

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES JOINTLY WITH THE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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June 13, 2018

Start: 1:08 p.m.

Recess: 4:00 p.m.

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

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

MARK TREYGER
Co-Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

JUSTIN L. BRANNAN

MARGARET S. CHIN

MATHIEU EUGENE

ANDY L. KING

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

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

Phil Weinberg
New York City Department of Education's Deputy
Chancellor for Teaching and Learning

Darryl Rattray
Associate Commissioner, Youth Services and
Strategic Partnerships

Erik Joerss
Director of Governmental Affairs, the New York
City Charter School Center

Viviana Perez
Civics Program Director at Democracy Prep Public
Schools

Reyes Claudio
Network Director of Operations for Brilla Public
Charter Schools

Laura Jankstrom
Director of Civic Engagement Programs at Citizens
Committee for Children of New York, COMMITTEE

CLERKC

Marco Battistella
Co-Chair of the Chancellor's Parent Advisory
Council, CPAC

Denis Yu
Program Coordinator, the Coalition of Asian
American Children and Families, CACF

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

Joseph Rogers
Senior Researcher and Director of Public
Engagement with the Center for Educational Equity
At Teachers College, Columbia University

Andy Cai
Senior at Stuyvesant High School in Brooklyn,
Student Leader from the Asian American Student
Advocacy Project, ASAP

Sophia Zherg
Junior at Manhattan Hunter Science High School,
Member of the Asian American Student Advocacy
Project, ASAP

Shona Gibson
Senior Director of Division of Family and
Community at New York City Department of
Education

DeNora Getachew
New York City Executive Director of Generation
Citizen

Anyhara Garcia
Student at International High School of Health
Sciences, Alumna of Generation Citizen's Action
Plan

Norah Lovett
Executive Director for Social Studies and Core
Curriculum Implementation

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[gavel]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Good morning. I want

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to thank you for coming to this hearing this morning.

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My name is Debi Rose and I'm the Chair of the Youth

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Services Committee and today I might add a very happy

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Chair of the Youth Services Committee. And today we

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are conducting a joint hearing with the Education

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Committee, chaired by my esteemed colleague, Council

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Member Treyger. Our topic today is youth civic

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engagement opportunities. In addition, we will be

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hearing two pieces of legislation introduced by

13

Council Member Treyger... introduced by Council Member

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Treyger. He will speak more on that, but I would

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first like to thank Speaker Corey Johnson for his

16

commitment to the youth of New York City. I'd also

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like to thank the young people themselves, the youth

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advocates and the providers to... who will testify here

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today. And finally, I'd like to acknowledge my

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colleagues who joined us this morning; Council Member

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Chin, Council Member Ampry-Samuel and Council Member

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Grodenschik and of course Chair Treyger. Civic

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engagement involves something more than just voting,

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this in particular is true for young people many of

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whom are not old enough to drive let alone vote.

1
2 Civic engagement involves working to make a
3 difference in a community and by extension the world.
4 It can involve volunteering, engaging in protests or
5 drawing attention to an issue that impacts more than
6 just one individual and for youth civic engagement
7 provides them an educational opportunity outside of
8 the walls of their classrooms. It provides them with
9 knowledge, skills, values and the motivation to make
10 a difference and this in turn helps to develop their
11 character. We as a city and indeed as a nation were
12 deeply saddened when 17 people including four young
13 lives were shot to death on Valentines day at a high
14 school in Parkland, Florida but through our... through
15 their and our collective pain we watched proudly as
16 youth across the nation from all ethnic backgrounds
17 and socioeconomic levels jumped into the national
18 debate about gun control. They organized themselves
19 through social media and held a mass demonstration in
20 the nation's capital called a march for our lives and
21 here in New York City nearly 200,000 participated in
22 a civil event in support of the march for our lives.
23 They proved to us adults that youth are a force to be
24 reckoned with and we indeed noticed. On this.. and on
25 its own gun control is a very important issue but

