca
9 and members of the Committee on Immigration. My name
10 is Bitta Mostofi. I'm the Commissioner of the New
11 York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. Thank
12 you very much for calling a hearing on this critical
13 issue. We really appreciate the opportunity to
14 discuss this crisis affecting thousands of New
15 Yorkers. Our agency works to remain consistently up-
16 to-date and rapidly—in the rapidly shifting landscape
17 of Temporary Protected Status designations, and how
18 it affects our communities. We are committed to
19 doing everything we can as a city to protect our
20 communities, to inform the public and ensure that if
21 TPS recipients lose their status, they can access
22 services and benefits to the greatest extent
23 possible. Thus, our work take and approach of
24 providing legal services, community outreach and
25 education, rapid response and research and analysis

2 of as well as advocacy at the city, state and federal
3 levels. While this issue has received less national
4 attention than many other crises caused by the
5 federal administration, the termination of TPS
6 designations for six countries is particularly cruel.
7 TPS recipients who will be affected by these
8 decisions are mostly long-term residents of the
9 United States, have U.S. citizen family members, and
10 have no serious criminal convictions. The
11 terminations will leave thousands of individuals
12 undocumented placing them at risk of deportation to
13 countries that even federal officials have admitted
14 remain unstable and unsafe for return. Moreover, the
15 circumstances and rhetoric surrounding these
16 terminations decisions have revealed these TPS
17 determinations were motivated by anti-Black and anti-
18 Latinx racism. In today's testimony, I will provide
19 the committee with an overview of TPS, the current
20 legal and political landscape surrounding recent TPS
21 terminations, an overview of how these terminations
22 directly impact New Yorkers and a detailed overview
23 of our city's efforts to continue to serve and
24 empower our communities. In 1990, Congress created
25 with bipartisan support the Temporary Protected

2 Status program. The TPS programs provides work
3 authorization and relief from deportation for
4 immigrants in the United States who cannot return to
5 their home countries due to ongoing turmoil such as
6 armed conflict, natural disasters or other
7 extraordinary circumstances. To obtain TPS,
8 individuals must meet certain eligibility
9 requirements including a lack of serious criminal
10 convictions. TPS does not provide a pathway to
11 citizenship, although some recipients may address
12 their status through U.S. citizen family members or
13 avenues. Its quote/unquote temporary nature means
14 that the Department of Homeland Security reviews TPS
15 designations every 6 to 18 months based upon a review
16 of country conditions. Recipients must re-register
17 for TPS each time DHS extends their country's
18 designations. They must maintain their eligibility
19 and pay up to \$495.00 in application fees. In a break
20 from the last 20 years of previous practice, the
21 Trump Administration has decided to terminate TPS for
22 6 of the 9 countries it had the opportunity to
23 review. Past federal administrations of both
24 political parties have always taken into account
25 current country conditions when evaluating whether

2 and extension of TPS is warranted. However the Trump
3 Administration has broken with longstanding policies
4 and instead only considered the original condition or
5 event that determines that initial designation.

6 Litigation has challenged these terminations and
7 remains ongoing. These cases have produced evidence
8 that these terminations were made without the weight
9 or evidence and against the recommendations of career
10 federal officials. Moreover, the decisions accord
11 with the President's racist and xenophobic rhetoric.

12 It is not a coincidence that the majority of the
13 individuals affected by these terminations are black
14 and brown people. Indeed, the President has made his
15 motivations clear in referring to predominantly black
16 TPS designated countries in vulgar and demeaning
17 terms that I will not repeat. These terminations are
18 particularly cruel in that most of the people with
19 TPS are long-term residents many of whom have U.S.

20 Citizen family members. The decision to cast away
21 members of our community is rooted in the anti-black
22 and anti-Latinix racism, which has been evident by as
23 I said the, president's own words. The
24 Administration's actions to terminate TPS
25 designations created economic harm as recipients lose

2 their work authorization and many of whom are the
3 primary bread winners of their families, and they
4 have also already had a negative public health impact
5 with TPS recipients experiencing toxic levels of
6 stress and anxiety. Five federal lawsuits have been
7 filed in response to these terminations. In October
8 of last year the Federal District Court of the north-
9 of Northern California issued a nationwide
10 preliminary injunction stopping DHS from terminating-
11 terminating TPS for Haiti, Sudan, Nicaragua and El
12 Salvador. Notably, Honduran and Nepali TPS
13 recipients were not a part of this litigation or the
14 decision because the case was filed before TPS for
15 those countries had been terminated. Major decisions
16 in the other four cases remain pending. Central to
17 all of these cases that's challenging these
18 terminations is the issue of racial animus. While
19 uncertainty persists due to ongoing litigation, TPS
20 recipients from six countries stand to lose their
21 legal status by 2020. Those six countries are Sudan,
22 Nicaragua, Nepal, Haiti, El Salvador and Honduras.
23 Nationally, this totals to nearly 400,000 people.
24 Last year more MOIA released a fact sheet on TPS
25 recipients in New York City to provide local

stakeholders and advocates with information about this population. We estimate that approximately 15,000 New Yorkers are TPS recipients, and over 8,000 U.S. born children live in households with a TPS recipient. Additionally, TPS recipients tend to be long-term U.S. residents. They have lived here an average of 15 years. The vast majority of TPS holders in New York City are from Haiti, El Salvador and Honduras. The Trump Administration has terminated TPS for all of these countries. We also found that TPS recipients are important contributors to our city economy. They account for approximately \$260 million in income in New York City each year. In 2017, TPS recipients generated an estimated \$591.1 million in gross city products. Additionally, TPS recipients have a higher labor force participation rate than the general population, and many work in the education and health service industries. In addition, to TPS recipients from the six countries the Trump Administration has declined to extend, a number of Liberians in New York City protected by a similar program will also lose legal status. On March 23rd of this year, all Liberians who have-who have benefitted from deferred and forced departure

will lose their protection from deportation. The pop—the size of this population is not large nationwide. As of 2017 at least 745 Liberians are covered, but we know that in Staten Island it is among the top areas of residence for Liberians in the United States. Among the most important ways which we've responded to the Trump Administration attacks on TPS has been outreach in public education. Beginning in 2017, MOIA has led a robust effort to provide information to residents including regular conversations with community based organizations, labor unions, faith leaders and elected officials. We've conducted multiple briefing calls with elected officials and consulates and our fact sheet, and we've organized 15 TPS focused outreach days of action along with many TPS specific know your rights forums with the help of 144 volunteers. Through our outreach efforts we've reached and estimated 50,000 constituents across the city. Additionally, we keep the public apprised of the latest news and developments on TPS with the specific page on our website designated for this subject at nyc.gov/tps. The city has also ensured that our unprecedented investments in immigration legal services can provide

2 a sense (sic) with TPS renewals. In response to
3 federal actions, Action NYC providers pivoted to
4 provide urgent support to their communities affected
5 by shifting immigration policies. For example,
6 Action NYC sites continue to prioritize TPS re-
7 registrations. Our Action NYC providers also provide
8 assistance in exploring alternative avenues of
9 immigration relief for TPS recipient at risk of
10 losing their status. Further, NYIFUP and other city
11 immigration legal services programs provide defense
12 against deportation, which can help those TPS
13 recipients who need assistance in removal
14 proceedings. The city and state have made sure that
15 TPS recipients in New York are eligible for a range o
16 public benefits. Benefits for which TPS recipients
17 are eligible include Medicaid, the Affordable Care
18 Act, Health Insurance subsidies through the New York
19 State of Health Marketplace and Safety Net Cash
20 Assistance. TPS recipients also have access to the
21 full spectrum of services for which immigration
22 status is not required. Like IDNYC, public
23 education, public health clinics and more. However,
24 because of federal eligibility-eligibility
25 limitations, there are other benefits that have

2 eligibility requirements that exclude TPS recipients.
3 These include SNAP, Supplemental Security Income,
4 public housing and Section 8 for example. TPS
5 recipients who—who lost their legal status due to
6 these terminations will be rendered ineligible for a
7 number of public benefits. Of particular concern is
8 the loss of Medicaid coverage for low-income TPS
9 recipients. This same concern arose in 2017 when the
10 Trump Administration attempted to rescind DACA. That
11 decision precipitated that concern that DACA
12 recipients would become ineligible to remain insured
13 through Medicaid. We were very gratified at that
14 time that the State Department of Health promulgated
15 guidance in January of 2018 to address the concern
16 following engagement by local advocacy organizations,
17 testimony I presented in December of 2017 before a
18 joint hearing of the Assembly Committee on Health,
19 Puerto Rican, Hispanic Task Force and the Task Force
20 on New Americans. In that guidance, the state
21 clarified that DACA recipients whose DACA status is
22 terminated will continue to be treated as eligible
23 for Medicaid. We look forward to working with our
24 state partners on a similar solution here to ensure
25 that low-income TPS recipients can continue their

2 health insurance coverage if they were to lose
3 status. Even though the Trump Administration's
4 termination of TPS designations for Sudan, Nicaragua,
5 Haiti and El Salvador have been enjoined for now, the
6 attempts to terminate have still posed challenges for
7 TPS recipients. Rather than issuing new work
8 authorization cards, the federal government announced
9 that work authorization cards for Sudanese and
10 Nicaraguan TPS recipients would be valid through
11 April 2nd. If the injunction continues beyond April
12 2nd, the government will issue another notice. Thus,
13 those TPS recipients only have with them expired work
14 authorization cards. This has caused challenges in
15 the past for immigrants seeking to renew driver's
16 licenses or verifying their work authorizations with
17 employers. We look forward to continuing to work
18 along side our state partners to find additional ways
19 to mitigate TPS terminations such as supporting the
20 passage of New York State Driver's Licenses For All
21 Bill, which could help former TPS recipients maintain
22 their driver's licenses. Our federal advocacy on TPS
23 has been long underway. MOIA leads Cities for
24 Action, a coalition of over 175 cities and counties
25 across the country that together advocate for pro-

2 immigrant policy and legislation. Our advocacy for
3 the 116th Congress will focus on TPS. We will be
4 helping to raise the profile of this issue on the—in
5 the crisis looming on the horizon. In particular we
6 will conduct extensive outreach to congressional
7 offices providing them with general information about
8 the program and why legislation is so desperately
9 needed to provide a pathway to citizenship for those
10 who have lost TPS. And we will be highlighting why
11 this issue is so important for cities in particular
12 across this country. TPS recipients are vital
13 members of our communities, contributors to our
14 economies and pillars of our families. We will work
15 to ensure that Congress knows just how much it is at
16 stake. Through Cities for Action Mayor de Blasio and
17 mayors across the country have sent letters to the
18 Trump Administration urging renewal for countries
19 whose TPS extension decisions were coming up. And in
20 November of 2017, the New York City Children's
21 Cabinet sent a letter to DHS Acting Secretary Elaine
22 Duke noting that 8,000 families in New York City have
23 a U.S. citizen child living with a TPS recipient.
24 The city also contributed to a multi-city and Amicus
25 Brief in the case that has resulted in the

2 preliminary injunction against the termination of
3 most of the TPS designations. We will continue to
4 use every tool available to advocate for relief for
5 TPS recipients and whether in Congress, in the
6 Federal Executive branch or in the courts. The city
7 has been working to mitigate the damage of these
8 terminations. We've sought to keep the public
9 informed in real time if the legal landscape has
10 rapidly shifted. We've gone into communities to help
11 ensure immigrant New Yorkers and their families can
12 continue to feel supported by the city. We've made
13 tremendous investments in legal services to help
14 protect our communities from over broad enforcement
15 and helped communities navigate an increasingly
16 complex system. I want to thank Chair Menchaca for
17 calling this hearing, and for your leadership. I
18 want to thank our agency partners, our legal service
19 providers, community organizations and most
20 importantly immigrant communities themselves for
21 their resiliency in the face of these countless
22 attacks that motivate our work each day. Thank you
23 so much.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you,
25 Commissioner and thank you and your team for-for

2 being here and really I think showing how—how we're
3 committed as a city on this issue. Before I ask
4 questions, I also want to acknowledge that we've
5 joined by Council Members Yeger and Gjonaj from the
6 Bronx and Brooklyn, and—and this morning we—we
7 started the day, you and I at 26 Federal Plaza with
8 Robbie and Amy, and we were in the midst of a system.
9 We were—while we were there for say for one person,
10 we saw families go in and out of their check-ins,
11 and—and it just reminded me of the—the nature of—of
12 this incredible beast and how arbitrary and how much
13 power the federal government has and—and what—what we
14 were able to do was summon our responsibility as
15 people were stewards of our neighbors, and—and so
16 it's just really important to get to the core of the—
17 and by the way, Robbie now has six months before his
18 next check-in, and the Congresswoman was there and
19 Congresswoman Clark now an appointed member of the
20 oversight for DHS. The Department of Homeland
21 Security is going to be launching an investigation
22 and really this is New York City. It is a blessing
23 to be here, and to be fighting alongside the advocate
24 community, and New Yorkers in general. This TPS
25 piece just falls under so much shadow in so many

2 ways, and I'm glad you acknowledged that, too,
3 nationally. This is a community that—that we never
4 thought in this unprecedented way that the
5 government, the federal government would be taking
6 away these protections. That falls in the face of
7 what they are there to do in the first place. So,
8 we're dealing with some really dark, dark times right
9 now. I want to offer the opportunity for Council
10 Member Council Member Holden to ask a question or
11 two. Are you ready for a question? A few minutes.
12 Great. So, I'm going in for—for a few questions.
13 You mentioned a kind of specific TPS oriented focused
14 outreach days of action, and I want to kind of go
15 back to that, and kind of give us a sense a little
16 bit about what those services were, when they
17 happened, how many people were—were in attendance?
18 Were these in communities, partners? I'd like to get
19 a good sense about—about how that worked--

20 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: [interposing]
21 Sure.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --mostly I think
23 because we're going to want to partner on some future
24 and gain a sense about how that actually happened.

