

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE ON
MENTAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTAL, DISABILITY, ALCOHOLISM
SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND DISABILITY SERVICES AND THE
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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January 12, 2017
Start: 1:15 p.m.
Recess: 2:27 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: MARGARET S. CHIN
Chairperson

ANDREW COHEN
Chairperson

JULISSA FERRERAS-COPELAND
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Karen Koslowitz
Deborah L. Rose
Chaim M. Deutsch
Mark Treyger
Paul A. Vallone
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Elizabeth S. Crowley
Ruben Wills
Corey D. Johnson
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Barry S. Grodenchik
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Vanessa L. Gibson
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Laurie A. Cumbo
Corey D. Johnson
Mark Levine
I. Daneek Miller
Helen K. Rosenthal
Steven Matteo

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

Michael Hyman, First Deputy Commissioner
New York City Department of Finance

Samara Karasyk, Assistant Commissioner
External Affairs
New York City Department of Finance

Julie Walpert, Assistant Commissioner
Housing Supervision
Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Nino Castonzo Guiliani Nanroni
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Bobbie Sackman, Director of Public Policy
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Sasha Kesler
Self-Help Community Services

Elizabeth Strojan
Enterprise Community Partners

Monica Bartley, Community Outreach Organizer
Center for Independence
Disable New York

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6 [sound check, pause] [gavel] [background
7 comments]

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Good afternoon. Today
9 is January 12, 2017. My name is Margaret Chin, and
10 I'm the Chair of the Committee on Aging. I have the
11 privilege of co-chairing this committee meeting with
12 Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Chair of
13 the Committee on Finance and Council Member Andrew
14 Cohen, Chair of the Committee on Mental Health,
15 Developmental Disability, Alcoholism, Substance
16 Abuse, and Disability Services. I would to thank the
17 committee members and staff from all three committees
18 for coming together to hold this hearing today.
19 Today's hearing will provide the committee with an
20 opportunity to hear Intro 1309, which I introduced
21 along with Council Member Cohen request of the Mayor.
22 The purpose of Intro 1309 is to codify existing
23 extensions to the Senior Citizen Rent Increase
24 Exemption and Disability Rent Increase Exemption to
25 eligible individuals who earn between \$29,000 and
\$50,000 per year. These programs are also commonly
known as SCRIE and DRIE or as the New York City Rent
Freeze Programs, and they ensure that some of the
city's most at-risk residents are able to afford to

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1 remain in their homes. The benefits offered by the
2 SCRIE and DRIE programs can provide life changing
3 financial support for a vulnerable population that
4 often dedicate a large percentage of their income to
5 medical bills. SCRIE AND DRIE are essential city
6 programs that can offset the escalating cost of rent
7 and growing income inequality across the city. Both
8 programs provide quality-qualified applicants with an
9 exemption from future rent increases and ensure
10 landlords receive property tax credits for abatements
11 to make up the difference. The 2014 State Budget
12 originally authorized the city to increase the SCRIE
13 and DRIE income limits from \$29,000 to \$50,000, and
14 in response, the City quickly passed two
15 corresponding Local Laws. Local Law 19 and 39 of
16 2014. Each of these laws incorporated the income
17 eligibility increase to \$50,000 into the
18 corresponding program in the Administrative Code.
19 Notably, the State Authorization for this program was
20 limited to just two years. After the initial two-
21 year period, the State recognized the success of the
22 program, and in the 2016 Budget authorized the city
23 to extend the income eligibility increase through
24 2020 ensuring that eligible seniors and disabled
25

1 persons continue to receive these rent subsidies
2 through at least that time. Intro 1309 in many ways
3 update Local Law 19 and 39, and grants access to
4 these benefits through at least 2020. However, one-
5 one change rom the 2014 and 2016 State Authorization
6 was the limitation on the state's financial
7 responsibility for this program. In the 2016 budget,
8 the State decided to cap this reimbursement to the
9 city at a paltry \$1.2 million for the entire five
10 years of the program. The rent freeze program cost
11 around \$6 million in its first year alone, and it's
12 estimated to cost as much as \$28.6 million in 2020.
13 There was no mention of limitations on the state
14 funding in the original 2014 authorization. Now,
15 city taxpayers are expected to bear the burden of
16 financing this program. We heard earlier this week
17 that the Police Department spends over \$1.2 million
18 every three days providing security for our new
19 President-Elect, and he is just one senior. Surely,
20 the state can find the resources to protect the
21 thousands of other seniors and disabled persons who
22 rely upon SCRIE AND DRIE programs for their
23 livelihood. The committee looks forward to hearing
24 testimony for the Department of Finance and the
25

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5 Department of Housing Preservation and Development
6 today, and to better understand how these changes
7 will impact the city's bottom line while ensuring
8 continued access to these programs for seniors and
9 the disabled. With that said, I would like to turn
10 the floor over to our Finance Committee Chair,
11 Council Member Ferreras-Copeland to give her remarks.
12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank you
14 Chair and thank you for reminding us that there are
15 no special seniors even if you're the elected
16 president. In addition to what the Chair has stated,
17 following the adoption of Local Law 1339 by the
18 Council that year, increasing the income limits for
19 both programs to \$50,000. Eligibility for the
20 program expanded to thousands of additional
21 households. According to the Department of Finance
22 with these changes the potentially eligible
23 population of SCRIE household increased by 9%, which
24 is about 10,317 additional households and DRIE
25 households by 10% bringing it to a potential of 3,086
additional households. However, authorizing state
legislation extended these new limits for a period of
only two years. Intro 1309 introduced by my co-chair

1 Council Member Chin and Cohen would extend the
2 current eligibility income as was mentioned until
3 June 2020. Without the enactment of this
4 legislation, thousands of households headed by
5 seniors and people with disability may be at risk of
6 once again finding themselves significantly rent
7 burdened. I strongly support this legislation and
8 urge my colleagues to do so as well. Additionally, I
9 look forward to hearing from the department about the
10 progress that has been in enrolling qualifying
11 households into the program particularly in those
12 neighborhoods identified as having significantly
13 under enrollment. Approximately 121,729 households
14 in the city are eligible for SCRIE and 3,637
15 household are eligible for DRIE. However, while
16 enrollment increase from 2015 to 2016, significant
17 percentages of eligible households remain unenrolled
18 in both programs. 59,524 individual participated in
19 SCRIE in 2016 representing less than half of the
20 eligible population. 13,762 individuals are
21 currently enrolled in DRIE and also representing less
22 than half of the eligible population. The
23 Administration estimates that 77,000 potentially
24 eligible individuals are yet to be enrolled in the
25

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1
2 program. It is critical that the city utilize the
3 tools and assist those to conduct comprehensive and
4 effective outreach to all these households who may
5 benefit from the rent freeze program. No eligible
6 household should fall through the cracks. Again, I
7 wanted to also publicly acknowledge the Department of
8 Finance for hosting public opportunities, and I know
9 that we partnered in Battery Park City to help
10 increase, but I got to say we probably need to do
11 more of that to continue to engage and increase these
12 numbers. Thank you again to my co-chairs for
13 sponsoring this legislation and to the Department of
14 Finance for working with us on this issue. And before
15 we hear from the Administration, I'm sure we will
16 pass it over to our Co-Chair Council Member Cohen.