1
2 this hearing is about something more than just one
3 issue, youth in this city are forced to deal with and
4 confront a wide variety of issues including for
5 instance a lack of sufficient funding for programs
6 important to their development. Recently about 200
7 youth attended a budget hearing right here at City
8 Hall to advocate for the preservation and expansion
9 of summer youth employ... the summer youth employment
10 which declined more than half of it's applicants last
11 summer, more than half. So, frankly I wish we saw
12 more of this from our young people. So, I ask what
13 voice do... does youth have in matters that affect them
14 and what can a young people... a young person do to
15 affect change even when they can't vote and what can
16 adults do to make sure youth not only have a voice
17 but also that they feel empowered to use it? These
18 are important questions because youth of our... are our
19 collective futures. They are future voters, they are
20 future politicians, future advocates and future
21 policy makers but they also live in the present and
22 we can no longer afford to ignore their important
23 voices. At today's hearing the committee will explore
24 what support structures exist in this city for youth
25 civic engagement and I hope that by gaining a deeper

1
2 understanding of what we provide within and outside
3 of our schools we can offer even more support and
4 resources that foster their engagement. I look
5 forward to delving into this topic. And in addition,
6 I want to thank my staff Edwina Martin and Lisa
7 Thompson and the Committee staff Paul Senegal, Kevin
8 Kotowski and our new finance analyst Namira Newshot,
9 where's Namira, welcome Namira. And with that I will
10 now turn the mic over to my colleague and Chair,
11 esteemed Chair of the Education Committee, Council
12 Member Mark Treyger.

13 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you to
14 our youth champion, Chair Rose, very kind words. Good
15 afternoon, I'm pleased to welcome you to today's
16 strong hearing on youth civic engagement
17 opportunities. I want to thank again Chair Rose for
18 co-chairing this hearing and the great work she does
19 promoting opportunities for our city's youth. Today
20 the Education Committee will also hear testimony on
21 two bills I am sponsoring. Introduction Number 56..
22 561 requiring the Department of Education to report
23 information regarding parent associations and parent
24 teacher associations in public schools and
25 Introduction Number 672 requiring the Department of

1
2 Education to provide information about the Department
3 of Citywide Administrative Services, Civil Service
4 Examination to Students. As a former high school
5 government and history teacher, I am very aware of
6 the importance of a strong civics education. When I
7 was a teacher I was frustrated to learn that many of
8 my students did not know who their elected officials
9 were and most of them had not taken a single civic
10 education course. Many of these students were a, a
11 voting age or close to a voting age and, and all of
12 them had the power to change the world, they simply
13 needed the tools to get started. Back then I did what
14 many educators often do, I, I adapted my curriculum
15 to include lessons on civic education, I worked to
16 make sure my students knew that as young and active
17 individuals they could influence policies, fight for
18 their rights and even run for office but right now
19 civic engagement is happening in peace mill and
20 there's no universal vision of what full civic
21 engagement looks like. We need to examine these
22 different measures of engagement. For instance, how
23 many coordinators of student activities are there in
24 schools, how many dedicated personnel works with our
25 students to increase civic engagement? Unfortunately,