25 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --that will be
3 helpful for us to know.

4 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So, when the
5 decisions are on TPS re-designations started to come
6 down, we along with many others thought it more
7 pertinent to be coordinated in response. We had I
8 think our first meeting here at City Hall in the call
9 with a larger number of community based
10 organizations, members from elected-offices of
11 elected officials, faith leadership and others,
12 unions essentially working together in a conversation
13 to determine what would be appropriate in our step in
14 getting good information out to communities and to
15 advocate cohesively. From that, we began engaging
16 in-with groups to deploy information to communities.
17 We-we created our web page so that we could have
18 timely update for people. We created community fact
19 sheets that we continue to update regularly and share
20 all the listed information on each country, and go
21 updated so people would have this information. We
22 had these translated into the various languages and
23 disseminated to community partners and elected
24 official offices. We conducted a series of Know Your
25 Rights forums, many within faith institutions

2 following days of service. We did town halls. Days
3 or action were largely focused around community
4 neighborhoods, bus stops and other locations where
5 the intended population that we were trying to reach
6 would be congregated, and largely with the support of
7 volunteers, as I mentioned, disseminating the flyers
8 that had the up-to-date information for each country
9 on it, and how to follow up with services if people
10 were to need it. We additionally did a PSA
11 announcement through the city's phone line, held a
12 number of press conferences jointly with the
13 Coalition and advocacy partners, New York Immigration
14 Coalition 1199, 32BJ and others. Held debriefing
15 calls and we continue to do monthly coalition
16 meetings with the chairs of stakeholders. I think as
17 we've seen with almost every issue, any which way you
18 can kind of penetrate information is useful. So, I
19 wouldn't say that one particularly-one method in
20 particular was the most relevant. I'd say we had a
21 lot of success in working with the Liberian Community
22 on Staten Island to make sure that we were engaging
23 effectively with that community as well, and that
24 they were a part of these conversations, as I know
25 I'd do it to DD-DED. I'm must making sure that we

2 were being responsive to the needs as they were
3 coming to us. So, I think those—those efforts, those
4 kinds of efforts are important. I think supporting
5 things like the National Caravan that was organized
6 by TPS holders themselves as they made their way to
7 Washington and welcoming them here in New York City
8 are important in helping to ensure that we're
9 continuing to elevate the voices of TPS holders
10 themselves, and welcome additional thoughts and ideas
11 and ways to partner.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: How—how effective
13 do you think that it was, and I'm asking with the
14 perspective of—of kind of general immigration
15 outreach--

16 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: [interposing]
17 Yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --to communities,
19 and this is a very particular thing, a particular
20 kind of benefit, one that has incredible unlocking
21 potential for a family for work and driver's
22 licenses, et cetera. How—how effective to you feel
23 like MOIA was in outreach?

24 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: You know,
25 TPS holders are a unique population not too

2 dissimilar from DACA recipients in that they've been
3 here for so long. They're so well established.
4 They've engaged with immigration so frequently in
5 their own renewal period, but a lot of the
6 individuals who benefit from these types of programs
7 are, you know, again, I guess very well established
8 and have their own ways of sort of going about those
9 efforts. So, in terms of measuring success, I'm not
10 sure there was a—there was like a specific way to
11 measure that something was successful in our mind. I
12 think we're continuing to sort of monitor renewals
13 and things like that and the—the most important
14 message for us is people knowing for instance that
15 there is an extension of their work authorization at
16 his time that they can get, that they can continue to
17 work and that they can get the legal advice if they
18 need it. But other than sort of deeply penetrating
19 information and working with community based groups
20 and faith leadership, which I do think was successful
21 and people were responsive, and a lot of what we
22 heard in terms of feedback from community groups was
23 oh, I'm not affected but my neighbor is, and I'm
24 going to share this information with them was really
25 part of the goal as well. So, I think it's hard to

2 measure effectively in terms of saying we wondered,
3 you know, why that happened and X made it happen, but
4 I think that's largely due to the fact that these are
5 communities who have been here for a very long period
6 of time, have their own established ways of going
7 through renewals, their own trusted providers or
8 people that they've gone to or processes that they've
9 gone about are stronger in the English language and
10 so forth. And so, I think hopefully the—the broad
11 based dissemination of information and the city's
12 leadership in demonstrating that we were here to do
13 what we could that was at our disposal gave people
14 the tools and the comfort that they needed through
15 this time.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I think what—
17 what's important here is—is clearly we're—we're—we're
18 getting to a critical point soon. Hopefully, the—the
19 courts will favor our side of this question, but in
20 preparation for this, I think we want to get a better
21 sense about what needs to happen, and what we've
22 learned in the past about this population, a unique
23 population that has a lot to lose, and where you have
24 a demographic that most—many of these families have
25 American born children to mixed status families.

2 They're integrated into our communities with work,
3 our economic—their economic engine, and so I think
4 that's what we're trying to get a better sense of-of
5 how we do that, and I know advocates are going to—are
6 going to testify and think about that, and hopefully
7 and I'll ask them be ready on how—what ideas they
8 have so that we can meet them where they are and
9 bring the resources. Is MOIA ye prepared to think
10 about—because we're in the middle of the big, or I
11 should say we're in the beginning of the next budget
12 season, a plan with resources for specific outreach
13 and not necessarily just general outreach, but
14 specific outreach to this community?

15 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So, one
16 thing I would just note is I would say that the labor
17 unions are—are very effective partners in this work
18 with TPS recipients, and hugely critical to be in
19 the—in the conversations many of whom, of course, met
20 their members, are in the sectors where you see large
21 numbers of TPS recipients and they were highly
22 critical, and driven and—and getting good information
23 out to their members, and working in partnership to
24 elevate the—the critical nature and need of-of this
25 work. In terms of ongoing need, you know, we—as I

2 said, have been continuing to prioritize appointments
3 as needed for TPS holders. We've not seen an issue
4 there in terms of large numbers of people needing
5 those appointments who haven't been able to get them.
6 As I noted again, this is a population that's been
7 going through this renewal process for so long that
8 many people already have sort of their—their way of
9 doing that, and the trusted people that they go to.
10 In terms of outreach and education, we've started
11 this work over a year ago now in terms of being in
12 communities and sharing information. We've sustained
13 it since that time as needs have come up, as we've
14 been asked to do a Know Your Rights forum and to
15 provide information and, you know, we'll continue to
16 do that. I think our focus at the moment is really
17 advocacy at the federal level. We think now is the
18 time to ensure that Congress is taking seriously the
19 need for a legislative solution for recipients, and
20 have learned through the work that we do, and
21 advocates—through advocates and others that we've
22 spoken to, but there's just a lot of need for
23 education at the federal level for people to
24 understand the importance of TPS recipients having a

2 permanent solution. So, we're very focused at the
3 moment in ensuring that we're doing that effectively.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can you—can you
5 talk a little bit more about exactly the federal—the
6 role that you're playing at the federal level to—to
7 the advocacy?

8 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. So, in
9 working through Cities for Action, the Coalition of
10 Mayors across the country, we are doing regular
11 engagement in terms of, you know, checking the pulse
12 on—on where—where there's appetite and where there is
13 need for education around issues that are critical to
14 our communities, our cities. TPS-

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] [off
16 mic] We're telling—[on mic] We're telling the story
17 of the city New York to the—to the federal community—
18 -

19 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: [interposing]
20 Exactly.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --community, the
22 federal legislative body.

23 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Big, by the
24 way, and not just the city of New York, and I think
25 that's where the power of—of the city is coming

2 together is, right. The city is nationally
3 experiencing the same ramifications or impacts
4 locally based on these policies and TPS being one
5 that's been a harder one to penetrate in terms of the
6 narrative and in terms of people really understanding
7 that the human impact will be, but cities deeply
8 understand that, and know that in a way that we're
9 able to speak to it in a different way than
10 applicants and others have. So, we're hoping to be
11 able to play more of that role on this issue in the
12 coming months including a trip to DC with city
13 partners.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Awesome. I want
15 to offer the opportunity to work the City Council in
16 all of this and we'll come back to that in a little
17 bit. Council Member Holden.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thanks,
19 Commissioner for your testimony. I just have a few
20 questions. Some of the—some of the questions were
21 answer already, but so the Temporary Protected Status
22 is evaluated every 6 to 18 months for these countries
23 that you—you're talking about?

24 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And each time that
3 the—the person has to pay for \$495 is good, and based
4 on—on—on just—so if they do it every six months, you
5 have to pay \$495 every six months. Is that ever
6 done?

7 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So, I—I
8 might want to pause, and get back to you on the
9 number that you have to pay at every renewal. I know
10 it's different if you're applying for the first time
11 versus—versus a renewal of your work authorization
12 card. So, I want to get back to you on the exact
13 number for just the renewal every 18 months.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: And—and you said
17 the Trump Administration has evaluated six or nine
18 countries six to nine countries. How many countries
19 have TPS in the United States?

20 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So, let me
21 get you—let me get to my chart so I don't give you
22 the wrong information on this. [pause] So, currently
23 including Liberia, there are 11 countries, and the
24 Trump Administration as we noted, evaluated 9 and
25 chose not to re-designate 6.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: So, there are 11
3 countries you said. Which ones weren't evaluated?
4 I'm sorry.

5 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So, if it's
6 okay, I'll just run down the list to make it a little
7 bit easier. So Sudan, they chose not to re-
8 designate. Niger-Nicaragua they chose not to re-
9 designate. Liberia they chose not to re-designate.
10 South Sudan they extended. Haiti they chose not to
11 re-designate. Nepal they chose not to re-designate.
12 El Salvador they chose not to re-designate. Syria
13 they did extend. Honduras they chose not to re-
14 designate. Yemen they extended and Somalia they
15 extended.

16 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: And since it
17 is TPS, it's temporary, and in previous
18 administrations—I know you said that the Trump
19 Administration is targeting certain countries, and
20 can-can-historically has—since it is TPS, I mean it
21 is lifted in previous Administration hasn't it? I
22 mean obviously because it wouldn't be called TPS.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Uh-hm.

24 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Uh-hm.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: So, could you go
3 back historically and say how many times it's been
4 lifted in other Administrations for certain
5 countries?

6 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. So-so
7 I'll say a couple of things, and I'll—I'll start with
8 what has been the most troubling or problematic about
9 the approach of the Trump Administration compared to
10 previous administrations.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Uh-hm.

12 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: The most
13 problematic thing has been the way that they've gone
14 about making the determination. So, as I noted in my
15 testimony and has been—has been a part of the
16 practice since the '90s re-designations are based on
17 current country conditions. So, the ability for the
18 individual to return safely to—to their country of
19 origin and establish themselves safely. The Trump
20 Administration again against what their own Country
21 Condition Report said against what—own guidance that
22 they—they were given ignored current country
23 conditions in the country of origin for individuals.
24 So, in terms of sort of process and, you know, some
25 of the bases for the legal challenge, it's that they

2 didn't procedurally operate as they ought to in
3 considering TPS designation and that's the first and
4 major thing I would say. The second is I think
5 comprehensively and nobody would dispute this,
6 there's a broader question around the need for
7 comprehensive immigration reform, and things that
8 work about our system and things that don't work in
9 our system and I think one of the-the important
10 things to consider is, of course, what happens when
11 people have been established for over 15 years in a
12 country. They have worked there. They have city
13 jobs. They have established themselves. They pose no
14 threat. They have mixed status households. There
15 should be consideration for those factors, and there
16 should be a system that acknowledges that. So, I
17 think certainly in any conversation about the need
18 for immigration reform, this would be a question.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Do-do you keep
20 track of how many-actually, how many people go back
21 to their original country voluntarily just because
22 conditions have improved in that country? Do you
23 keep status like that?

24 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: I don't.
25 No. I'm not sure we would be able to get something

2 like that, but we can certainly try that—try to and
3 get back to you if we can.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: So, so the basis
5 of—of the argument though is that you believe the
6 conditions haven't improved in—in those countries at
7 all? In any of the countries and that there should
8 be some mechanism to apply for citizenship or at
9 least permanent status based on the fact that they've
10 been here a long time, 15 years let's say or so, and
11 have good jobs let's say?