17 CHAIRPERSON COHEN: Thank you, Chair, but
18 I'm going to briefly repeat everything was said.
19 Good afternoon. My name is [laughs] my name is
20 Andrew Cohen, and I am the Chair of the Council's
21 Committee on Mental Health, Development Disabilities,
22 Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Disability Services. I am
23 please to be holding this joint hearing with Council
24 Member Chin, Chair of the Aging Committee and Council
25 Member Ferreras-Copeland, Chair of the Finance

1
2 Committee. We are here today to discuss Intro 1309,
3 a Local Law to amend Local Law 19 of 2014 to increase
4 the maximum income level to qualify for the exemption
5 for rent increases guaranteed to certain seniors, and
6 to amend Local Law 39 of 2014 to increase the maximum
7 income level to qualify for exemptions for rent
8 increases granted to certain persons with
9 disabilities in relation to extending provisions
10 thereof. The New York City Rent Freeze Program
11 includes Senior Citizen Rent Exemption, SCRIE and the
12 Disability Rent Increase Exemption DRIE program, and
13 are essential to ensure that both seniors and
14 individuals with disabilities are able to stay in
15 their homes. The risk of becoming homeless is real
16 for the elderly and the disabled living on a fixed
17 income and facing rising housing costs. Programs
18 such as a SCRIE and DRIE currently help individuals
19 stay in their homes, and must continue to make—and
20 must continue—we must continue these programs, and to
21 make the programs reliable and accessible to New
22 Yorkers. That is why I'm co-sponsor—co-prime sponsor
23 of Intro 1309, and look forward to its prompt
24 passage. I look forward to hearing from the
25 administration on how they are continuing outreach to

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5 these—to these communities to ensure individuals are
6 aware of these programs and are able to enroll if
7 they qualify. I'm interested to know what the
8 program is costing the city and how it is funded. We
9 are appreciated that the state authorized this to
10 expand and extend the income and—income eligibility
11 and that is exactly what we're going to do with
12 legislation. I just want to acknowledge the members
13 of the Mental Health Committee like Council Member
14 Vallone, Council Member Rose. I think Council Member
15 Grodenchik is here. Do I have everybody? And
16 lastly, I just want to thank my committee staff
17 Nicole Labean (sp?), Michael Benjamin is probably
18 some place, and Janette Merrill, our Finance Analyst
19 as well as well as Kate Diebold, my Legislative
20 Counsel. Thank you, Madam Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I just wanted to
22 recognize other Council Members that are here.
23 Council Member Deutsch also from the Aging Committee,
24 Council Member Koslowitz, and Council Member Vallone,
25 the Chair of our Subcommittee and then we also have
Council Member Matteo, Council Member Van Bramer,
Council Member Rosenthal and Council Member Daneek

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1
2 Miller. We're calling up the first panel. The
3 Counsel will swear you in.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Good afternoon. Please
5 raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm to
6 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
7 truth in your testimony today?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: Yes.

9 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We've also been joined
11 by Council Member Cornegy. You may begin. Thank
12 you.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: Alright.
14 Alright, thank you. Good afternoon, Chairwoman Chin,
15 Chairman Cohen, Chairwoman Ferreras-Copeland and
16 members of the Committee on Aging, Mental Health,
17 Developmental Disability, Alcoholism, Substance Abuse
18 and Disability Service and the Committee on Finance.
19 I am Michael Hyman, First Deputy Commissioner of the
20 New York City Department of Finance. I am joined by
21 Samara Karasyk, Assistant Commissioner for External
22 Affairs and Julie Walpert, Assistant Commissioner for
23 Housing Supervision for the Department of Housing
24 Preservation and Development. Thank you for the
25 opportunity to testify on Intro 1309, legislation

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1 authorizing the City to extend to 2020 the increase
2 to the amount of income a household can receive from
3 \$29,000 to \$50,000 and still be eligible for the
4 Senior Citizen Rent Increase, SCRIE and Disability
5 Rent Increase Exemption, DRIE combined to all the
6 rent freeze programs. We support its enactment and
7 are committed to making sure that every eligible New
8 Yorker knows about the program and receives this
9 important benefit. From July 1st, 2014 to the
10 present, 15,779 new seniors enrolled in SCRIE.
11 During that same time—same period, HPD enrolled 1,821
12 new participants in SCRIE. Thus, in total 17,600 new
13 households enrolled. City outreach efforts as well
14 as the new income ceiling contributed to the
15 enrollment increases. Currently, there are
16 approximately 60,400 seniors in the Rent Freeze
17 Program, and 11,416 people with disabilities enrolled
18 in the program. I have a chart below that if you
19 have in your testimony. This is a breakdown of the
20 total enrollment for those who met the new income
21 ceiling. So, just to go over it, the total current
22 access participants in SCRIE is 53,688. The portion
23 that has income between \$29,000 and \$50,000 is 7,553.
24 With DRIE the total current enrollees is 11,146 with
25

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600 in the subset with income between \$29,000 and
\$50,000, and for HPD enrollees, the current level is
6,721 with 481 incomes between \$29,000 and \$50,000.
For the past year DOF has amplified its outreach
through partnerships with elected officials,
community boards, and community-based organizations
to raise awareness about these programs so that more
people may enroll. We have taken a strategic
approach to outreach focused on the neighborhoods
where we have the highest levels of under-enrollment.
We feel that this method of outreach will yield a
continued increase in the role of numbers for these
vital programs. We have also made a number of
improvements to the application process including a
complete renovation of our New York City Rent Freeze
Walk-in Center and totally redesigned applications.
We wholeheartedly support the enactment of Intro 1309
to ensure the income levels set forth in Local Law 19
of 2014 are extended to June–June 30th, 2020. DOF
projects a savings to eligible recipients for the
Rent Freeze FY17 of \$14 million, and for FY18 of \$17
million. We are harnessing every effort that we have
to increase enrolment and retain current program
participants. We know there is more work to do and

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1 are pleased to be partnering with so many advocates
2 and seniors and people with disabilities to make sure
3 that all qualified households take advantage of this
4 vital program. Thank for the opportunity to testify
5 today. We are happy to answer any questions the
6 committee may have.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. We've also
9 been joined by Council Member Treyger and Council
10 Member Crowley. [pause] Okay. Well thank you for
11 your testimony. I-I know that all of us would agree
12 that the program is needed, and it's successful but
13 because we're all legislating more seniors and people
14 with disabilities to be able to benefit from this
15 program. So, how many people do you expect to enroll
16 in the Rent Freeze Program this coming year? If you
17 could provide both the SCRIE and DRIE. Is there a
18 target that you want to hit?