1 it is still not uncommon for students to be
2 introduced to civic engagement late in their academic
3 careers. Citywide most students do not take a civic
4 education course until 12th grade. In fact, New York
5 State social studies framework does not include
6 explicit instruction on participating in government
7 and civics until 12th grade and many educators are
8 left trying to carve out time to teach their students
9 about civic engagement. Simply put, students should
10 not have to wait until 12th grade to take civic
11 education, they should learn explicit civic education
12 as early as elementary school. Just like adults,
13 children are impacted by policies and they too should
14 have a voice in our democracy. This is why I was
15 thrilled when the Mayor announced these civics for
16 all initiative and his commitment to making civic
17 education a priority for this administration. As part
18 of this initiative the Department of Education will
19 dedicate 3.9 million dollars in fiscal year 2019
20 growing to 5.4 million dollars by fiscal year 2022 to
21 hire and train staff to engage students in the
22 democratic process. A pilot student participatory
23 budgeting program will give a small group of high
24 schools 2,000 dollars and students will work to
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1 identify their priorities and decide where that
2 funding should be allocated. Additionally, in the
3 fall the city will pilot curricula for grades six to
4 eight that teaches civic ideologies and civic
5 participation. As part of the initiative DOE also
6 recently expanded student voter registration day from
7 the 25 high schools initially piloted, piloted by
8 Council Member Rosenthal to be a citywide event. As
9 Chair Rose mentioned earlier the February 14th school
10 shooting in Parkland, Florida was an unimaginable
11 tragedy however if there was anything that this
12 tragedy reminded us is that our young people are
13 capable of organizing, protesting and taking other
14 political action needed to make society more just. I
15 commend the thousands of New York City students who
16 participated in protests, joined organizations and
17 attended Town Halls to push their government to make
18 their schools safer. Many of these students took
19 these actions on their own however today the
20 committees are interested in learning more about
21 DOE's current policies relating to civic engagement
22 in education. We also look forward to learning more
23 about DOE's plans and goals for it's civics for all
24 initiative. As I stated earlier today we will hear
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1 testimony on Intro 561, which would require the
2 reporting of information regarding funds raised by
3 parent associations and parent teacher associations
4 in New York City public schools which is currently
5 already required to be reported to the DOE under
6 Chancellor's regulation A-660. To be clear this bill
7 does not seek to infringe upon PA or PTA independents
8 in any way, rather the goal is to bring transparency
9 to a major contributor to many of our school's
10 successes. PA and PTA activity takes various forms
11 and plays different roles in various schools across
12 the city but in every case, it is valuable and worthy
13 of our attention. I look forward to continuing
14 conversations regarding how this bill can elicit the
15 most valuable and meaningful data. Finally, we will
16 hear testimony today on Intro 672, which would
17 require the Department of Education to provide
18 information about the Department of Citywide
19 Administrative Service, Services Civil Service
20 Examinations to students. Many New York City students
21 enter the workforce upon high school graduation and
22 we can support them by promoting information about
23 nontraditional career paths including careers in, in
24 the public sector and also will encourage students to
25

1 learn more about the types of careers government
2 offers and is a further incentive to continue their
3 education post high school and earn a bachelor's,
4 master's degrees and so on. If you wish to testify on
5 Intro 561 or Intro 672 please indicate on the witness
6 slip whether you are here to testify in favor or in
7 opposition. I also want to point out that we will not
8 be voting on the bills today as this is just the
9 first hearing to allow as many people as possible to
10 testify, testimony will be limited to three minutes
11 per person and please note that all witnesses will be
12 sworn in before testifying. And I'd like to thank our
13 Committee Counsel Beth Golub, Jan Atwell and Kalima
14 Johnson, Kaitlyn O'Hagan, Elizabeth Hoffman and
15 Millie Bonilla. I'd like to also thank my staff Anna
16 Scaife, Vanessa Ogle and Eric Feinberg and with that
17 I'd like to turn it over back to my Co-chair, Chair
18 Rose.
19

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you so much
21 Chair Treyger and we've been joined by Council Member
22 Cornegy. And we would like to have our panel sworn
23 in.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK: would you please raise
25 your right hands. Do you affirm to tell the truth,

1
2 the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your
3 testimony today and respond honestly to Council
4 Member's questions?

5 [panel confirms]

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Please lower your hands
7 and state your names for the record.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, would you please
9 begin your testimony, state your name and you can
10 begin.

11 PHIL WEINBERG: Great. Good afternoon
12 Chairs Treyger and Rose and members of the City
13 Council Education Committee and Committee on Youth
14 Services. My name is Phil Weinberg, the New York City
15 Department of Education's Deputy Chancellor for
16 Teaching and Learning and I'm pleased to be joined by
17 my colleague Norah Lovett, who's the Executive
18 Director for Social Studies and Core Curriculum
19 Implementation and we're pleased to be here today to
20 discuss the administration's work to create strong
21 civics instruction and civic engagement opportunities
22 for all of our students. Our goal is for students to
23 graduate high school as empowered critical thinkers
24 who are ready to chart the course our city and our
25 country will take in the future. We believe civic