12 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So what I'm
13 saying is a couple of things. One that I think the
14 kind—this kind of program is an important kind of
15 program. We're not, you know, we're not entering
16 into a situation where you aren't—aren't going to see
17 crises arise globally. In fact, we're seeing an
18 increase in crises and will see an increase in crisis
19 around migration due to climate change, and so I
20 think the importance of programs that acknowledge
21 that somebody should not be forced to go to an
22 unstable, unsafe condition is a part of what we
23 should value and who we are as a country and a
24 society I think the reality of what plays out in
25 countries and how long it takes to rebuild and so

2 forth is something that I would hope would be
3 considered in a conversation in-around comprehensive
4 immigration reform, and part of what what's happening
5 to the countries that we're talking about and the
6 individuals here in New York City is so critical to
7 the conversation. We want to just make sure that
8 legislators are educated about who these populations
9 are, why it matters that they've been here for over
10 15 years and have children and other primary
11 breadwinners of their family and have established
12 themselves every year paying taxes not committing
13 crimes and so forth.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you Council
16 Member Holden. We've also been joined by Council
17 Member Miller. Council Member Miller, do you have
18 questions? Okay.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you Chair
20 Menchaca for your leadership once again, and
21 Commissioner, thank you as well for you and your team
22 that has demonstrated the support to these folks that
23 have been afforded temporary protections in our
24 communities throughout the city of New York and that
25 let me just say that we appreciate the resources, and

2 the collaborations that have allowed us to support
3 these communities within our communities

4 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI:

5 [interposing] Okay.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: --that really
7 have--have become very important to our communities on
8 so many different levels whether it's the economic or
9 social fabric of who we are, which speaks directly to
10 the other line of questioning. But for me, I kind of
11 just want to step outside of this box. I'm a little
12 more familiar with--with what those protections look
13 like, and--and that we are kind of on pins and needles
14 as we await a decision and--and next steps as we--we
15 deal with those decisions that are upcoming and--and
16 was--is it three or four countries involved in the
17 lawsuit?

18 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: It's six.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Ho many?

20 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Six.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Six actually
22 involved in the lawsuit now?

23 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Oh, in the
24 lawsuit it's--it's four.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: It four--

2 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: --right, and in
4 the--the injunction and so forth. So, there--there are
5 a lot of folks that are on pins and needles. Let me
6 ask you. Is--is those and those individuals that--that
7 have come here by virtue of catastrophes or other
8 world events that--that they've experienced, and those
9 who received a Temporary Protected Status, what other
10 mechanisms, avenues, resources does the government
11 provide--assistance do we provide for individuals from
12 these countries that find themselves in these type of
13 predicaments?

14 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: In terms of
15 public assistance?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So, this is a
17 Temporary Protected Status. I know that there are
18 many such qualifying catastrophic events that happen.
19 Unfortunately, pretty regularly. As I take a look at
20 this list, there's a list of--of--of folks in countries
21 that are all black and brown, right? What
22 opportunities are afforded to the rest of the world
23 that have equal catastrophic events? Are they
24 finding themselves in simply Temporary Protected
25 Status or is there something that else that grants

2 them the opportunities to—that are being afforded to
3 TPS and beyond? Is there something else that you are
4 missing, and why aren't there folks that—why they non
5 and black and brown countries and folks from those
6 countries on TPS? Is there something aside from TPS
7 that assists these folks?

8 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: It's something
10 that we're missing here?

11 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: And noted.

12 I know Council Member you came a little bit late, but
13 I did as—in my testimony speak to how we believe very
14 much the decision to terminate these countries is
15 motivated by anti-black and anti-Latinix racism at
16 the federal level, and that that has been clear
17 through the rhetoric, and the lack of following
18 procedure in making these determinations. I think in
19 terms of what—why do you see a host of countries
20 listed that are all from the country—from countries
21 that have predominately people of color, and now I
22 mean we could probably have a whole history lesson
23 about foreign policy, and nobody did it work—that
24 speaks to that, quite honestly, and speaks to the

2 resources in—in some countries and—and the way that
3 governments work in other—in other countries--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: [interposing]

5 Could—could--

6 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: --that

7 actually results in--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: [interposing]

9 Could you very specifically say, and—and—and I can't
10 grasp at a country, a European country or a non-
11 country of color, but when they find themselves in
12 these positions, are there only options available to
13 them, Temporary Protected Statuses or are the
14 government, federal government affording them
15 opportunities that are not being afforded to these—to
16 folks from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, Yemena and
17 Somalia and other—the other West African countries?

18 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: I mean I—I
19 think without a specific example, it's a difficult
20 thing for me to answer that question. I would say
21 that in terms of reliefs that are available for
22 individuals who are in the United States at the time
23 when there might be some sort of civil or other
24 natural disaster in their country that makes them
25 unable to go home, as far as I'm aware, it would be

2 similar. But there isn't a different kind of program
3 that would be made available to one country versus
4 another. I think it's more of a question of what are
5 the--what are the sort of number of opportunities that
6 might be made available to individuals, in particular
7 countries for different reasons. Be it more freedom
8 to travel to other places, to relocate if you're in
9 the European Union, et cetera.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Not exactly what
11 I was looking for. I was looking for something a
12 little more definitive, but I can appreciate your
13 answer, and thank you again, Mr. Chair. I'm just
14 going to kind of listen to the rest of the--the
15 hearing and kind ascertain--and maybe I'll hear what
16 we're trying to get to, and the same. But I think
17 that the folks that are being--it was just a simple
18 question. Is there outside of TPS anything else that
19 are being afforded to folks that find themselves in
20 the position that these folks aren't able to take
21 advantage of a program outside TPS that will allow
22 them to remain here with certain provisions and
23 protections?

24 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Not that I'm
25 aware of, but we can get back to you. Yeah.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council
4 Member Miller and we've been also joined by Council
5 Member Mathieu Eugene from Brooklyn. I- want to ask
6 a question, but I want to also say that maybe in
7 relationship to your question Council Member Miller,
8 when you look at the list of countries with the
9 highest amount of TPS recipients, where 98 and some
10 percent are coming from those countries where this
11 president has decided to not renew, these are also
12 countries for the most part related to incredibly
13 horrible foreign policy in Latin America where we
14 have destabilized countries and climate change is one
15 piece, but we have also been a force of nature
16 ourselves destailizing so many countries that we're
17 seeing people continue to come to the United States.
18 So, there is- there is a relationship there that I
19 think we can- we can talk about for a long time, and-
20 and so really what I want to figure out here is- and
21 also to Council Member Miller's question about what
22 other immigration status benefits are available for
23 TPS, and have you done that study within MOIA for
24 families that are residing here with at least one TPS
25 recipient? And wait hold on. Yeah, any benefits

2 that are available to TPS recipients and what-where
3 is Action NYC in that outreach to be able to bring
4 that benefit to those families? Further options?

5 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. You
6 mean immigration benefits, yes?

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Immigration
8 benefits.

9 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So, it's a
10 difficult question to answer for a number of reasons.
11 One, it's a very individualized analysis. So--

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Are
13 there any trends?

14 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So, as I
15 noted in my testimony, the primary way would be
16 through a family member. You know, marriage to a
17 U.S. Citizen spouse by way of example would be one
18 way in which you could potentially, though not
19 always, see a path towards immigration status for
20 you. There is a number of litigations that have in
21 two circuits across the country that have made it
22 easier to adjust your status to permanent residents
23 based on a marriage to a U.S. citizens, and there's
24 pending litigation in this--in our--in the Eastern
25 District in New York on this question. So, it is a

2 very complex and individualized question. It is more
3 difficult for individuals who have TPS and are placed
4 in deportation proceedings to—to obtain relief that
5 might be available to somebody else who's been here
6 for a long period of time and established themselves.
7 So, it's not something that can easily be answered.
8 It's a very—very specific and very limited options
9 and must be looked at per individual.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, without
11 immigration reform, we're not going to be able to
12 bring that kind of relief across the board, and
13 we're—we're trying to find ways and—and that's all
14 going to take lawyers. It's going to take legal
15 representation. So, back to this concept of cost,
16 and have you costed this out? Have you pulled
17 together a budget for—if we were able to engage every
18 single TPS recipient in the city of New York, how
19 much would that cost to bring them a lawyer. This
20 also touches upon due process and ensuring that every
21 New Yorker gets access to a lawyer of some kind to
22 take their individualized need and unique case and
23 bring it forth and—and offer opportunity for justice
24 especially in this mix, well all—for everybody. For
25 everybody what's the cost?

2 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So, we've
3 not costed out specifically for this population. I'd
4 say what we have done for this population, and this
5 is similar to what we had done with--when we saw the
6 end for DACA was wanting to ensure that we were doing
7 what we could to maximize outreach and engagements
8 that we were establishing different entry points for
9 people to get legal advice, and that we were
10 monitoring and making sure that people who needed it
11 were getting it who were trying to come to us. I
12 think what we saw and--and I know Council Member
13 Eugene has joined. Thank you to him and his staff
14 who were extremely great partners around Haitian TPS
15 renewals and we worked together to do both outreach
16 as well as the Legal Clinic through your office. So,
17 thank you so much for your work with communities in
18 this space. I think what we have seen in this regard
19 is so far we've been able to meet the--the demand of
20 people who are coming to us. Again, I think--

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] With
22 the current budget?

23 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Uh-hm. I
24 think with the--with these populations as I noted,
25 you're talking about people who have kind of year in

2 and year out gone through the renewal process and
3 nothing has necessarily changed in their lives that
4 many necessitate them needing to get advice, and so,
5 you know, a little bit of-of the-the desire that we
6 have had to make sure that everybody is getting that
7 legal advice to make sure that yeah, you might not
8 know if you have another pathway, or you might not
9 know where all the best options are for you. So, we
10 want you to get that screening. This is why we've
11 also kind of doubled down on the community engagement
12 and the more broader public outreach, but we've not,
13 you know, have the need at this time to make a
14 determination or assessment that there's--there's a
15 broader need for the immigration legal services on
16 this front.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for
18 that. I'm going to hand it over to Council Member
19 Mathieu Eugene for questions.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very
21 much, Mr. Chair, and thank you very much also,
22 Commissioner.

23 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Thank you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: And we all know
25 that TPS is a very important immigration relief and

2 humanitarian relief to people who have been living in
3 the United States because I've heard their countries
4 have been through a very difficult situation. It
5 could be natural disasters, and police culture in
6 them all and all the tragedies, but the reality is
7 those people have been living in the United States.
8 They are part. As you know, we all know that part of
9 the fabric of the United States and especially as--
10 because we are New York City part of the fabric of
11 New York City, and those people they are hard working
12 people also. As you know, that they come to my
13 office. They go to the offices of the City Council
14 Members to renew their work permit. That says
15 something. They want to work. They want to make
16 sure they can contribute, you know, to the greatness
17 of the city of the United States. They want to make
18 sure that they can maintain their families, pay their
19 bills, and also they are part of the economy also,
20 and but the problem is--one of the problems that we
21 have been seeing all the time when we have to renew
22 their TPS? There's a cap, you know. When they have
23 to renew to extend the TPS? Some of the time they
24 don't receive their permit on time--

25 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Right.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: --the work permit
3 on time, and their employers don't want to keep them.
4 So, that means many of them unfortunately usually
5 lost their job. We have been doing another thing to
6 contact their employers. Some of the time, you know,
7 we succeed in doing that. Other times certain
8 employers say no. They want to see the physical, you
9 know, extended permit. Are you aware of this as the,
10 you know the Mayor's Office of Immigration, you at
11 the Mayor's Office of Immigration are you aware of
12 that? And what have been done to try to help those
13 people? They are qualified. They are waiting. They
14 were waiting for their working permit, but because of
15 a, you know, a-a process, the process has been
16 delayed, administrative issues, they didn't receive
17 their work permit on time. Are you aware of that
18 situation? What have been done to help those people,
19 you know, stay in their job?

20 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. Thank
21 you for the question. So, I'm aware of it maybe kind
22 of a couple cases here and there, but not as a-a much
23 broader wide spread issue that we have worked on
24 though it's something we're interested in learning
25 more about and helping to work on as needed in terms

2 of advocacy. I'd say that this is a challenge more
3 broadly with USDIS and that there aren't many delays
4 in issuance of decisions on a wide range of cases not
5 just TPS. So, that is an issue that we have talked
6 about with the local office, and are interested in
7 continuing to advocate around. So, as you're hearing
8 cases, please do share information with us so that we
9 can more effectively ascertain, you know, how
10 prevalent this is, and what the challenges are. As I
11 noted before in the current situation where people
12 are receiving simply the announcement that their
13 status is extended and no new card to-to verify that,
14 we have heard that this is a challenge, and that's
15 something that we're-we're interested in just making
16 sure we understand and can be responsive and advocate
17 around.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Uh-hm. As I said
19 before, and all of us we know that because we have
20 been advocating for people for immigrants. The
21 people who benefit from TPS, as I said, they want to
22 work and many of them they want to learn something to
23 be able to-to get a better income situation. Go to do
24 nurses there. They'll get the trade, but because,
25 you know, the benefit for them are very limited. If

2 they don't have money, they cannot go to a school to
3 learn something. But can the Mayor's Office of
4 Immigration create some type of grant or funding or
5 create a system or try to work together with the
6 school? I know there are people who have at least
7 the opportunity to go to school to get a certificate,
8 a diploma for something. I'm not talking about the
9 medicine, or go to law school, but some trade that
10 will enable them to better contribute to society to
11 New York City because the better prepared they are
12 the better is going to be for New York City also.
13 It's going to be a win-win situation.

14 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Is there anything
16 that, you know, you from the, you know, the Mayor's
17 Office is talking about? Is there anything that you
18 believe that should be done?

19 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Um--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: [interposing]
21 Because they're already here.

22 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: They're already
24 here--

25 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: That's right.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: --and they are
3 legally here. You understand what I'm saying? So,
4 if we can help them to empower themselves, by doing
5 that we are empowering also the city of New York.