19 MICHAEL HYMAN: I'm going to ask Samara
20 Karasyk who deals with the Outreach programs to give
21 you some information.

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: So, we
23 are working on that internally right now to have a-a
24 number that we can publicly share. Thus far we just
25 say as many eligible households as we can. We deal

1 with data that we have available to us in the 2014
2 report in terms of who is eligible and not enrolled
3 in the program. So we do know we're going to be
4 targeting neighborhoods where the high--there's the
5 highest amount of eligible and under-enrolled, and
6 we're going to continue doing what we've been doing
7 basically since last spring, which many of you have
8 participated in. We go out to your area. We are
9 taking a proactive approach. So when we come to your
10 neighborhood we reach out to your office and say hey,
11 do you guys want to do an event with us? We believe
12 that there is X number of people that qualify usually
13 in the thousands. We want to get them enrolled, and
14 then we do outreach to get them to an event. We make
15 sure they bring all their documentation with them to
16 the event so that we can sign them up there and then.
17 We have a new group in our process unit as well that
18 does mobile processing. So in addition to our
19 regular outreach team they're also there signing
20 people up right then, and then when people don't have
21 all the documentation they need, which we find is one
22 of the pinch points of getting people involved. They
23 have to submit income documentation, and other sorts
24 of documentation. They may not have it. So we will
25

1 follow up with them. We also work really closely
2 with partner organizations when we do those events so
3 they can help us follow up with the Department of
4 Finance. Most people don't view us as being someone
5 that's really committed to enrolling people in social
6 services programs. So even though we are, we do find
7 that partnering with elected officials and housing
8 advocates a number of whom are here today have been
9 great, and they really can help us build those
10 relationships with people so they understand we're
11 there for good. We really want you guys to get
12 enrolled. We promise this is a good program, and
13 we're going to help you do it. And outreach staff
14 will follow up afterwards, too, if people show up and
15 they don't get documentation and what do need? Do we
16 need to come and pick up an application. In Battery
17 Park City (sic) for example, as the Chair was talking
18 about, we do a number of events because we went once,
19 and it seemed like there was a really a lot of demand
20 to come back. So we had a bunch of events there, and
21 we're going to continue with that approach throughout
22 the year. Our focus is getting applications for
23 qualified individuals. So that's really what we're
24 doing when we go to events. Informational events are
25

1
2 useful, and we'll continue to do those for all of our
3 programs, but for the Rent Freeze Program in
4 particular we're really very much aiming at getting
5 applications for qualified households. We want to
6 keep those numbers going up.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I know that one of the
8 programs that Council Members partners with the
9 Department of Finance is that when applicants fail to
10 re-apply, renew their applications we often get
11 alert.(sic) And I know that because my office, my
12 staff call out and we usually do end up helping quite
13 a number of them get back in applying. So what-what
14 does the city do in terms of really proactively
15 remind people that it's time to renew and-and that
16 they need to do the paperwork so that when you're
17 sure that they could benefit from that?

18 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: So we
19 send them a number of notices. We send them their
20 first notice 90 days before the benefit is set to
21 expire saying hey we need you to renew your benefits.
22 And then we send them at least two other notices to
23 make sure that they get that. I think we do a fourth
24 notice as well. We work with people like elected
25 officials if we aren't hearing back from people to

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5 say they haven't gotten back to us. We really want
6 them to renew. Do you have good contact information
7 for these people? Can you help us reach them? We
8 are partnering with the Mayor's Office as well to go
9 out into the community to try and reach those people
10 directly, and that's something that we're going to be
11 amping up over the course of this coming year because
12 we really want to make sure that everyone that's
13 already enrolled, doesn't drop out as long as they
14 continue to qualify. So that's a priority for us.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, I think one of
16 the things that I wanted to emphasize is that to
17 really let the senior know, you know, if they did not
18 renew in time, the landlord is still going to get the
19 benefit because we have landlords who tell the
20 tenants, well, your-your benefits stopped and so you
21 have to pay. But we have to remind the seniors that
22 once they, you know, send their application in that's
23 it. The landlord will get the back pay.

24 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: They will--they will
always, you know, get their money.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON CHIN: That they should not--
the seniors should not have to pay, and then there's
got to be some way of really focusing on that. My
one last question to you before I pass it onto my
other colleague is that how much does the city pay
annually in tax abatements for this Rent Freeze
Program? [background comments]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: I can give
you that. For the--in the City's Annual Tax Exemption
Report in FY16 the full benefits or costs to the City
of the SCRIE portion of the program was \$138 million,
and for DRIE it was \$21 million. So combined it's
\$158 million.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So that's what the--?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: That was the
annual cost in FY16 for the Rent Freeze Program.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: That's a lot of money.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But it's important. I
mean we're keeping our seniors and the people with
disabilities in their homes, and we will continue to
do that, but we just want the State to help with
that, and that's why it's unfortunate they put a cap
on--on the, you know, the resources they propose to

1 provide. So we hope to really encourage the
2 administration to work with us to advocate that
3 that's not fair. That they need to put in their fair
4 share. I'm going to pass it onto Council Member--
5 Chair Cohen, but we are also joined by Council Member
6 Salamanca and Council Member Johnson.

8 CHAIRPERSON COHEN: Thank you, Chair. I
9 just want to follow up first on--on Council Member
10 Chin's question about the cost. Is that--is that your
11 testimony that the total to the program and the total
12 cost to the city? I'd like to have the--the total
13 program's funding?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: Well, this--
15 this is the total cost to the city, combining both
16 the senior citizens unfortunately and disabled
17 persons unfortunately. They're looking at the
18 converse. It's the savings to the--to the recipient
19 and--and the city saves--

20 CHAIRPERSON COHEN: Is--is there a state
21 contribution also for that?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: Well, the
23 State contribution as--as was mentioned for the two--
24 year period FY15 and 16 was \$1.2 million. That's
25 right. You could say the city was reimbursed \$1.2

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5 million. Well this—that would be \$600,000 a year.