1 education is an essential part of every student's
2 core academic program that is why as part of our
3 vision for Equity and Excellence for All, earlier
4 this year we announced a significant investment in
5 civics education through our new Civics for All
6 initiative. Our focus is on teaching the foundations
7 of the United States government and the democratic
8 process in order to build a more engaged, active
9 citizen and informed voter. All of us know how
10 important that is. Yet, the National Assessment of
11 Education Progress reports that only one fourth of
12 high school graduates understand how the American
13 political system works, the principles of democracy,
14 the United States' role in world affairs and the
15 roles and responsibilities of being an active
16 citizen. One in every 300 Americans is a New York
17 City public school student so we know we are uniquely
18 positioned to change that reality. First and
19 foremost, we are developing state aligned Civics for
20 All curricula for grades K through 12. Resources and
21 lesson plans will build our student's knowledge of
22 systems starting with the classroom in schools, then
23 the... then the political systems of communities, the
24 city, state and the nation. The DOE will, will engage
25

1 multiple perspectives and voices by collaborating
2 with teachers, partners and organizations across the
3 city to support curriculum development, pilot lessons
4 and implement the curricula. Once the piloting of all
5 lessons has been completed, successful lessons will
6 be published in the Civics for All curricula for
7 distribution to schools by fall 2019. In addition to
8 curricula, we will also support all our schools in
9 bringing theory to practice. Students will actively
10 learn about civics practices that include how to
11 contribute appropriately and meaningfully to the
12 public processes, voting, volunteering, jury service,
13 and joining with others to improve our society.
14 Students will learn how to start and lead
15 organizations within schools and how to conduct
16 community-based research and present their findings
17 to their communities. As part of Civics for All, on
18 Monday, May 21st, 2018, we held our first ever
19 citywide student voter registration day with the goal
20 of registering every eligible young person to vote as
21 early as possible. Every high school was invited to
22 hold the student registration... the student voter
23 registration day event supported by a resource guide
24 with suggested lessons and activities. Student voter
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1 registration day is in... is a partnership with
2 Democracy NYC, the City Council, the New York
3 Immigration Coalition, the New York City Board of
4 Elections and NYC Votes. I thank those of your who
5 participated, and I look forward to your continued
6 support of this initiative. In addition, we plan to
7 bring participatory budgeting to every high school,
8 piloting the process at up to 50 high schools in the
9 2018-19 school year. Similar to the participatory...
10 similar to the participatory budgeting effort the
11 city council has kicked off across our city, we will
12 provide 2,000 dollars per high school for students to
13 identify priorities and upon which to direct
14 spending. By school year 2020-21, we will implement
15 participatory budgeting at every single high school,
16 creating engaging learning opportunities that will
17 support young people in knowing how to engage
18 democratically, how to build stronger communities, as
19 well as how to participate in budgeting decisions.
20 Civics for All will build on this administration's
21 existing work to strengthen civics and social studies
22 education. this includes NYC's Passport to Social
23 Studies curriculum, which has been adopted by over 70
24 percent of the city's elementary and middle schools
25

1 in just its second year. Passport is a comprehensive
2 instructional resource for teachers in grades
3 kindergarten through eight, organized around units of
4 study that are guided by essential questions.
5 Teachers are encouraged to customize the Passport to
6 meet their individual students' and classrooms'
7 needs. It also includes our middle school quality
8 initiative debate tournament, made possible by the
9 city council's generous support and ongoing
10 commitment, which provides schools across the city
11 with the opportunity to regularly engage in
12 competitive debate. The MSQI debate program is the
13 largest middle school debate league in the country
14 with 60 schools participating since the 2014 school
15 year. An evaluation of the MSQI debate program has
16 shown a positive impact on civic engagement, as well
17 as overall improvements in literacy and academic
18 performance for students. The DOE's Office of Safety
19 and Youth Development and Office of Field Support
20 also provides engagement and leadership opportunities
21 for students. Students from each borough are selected
22 by their high schools to represent their school on
23 borough student advisory councils. Each of the seven
24 BSACs meet with their field support center to discuss
25

1 and address policies and practices that impact their
2 respective school communities and to engage in
3 decision making that leads to tangible changes.
4 Currently, the BSACs... the BSACs consist of 265
5 students citywide. Students from, from each BSAC are
6 then selected to represent their boroughs on the
7 Chancellor's student advisory council and submit
8 proposals to senior DOE leadership and suggest policy
9 changes. Two CSAC representatives are selected each
10 year to be student representatives on the panel for
11 education policy. The DOE also works with NYC Service
12 to support Youth Leadership Councils. In the past two
13 years we have trained 36 schools within 20 campuses
14 and are looking to expand this program to work with
15 all city high schools in... with all high schools in
16 the city. We are also proud of our justice resource
17 center, part of the city's career and technical
18 education offerings, which administers and
19 facilitates learning experiences that expose students
20 to basic law principles and practices. This program
21 includes moot court, run in participation with
22 Fordham University Law at 48 high schools and mock
23 trial, run in participation with the New York State
24 Bar Association at over 50 schools. Thank you for the
25