6 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Is there anything
8 that can be done in that, you know, area?

9 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, I
10 thank you for your questions. I think that's
11 definitely something that we would like to look at
12 and potentially work on with you. [coughs] Excuse
13 me. If you have particular ideas or thoughts on the
14 kinds of either licenses, skills or training that
15 would be beneficial to TPS populations that you're
16 working with or others, we'd definitely love to
17 explore that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: My last questions
19 is this one: We all know that, you know, there's a
20 big issue a the wall, a big issue and one of the
21 conditions, [coughing] you know, for this president
22 to get-to open the government event though the
23 government is open now, but the package that he
24 presented it was okay, I will give that car, you know
25 a tip yes, if you give me this, you give me the money

2 for the wall. What I'm thinking about is there any
3 advocacy anything that the City of New York can do
4 because now that means TPS, DACA they are part of the
5 conversation for good or for bad, but for us,
6 advocates for immigrant, is there anything that we
7 can do or the city of New York can do to make sure we
8 are part of the conversation and put some weight
9 into-to-to-to present TPS or DACA, you know, as a
10 very important topic, a very important subject, a
11 very important issue, and then to make sure that, you
12 know, regardless of which way the decision will go,
13 TPS and DACA can be considered and those people are
14 waiting for--those benefits can, you know, see a good
15 day, can--benefit can be granted, the TPS or DACA?

16 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, so
17 they--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: [interposing]
19 Any, you know advocacy, any force any thing that we
20 can put on that?

21 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes. So
22 think you for that question. I spoke a little bit
23 about this. One of the things that we've done
24 already is we've joined the litigation nationally
25 through Amicus Brief with multi-city Amicus Brief.

2 We also through our coalition Cities for Action have
3 jointly shared the city's perspective on each of the
4 TPS considerations, and we have in the coming months
5 on agenda to help educate Congressional
6 representative around TPS including a trip to DC a
7 multi-city trip to DC around this to elevate the
8 importance of this issue for cities, what our
9 communities look like, what the impact would be and
10 why it's so important to ensure that there is a
11 permanent solution for our TPS residents.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very
13 much. Before I conclude, let me take the opportunity
14 to thank you also, to thank the Mayor's Office of
15 Immigration, MOIA, because I've—I have seen the
16 effort that you have been doing to reach out to
17 people with TPS and special immigration community by
18 organizing, Know Your Rights and many of the forums
19 to inform them about their rights, and also to give
20 them the necessary information that they need not
21 only to keep the TPS, to renew the TPS. Thank you
22 very much for that.

23 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Thank you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: And, Mr. Chair,
25 thank you so very much. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much
3 Council Member Eugene and thank you for your
4 advocacy. It just goes to show how important we are
5 as partners in the City Council for our communities,
6 and your connection and leadership in the Haitian
7 communities is incredibly important to the larger
8 citywide platform of outreach, and so we're going to
9 keep working together. No doubt. So, I have a few
10 more questions before we bring the advocates on
11 board, and I really want to nail understanding of
12 Action NYC. What's the role of Action NYC for TPS
13 [siren] and/or specifically what does Action NYC
14 doing for the TPS community?

15 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure.
16 [bangs]

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right there.

18 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. So,
19 you know, Action—Action NYC is the city's sort of
20 entry point for immigration legal services as we like
21 to call it in that you can—if you call 311 or the hot
22 line, you know, you don't have to go to a particular
23 location to get an appointment, but you can call
24 wherever you are in the city, and you can get an
25 appointment--

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] 311-
3 311 is essentially the face of-of the response? Is
4 that--?

5 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: No.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: 311 you can
8 just-if you don't know the hotline number, you can
9 just call 311 and they'll connect you to the hotline.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it.

11 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Great.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: The Action NYC
13 Hotline Number.

14 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes, yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Regardless
17 of your language, we have interpretation available,
18 et cetera, and you get an appointment made and what
19 we did with that was we just made sure that we were
20 prioritizing re-registration appointments for TPS
21 holders. So, so you didn't have to wait to come in
22 because you could miss your deadline, right. So,
23 that was what we were-we were doing with TPS
24 recipients to just ensure that they had the ability
25 to come and quickly get an appointment and didn't

2 have to wait a couple of weeks if they needed to come
3 in tomorrow because the deadline was going to mean
4 they could do that.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can I--can I pause
6 and ask about the calls? So, how-how did the calls
7 measure in terms of other calls that were coming into
8 the hotline/311? Did TPS kind of go up at all over
9 the last few--

10 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI:
11 [interposing] So, I don't know the exact number for
12 you. I can get back to you, but I don't recall--

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]
14 Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: --us having
16 a huge spike in terms of TPS calls.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: It goes to that.
18 I really--I'd like to see that as well.

19 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: We're doing a lot
21 of 311 stuff and then we're going to be working on
22 some of the legislation for kind of language access.

23 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yep.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: But then we won't
25 go there right now. What are the most common

2 questions when someone calls about TPS? What-what
3 are the-what's the quality of the question? What-
4 what-what are they asking for?

5 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. So,
6 if you're calling because you-what our-what the
7 hotline should be doing is when you call they're-
8 they're just assessing do you have TPS? Right? If
9 you have TPS, what country is it from and is your
10 deadline looming. Right? Do you need to get in
11 sooner than later? And let's make sure we can get
12 you in. If you-if that's what it is, then that's
13 sort of the process that they're going through to
14 make sure. If you just have a broader question about
15 the program or what's happening with it, then we have
16 partnered with the Office of New Americans Hotline so
17 that our-our-our hotline can transfer to get a kind
18 of more in-depth responsiveness there. We've also
19 recently hired onboard a counselor who can go a
20 little bit more in-depth for-with callers just to
21 make sure we're not missing anything and can address
22 things quicker, and right off bat, if people are
23 calling us for broader information and not just the
24 need for the Immigration Legal Service appointment.
25 When you get connected to the provider, all of the

2 Action NYC's providers can take—can do those TPS
3 renewals. So they can—they can do the full scope of
4 it. Probably the largest Action NYC provider that
5 sees the most TPS cases is probably CAMBA in
6 Brooklyn, and I know they were, you know, working
7 over the weekends during the Haitian Renewal period
8 to make sure that they were seeing the—the population
9 and they were able to meet all of the need. In terms
10 of if you have a more complex case, if you have the
11 possibility of needing services to reopen a
12 deportation case or what have you, then they will
13 help make the referral to IOI provider to be able to
14 take those cases.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Awesome. Thank
16 you and that reminds me about thinking about other
17 city agencies and partnering with them to do
18 outreach.

19 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So many of them—so
21 many of those agencies interact with—with possible
22 populations--

23 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: [interposing]
24 Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --kids, the
3 Department of Education, ACS, DYCD, HRA, SBS in terms
4 of the workforce. Can you give us a--a sense? Maybe
5 kind of go one-by-one on each of those agencies and
6 how-how MOIA is working with them to do that outreach
7 if there's any?

8 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. So,
9 kind of top lines in this is what we've put into
10 place on all sort of major federal policy shift. We
11 immediately do a multi-agency briefing call where we
12 invite agencies to join to make sure that they have
13 the immediate sort of topline information. We share
14 out information like our outreach flyer, and talking
15 points for staff to make sure that they're sharing
16 good information, and can immediately connect people
17 to services not just, of course, people that they're
18 interacting with, but city workers who might have
19 questions, and might be impacted, and we--we have
20 worked closely with General Counsel offices as well
21 for that purpose. So that's a part of what we do.
22 We also do individual support or technical assistance
23 for agencies as cases arise.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, I guess what
3 I'm also trying to understand, too, is for the lack
4 of a better word--

5 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Uh-hm.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --I'm going to use
7 the word passive--

8 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --outreach where--
10 and I struggle with that, too in the district office--
11 -

12 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: [interposing]
13 Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --where we're like
15 going out, and we're just kind of blanketing the
16 neighborhood, and everybody is got the information,
17 but really trying to understand how we know when
18 information has been received--

19 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: [interposing]
20 Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --and--and we're
22 able to kind of get a good feedback going with
23 communities over time. TPS is--is one kind very kind
24 of unique community, but that will probably change
25 over time again, and if we win the court battle and

2 so-and so how do-how do we-are there any non-passive
3 kind of direct measurable connections that we're
4 making at the agency levels in any way? That might
5 not be measurable. I know we-we hit privacy issues
6 and we hit like--

7 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI:

8 [interposing] Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --we don't want to
10 create lists, and I-and I get that--

11 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Right.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --but is there
13 anything else that's beyond?

14 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: At the
15 agency level I can't think of anything right now. I
16 think if I think of something else I'll get back to
17 you, but I think you're right in the challenges that
18 we come up against, and that we're not advising
19 agencies to ask these questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: We're not
22 asking agencies to tally, you know, the-the TPS
23 recipients they are serving or DACA recipients. Most
24 don't know because--

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Uh-hm, Uh-hm.

2 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: --because
3 they're not supposed to--

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yes. Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: --and so, it
6 is for us to a lot more about just making sure we can
7 disseminate good information in a timely way, and
8 ensure that they can be responsive effectively, and
9 share information proactively knowing that they might
10 have, you know, TPS recipients coming into their
11 service center or to their school and that they can
12 be-be responsive in that way. I'd say the work that
13 we do in partnership with the advocacy community if
14 the labor unions with that faith leadership is a lot
15 more intentional and targeted.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Uh-hm.

17 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Right.
18 We're working using our own data on where communities
19 live, and doing our own analyses, but also in working
20 with those communities who are trusted voices in
21 leadership and making sure that information get
22 disseminated effectively, and in all-all of the right
23 ways. You know, visiting many mosques and making
24 sure that we're speaking to the Haitian clergy, and
25 making sure that we're--we're working with the

2 Liberian community based organizations in Staten
3 Island. All of that had been probably the most
4 fundamental in effectiveness in reaching harder to
5 reach populations, but I have your questions as well
6 in terms of how do you best—best measure those
7 outputs, and it's difficult.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, thank you
9 for that, and—and the last two areas of questions are
10 about different sectors who our hope plays to lose
11 work authorization and whether—whether MOIA has done
12 research around what—what sectors are we talking
13 about in terms of TPS through trends, and—and what—
14 what are we doing to understand that sector when they
15 lose a prominent TPS workforce, and then also kind of
16 thinking about outreach to employers and—and whether
17 that's already done or whether you're going to—that's
18 a strategy that MOIA is employing later?

19 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So, in terms
20 of workforce, our analyses has shown us specifically
21 for the Haitian TPS population as we put in our fact
22 sheet that 42% of TPS holders from Haiti are actually
23 in the education and health service industries. We
24 ended up as a result of that doing a lot of work with
25 health service workers, nurses—nurse associations and

2 others in the outreach and engagement that we were
3 doing around this work. I think that will continue.
4 That kind of information will continue to guide the
5 way that we go about doing that—that information
6 education work, but also just about understanding how
7 best to serve the needs of the populations. And as I
8 noted earlier, I'd sat the labor unions were hugely
9 important in this fight in this battle, and certainly
10 from the restaurant industry to the health industry a
11 lot of their members are TPS recipients.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Let's—let's end
13 with healthcare and mental healthcare.

14 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: You talked about
16 what I think everybody understands even anecdotally,
17 but there's data about toxic stress, and how we're
18 working with our communities to ensure that they get
19 access to good mental health care. So what can I
20 hear from you what MOIA is doing with what I believe
21 is one of the large—one of the larger new programs
22 and initiatives through Thrive NYC. So, I want to
23 kind of hear a little bit about any targeted TPS
24 programs for mental health, and then also the work
25 that you're doing at the state level to ensure that

2 like DACA, we are going to have a positive response
3 from the state in making sure that we can continue
4 the healthcare access for TPS if we get to that point
5 where TPS expires.

6 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Sure. So,
7 as—as a I noted in a lot of the outreach and
8 community engagement we've provided information.
9 Information was not limited to legal services. It
10 was also—it also included how to connect to Thrive
11 and get--

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]
13 Could—can we get a copy of—that copy? Is that--? I
14 don't' think we have that, right. We don't have that
15 here? Oh, just give it to the sergeant-at-arms,
16 please. Thank you, Sam.

17 SAM: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Sorry, continue.

19 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Of course.

20 It also included how to connect to—to Thrive NY—and
21 NYC Well. In terms of broader engagement and
22 outreach, that was also a centerpiece of what we were
23 hoping and trying to ensure that people could
24 immediately access as they needed it. We work
25 closely with Thrive at looking at how they're

2 reaching the immigrant community more broadly and
3 specifically those that we've [coughs] we understand
4 are in crises moments, which unfortunately still
5 happen to be in their (sic) community at this time to
6 [coughs] to better their outreach and engagement and
7 also their service in competency and reaching these
8 populations, and that's work that we will continue to
9 undertake, and work with the newly appointed Director
10 of Thrive Susan Herman. So, we'll continue to do
11 that work. I'd also note that as you've heard the
12 Mayor announce earlier with the State of the City
13 with NYC Care. A component of NYC Care is looking at
14 expanding the mental health services that are
15 available to New Yorkers regardless of status, and
16 helping to increase access through the Mental Health
17 Service Corps, which we have founds to be really
18 critical in reaching these populations.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And is there
20 anything that's specific to TPS populations that is
21 being developed because what I'm hearing--what I'm
22 hearing, and correct me if I'm wrong, but essentially
23 you're--you're doing outreach. This is a MOIA flyer.
24 So MOIA is saying hey, hey really great review on the
25 back of all the--all the countries--

2 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI:

3 [interposing] Sure.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: -and then on the
5 other side saying here are all the services, but is
6 NYC Thrive or NYC Well doing very kind of targeted
7 from their perspective outreach for TPS recipients?