6 This annual period would cost us \$158 and I think the
7 average state reimbursement was \$600,000, which is
8 supposed for the portion of recipients with incomes
9 between \$29 and \$50,000.

10 CHAIRPERSON COHEN: Is there a State
11 contribution for—for the cost of the program under
12 \$29,000?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: No, that was
14 part of the initial authorization to raise the income
15 ceiling. The state agreed to a partial
16 reimbursement, and then the budgeted amount was \$1.2
17 million. Under \$29,000 the city funded the total
18 contribution.

19 CHAIRPERSON COHEN: And I just want to
20 understand the chart connected to your testimony that
21 for SCRIE you testified that there were 53,688 people
22 enrolled in the SCRIE program, and you're saying of
23 those, only 7,553 had incomes under—so that's
24 connected—so essentially most people would not be
25 eligible for the program, but for the increase in the
income eligibility.

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5 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: Well,
6 to—to clarify, so the 7,553 is the portion that earns
7 more than \$29,000.

8 CHAIRPERSON COHEN: Who owns more?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON COHEN: Because I—because I
11 don't—because I don't know how it works.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: Okay, we
13 should—we should have clearer on the chart. Less than
14 they are helping us. (sic)

15 CHAIRPERSON COHEN: Okay, and so that's
16 the same—the same with DRIE?

17 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: It's an—
18 it's an even smaller percentage od DRIE.

19 CHAIRPERSON COHEN: Okay. Again, thank
20 you for your testimony.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member
22 Cornegy, do you have questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: [off mic]
24 For me.

25 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, Council Member
Cornegy I got to pass it back to the Chair. I—I
forgot about her.

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CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
you, Council Member. You go right after me, but I'll
be quick. So, when did the city file for the
reimbursement for the increased cost in SCRIE?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: The—the
reimbursement—the \$1.2 million has been funded to the
city. We—that—I think that occurred about a month
ago that we set in expect--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] So it's been totally funded? We've
received the pay.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: [interposing]
The \$1.2 million we have received the appropriation.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Okay, and
if we were—I guess the appropriation did you request
additional to the \$1.2 when you were negotiating?
You know, I know the State told you it's \$1.2 but at
any point have you engaged with the state to say you
know what, we might need more if our number is right?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: I think this
was the amount that the State had budgeted. So it
was--

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Right.

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HYMAN: --statutorily
dictated the amount. We did provide to the State,
you know, the reimbursement being the expense to the
city, and then funded what was statutorily with that.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: So I
guess moving--looking forward to let's say from now to
2020, and analyzing the fiscal impact, if we were to
enroll, and be every successful because this what we
are trying to do, and potentially we could be capped
at the \$1.2 million. What would be the additional
cost to our city if we don't get more?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: Well,
there--there is no appropriation put into the extender
for your extenders. So I think that that
conversation would be hey this is the cost. Do you
guys want to fund it?

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Well,
hopefully we won't ask like that. [laughter]

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: I mean,
you know, we're--we're always happy--we're always happy
for the people who have funds for these special
programs like this.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
[interposing] Right, we're--we're ready to fight.

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1 We're ready to fight. So I just guess in-in your
2 vision in the best case scenario we have every
3 eligible enrollee enrolled, what would that cost you?
4 What is that number?
5

6 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: So
7 we've-we've project just based on the growth that
8 we've seen so far at the higher range. So this is
9 only the growth due to the higher income that we
10 think it would be about \$14 million in Fiscal 17, and
11 \$17.5 million in 2018. These are estimates.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND: Youi said
13 \$14 million in--?

14 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: 2017,
15 Fiscal 17, and \$17.5 in--

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS-COPELAND:
17 [interposing] \$17.5. Okay, I mean, we're-we're
18 establishing our state priorities now so this is why
19 this hearing was so important so that we get accurate
20 numbers because while we are very happy to partner
21 with the State and they are doing a \$1.2 million
22 reimbursement, it's clearly not enough especially as
23 we start to ramp up. I don't know. Considering that
24 this will be a successful outreach and we are going
25 to get all our seniors enrolled, this is now-can be

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1 very costly. But not an investment that, you know,
2 as was mentioned we're spending this on Trump in like
3 a week. So, the reality is that, you know, we—we
4 want to set our priorities, but we prepared for what
5 the fiscal impact will be. So thank you very much.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member

8 Cornegy.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you, Madam
10 and Sir Chairs. Good afternoon. Last year, I put
11 forward a bill out of this committee that was signed
12 by the Mayor and I just kind of wanted to know where
13 it was. The bill will require the Department of
14 Finance to include a legal notice regarding legal and
15 preferential rents on certain documents related to
16 the New York City Rent Freeze Program. Specifically,
17 the notice must include the rent amount on which the
18 benefit calculation was based, and an explanation of
19 why that amount was used in the calculation. The
20 legal regulated rent and explanation that the tenant
21 may continue to pay a preferential rent even once
22 enrolled in the program, a statement that the tenant
23 can obtain a rent registration history and file a
24 complaint with the State Division of Housing and
25 Community Renewal, and a telephone number and email

1 address for that agency. In addition, by 2018, the
2 legislation is supposed to require the Department of
3 Finance to include both the preferential and legal
4 regulated rents of applicants to the New York City
5 Rent Free Program in its database, and include the
6 preferential rent amount in the notice described
7 above. I just wanted to know if any portion of that
8 has been implemented to date, and if not, what is the
9 time table for having that included in documents
10 obviously for the purposes of information as it
11 relates to preferential rent.
12

13 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: So the
14 first part of the legislation and that additional
15 language we do have in our notice it's about
16 preferential rent versus legal rent. What that is
17 and how to contact HCR. That's in there now, and we
18 are working on our database so that in 2018, we can
19 capture both the preferential rent and the legal
20 rent.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So have you
22 noticed at this point any barriers to the success of
23 the legislation? Has—has the response been favorable
24 as to the intent, you know, meeting the intent of the
25 legislation in terms of information where people can

1 know the difference between preferential rent and
2 legal rent and any—anything of the above?
3