1
2 opportunity to discuss our investments in civic
3 education for our young people. We believe ensuring
4 that all of our students graduate ready to lead our
5 city and our country is a whole city effort and we
6 are grateful for your participation in this effort
7 and we look forward to ways to deepen our
8 collaboration. And now I will turn to the proposed
9 legislation. Intro Number 561 requires the DOE to
10 report information regarding parent teacher
11 associations and parent associations in public
12 schools. specifically, the bill would require the DOE
13 to report on, among other reporting requirements,
14 whether a school has a PA or a PTA, the number of
15 members, the dates and results of each election, the
16 number of staff members and their job titles, the
17 number of meetings held, and the annual income,
18 fundraising activities and expenditures for each PTA
19 or PA. while we support the goal of the proposed
20 legislation, we have concerns regarding the scope of
21 the reporting requirements. As you are aware,
22 Chancellor's Regulation A-660 governs all aspects of
23 PTAs and PAs and was developed after significant
24 consultation with parents. CR A-660 also recognizes
25 that PA/PTAs are autonomous and self-governing, and

1 that school officials oversight of PA/PTA is limited.
2 Pursuant to C... to Chancellor's Regulation A-660, we
3 do not currently track the detailed information
4 proposed in the bill. We believe information on PAs
5 or PTAs is important for school communities and the
6 DOE and we look forward to working with the council
7 to narrow the scope of the proposed legislation to
8 meet the goals of providing useful information that
9 is consistent with current DOE regulations and what
10 we currently track. Intro Number 672 requires DOE to
11 provide information about the Department of City... the
12 Department of Citywide Administrative Services
13 Examinations. We support the goal of the legislation.
14 DCAS would be required to provide DOE with the
15 information. I will now turn this over to my
16 colleague Susan Haskell, Deputy Commissioner, Youth
17 Services at the New York City Department of Youth and
18 Community Development. We will then be happy to
19 answer any questions you may have.
20

21 SUSAN HASKELL: Thank you. Good afternoon
22 Chair Rose, Chair Treyger and members of the
23 Committee on Youth Services and Committee on
24 Education. I am Susan Haskell, Deputy Commissioner
25 Youth Services at the New York City Department of

2 Youth and Community Development. I'm joined by Darryl
3 Rattray, Associate Commissioner, Youth Services and
4 Strategic Partnerships. On behalf of Commissioner
5 Chong, thank you for the opportunity to testify today
6 about youth civic engagement. DYCD supports an array
7 of programs for young people, including youth
8 workforce development, after school programs and
9 community centers. All DYCD programs for youth are
10 shaped by the interrelated concepts of positive youth
11 development, social and emotional learning, and youth
12 leadership development. Within this framework, youth
13 civic engagement activities and opportunities are
14 essential to allowing young people to build
15 leadership skills, learn how to affect change, be
16 civic minded and have the chance to reflect on their
17 actions. Civic engagement activities are embedded in
18 the quality program design of DYCD funded programs at
19 three levels; at the provider level located
20 throughout the city with specific DYCD funded and
21 organized initiatives to promote civic engagement and
22 citywide events and enrichment opportunities. At the
23 provider level, civic engagement activities are
24 designed to respond to the needs and interests of
25 program participants and local community. Examples of