8 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: So, we've-
9 we've cross-trained the Thrive team on these things.
10 I can't speak to specific things that they've done,
11 but can talk to-

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Like
13 campaigns?

14 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yeah, yes. I
15 can get back to you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]
17 Okay, so let's work on that--

18 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yep.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --and just
20 understanding if that exists or again I'm-I'm-I'm
21 getting prepared for the budget hearing--

22 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: [interposing]
23 Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --and trying to
25 figure out what-what the gaps are--

2 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --for services,
4 and not just for MOIA for you to do your work and
5 continue that work, but also from the agencies
6 themselves to be able to do that work. And the last
7 thing we want is for them not to have that resource
8 to be able to do that work on their own especially if
9 you're building competency at the agency level, they
10 should be able to kind of generate their own thing--

11 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --and not wait for
13 you to do that. That's my opinion.

14 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Understood.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. Well, I
16 think that's it for us unless you have any other
17 final comments. I will have one final comment just
18 as we talk and Council Member Miller made me think
19 about this in terms of how we got here, and--and the
20 fact that these countries are countries that are
21 connected to this concept that we understand as--as
22 people of color. We're--we're being led. This
23 president has incredible connections to the values
24 around white supremacy. The reason why we're having
25 the border issue, the reason we're having this issue

2 is because he's trying to whiten America. He's
3 trying to deport people who do not look like him,
4 and--and the white race. And so that--that for me is
5 very true, and I will say it any time I have the
6 opportunity to say it, and that's what we're--that's
7 what we're dealing with Temporary Protected Status--
8 Status as you laid out, as we laid out has origins
9 around protecting people who are in crisis. The
10 crisis is still alive. The crisis was generated by
11 us as the U.S. and our foreign policy, and I just
12 needed to say that, and thank you for your work, and
13 then we're looking forward to working with you--

14 COMMISSIONER BITTA MOSTOFI: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --as we move
16 forward. Thank you, Commissioner. Okay, with that
17 said, we're going to go into our first public panel,
18 and New York--NYLPI, Elana Roman, please. Amal Don,
19 the African Communities Together; Amaha Kassa,
20 African Communities Together as well and then Sammy
21 Aliamini (sp?) the Arab-American Association of New
22 York, and if anybody else wants to testify--has--does
23 anybody want to testify that has not filled out a
24 form see the sergeant-at-arms and fill it out.
25 [pause] Okay, who wants to begin? Please just

2 introduce yourself and we can—can move forward. I
3 want to put a clock—I want to put a clock for three
4 minutes and then we could—we could go to Q&A. Thank
5 you.

6 YLEANA ROMAN: Good afternoon. My name
7 is Yleana Roman and I am the Health Justice and
8 Immigration Staff Attorney at the New York Lawyers
9 for the Public Interest. Thank you to Chairperson
10 Menchaca and the committee members for having this
11 oversight hearing. NYLPI urges the Council to
12 support healthcare coverage for at-risk TPS holders
13 who may lose their immigration status. For the
14 population of immigrants, we serve those with serious
15 health conditions, losing healthcare coverage would
16 have devastating consequences. It would be clients
17 who currently have state funded Medicaid, who could
18 be unable to obtain the life saving surgeries or
19 transplants they need because they would not—they
20 would be unable to obtain the life saving surgeries
21 or transplants they need because they would not have
22 the necessary health insurance to cover their
23 procedures. The city and state need to protect these
24 New Yorkers and guarantee healthcare coverage for
25 them in the future. We have clients in our

2 UnDocucare program who have applied for Temporary
3 Protected Status, and are currently TPS holders. As
4 you know, the Trump Administration aims to eliminate
5 TPS for 6 out of 9 countries. These folks have lived
6 in the United States for several years, and some for
7 decades and being their TPS status not only uproots
8 them from their families, homes, jobs and
9 communities, it would also mean potentially ending
10 their healthcare coverage. For our clients, this
11 would meant the difference between treating end-stage
12 renal disease with dialysis or with a kidney
13 transplant. Dialysis is covered by emergency
14 Medicaid and means that the clients must spend
15 several hours over multiple days connected to a
16 machine for survival. That dialysis will not cure
17 their disease and they will have to go for dialysis
18 permanently in order to live. Whereas a kidney
19 transplant, which is covered by state funded
20 Medicaid, would fix the disease, and allow our
21 clients to have healthy productive lives. NYLPI is a
22 part of Coverage for all, a campaign of Healthcare
23 for All New York. Coverage for All demands state
24 action to create an essential plan for all New Yorker
25 up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level regardless of

2 immigration status with particular urgency for
3 immigrants who will be—who will be losing their
4 Temporary Protected Status. So, New York City should
5 affirmatively step forward in supporting the coverage
6 for All Campaign and should urge the state to act on
7 behalf of all New Yorker and to protect TPS holders.
8 Furthermore, should the state not choose to continue
9 coverage for former TPS recipients, we encourage the
10 city to step in and provide comparable coverage that
11 will maintain the specialist care these individuals
12 currently receive and require. If both state and
13 city fail to provide this needed coverage, many TPS
14 holders could be at risk. Ultimately, it's up to the
15 city and state to step in and advocate for TPS
16 applicants since the current federal administration
17 is actively aiming to harm these individuals. Thank
18 you for your consideration today. We look forward to
19 continuing to work with the Council and to improve
20 immigrant New Yorkers' access to healthcare. Thank
21 you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much.
23 I have some questions for you after the panel.

24 YLEANA ROMAN: Okay.

2 AMAHA KASSA: Good afternoon, Chair
3 Menchaca. Thank you for convening this hearing, and
4 thank you for your attention to this issue. As
5 you've said, Temporary Protected Status is a critical
6 issue in our political landscape, and part of not
7 only a broader attack on legal mechanisms to
8 emigrated to the United States, things like the
9 Diversity Visa Program, Refugee Resettlement and
10 Asylum, but as you've said, has been clearly informed
11 by Animus, which is the basis of the *Ramos-Ramos v.*
12 *Nielson* lawsuit, which my organization African
13 Communities Together is one of the plaintiffs on that
14 and our Sudanese members. My name is Amaha Kassa.
15 I'm the Executive Director of African Communities
16 together. I'm also an immigration attorney. I'm her
17 with our member Amaldo Daud, who is a TPS holder from
18 Sudan, and my colleagues Assafat Naconan (sp?) and
19 Keddi Mian (sp?) to both add a little bit of context
20 about what's going on for TPS holders and to build on
21 the ideas about how the city can support some of the
22 current issues that they are facing. My organization
23 has worked on Temporary Protected Status
24 reauthorization and directly with TPS holders for the
25 six African countries that have had—that have or have

2 held the status or deferred enforced departure, which
3 is the parallel program to TPS that's inactive under
4 Presidential authority. Those countries are—include
5 Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Guinea, Liberia and
6 Sierra Leon. Liberia is under both the Temporary
7 Protected—has been under both the Temporary Protected
8 Status and Deferred Enforced Departure Programs. I
9 want to make sure we don't forget about Guinea,
10 Liberia and Sierra Leon, which were terminated at the
11 tail end of the Obama Administration. We're very
12 grateful to Congresswoman Valazquez and to
13 Congresswoman Clark for including relief for those
14 West African TPS holders who were granted TPS under
15 the—as a result of the Ebola epidemic in their bills
16 in the previous, and we want to continue to work with
17 those members of Congress, with Congressman Jeffries
18 who is in a key leaders position and the city to
19 ensure that they're also included in advocacy going
20 forward as well as Liberian DEB. Because it doesn't
21 have the same acronym, it's sometimes forgotten. I
22 think two things to highlight for potential resources
23 and support. One is the need for social work. As
24 people said, there's a variety of programs
25 eligibility that—that people no longer qualify for.

2 People need navigation assistance not just
3 immigration legal assistance. Second is the need for
4 assistance with fees. We can no longer recommend to
5 people that they apply for a fee waiver because of
6 how lengthy the process has—has become, and so are
7 there ways that the city can step in and help provide
8 for people who qualify for fee—who would qualify for
9 fee waivers, fees in lieu of what the federal
10 government [bell] is providing. And the very last
11 thing with your indulgence. The practice of refusing
12 to honor work authorizations issued by the government
13 because they are not based on a—on a physical
14 identification card is widespread. Amal is going to
15 speak to it as well. It is actually illegal. It's a
16 form of discrimination based on national origin. We
17 are referring those cases primarily to the Department
18 of Justice's Division of Immigrant and Employee
19 Rights, which does do investigation and enforcement.
20 We'd love to partner more with the city on that. I'm
21 looking at agencies like the Human—the Human
22 Resources Commission because that is an illegal form
23 of discrimination based on national origin. Thank
24 you very much.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for
3 that.

4 AMAL DAUD: Good afternoon my name--

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Good
6 afternoon.

7 AMAL DAUD: Yeah, Good afternoon. My
8 name is Amal Daud. I'm a TPS holder. I am from
9 Sudan. I-I have been living here in the USA like 22
10 years--22 years now. I just come with my African
11 community to just show of like what is going on.

12 AMAHA KASSA: Would you say you're
13 worried about the--the jobs--

14 AMAL DAUD: [interposing] Yes.

15 AMAHA KASSA: --the new job.

16 AMAL DAUD: --yeah because the--I-I
17 stopped my job like 2017 from November because I
18 don't have the--the I.D. and they--I don't get it
19 until April of 2018. From that time I go to it back,
20 but I stopped again in November--November. For that
21 reason I'm--I'm just home. I do some job like a job
22 like to go and do what I have to do. Because I have
23 big family, I have to do something.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and I
3 want to ask you some questions right after we're done
4 with all the testimony.

5 SAMMI: Hi. My name is Sammi and I am an
6 immigration advocate at the Arab-American Association
7 of New York. I also work on their Action NYC. Our
8 organization serves all immigrants of NYC who walk
9 through our doors. The people who come to us for TPS
10 do so because their countries are experiencing crisis
11 like national disaster or ongoing violence. TPS
12 allows our clients to support their families. They
13 pay taxes, get married, and start new families and
14 then invest in our country. A perfect example of
15 this is our client Sarah. She's a 90-year-old widow
16 from Syria who came to the states in the '90s. When
17 she first heard of TPS in 2012, she immediately
18 applied for the benefit. Sarah was so happy that she
19 could finally work legally in the United States.
20 Sarah had been a chef for 20 years, and she enjoys
21 cooking for people. Back in Syria she has nine
22 children who she still supports. With the money that
23 she sends back home here family was able to build a
24 house where they can all live together. It's so
25 important that we keep fighting for TPS because so

2 many people are still at risk in their home
3 countries. For example, the 7.8 or 8.1 magnitude
4 earthquake of April 2015 in Nepal not only displaced
5 people but led to rising expenses, accumulation debt,
6 and homelessness. Most of our clients at Triple A NY
7 are fleeing war-torn countries or natural disasters,
8 and we have real life experience in dealing with
9 clients who flee to the U.S. for safety. Another
10 example is my client Mr. A who fled the war from
11 Yemen. Mr. A did not attend college because he was
12 afraid of being killed or kidnapped. He came to
13 America because Arab countries aren't accepting
14 refugees. All he wanted was to go to school and
15 become a police officer. Mr. A came to America,
16 applied to colleges and realized his dreams that he
17 could not realize in his country. One of our clients
18 that left a huge impression on me of strength and
19 will was Mr. M, an elder man for Yemen who is
20 unfortunately diagnosed with cancer. [pause]

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Take your time.

22 SAMMI: [crying] He currently has TPS.

23 [pause] I'm sorry, but this is important to me
24 because he reminds me of my father [sniffing] who
25 passed away from cancer and it's so hard that he has

2 to worry about TPS instead of focusing on his cancer
3 treatments. [pause]

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and
5 thank you for the work that you're doing everyday
6 with the association. You are incredibly supported
7 by the City Council, and you're absolutely right.
8 This is not something that should be happening. This
9 is incredibly cruel and is not at all humane and this
10 is why we're here. And so, thank you for lifting
11 that story up. This is--this is--this is the work
12 ahead of us, and I'm hoping that your panel really
13 helps us understand how we can do better on the
14 ground and support these families that should be
15 focused on their health. Should be focused on their
16 relationships that they've built with their family
17 here in the United States in New York, in Brooklyn
18 and--and with us their neighbors, and so thank you
19 for--for all of you for--for being here to--to ensure
20 that we stay focused. I want to start and think
21 about healthcare and really thinking about how the
22 strat--and what is the strategy at the end of the day?
23 Because even if we lost TPS, Mr. M should be able to
24 have access to healthcare, and so what's the
25 strategy? I--I asked MOIA this--this question and--and

2 so I want to hear your perspective. How real is it
3 that the state and what's the process for the state
4 to grant us that access like it did with DACA? Is
5 the governor saying yes? Is that where the pressure
6 needs to go? Is it the legislative process, and what
7 can we do to help?