4 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KARASYK: I—I
5 haven't seen anecdotally, but based on this personal
6 experience of folks not understanding the legal rent
7 versus preferential rent, I—I think it's useful to
8 have it on there because , you know, when we were
9 discussing the bill one was saying that it's clear.
10 People—they just pay what they pay, right. So you're
11 paying your rent. You're not thinking about whether
12 it's a legal or preferential rent. With these
13 preferential rents, you don't really know until you
14 get a notice from us saying we're saying it's a
15 legal, and then, you know, if you're the tenant you
16 say well, I don't understand. That's—that's not what
17 I pay. How does that make sense? So I think that
18 clarification is useful. I don't know if it's going
19 to have people asking. I don't think they're going
20 to ask more questions. Right, I would think it would
21 elicit fewer questions because we're telling them why
22 there's a difference here. I'm looking forward to
23 when we can capture the data in 2018 because it will
24 show us how many people are actually on preferential
25 rent.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: And also,
3 obviously, you know that we are attempting to move
4 the state to have a bigger role in-in the difference
5 between preferential rents, and so we have partners
6 in Albany and hopefully this session that's something
7 that will go to the floor. But I should have-I was-
8 I'm remiss not saying that I appreciate your hard
9 work with us on getting that legislation turned
10 around and that's in record time, and I look forward
11 to any improvements to the legislation or anything we
12 can do to make sure that we protect the safety and
13 sanctity of-of our seniors. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, Council
15 Member. I wanted to thank this panel. We didn't have
16 any more questions, and we look forward to continuing
17 to do more outreach to make sure that everyone knows
18 about this Rent Freeze Program, and they're able to
19 sign up. So thank you, and we're going to call up
20 the next panel. Nino Nadaloni (sp?) from AARP.
21 Congratulations on your grandkids. [laughs]
22 Elizabeth Strojan, Enterprise Community Partners;
23 Bobbie Sackman, Live On New York; Sotter Carsal,
24 Self-Help Community Services; and Monica Bartley from
25

1 the Center for Independence of the Disabled.

2 [background comments, pause] Okay, you can begin.

3 NINO NANARONI: Okay. So I-I just wanted
4 to say I-I-I mentioned this, too, that my wife-my-we
5 just had our grandchild today. So I'm going to pick
6 up and see our granddaughter. So that's a happy
7 thing. So good afternoon, Chairman Ferreras-
8 Copeland, Chin, Cohen and members of the committee.
9 My name is Nino Nanaroni. On that list that you have
10 there it says Nino Castonzo, but it's actually my
11 last name is Nanaroni, and it's Nino Castonzo
12 Giuliani Nanaroni. Nino is fine. I'm a volunteer
13 with AARP. On behalf of our 800,000 members ages 50
14 and older in New York City I want to thank you for
15 the opportunity to talk about Intro 1309. AARP New
16 York has long held housing affordability as a top
17 priority, and we support the efforts of this bill to
18 increase the maximum income level qualifying for rent
19 increases, and make other administrative changes to
20 the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption. However,
21 AARP feels that there are other policy changes that
22 can be made to help further strengthen this law, and
23 help other New Yorkers such as raising the awareness
24 of the program, and to cap rents under the Senior
25

1 Citizen Rent Increase Exemption relative to
2 participants' income. So there's three points I want
3 to make: One is your ability to pay the rent. Two,
4 the most serious impact on housing finances; and
5 three unaware that help is exists. Okay so the first
6 thing. In 2015 an AARP New York Report titled High
7 Anxiety: Generation X and Boomers struggle with
8 stress and saving security found that more than half
9 of the New York City boomers, 59% are concerned about
10 their ability to pay rent in the future. This report
11 is online. Right here. In 2016, a survey by AARP
12 New York and this—I'm sorry. I—I skipped here. City
13 Boomers—okay, I read that. These numbers, this 59%
14 increase among African-Americans and Black
15 populations with 73% showing concern and the Hispanic
16 Latin-Latino community with 70% showing concern. A
17 2016 survey by AARP New York and the Sienna Research
18 Institute Countdown New York: Vanishing Middle Class
19 sheds additional light on this issue. Housing was
20 cited by both lower class, those making less than
21 \$40,000 and middle-class those making \$40,000 to
22 \$120,000 Boomers as expense that has the most serious
23 impact on their household finances. More so than
24 food, utilizes, transportation, medical costs or
25

1 health insurance. It is clear that housing
2 affordability is an issue, but perhaps even more
3 troubling was the number of older New Yorkers who are
4 unaware of the help that exists. According to a
5 report from Live On New York, reducing rent burdens
6 for elderly New Yorkers only 43% of the eligible New
7 Yorkers are enrolled in the Senior Citizen Rent
8 Increase Exemption. AARP recommends that the Council
9 empower the Department of Finance to run more robust-
10 robust promotional and outreach programs to raise-to
11 raise the awareness of this vital program. So, to
12 put this other terms, 60% of the people that are
13 eligible are not in this program. Why is that so? I
14 mean when you-when' you're asking the Finance
15 Committee here what kind of things-I mean they can
16 tell you well we want to increase the participants,
17 blah, blah, blah. But there should be some kind of
18 cap that the Finance Committee or this committee puts
19 on and says okay, we want to increase this double.
20 Instead of 43%, we want 86%, right? And In order to
21 do that, quarterly we're going to hold your feet to
22 the fire to make sure that you increase the number of
23 people that are eligible under the program that
24 exists. So that's-that's a-a basic thing. You have
25

1 this program, and it's a shame that only 43% know it.
2 Why don't you partner with AARP, Live On and other
3 groups that are here instead of having the Finance
4 Committee. Maybe they don't know how to do some of
5 this stuff that we can do. Anyway, I just want to
6 bring that out because that pisses me off. It is
7 important also because I come from one of the most
8 diverse areas of Brooklyn, in the Flatbush Junction
9 area near Brooklyn College. That's a multi--multi-
10 racial area, and--and there are seniors all--all
11 colors, all shapes, all sizes that are suffering
12 under--under this kind of affordability of housing.
13 It is important to note that even for the members
14 that are in--that are participants--so this is the
15 second point--rent payments can still be a burden for
16 program participants. The current eligibility
17 requirements at State in order to receive rent freeze
18 more than one-third of the household incomes must be
19 spent on rent. However, the reality is that a larger
20 proportion of participants are paying far above that.
21 The same Live On New York Report found that more than
22 half of the participants are spending 50% of their
23 income on rent with nearly one in third--one-third
24 paying over 70%. I mean how are you going to pay for
25

1 medical stuff? How are you going to pay for
2 transportation? How are you going to pay for food?
3 This is outrageous. AARP New York Recommends that
4 the policy is our for us to cap rents for
5 participants enrolled in the—in the program at one-
6 third of their income. This will help to make
7 housing more affordable for older New Yorkers easing
8 what may be considered a major burden. So Chairman
9 Ferreras-Copeland, Chin and Cohen and members of the
10 committees, we thank you for the opportunity to speak
11 to the importance of the Senior Citizen Rent Increase
12 Exemption for older New Yorkers, Intro 1309.
13 Copeland—coupled with the increased outreach and rent
14 cap relative to income will provide relief to many
15 older Americans or New Yorkers. Thank you very much.