2 those activities include; planting tree mulch as part
3 of a beautification project at a local park, doing
4 random acts of kindness during the holidays by
5 visiting family shelters to deliver... to deliver food,
6 blankets and gifts, in response to parent requests,
7 hosting a book give away to support participant's
8 interest in literacy skills and participating in a
9 community rally against gun violence. In addition to
10 the activities at the provider level, DYCD supports
11 specific civic engagement initiatives. This includes;
12 summer of service which is an annual community
13 service initiative. Participants of DYCD funded
14 programs gather throughout the summer to engage in 10
15 to 15 community service projects such as mural
16 painting, volunteering at a senior center and
17 planting trees. Summer of service includes youth
18 voice, community partnership and exploration of
19 issues. It ensures that the service hours demonstrate
20 the impact that young people can make through efforts
21 that address community needs. Projects support skill
22 building in critical thinking, collaboration, and
23 communication. My Brother's/Sister's Keeper Youth
24 Council engages high school youth to work with
25 networks of borough-based youth councils at the

1 Beacon and Cornerstone centers across the city. Young
2 people identify social justice issues important to
3 the local community and to New York City. The Youth
4 Council's goals are to; develop leadership skills and
5 inspire youth to take leadership roles, create
6 authentic opportunities for young people to shape
7 responses and solutions to community issues, and
8 cultivate an ethic of service in young people. In the
9 current program year, the Youth Council completed a
10 participatory action research project on public
11 safety that included youth police relationships.
12 Young people collected data from peers and neighbors
13 through collaborative meetings, listening tours and a
14 youth survey that they designed. At Beacon and
15 Cornerstone Community Centers, youth councils inform
16 a center's program design. The councils consider
17 ideas for new program offerings and discuss
18 improvements or changing to... changes to existing
19 programs. They serve as a mechanism for youth to
20 explore community and social issues and develop
21 strategies to take action. For example; at the Sonia
22 Sotomayor Cornerstone in the Bronx, the youth council
23 hosted a How to Keep Your Community Safe meeting that
24 included presentations and panel discussions with
25

1 local police officers. At the Ocean Bay Cornerstone
2 in the Rockaways, the youth council hosted an LGBTQ
3 conference and forum to address issues of concern to
4 the LGBTQ community. This youth council also held a
5 youth voter education event in mid-April. At the
6 Gerard Carter Center on Staten Island, the youth
7 council partnered with the Mayor's Action Plan on
8 Neighborhood Safety to host a youth career fair. In
9 DYCD's SONYC Program... middle school programs, youth
10 leadership is an essential component. When we
11 launched SONYC in 2014, it was critical to infuse
12 leadership building activities into the programs
13 because middle school students are at the
14 developmental stage where they are starting to make
15 real choices for themselves. SONYC programs help
16 youth harness their growing sense of self and voice.
17 On a validated youth leadership survey developed by
18 the American Institute of Research, youth attending
19 SONYC programs have positive perceptions of their own
20 attitudes and skills; 99 percent see themselves as
21 motivated, self-aware, and persistent; 94 percent see
22 themselves as inspirational, confident, active
23 listeners and persuasive and 94 percent see
24 themselves as purposeful, conveners and perspective
25

1 develop a healthy foods campaign to support
2 communities in a food desert and in the Bronx and
3 Queens participants will learn about government
4 elections and develop a democracy project to explore
5 voting policies and create public awareness
6 campaigns. In addition to these specific program
7 initiatives DYCD hosts citywide events and enrichment
8 opportunities for DYCD program participants with a
9 civic engagement dimension while connecting to young
10 people from different communities across New York.
11 the young citizens conference is DYCD's annual youth
12 leadership conference that highlights and celebrates
13 service learning projects taking place in DYCD funded
14 programs. Projects include the arts, civic
15 engagement, sports and leadership and youth councils.
16 In partnership with the New York City Urban Debate
17 League, DYCD established a Debate League for
18 participants of DYCD funded programs. They completed...
19 competed in tournaments and researched constructive
20 arguments to support and refute a specific topic.
21 Step it Up, is the culmination of a ten... of a month-
22 long dance competition that begins in January. Ten
23 final teams compete for the citywide grand prize and
24 each year in Step it Up the competition requires
25