8 YLEANA ROMAN: Uh-hm. Well, it's the
9 legislative process because there is going to be
10 money involved in kind of ensuring that TPS holders
11 and even broader than TPS holders are getting access
12 to healthcare coverage, specifically to state funded
13 Medicaid and so Coverage for All, the larger campaign
14 that NYLPI is a part of is pushing the state to
15 invest in this essential plan.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Do we have the
17 numbers? Is there—are there numbers generated right
18 now about how—how many dollars?

19 YLEANA ROMAN: Yes, we certainly do, and
20 I—I can send you kind of that--

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]
22 Okay.

23 YLEANA ROMAN: --information. I—I don't
24 have it handy right now, but it's a portion of the
25 budget that the state could—could afford to pay if

2 they treated it as a priority, something along the
3 lines of \$500 million, but I—I could give you the
4 exact number afterwards. Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

6 YLEANA ROMAN: Uh-hm.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And—and then do we
8 know if—because to be honest, I will confess I did
9 not listen to the Governor's State of the--

10 YLEANA ROMAN: [interposing] Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --State.

12 YLEANA ROMAN: [laughter] A crisis.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Sorry.

14 YLEANA ROMAN: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Did he mention it
16 in his State of the State?

17 YLEANA ROMAN: He did not.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: He did not?

19 YLEANA ROMAN: No, exactly.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

21 YLEANA ROMAN: So--

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: This is very
23 important.

24 YLEANA ROMAN: It is very important.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, and—and it
3 clues us into the priorities. Okay.

4 YLEANA ROMAN: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, we have some
6 work to do on—on that front and—and on the
7 legislative side for the state and—and as the Chair
8 of the Committee on Immigration, I'm going to ensure
9 that this gets onto our state agenda as we move
10 forward for budget negotiations in April that are
11 upon us, and so good—good, thank you. Thank you for
12 that.

13 YLEANA ROMAN: Thank you so much.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. I want to
15 ask in general for the panel how—how are you
16 partnering with MOIA or other city agencies on this
17 particular question, on TPS? Renewals, support,
18 healthcare, et cetera. Are—is there a link, a direct
19 link between you and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant
20 Affairs?

21 AMAHA KASSA: So, African Communities
22 Together as a—as contractor is part of the—both the
23 Action NYC and IOI programs through a collaborative
24 called CILEC, Citywide Immigrant Legal Empowerment
25 Collect—Collaborative that is providing direct

2 immigration legal services. So, we partners with
3 legal service providers including—including Catholic
4 Charities, Catholic Migration Services, and Community
5 Development Project of the Urban Justice Center, and
6 Make the Road, and then our community based
7 organizations, which include Adhikaar (sic) who is
8 also here and a number of other immigrant community
9 based organizations. We refer clients to legal
10 service providers. So, we organize clinics in our
11 own offices. Lawyers come to us. We provide the
12 language access. You know, we're, you know, we're
13 providing services in, you know, a range of languages
14 including Ma—you know, Madigo, Fulani, and a number
15 of others, and—and through that, people are accessing
16 immigration legal services. We also are doing Know
17 Your Rights outreach and, you know, to speak to some
18 of the earlier questions, we've done everything from
19 national conference calls with the Liberian community
20 or with other communities facing termination of TPS
21 to events in churches, mosques and associations.
22 When—as the, you know—when—when a termination is
23 happening or is about to happen, we hear sort of the
24 tidal wave. You know, we—they are the folks who are—
25 who are calling us and—and trying to find out what's

2 going on, and so through city support we've done
3 that. I do think that there, you know, we can
4 continue to deepen that partnership, you know, in
5 other ways that we've talked about.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, and
7 specifically I want to follow up on your concept of
8 social workers rather than only focus on legal-legal
9 services. What's-what's that model, and have you
10 presented that model in full with a budget and
11 structure that's in preference to your-your liking?

12 AMAHA KASSA: Yeah. So, I'll-I think
13 we've had-I've had informal conversations with the
14 Commissioner about this, and-and-but we haven't
15 developed-introduced the proposal. What I would say
16 is that the-one of the-one of the biggest initial
17 challenges we face is trust, you know, that people
18 are less trusting than ever of not only government
19 but even not-for-profit providers, you know, that
20 people are afraid of providing their information,
21 afraid of being honest with their own attorneys and
22 advocates about their situation. And so that's an
23 issue for everyone, but I think that we are able to
24 get past that by, you know, hiring culturally
25 competent people, people who speak the same language

2 working with then trusted institutions like churches,
3 mosques and associations. So, when people come to us
4 for these kind of immigration legal services, I want
5 to see if I qualify for any, you know, form of
6 immigration relief or I need help with my—with my,
7 you know, adjustment of status. They don't come with
8 one issue, right. People come with issues: I want
9 to apply for a DV, you know a Visa based on DV, but
10 they also need help getting a divorce. They also
11 need help finding housing. In the case of TPS
12 holders, often people are having these kinds of
13 issues with workplace enforcement or with the
14 Department of Motor Vehicles, and often we're—you
15 know, I—I think the city has done a phenomenal job at
16 directing resources towards direct legal services,
17 and to Know Your Rights and outreach, but I think
18 outside a handful of the largest legal services
19 providers, the community based organizations like
20 ourselves, like ADVICARD (sic). You know, I don't—
21 I'm not as familiar Arab-American, but most of us
22 don't have for example a licensed social worker on
23 staff who could help navigate for people and help
24 direct, you know do case management with people. And
25 often times when we try to refer them to one stops or

2 to other things, they—they get lost in the system.
3 They never get past the—the automated greeting. So, I
4 think--

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Are
6 you referring to city agencies or are you referring
7 to other non-profits?

8 AMAHA KASSA: [interposing] City funded
9 non-profits.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: There are a lot of
11 non-profit agencies.

12 AMAHA KASSA: You know, I think—I think
13 it's just—I think they—they are providing an
14 incredibly valuable service and—and dealing at a
15 volume that we couldn't. You know, we as community
16 based organizations couldn't hope to do.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yes.

18 AMAHA KASSA: I feel that--

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]
20 Right.

21 AMAHA KASSA: --we as community based
22 organizations can reach some more disconnected and
23 hard to reach community members, and so a relatively
24 small initiative, you know, engaging some of our
25 schools of social work like Siberman and—and, you

2 know, all—some of the private schools of social work
3 as well at Columbia and NYU including licensed social
4 workers in immigrant community based organizations to
5 help with navigation on the front line I think could
6 have a huge impact.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I agree, and I
8 think what we should do is actually set up a meeting
9 with your team, and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant
10 Affairs and our team and just look at it together. I
11 think that we're going to hear from legal service
12 providers, but they're asking for almost the same
13 kind of thing. They're—well, I don't have to tell
14 this room. I mean this—this is the—this the
15 question. It's almost like the—the mover—the
16 lubricant of the—of the system so that—so people can
17 move through it smoothly and with purpose, and not to
18 be lost, and otherwise it—it just jams up and we lose
19 a person, and once you break trust with a New Yorker,
20 they will not come back to it.

21 AMAHA KASSA: Yep, that's true.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Either a 311 when
23 they lose—when we 311, which is what we're trying to
24 fix right now, when they call or—or at an
25 organization. So, this is great. Let's—let's table

2 that and say let's come up with something because I
3 think it should be part of our budget negotiations,
4 and we should be working all as a team. I don't know
5 if MOIA will agree with that that invitation or take
6 that invitation, but it will be offered. Thank you
7 for that, and then and then I think the last thing I
8 want to get a better sense about is the ID situation,
9 and the Worker Grow Permit. What--what happens in a
10 situation where you don't have your--your ID? How--how
11 is it--I don't know if I can ask this question or if
12 we should talk offline, but in--in--in general what--
13 what happens when a TPS holder does not have work
14 authorization, people work? How is that--what causes
15 that, and--?

16 AMAHA KASSA: Yeah.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Tell me a little
18 bit more about what that problem is.

19 AMAHA KASSA: So there are, you know,
20 there--there are sort of several buckets of--of people
21 in different statuses right now. There are people
22 who have outright had their--their status terminated
23 Liberia, Sierra Leone. They have been terminated
24 since 2017. There are also people who've had their
25 status extended. Somalia and South Sudan and so

2 there they run—they run into the issue of it's taking
3 a really long time to get new work authorizations,
4 and in that interim period, what they're supposed to
5 do is, you know, go to their employer with a printout
6 from the CI-USCIS website and say here's my expired
7 work card. Here's my—here's my—here's the notice
8 from the website. You should honor this as proof of
9 my continuing work authorization. As, you know,
10 Councilman Eugene and others have mentioned, some
11 employers just don't. You know, they just say, you
12 know, that's not good enough. Get me the card and as
13 the delays grow longer and longer, and as more and
14 more people face termination, that becomes a more and
15 more common situation. I think there's a special
16 situation for the four countries: Haiti, El
17 Salvador, Nicaragua and Sudan that have—that are part
18 of the *Ramos v. Nielson* lawsuit. I think they're
19 facing even more issues because the guidance on the
20 federal website has not been as clear, and so they're
21 essentially as—as Amal described what happens is
22 they—people present this work authorization and it's
23 rejected. And as I said, that's illegal. It's a
24 form of, you know, it's a form of national origin
25 discrimination, but the enforcement gets difficult,

2 and then the DMV issue also happens where people come
3 in with these same forms of authorization, and if the
4 front line worker doesn't know, they just say what is
5 this? You know, it should be a-a card, and so we've
6 seen people turned away, and especially for people
7 who driver Uber or Lyft or-or a Yellow cabs those-
8 that is also a loss of livelihood. What was your
9 experience, Amal? Do you want to share?

10 AMAL DAUD: [off mic] Which experience?

11 AMAHA KASSA: When you-when you gave your
12 card to your employer.

13 AMAL DAUD: Yes, they need the ID. They
14 say because like it's expired. They don't accept it,
15 but they want like from the job.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: When you had every
17 right to be accepted with what you were presenting?

18 AMAL DAUD: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay and okay so
20 I'd like to learn a little bit more about this, and
21 what we-so what-what can we do at the City Council?

22 AMAHA KASSA: I think convening a
23 conversation maybe with some of the advocates, you
24 know, that are in the room, MOIA and then possibly
25 with the Human Rights Commission, and-and, you know,

2 thinking about does this fall within the scope of the
3 city's Human Right ordinance or what is the
4 enforcement mechanism? I think the Department of
5 Justice has been somewhat successful in just calling
6 employers and telling them actually people have a
7 legal right to do this. The—they're overwhelmed.
8 There's—I think there are two staff attorneys for
9 this entire division at DOJ, and so, you know, if we
10 can—if we can have people saying listen I'm sure
11 you're not meaning intentionally to discriminate by
12 national origin, but you actually are required by law
13 to accept valid work authorization.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. So
15 let's—let's come up with a meeting and just talk even
16 if it's on a phone quickly just so we can get a
17 better sense. I think and all this is to say we—we
18 have to build a budget that's going to be responsive,
19 and that this is a better resource question, and you
20 want to know that sooner rather than later, but
21 everything from social workers to advocacy, thinking
22 about the state. So that we can get Mr. M's story in
23 front of folks that are in the middle of their
24 legislative victories right now with the state where
25 we have progressive new leadership, where we have two

2 Democrat, well three technically Democrats leading
3 the state. That we can try to get some of this stuff
4 done, and I think that's important. Than you all for
5 your testimony and your time today. Our next panel
6 we have NYLAG, Jodi Ziesemer-Ziesemer; Margaret
7 Garret from the Legal Aid Society; and Tracy Lawson
8 from Brooklyn Defender Services. Are there any other
9 legal services in the room that wanted to testify?
10 Okay, this is it. This is our legal services panel.
11 You to it. Alright, who wants to begin?

12 I can begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

14 JODI ZIESEMER: So, hi. Thank you, Chair
15 Menchaca and Council Members and staff. My name is
16 Jodi Ziesemer. I'm here for the New York Legal
17 Assistance Group. I'm the new Director of their
18 Immigrant Protection Unit. I'm here with Melissa
19 Chua who is our Assistant Director of that Unit.
20 NYLAG uses the power of law to help New Yorkers to
21 combat social and economic injustice. We address
22 emerging and urgent legal needs with comprehensive
23 free civil legal services impact with the litigation
24 policy advocacy, and community education. We help a
25 variety of different communities including

2 immigrants, veterans, seniors, families facing
3 foreclosure, children in need of special education,
4 domestic violence victims, LGBTQ communities among
5 others. NYLAG represents over 2,000 New York City
6 resident TPS recipients. We've partnered with
7 Councilman Eugene's office to run clinics in the wake
8 of the—the earthquake in Haiti and the designation of
9 TPS for that country. We have also done clinics and
10 for other TPS communities throughout the years and we
11 have helped as many people as possible move off of
12 TPS into a more permanent status. So, in one
13 particular case we helped an individual who was an
14 HIV-positive woman from Haiti. Was married to a U.S.
15 citizen, but also had an outstanding removal order.
16 We helped get her case reopened, helped her move
17 through many of the legal challenges to actually
18 obtain her Green Card so she can continue to receive
19 health services and remain with her family. As you
20 can imagine, and we have discussed here today, there
21 is a variety of services that are needed sort of
22 during this uncertain time period. For many of these
23 communities figuring out whether TPS will be extended
24 either by a court order or by the this
25 administration, if it will be terminated immediately

2 upon the designation, or if it will go through some
3 sort of temporary period, which is what has been
4 happening in the past where there's usually a six-
5 month period of re-designation or as somebody had
6 mentioned, it was called Deferred Enforced Departure.
7 So, that recipients can then be eased off of the
8 status and perhaps find a different status if they're
9 eligible. So, because of all the ongoing litigation
10 and because of all the uncertainty, nuanced and
11 timely legal immigration advice is really essential,
12 and I actually think that there are sort of four
13 different buckets for legal services that are—are
14 very critical in this time. I think a lot of these
15 have come up in the discussions that you've heard so
16 far. The first is, of course, Immigration Legal
17 Services providing nuanced and specific complications
18 for every TPS recipients about their unique situation
19 to see if they have other options and then providing
20 full representation for them to pursue those options,
21 and that is going to encompass not only, you know, if
22 people want to invest (sic) in such in such a variety
23 of different circumstances given their [bell] long-
24 time in the United States and their history here so
25 that will involve affirmative applications, but also

2 a lot of removal defense. So, funding those services
3 adequately either through existing initiatives or
4 creating new ones. The second bucket is employment
5 discrimination support and other employment related
6 several legal services as we--

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Like
8 the ones that we just heard?