17 [background comments]

18 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Hi. My name is Bobbie
19 Sackman, Director of Public Policy. [off mic]

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: The mic, Bobbie.

21 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Oh, it probably closed.
22 I'm sorry. This better? Bobbie Sackman, Director of
23 Public Policy with Live On New York. The--the first
24 thing I want to say is that the report that this
25 gentleman was referring to is actually Enterprise

1
2 Community Partners with us on the panel really did
3 the lion's share of the—of the research. We—we did
4 it all in collaboration. So I want to make sure you—
5 you all know that. I'm not going to read word for
6 work from my testimony. This sort of puts some other
7 remarks together. When it comes to SCRIE, I'm always
8 struck with how proud the City Council is about any
9 way that you guys can strengthen the SCRIE program.
10 Today's hearing is—is a case in—in point. You
11 enacted legislation to increase it to \$50,000.
12 You're always trying to figure out ways to make it
13 more accessible for seniors. SCRIE is actually a
14 brilliant program because it's a solution to the
15 affordable housing crisis that we live in, and yet
16 even though it's been around for literally 30 or 40
17 years, it's, as we've heard, very underutilized.
18 It's sort of that bright light of the solution. I'm
19 willing to bet that the most common call you all get
20 at your offices are from seniors who are calling
21 about affordable housing or some housing related
22 issue. And if you can at least offer them SCRIE,
23 you'll probably feel good that day because there's
24 usually very little else you can do for them. And—an
25 yet, obviously they find out often way too late

1 they're paying over 50% of their income in rent,
2 which I'm sure frustrates all of you as it frustrates
3 us. So if you could get them on SCRIE earlier, and
4 there are other ways to move this great program
5 forward, we're hoping that you will work with us to
6 do that, and obviously this will not only help
7 seniors stay in their apartments, but it—the proposal
8 that I'm going to talk about will literally put more
9 money in the pockets of seniors. There are very few
10 ways of actually putting money in the pockets of
11 people who don't have a lot of money or who are
12 financially struggling and this can do that. And then
13 they will probably spend that money locally. They
14 don't intend to run off to faraway places and spend
15 their money. So one is—is capping everybody on SCRIE
16 and the one-third level, which is what's considered
17 the affordable rent level. That would entail a
18 rollback that goes on where—where the—the huge
19 Outreach and Awareness program as we talked about so
20 that folks get on it early. I think many of them
21 find out when they're in crisis, and that's when they
22 call you or they call us, different organizations.
23 Live On New York has a very robust Outreach and
24 Awareness program for SCRIE. We've gotten support
25

1 from the City Council and for other benefits. So we
2 do go around the city doing that as well. So that's
3 one piece. That's a major piece. What do we mean by
4 a public awareness campaign? So here's the dream.
5 You guys did UPK The Mayor did UPK. UPK is a
6 household in this city. Why isn't SCRIE? It's young
7 and old. It's the point. Why isn't SCRIE, rent
8 freeze whatever you want to call it, SCRIE is an
9 awkward name. Why aren't there signs? We are
10 beginning to see them on the subways and trains. I'm
11 not saying there isn't progress. This isn't even
12 criticism of the Department of Finance. We want them
13 to have more resources to do more. So this is to
14 push it all forward, but if you're 60 or you're 61,
15 or holding in that age area, why don't you know about
16 SCRIE so that you will be ready to sing up at the
17 moment you can. So that's the goal, and that's the
18 dream. We think it's attainable, and so how do we,
19 you know, get out a marketing plan? Who puts
20 together that UPK plan? Long, deep and sustainable.
21 Why can't we do this for SCRIE, and then roll back
22 the rents. There will be seniors that will have, you
23 know, it could be \$100 more in their pocket. Also,
24 the preferential rent challenge, and I'm sorry that
25

1 Councilman Cornegy had to leave, because he's
2 definitely been a leader on this. If everybody is
3 capped at one-third, there's no preferential rent
4 problem in there. You just addressed it because
5 everyone on SCRIE will be at that level. So, please,
6 you know, we would love to talk about this further.
7 It's beyond just obviously one hearing. But we
8 wanted to use this today as an opportunity to raise
9 this for your thinking and your consideration and,
10 you know, we would look forward to working with you
11 further on this, and we are calling this Off the
12 Fiscal Cliff Campaign. Because seniors are frozen.
13 They're paying 50, 60, 70% of their income in rent.
14 We've got to get them off the fiscal cliff. Thank
15 you.
16

17 SASHA KESLER: Thank you, Bobbie. Hi, my
18 name is Sasha Kesler, and I work at Self-Help
19 Community Services. My physical testimony had a
20 little encounter with a batch of tea this morning.
21 So it has been submitted for the record, but will go
22 in the binder later. I'm here to really reflect much
23 of what has been said so far by Live On and by AARP.
24 Self-Help Community Services is a social service
25 provider primarily for seniors, and we serve 20,000

1 seniors in the city through a combination of
2 affordable housing, senior centers, NORCs, home
3 care. You name it for seniors, we are working to
4 serve them, and what we find is that many of the
5 seniors that come to us while we are—work diligently
6 to make sure that they know about these programs,
7 that we—they know about SCRIE, they often come too
8 late. As Bobbie mentioned in the report from Live On
9 and Enterprise, there are 60% of seniors in this city
10 who do not know about SCRIE or who are now eligible
11 but are not enrolled, and of those seniors who
12 ultimately are in enrolled, 50% are paying more than
13 a third of their income, and 70% are paying more than
14 50% of their income. This is a level that is not
15 sustainable. This a level that—as has been mentioned
16 that eliminates the ability for seniors to pay for
17 what's really vital for them let alone things that
18 can even bring them joy in the later years of their
19 life. We really see City Council as being a partner
20 in this, and we are so appreciative for all the work
21 that the City Council, this Administration and the
22 Department of Finance have done in trying to expand
23 the SCRIE and DRIE program and expand awareness of
24 it, and we would like to urge to continue to do more
25