1 success in dance as well as a public awareness
2 campaign focused on social issues relevant to young
3 people. This year's theme was anti bullying and
4 bullying prevention. The Step it Up dance final was
5 held on June 2nd at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. As
6 part of DYCD's overall goal to support youth
7 leadership in civic engagement we're pleased to work
8 with the city council to promote Participatory
9 Budgeting. During April PB vote week, we alerted DYCD
10 providers to encourage their participants to vote.
11 The offices of Council Members Levine, Gibson, Torres
12 and Williams held vote sites at their DYCD Spring
13 into Health Fair. We thank Council Members for this
14 collaboration. To encourage DYCD funded providers to
15 get involved in next year's PB cycle, we hosted an
16 information session for DYCD staff, led by the
17 council's community engagement division. Two
18 workshops were held at the Young Citizens Conference,
19 for provider staff. We're also interested in
20 encouraging all Council Members to have SYEP youth
21 who are placed in their office, work on PB related
22 projects and tasks. It's essential for young people
23 to develop these skills and be connected to their
24 communities. DYCD funded programs strongly support
25

1
2 young people and foster their civic engagement. We
3 look forward to the continued partnership with
4 council to meet the needs of the city's youth and
5 create opportunities for them to grow and thrive.
6 Thank you for the chance to testify today, we're
7 prepared to answer your questions.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you so much
9 you're your testimony and we've been joined by
10 Council Members Deutsch, Lander, Brannan, Ulrich and
11 Levine. Thank you, good to see you all here. And
12 it's... we have quite a, a chock-full agenda today, we
13 have DYCD speaking about civic engagement, we have
14 DOE and we have two, two bills so I'm going to be...
15 I'm going to ask just one brief question and I'll
16 turn it over to Chair Treyger and we'll sort of...
17 [cross-talk]

18 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Lead the way...
19 [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...intermix, okay.
21 Alright, so I want to thank you for your testimony
22 and, and the fact that DOE and DYCD understands and
23 recognizes how important civic engagement is and that
24 you've... you have a number of programs that address it
25 and we saw in, in... recently with the shooting in

2 Florida, Parkland that young people do want to engage
3 civically so could you tell me DYCD what are the
4 things that have changed in terms of providing
5 services that provide long lasting positive impact on
6 the communities and the youth population in this city
7 and can you describe how you're using social media
8 and how it impacts social media and, and technology
9 on DYCD programing and how DYCD spreads knowledge
10 about the services that you offer and do you think
11 there's been any effective change?

12 SUSAN HASSELL: Yes. Yes, and I'll invite
13 my colleague Darryl to give some examples, we were
14 talking about the soccer field just earlier today. I
15 think DYCD has developed a really strong social media
16 presence, presence and we welcome anyone who's not
17 connected to... attached to NYC Youth on Instagram, on
18 Twitter, on Facebook, we, we have terrific
19 photographers and, and social media staff who love to
20 highlight the work that young people are doing in our
21 communities and also opportunities for young people
22 to take advantage of, that's one of the main ways
23 that we connect centrally to people in the community
24 and of course our providers play a significant role
25 locally as well. Do we impact change, absolutely, I

1
2 think, you know developing the leadership skills? I
3 appreciate what you mentioned Chair Rose about the
4 advocacy around the budget that happened right here
5 just in the past few weeks, I think developing
6 leadership skills prepares young people to be ready
7 when, when, when there's something they want to act
8 on. And then we have like... do you want to talk about
9 the... that Beacon we're... just as an example... [cross-
10 talk]

11 DARRYL RATTRAY: Uh-huh, absolutely...
12 [cross-talk]

13 SUSAN HASKELL: ...of making change.

14 DARRYL RATTRAY: So, civic engagement of
15 course is at the hallmark of our programming. Of, of
16 course it gives young people leadership skills, it
17 gives them the ability to develop those skills and as
18 you mentioned during the opening it can change their
19 character. We have young people... we have examples of
20 that across the city, young people who in one case on
21 the Lower East Side fought for a soccer field and it
22 was a, a, a park, park property so it was a
23 collaboration between the Parks Department, the
24 actual school administration, the East Side Community
25 High School and University Settlement Beacon Program

1 but the youth council, the actually soccer team all
2 lobbied to get this field and then the U.S. Soccer
3 Foundation came in with Rebel and actually created
4 the field for them. We have examples where young
5 people Direct Teen Action Program activated at a park
6 in Williamsburg because it was there being a
7 shooting, and someone known to the community was
8 actually murdered. The young people decided that the...
9 they want that park to be saved so they, they began
10 activating a campaign to both clean up the park but
11 also create new things in that park space, bring
12 activities to that park space, make that park space
13 open to the community and there's countless examples
14 like that across the city.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Have you seen an
17 increase in youth wanting to be civically engaged or,
18 or have you noticed a decrease and has there been a,
19 a sort of... a different tone and tenure around the
20 types of things that they want to be civically
21 engaged in?