9 JODI ZIESEMER: Yes, the ones we just
10 heard I would also say that there's counseling needed
11 for can people receive unemployment benefits if they
12 are--if their employment is terminated--

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] The
14 answer to that question?

15 JODI ZIESEMER: The answer is dependent
16 on their situation.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

18 JODI ZIESEMER: Also whether people can
19 draw down Social Security benefits that they've paid
20 into for very many years. So, I think there is going
21 to be counseling needed on a variety of different
22 employment related matters.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And that's al legal
24 expertise?

2 JODI ZIESEMER:[interposing] I think so,
3 yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Not like just—they
5 can go to like the Chamber or Commerce and get a
6 specialist on—this is a lawyer that needs to--

7 JODI ZIESEMER: [interposing] Right.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: -kind of walk
9 through with that.

10 JODI ZIESEMER: And this is going to be
11 also the intersection of federal, state and Local Law
12 to see what people who, you know, again, if they are
13 eligible for continuing employment. If there's a gap
14 and then also this discrimination that we had talked
15 about for really advocating for people who may not
16 have a physical card, which often is delayed and
17 maybe there's some uncertainty, but they have a legal
18 right to work, and really making sure that they are
19 able to take advantage of that. So, NYLAG does
20 provide some of the services, and can do anything
21 from class action lawsuits if they widespread
22 discrimination to individuals like just letters or
23 information to employers to really advocate for
24 those—for those rights, and we've done some
25 partnerships looking specifically at immigrants and

2 their intersection with employment. So, partnering
3 with employment agencies, parting with--partnering
4 with other advocacy groups and unions. The third
5 bucket, which we have touched on as well is legal
6 health support. Again, advocating for individuals.
7 This has always been an issue with all immigrant
8 populations and making sure that they can take
9 advantage of eligibility for Medicaid and navigating
10 some of the legal difficulties with the intersection
11 between eligibility for health insurance and
12 immigration status. And I think that that's going to
13 be even more critical for this population in
14 particular as we go through the legal limbo and
15 trying to figure out what their status is, if they're
16 changing status, renewing status or possibly losing
17 status. So making sure, and this is one thing that
18 Action NYC does fund is lawyers and hospitals to do
19 individual consultations and do that advocacy and I
20 would encourage the Council to support and maybe fund
21 additional services in that realm. And then finally
22 as some of our--some of the CBOs had mentioned just
23 wraparound civil services. So this is a populations
24 that is in need of a lot of legal services, and often
25 many of the other legal needs contribute directly to

2 their legal-their immigration case and unemployment
3 case, and their legal case, their legal health case.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And they were very
5 specific in asking for a social worker. Is that--

6 JODI ZIESEMER: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --is that your
8 conclusion as well?

9 JODI ZIESEMER: Yes--

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Someone that can
11 kind of hold this whole case together, and support
12 them holistically.

13 JODI ZIESEMER: Uh-hm.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

15 JODI ZIESEMER: Yeah, I think that
16 that's-it's a very good way to navigate and have-have
17 somebody who can advocate in many different areas--

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Uh-hm.

19 JODI ZIESEMER: --and really identify a
20 host of different needs, but then having the-the
21 legal services funded to provide those needs.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right and those
23 are-those are going to be two different roles?

24 JODI ZIESEMER: I believe so, yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

2 JODI ZIESEMER: Thank you.

3 TRACI LAWSON: Good afternoon. My name
4 is Traci Lawson. I'm the attorney in charge of the
5 Asian (sic) Communities Project in the Immigration
6 Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services. Thank you
7 for the opportunity to come and speak about Temporary
8 Protected Status. Since 2009 BDS has represented
9 over 10,000 clients broadly in our Immigration
10 Practice, and Raising Communities team has
11 represented thousands of Brooklyn residents in their
12 application for lawful status, and—and in non-
13 detainable defense. We specialize in the most
14 complex cases, clients and immigrants who are—have a
15 long history of criminal justice involvement, ACS
16 involvement and through the support and funding of
17 the City Council, we provide legal service to low-
18 income New York immigrants and to maintain their
19 status and move towards citizenship. We've
20 established ourselves as a well know TPS provider,
21 which is really with the help of Council Member
22 Mathieu Eugene we've done some clinics, and just in
23 the last couple of years we've done nearly hundreds
24 of—of applications for TPS. I'd like to just
25 highlight a story similar to what my counterpart

2 said, the importance of being able to provide a full
3 analysis of someone's immigration situation and then
4 to continue to provide full representation in other
5 applications where the person can gain permanent
6 status. So, one example of that is one of the—a
7 young man who came to the TPS clinic was a
8 beneficiary—or his--his mother was a lawful permanent
9 resident, and was petitioning for him, and meanwhile
10 his TPS status lapsed. Unfortunately, his mother
11 passed away during that time. So, we were able to
12 help him regain his TPS status, and now we're able to
13 help him continue with his application for permanent
14 residency. So, one concern that we have is that
15 there's been widespread anxiety and misinformation
16 around the end of TPS due to the Trump
17 Administration's decision. We've had clients tell us
18 that they've heard rumors that literally that TPS and
19 ICE is going to go into the communities and do
20 massive roundups and deportations. We've had clients
21 talk to us about their considerations of fleeing to
22 other countries because they can't return to their
23 home country, but they—those options are no longer
24 available and, then, of course, there's just the—a
25 struggle looking forward to preserve their family

2 units and to continue to support their families as
3 they make long-term plans around the end of TPS. So,
4 we have recommendations that we'd like the Council to
5 support. One, of course, is to continue funding and
6 supporting legal services organizations to provide
7 direct legal services. The second is to expand the
8 filing fees fund for those other applications where
9 there is another possibility for permanent residency
10 or another status. [bell]

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Can
12 you tell me a little bit about the city? Sorry, the
13 Filing Fees Fund.

14 TRACI LAWSON: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Is that a—is that—
16 is that a private fund? Is that a city fund?

17 TRACI LAWSON: My understanding is that
18 the Council has a naturalization funds for
19 citizenship application. So, expanding those filing—
20 the filing fees funds to other kinds of applications.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: All beyond
22 citizenship. Got it.

23 TRACI LAWSON: Yes, citizenship.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, some at TPS

25 TRACI LAWSON: Correct.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --filing, you're
3 saying-got it. Now I understand.

4 TRACI LAWSON: For TPS recipients who are
5 eligible for other kinds of relief, a lot of times
6 the barrier to them accessing those--

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] So a
8 filing fee.

9 TRACI LAWSON: --those--that relief is a--
10 is an exorbitant filing fees. They might be in the
11 150 to 350% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. So,
12 they don't deny eligible for a fee waivers but they
13 don't have disposable income--

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Yes.

15 TRACI LAWSON: --especially in the amount
16 of those filing fees.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right and--and on
18 datasets, do you have a sense of data around how
19 many--how many applications and at the filing fee and
20 people don't decide to go forward or can't because
21 they can't access funds? And--and--and I think in
22 general, I'm hoping that we can get those pieces of
23 data for us to understand what the barriers are and
24 then build programs to alleviate that pressure where
25 dollars are really the only thing that is needed.

2 You have the mechanism, you have the relationships.
3 All we have to do is kind of insert dollars into it
4 to make it work and happen especially if there are
5 other non-TPS. For example, percentages of--of TPS
6 clients that are on a process for non-TPS benefits,
7 and the city couldn't answer that question earlier,
8 and it makes sense maybe. You--you could--I'm assuming
9 that just your population and who you're connected
10 with. Anyway--

11 TRACI LAWSON: Yeah, I don't--I don't have
12 numbers--those numbers handy, but I'm sure we can get
13 them together.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] But
15 that--that exists I'm assuming even in just trends--

16 TRACI LAWSON: Yeah.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --to build
18 programs and initiatives on our side so we can get
19 you what you need.

20 TRACI LAWSON: Absolutely.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, great. Thank
22 you.

23 MARGARET GARRETT: Good afternoon. My
24 name is Margaret Garrett and I'm a staff attorney at
25 the Legal Aid Society of New York. Thank you for

2 this opportunity to present. I'm not going to go too
3 much into the history of the Legal Aid Society, and
4 our response to immigrants is in our hand-out and
5 we've been around for a while.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]
7 Well, actually let's get the mic near you.

8 MARGARET GARRETT: Oh, yeah, but I do
9 want to talk about what our recommendations would be.
10 As many of the partners have mentioned, we-we worry
11 about how a loss of TPS would affect TPS holders'
12 access to benefits including healthcare. One thing
13 would be we would encourage the city to—encourage the
14 state to pass legislation. There a legislation right
15 now that I'm not sure exactly what point. It's our
16 S1809, which would amend the New York State Social
17 Services Law to ensure that TPS beneficiaries
18 continue to receive Medicaid benefits if their TPS is
19 lapsed or been terminated.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, that's—that's
21 already been introduced in the State Legislative--

22 MARGARET GARRETT: [interposing] Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --body.

24 MARGARET GARRETT: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, great.
3 Thank you.

4 MARGARET GARRETT: And we would also ask
5 the city to target the immigrants who are losing TPS
6 for the Mayor's New York City Care Initiative. Those
7 are two recommendations we would have in terms of
8 health insurance.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Is the—is NYC Care
10 the thing that the Mayor announced just recently?

11 MARGARET GARRETT: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: How do you all
13 feel about that? I haven't gotten briefed on it, by
14 the way, so I—I don't know much about it, but and I
15 don't know if you want to go on the record [laughter]
16 or if you want to maybe talk offline?

17 MARGARET GARRETT: Yeah, I personally
18 don't have enough knowledge to--

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

20 MARGARET GARRETT: --to talk about it at
21 this point.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]
23 Right, let's get smart about that--

24 MARGARET GARRETT: Yeah. [laughs]

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --together and
3 that's all I'll say. MOIA is still in the house,
4 right? So, I'll see them walk out. Cool. Thank you.
5 I think it's been noted. Anyway.

6 MARGARET GARRETT: We also worry that TPS
7 holders are at risk of immigration scams especially
8 at this moment where there are so many unknown things
9 It makes them even more, you susceptible to notarials
10 and other kinds of immigration fraud, which as you
11 know, run rampant in our city. We would urge the
12 city to invest in public service announcements,
13 encouraging TPS registrants to seek legal assistance
14 through Action NYC, to try and combat some of the--the
15 people who prey on--on this kind of population. We
16 also would ask the city to do public service
17 announcements advising of the possibility of seeking
18 advanced parole, which is something that many TPS
19 holders are eligible for, and once they come back
20 with a stamp and inspection many of them would then
21 be a eligible to adjust through a family members. So,
22 that's one way to--for TPS holders to get to a
23 permanent status.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Just so I can get
25 a better sense of this, essentially you're saying

2 [bell] someone that has TPS today, travels out of the
3 country and then back with a-with a stamped passport
4 can then begin the process for another benefit
5 through a family member who is an American citizen.

6 MARGARET GARRETT: Yes. Without getting
7 too much into the weeds--

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Yes.

9 MARGARET GARRETT: --if a person who has
10 TPS but doesn't have a legal entry so they entered
11 without inspection even if they're married to a U.S.
12 citizen they are not eligible to adjust, but there is
13 a possibility for them to get advanced parole for
14 certain circumstances, which gives them permission to
15 leave the country. Then they have the stamp and now
16 they can adjust to their U.S. spouse. So, that's
17 something that we screen for and I have represented
18 plenty of clients in that exact position. And-and
19 finally, if the injunction is lifted, we would ask
20 the city to consider shifting legal service
21 providers, deliverables under the Immigration
22 Opportunities Initiatives grants from Tier 2 removal
23 cases to more brief service in Tier 1 cases, which
24 will give providers time to focus on the particular
25 needs of-of TPS holders and in terms of also just

2 the--the screening of TPS. You know, clients, I--I can
3 speak personally. I have been to TPS clinics and
4 have seen young people who were eligible for example
5 for special immigrant juvenile status, and then they
6 missed the boat because no one had caught it, which
7 is always really hard to see because it's a missed
8 opportunity and, you know, with more funding for
9 those kind of services. For legal services we're
10 able to provide those types of services as well.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So, we're trying
12 to understand exactly what that means, and I'm not a
13 lawyer. I want to be, but so essentially what we're--
14 what you're saying is that the way that the contracts
15 are constructed with the city it doesn't allow you to
16 capture more people in the screenings, and so the
17 screenings can--can be open to more people--

18 MARGARET GARRETT: [interposing] Well,
19 no. If, for example I screened somebody and thought
20 that they were eligible for special immigrant
21 juvenile status, we don't necessarily have the
22 capacity to take that case.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And that capacity
24 is based on capacity or capacity based on definition

2 of the type of—of legal assistance you can give to a
3 client.