1 in this process. As Bobbie said, we would like to
2 make sure that every person in this city regardless
3 of if you are 20 years old and you have a parent
4 who's 60 or if you are 60 years old yourself, every
5 person knows about this program, and knows that when
6 they turn 52 years old that they are eligible to
7 apply for SCRIE and to make sure that they are able
8 to sustain the—the—after the age of 52 living in
9 their homes, living independently, living with
10 dignity so that they have all their needs met. And
11 part of that in addition to an outreach campaign is
12 making sure that the rents are rolled back, paying
13 50%, 70% of your income for any person let alone when
14 you're often on a fixed income is not sustainable,
15 and it's not fair to any senior or any person with a
16 disability in this city. So we strongly, you know,
17 we thank you all for your support in making sure that
18 this program is really growing, and that is being
19 seen as the, you know, potential benefit that it—that
20 it has for many people, and we look forward to
21 working with you in the future to make sure that
22 every person in the city who qualifies is able to
23 apply for program, and that their rent is capped at a
24 level that is sustainable and that would allow them
25

1
2 again to live independently and with dignity. So
3 thank you so much, and we look forward to being in
4 partnership.

5 ELIZABETH STROJAN: Good afternoon, and
6 thank you all for the opportunity to testify. Here
7 today. My name is Elizabeth Strojan. I'm with
8 Enterprise Community Partners. Good to see you again
9 Chair Ferreras. That's right. We're best friends
10 now. So I work with Enterprise. Enterprise is a
11 national affordable housing organization. It's been
12 working to create and preserve affordable housing
13 here and nationwide for more than 30 years and we
14 know because of market pressures and costs of
15 preservation and development. So we can't build our
16 way out of the affordable housing crisis that we all
17 see and feel every single day. So we're looking, as
18 you guys are, opportunities to use every tool in our
19 toolbox to keep people stably housed and affordably
20 housed in quality housing in their communities. So
21 we agree that SCRIE is an incredible tool, and we
22 absolutely support the Intro discussed here today,
23 and I think the advocacy community did a great job
24 coordinating our testimonies because I'm here to
25 continue to beat the drum for the need to continue to

1 improve and expand the SCRIE and DRIE Program.

2 Enterprise undertook the research in this report.

3 Because of things we were hearing on the ground from

4 our social service provider partners and our

5 affordable housing provider partners like Self Help

6 who were saying hey we're—we're seeing seniors

7 increasingly vulnerable in their housing. And so, we

8 were able to get Finance, the Department of Finance

9 data, and look to see the numbers that you've heard.

10 They were quoted several times, but one specific that

11 I want to add in addition to the fact that a third of

12 people enrolled in SCRIE are paying more than 70% of

13 their income in rent. Because the average income for

14 those households is under \$17,000 a year. So you can

15 imagine that these households are under incredible

16 financial pressure, which leads to horrible outcomes

17 in terms of skipping meals, skipping doctor's

18 appointments, not filling prescriptions. So we join

19 this group of advocates in calling for a more robust

20 outreach program. I think that the recent efforts of

21 the Department of Finance to really advertise the

22 Rent Freeze Campaign have been laudable. We've all

23 seen the signs on the subways in English and Spanish.

24 I know I've seen signs in my neighborhood and in my

1 building advertising outreach campaigns, and I think
2 that's laudable, but I think we all agree that we can
3 do more, and I think that we have to do this in
4 partnership with each other. I also want to add that
5 capping rent for enrollees in the SCRIE program will
6 be incredibly useful, and we should work together,
7 and look at what's the best population to target for
8 that rollback. We know that we're entering on
9 certain financial times with the new Federal
10 Administration. We always have to balance
11 priorities. So when you're looking at where we're
12 spending our money keeping seniors stably housed in
13 their communities has to be at the top of that
14 priority list. So I do just want to add two points
15 that haven't—I haven't heard yet for about—on—on this
16 panel. The first is that we all know that rent
17 stabilized apartments are an incredibly—incredibly
18 valuable resource, and we know that when apartments
19 turn over because of the vacancy bonus, those rents
20 increase, and when you're rent increase in a rent
21 stabilized unit to a certain point, that unit leaves
22 the program. So we—we are also looking at SCRIE as a
23 preservation tool for our rent stabilized housing
24 stock, and I think that that's something we should
25

1
2 keep in mind as we weigh the costs and benefits of
3 the proposals we're laying out today. The second
4 thing I want to add is the real potential for cost
5 savings. So I don't want to, you know, immediately
6 point to how much it would cost to house every single
7 senior in emergency shelter, but we know that when
8 these seniors are incredibly vulnerable, so again we
9 have households making \$17,000 a year spending 70% of
10 their income on rent. Where do you go if you're
11 evicted? You're probably going to go to potentially
12 emergency shelter, which is incredibly expensive. So
13 we have to look at the cost of providing SCRIE or
14 DRIE benefits for very vulnerable populations versus
15 cost for like that. So I think that's it. I'll wrap
16 up. Thank you very much for the opportunity to talk
17 here, and we look forward to working with advocates
18 and partners with the Department of Finance, with HPD
19 and with the Council. Thank you.

20 MONICA BARTLEY: Thank you. Good
21 afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee.
22 My name is Monica Bartley, and I am the Community
23 Outreach Organizer with the Center for Independence
24 of the Disable New York. I would like to thank the
25 Council for permitting me to testify on this matter.

1 Disability Rent Increase Exemption, DRIE is a very
2 important law that helps people with disability who
3 able to—to freeze their rent if they live in a rent
4 regulated or rent stabilized apartment and meet the
5 income requirements of \$50,000. DRIE exists for the
6 purpose of ensuring that low-income residents can
7 remain in their apartments. It acknowledges that
8 people with disabilities are on fixed incomes, and
9 it's a major tool in preventing homelessness for
10 them. According to Economic Release in 2014 to 15
11 there was an annual average of 29,752 individuals
12 with disabilities from ages 16 and above in New York
13 City. Of those, 5,813 are employed. Although the
14 average medium income of households of people with
15 disabilities is \$41,300, there was a significant
16 number of the 5,813 who were making over \$50,000.
17 The rates of full employment of people with
18 disabilities is increasing. With that comes the
19 likelihood of increased income. Although many people
20 with disabilities are in public housing, shelters or
21 the streets, we cannot forget the working lower and
22 middle-class people with disabilities. Record rent
23 increase throughout New York City have affected
24 everyone, but for those who are living fixed or lower
25

1 incomes, the possibility of being driven (sic) out
2 of their own homes is very real. For those with
3 disabilities, the hard won stability that they worked
4 so hard for can be easily lost when rent far
5 surpasses their income. With a program such as DRIE—
6 such as DRIE the lower income and middle-class people
7 with disabilities will have the opportunity to remain
8 in their homes at an affordable rate. Rent regulated
9 apartments are key components that give the people
10 with disabilities who are working an opportunity to
11 be housed. DRIE is a major factor in maintaining
12 housing for people with disabilities, and protect
13 against homelessness caused by rapid and substantial
14 rent increases. People with disabilities come for
15 assistance with CIDNY for all types of services.
16 Housing in New York City is a primary issue. CIDNY
17 and other advocacies (sic) have relied on DRIE to
18 help people with disabilities stay in their homes and
19 maintain their independence. In order to keep this
20 tool, and make housing affordable for many New
21 Yorkers with disabilities, the City needs to have
22 DRIE keep pace with the rising rents. We urge you to
23 amend Local Law 39 of 2014 to allow for an increase
24 of the maximum income level for DRIE eligibility.
25

1
2 Again, I wish to thank the City Council for its
3 support. CIDNY just asks that the City Council not
4 be short-sighted when it comes to DRIE. Thank you
5 very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you very much
7 for your testimony. I have a couple of questions.
8 In terms of the—the Rollback Program and it makes so
9 much sense that we want to make sure that seniors and
10 people with disabilities are only paying one-third of
11 their income. Now is there a way that we can work
12 together maybe with Department of Finance to really
13 look at how large is this group of seniors and people
14 with disability that are paying more than one-third,
15 and if we start a rollback program, what would that
16 look like, and how much, you know, would it cost?
17 And also, in the meantime—the second question is in
18 the meantime, are we looking at other rental subsidy
19 programs out there that the city are offering to help
20 the seniors to sort of make—meet—make ends meet while
21 we take steps to work on a rollback program?

22 BOBBIE SACKMAN: The first question
23 actually I don't remember the data off hand, but
24 there is data in the Enterprise Report about how many
25

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1
2 people are paying above one-third. Do you have any
3 comments?

4 SASHA KESLER: Yes. Sixty percent of
5 seniors on SCRIE pay over 50% of their income. These
6 are people who are enrolled in SCRIE and a third of
7 individuals enrolled in SCRIE pay more than 70% of
8 their income. So in terms of the number, just—you
9 can calculate.

10 ELIZABETH STROJAN: [off mic] So in the
11 report—[on mic] Yeah, so in—in the report, which we
12 can circulate after this hearing we actually have
13 charts breaking down how much it would it cost under
14 current enrollment levels to rollback rents for SCRIE
15 participants back to 50% of the income limit and then
16 back to a third of their income limits, and then we
17 also project out that cost assuming 100% enrollment.
18 So we—we have some of that data. So we can start to
19 look at it. So I—I can circulate that number—those
20 numbers to you after the hearing if that's helpful.
21 It's in the report.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I think that would be
23 helpful, and then I also wanted to ask, you know, the
24 Department of Finance who have a representative here
25 to really see how you can also be helpful with that

1 because I'm sure that you have data particularly when
2 a senior apply. I mean also the DRIE program that
3 they put in what the rent is, and what their income
4 is. So the way to get that data and then maybe we
5 can really look at how do we start incorporating a
6 rollback program to help the people who are paying
7 more than one-third of their income. So I look
8 forward to working with all of you on that.

10 ELIZABETH STROJAN: Right, than you so
11 much for that question and you—the second part is—did
12 you have something to add on that? Oh, good. [pause]

13 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. In terms
14 of you talking about linking the rent subsidy
15 programs, I—I wasn't clear what we had. You mean
16 like Section 8 or—

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, I mean right now
18 I think HRA or perhaps programs that prevent, you
19 know, help people to prevent homelessness.

20 BOBBIE SACKMAN: Right.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So are you looking at
22 what resources might be available. Because if some
23 body is paying 70% of their income for rent, we need
24 to help them now. So are there rents or subsidy
25 programs? And if not, maybe we can also look at

1 creating some of these programs that can lead--
2 immediately help these groups of seniors, and--and a
3 group of, you know, people who are on DRIE to see
4 that we can at least help them, and make sure that
5 they are able to stay in their homes.

7 ELIZABETH STROJAN: What the City does is
8 just that it provides several kinds of rental
9 subsidies some on an emergency basis. If someone
10 were to start facing eviction and--and some certain
11 people who are facing homelessness, but I think
12 that's a good idea. We have to look at like the
13 suite of tools. What I think is so special about
14 SCRIE and DRIE is that they're targeting households
15 that don't have other kinds of rent subsidies
16 usually. So these are households then sometimes--
17 sometimes it's subsidized affordable housing, but
18 sometimes it's in our Naturally Occurring Affordable
19 Housing stock, which is an important stock to reach
20 with these kinds of tools, and these are folks that
21 often don't have other kinds of programs. I agree
22 that when there's a--a crisis and a population in
23 crisis you should layer on however many tools you
24 need to help stabilize people. But I think we should

1
2 look more closely at how do we make SCRIE a more
3 perfect program so that it works on its own.

4 BOBBIE SACKMAN: But just to piggyback,
5 it probably would be worthwhile if—if we could get
6 data from HRA on the utilization of their rental
7 structured programs for people over the age of 60 and
8 people with disabilities as well. Because we don't
9 know what the—the utilization rate is, and—and if—
10 sometimes seniors have a hard time accessing existing
11 programs. Partially because they don't know about
12 it. It could be daunting or if it's done a lot
13 online and then it's difficult for them or maybe even
14 impossible for them.

15 ELIZABETH STROJAN: That would be a
16 really good data point to have that in the—

17 BOBBIE SACKMAN: [interposing] yeah.

18 ELIZABETH STROJAN: --set up for the--

19 BOBBIE SACKMAN: [interposing] Yeah, the
20 HRA and the utilization rate. Maybe we could look
21 again.

22 ELIZABETH STROJAN: Like who—who's
23 entering home base that would eligible for DRIE and
24 SCRIE I think would be really helpful for people.
25

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We could work with
the—the chair of the General Welfare Committee and
try to access those data, those information, but
definitely we will look forward to working with you
on making the SCRIE program and the DRIE program much
better that it really only, you know, has people only
pay one-third of their income for rent. So we look
forward to working with you on that, and thank you
very much for coming down here. Anybody else have
any questions? Okay, so our hearing is adjourned,
and thank you to everyone for coming. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date January 17, 2017