4 MARGARET GARRETT: Correct. The latter.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: The latter.

6 MARGARET GARRETT: It has to do with the
7 funding.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Got
9 it. So, they're not going to reimburse you if you go
10 down Sid's (sic) route because that's not the
11 contract. The contract says to do X.

12 MARGARET GARRETT: Right, or even, you
13 know, brief services under the contract is—is not
14 necessarily representing somebody in an immigration
15 proceeding by giving them information or writing an
16 advocacy letter or something to that effect as well.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. I mean this
18 is another kind of classic case of universal
19 representation.

20 MARGARET GARRETT: Uh-hm.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yet, again,
22 everyone should have a lawyer no matter what, and if
23 the city is—is restricting your ability to serve a
24 New Yorker, then we're not at universal
25 representation and we're not at Sanctuary City and so

2 this is just another hint at some of the work that I
3 think we can do to track ourselves for the budget
4 hearings and really think about that access point and
5 that happens there, and that's a contract issue.
6 That's not—that—it's not Trump saying you can't do
7 that.

8 MARGARET GARRETT: Right.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: It's us saying we
10 can't do that, and that's unacceptable. Note, and
11 that's—that's important. So, thank you for that, and
12 I want to come back and kind of get a sense, a better
13 sense about what needs to happen. Clearly, actually
14 no, not clearly. No, I don't want to restrict this.
15 Everyone should get a lawyer, and especially if we
16 can—we can build out the system with social workers,
17 with interpreters, with—and have a robust system. We
18 can—we can make sure that everybody maintains trust
19 with us because we're going to be able to deliver at
20 a point where we might get TPS and other things
21 removed from possibility including healthcare as
22 well, which we'll come back to later offline. Thank
23 you for that. Any other—any other points or things
24 that kind of came up on the legal side? Do you have
25 any more?

2 MARGARET GARRETT: Well, maybe to that
3 point just flexibility in what we do because of the
4 changing landscape in general with what—so, it's hard
5 for us to know. Do we need more—to shift more
6 towards removal defense or more affirmative
7 applications and just having that flexibility to kind
8 of provide the needs where they're at especially
9 since contracts are for a year or two years or three
10 years at a time and things are changing so quickly
11 right now in this field.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, and that's
13 going to—that's going to require a better sense of
14 defining what that flexibility is. I think the
15 administration is always—well the Office of
16 Management and Budget is always going to be
17 uncomfortable with saying ho, we're going to—we're
18 going to—we're going to give all these legal service
19 providers anything that they want so they can do
20 whenever and whatever they want, and—and really build
21 it out of values. And I think that due process for
22 all, universal representation I think is the value
23 that we need to get to because right now we're—we're
24 kind of just inching towards these pieces and —and I
25 think it's changing. I think the flexibility is

2 there, but the—if we're not universal—if we're not
3 agreeing on universal representation, we're going to
4 be—we're going to be chipping away for a long time,
5 and what we want is full access to everything and
6 start at the end. So, flexibility I hear you. big
7 time, but we need you to kind of do a leap frog into
8 universal representation, and that's something I
9 think the state needs to consider now that we have
10 new leadership, and—and then prepare for the federal
11 government to be forced to do that at that level as
12 well, and make that a constitutional right fulfilled.
13 Okay, thank you.

14 MARGARET GARRETT: Thank you.

15 TRACI LAWSON: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. So, our
17 final panel I believe is Adhikaar (sp?) both members
18 from Adhikaar, Parthana Garoom and Narbada Chhertri
19 Did I say that right?

20 Close.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Close. Okay.
22 Please introduce yourselves and you'll be closing up
23 our—our public hearing on TPS today. Thank you.

24 NARBADA CHHETRI: Good afternoon. Thank
25 you for having us and taking council for TPS. So, my

2 name is Narbada Chherti. I'm from Adhikaar.
3 Adhikaar is the only women led worker and community
4 center solving and organizing the Nepali speaking
5 community on worker rights, immigration rights and
6 access to healthcare. As the only organization
7 working to protect and advocate for Nepali TPS
8 holders. We are here for the nearly 50-15,000
9 Nepalis TPS holders in the country. A large number
10 of them in New York State, 53,000 TPS holders from
11 all countries are in New York alone, and in the city.
12 As one of the 13 countries with TPS and/or DED our
13 members with Temporary Protected Status are in a very
14 low situation as their status will run on June 24 of
15 this year. Not even six months away. If TPS runs out
16 for Nepalis on June 24th without any legislative or
17 legislative solution, we anticipate major blows to
18 our community. Their status is tied to things like a
19 work permit, health insurance, business, home, car
20 ownership and basic protections that undocumented
21 members of our society are unable to access. Because
22 they have a work permit, TPS workers have been able
23 to work legally. However, because it is based on a
24 temporary status. There are at risk as the deadline
25 comes closer. Members have reported that they have

2 been discriminated against not ever to find good jobs
3 or even have been taken by employers, that they will
4 lose their job. Moreover, they are unable to take
5 advantage of the city's Workforce Development
6 programs. These programs are built for long-term
7 candidates, and are looking for some one to join as a
8 permanent hire. Therefore, individuals with TPS are
9 least likely to be hired. We ask the—we ask that
10 that city provide a type of city given specific work
11 permit to ensure that even if they lose their
12 federally given work permits they may still be able
13 to contribute to this economy and support their
14 families by continuing to work. Employers must also
15 be held accountable. There should be advocate (sic)
16 and done for employers especially those in industries
17 with many TPS holders so that they understand what
18 their responsibilities are. Often times the burden
19 is on workers who assert their rights. [bell]
20 However, if employers do not know—are—are not
21 accurately trained on how to engage their workers,
22 the discrimination and unfair treatment will
23 continue. Our domestic worker members are even more
24 vulnerable working in unique conditions in private
25 homes of employers that are not traditionally without

2 an employee's engagement. The city should also build
3 stronger enforcement on workforce that has been due
4 to immigration status, and allow for more integration
5 for that reason especially among advances working
6 with workers to work with employers and business as
7 with members like Gita who have worked for nearly 20
8 years in an nail salon are now facing difficulties in
9 figuring out how to manage their work conditions
10 without status.

11 PRATHANA GURUNG: So, Prathana also of
12 Adhikaar. I just want to say at the same time we urge
13 the city to look into ways to support small
14 businesses especially women and minority lead
15 businesses. Tat this time several members have
16 reached out to us who are TPS holders, and who were
17 able to start small businesses because of TPS, but
18 now are in difficult situations where they're forced
19 to decide whether or not they have their business or
20 are also susceptible to types of business fraud, and
21 they're in just very desperate situations looking to
22 find some way out while still maintaining their
23 livelihood. We also recognize that our members while
24 still with some type of status are feel for-fearful
25 for what will happen once they lost it. New York

2 City claims to be a sanctuary city, and we know that
3 our communities continue to be at risk by detained by
4 ICE and local police continue to collaborate with
5 immigration enforcement. Our communities deserve an
6 accessible 24/7 support network that is an
7 alternative to calling 9/11, one that's financed and
8 supported by the city in partnership with community
9 groups. Our work with legal organizations will
10 continue, but as casework increases even as groups
11 like Legal Aid and Unban Justice Center are also
12 reaching an impasse and are unable to take cases.
13 While we utilize city resources like Action NYC,
14 there's little to no feedback or follow-up with
15 individuals who call on Action NYC, and their
16 automatic hotline is very difficult to access for our
17 members many of whom English is a second language,
18 and some of whom are limited in literacy. So, they
19 don't even know to read or write in their own
20 language. If resources like Action NYC could have
21 legal service contacts or point people or a team just
22 for TPS that would greatly support our legal needs.
23 In addition to all of these needs, we stand by and
24 urge you to support the existing campaigns that
25 groups like New York Immigration Coalition they're

2 working on the state solutions I know are outside the
3 scope of the city, but as New York City there are
4 opportunities to continue pushing for things like the
5 Green Light Campaign to provide state IDs for all and
6 coverage for all, and expanding healthcare access for
7 all, and we also urge the city to support community
8 legislative solutions to increase outreach, and
9 potential support and financial resources. The last
10 thing, I know this is again outside of the city
11 capacity, but we urge city to do what they can
12 pressure U.S. Congressional representatives across
13 the city to sign onto a legislative solution or a
14 bill to provide permanent residency for DREAMERS and
15 also TPS holders. This is again just a short list of
16 needs that are arising, a lot of organizations that
17 have been here and have testified and spoken to a
18 lot of the pieces that we also wanted to bring up,
19 and just want to reiterate all of that. So, thank
20 you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And thank you for—
22 for staying and making your voices heard. Your
23 organization is an incredible organization. We
24 partnered with all of you all the time to ensure that
25 your—your organizing needs are—are kind of work here

2 at the City Council for policy making, laws and
3 budget as well, and you had some really good ideas
4 about how to create infrastructure to connect
5 communities with language competency, and—and so I
6 like some of your ideas. In fact, is it possible we
7 can get your copy? I already wrote on this one copy
8 that we have. I'm looking at your clean copy if you
9 haven't written on it.

10 PRATHANA GURUNG: We've written on it.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [laughter] Okay.

12 PRATHANA GURUNG: But we can send you--

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

14 Okay, please. Make sure that you—you send it over--
15 back to us.

16 PRATHANA GURUNG: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And you really
18 kind of know a lot of the work that's happened--
19 happening already at the State level, and that's
20 where we just need to organize at the city level to
21 ensure that our voices as your representatives are at
22 the negotiating tables for the State as well. And so
23 it is great that we're here hearing the same story,
24 the same strategy over and over again. The one thing
25 I wanted to just address is the question around the

2 city providing a type of city given specific work
3 permit. I don't believe we have—I'm almost sure that
4 we don't power to do that at the city level because
5 this is a federal—this is a federal issue. Is there
6 any other—is there guidance or kind of legal
7 framework around this or is this—is this—is this an
8 idea about how to really you get—if any—if someone
9 loses TPS they're going to be using their livelihood.
10 So, we need to find a solution.

11 PRATHANA GURUNG: Uh-hm. Yeah, no, I--

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: or a work permit?

13 PRATHANA GURUNG: Yeah, that's a good
14 question. I mean I think one of the things, you
15 know, if there is a workaround I don't know, but I
16 think one of the examples that we've seen that we
17 have seen some type of workforce support regardless
18 of documentation had been on a state level with a
19 nail salon on Workers Bill of Rights where nail salon
20 workers were given access to be able to get a
21 license, which is required to work regardless of a
22 Social Security number.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right.

24

25

2 PRATHANA GURUNG: I think they can access
3 a license, which gives them some type of thing that
4 you can show an employer.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right.

6 PRATHANA GURUNG: You know, we know that
7 whether or not that they have a work permit they're
8 still going to work. Employers will still hire them.
9 They'll pay cash and whatnot, but at least some type
10 of workforce license gave them the ability to be able
11 to negotiate for themselves and—and not be
12 discriminated against, and so that was I mean just
13 kind of off the top of my heard. That's the only
14 example that we've seen. On a state level they've
15 been able to kind of create a wrap like a workaround
16 in some ways.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for that
18 and—and I think one thing I'll—I'll offer is that has
19 been a growing opportunity for immigrants of multiple
20 communities and access or statuses is—are workers
21 cooperatives and business—businesses that have been
22 able to—to bring in people. I'll just leave it at
23 that, and just say let's work together to figure out
24 how you can plug in, and maybe you're already plugged
25 into worker cooperatives—cooperatives and that—that

2 growing phenomenon and we're putting a lot of
3 funding. I'm a proud kind of champion for that
4 inside the City Council and it's the district that I
5 represent in-in Sunset Park is one of those place
6 where it's kind of embedded into the culture of our
7 communities for-for mothers, women who have kind of
8 taken on that-that leadership for themselves, and-and
9 owning businesses, and so let's-let's-you're right.
10 Let's talk about worker not rights, but economic
11 empowerment for our immigrant communities and make
12 sure that everyone has as many opportunities as
13 possible with different models so that they can-they
14 can make-can make money so they can be empowered
15 economically, and that's-that's what we want. Okay,
16 thank you so much for that, and I want to thank
17 everyone for being here today, and for really
18 allowing us to ask the questions to city's-to the
19 Administration, and preparing ourselves for the
20 budget hearings which are on their way, and I think
21 we-we wanted to really ask this question because we
22 know that there are gaps. We know that we're
23 following peak cases, court cases that could change
24 everything, but we want to be prepared, and couldn't
25 thank you enough for being here today, and think MOIA

1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

123

2 is here as well so thank you for staying to the end,

3 and this meeting is now adjourned. Thank you.

4 [gavel]

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date February 22, 2019