22 DARRYL RATTRAY: So, through our
23 initiatives I, I would say that we've seen increase
24 and what's remarkable is, you know watching young
25 people develop and grow and all of a sudden... someone

1 on the dance team and you know they were known for
2 just dancing is now stepping up and speaking out
3 against bullying and they're, they're both talking to
4 their peers, doing a workshop or they're talking to
5 the community during a mini rally or they're on stage
6 at BAM actually performing and speaking up. So, we,
7 we have seen an increase across our programs with
8 young people who want to be civically engaged, it's
9 also at the hallmark of what we do. Our programs
10 connection to, to the community is through civic
11 engagement so we measure that, we, we go out, we
12 highlight it on our social media.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: How do you recruit
15 young people to be involved in, in your programs,
16 your social... civic engagement programs?

17 DARRYL RATTRAY: The primary recruitment
18 strategy actually is other young people. So, you
19 have... you may have a core group, it may be a low
20 amount, ten young people, young adults who
21 participate in your youth council, they actually go
22 out and get friends, our programs may get t-shirts
23 for them, other media items and then what happens is
24 you get this synergy in that community in that
25 location where other young people want to be involved

1 and for communities it's great for them to see other
2 young people, young adults actually doing something
3 whether it's beautification, whether it's a rally
4 around anti-bullying, they see that happening and a
5 young person who may be disconnected sees it
6 happening and near social capital that gets developed
7 in the young people who are participating.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And you collaborate
10 with other community-based organizations?

11 DARRYL RATTRAY: So, part of DYCD's
12 approach and a stronger approach this year with our
13 commissioner and the vision of the agency is that we
14 do encourage collaboration amongst our providers. A
15 quick example of something years ago there was a
16 shooting in Cypress development, we went out there to
17 treat... to figure out what was happening and to help
18 provide support and services and we found out that a
19 provider in our Cornerstone program which is
20 literally across the street from the Beacon program
21 because there's two different providers they didn't
22 talk and collaborate and that was several years ago
23 so our Commissioner has made sure that we've been
24 creating networking opportunities for providers,
25 we've been doing things like the DYCD health, health

1
2 fair, health week where providers are actually
3 collaborating on some of these issues, they're
4 bringing the youth councils together to help
5 collaborate on initiatives.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Is there any cross
7 pollination with DOE with your... between your programs
8 and DOE programs?

9 SUSAN HASSELL: We work... so, we work very
10 closely with DO... DOE, in fact, you know we wouldn't
11 have nearly as many programs if we didn't have the
12 school spaces that we use. When we fund a program we
13 require our provider to work closely with the DOE
14 staff person, the principal will designate a liaison
15 or play that role themselves and in many of our
16 programs we've... we also fund an educational
17 specialist so that person's role is to kind of be the
18 liaison in terms of curriculum including potentially
19 the Civics for All curriculum and make sure that the
20 activities in after school tie nicely together with
21 the goals of the school day programs. We also
22 encourage participation on school leadership team
23 and, and PTA activities.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you and I want
25 to mention... I wanted to say thank you. In your

1 testimony you mentioned Staten Island groups twice
2 first so... that was... that was good, that, that was
3 really good, and we do have, you know quite a busy...
4 so, I'm going to turn the mic over to Council Member
5 Treyger but before I do I want to acknowledge that
6 Council Member Borelli and Council Member Eugene have
7 joined us. Council Member Treyger.

9 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you
10 Chair Rose and it feels good to put back the civics
11 teacher hat on for, for, for a moment here but I want
12 to thank, thank the administration for their
13 testimony and I guess Deputy Chancellor I... I'll start
14 to ask you a question. How would... how would you
15 define civic engagement?

16 PHIL WEINBERG: Students who... when you're
17 talking about young people, students who are engaged
18 in the lives of their communities see themselves as
19 actors not acted upon by the world in which they live
20 and understand the ways in which they can organize
21 themselves to make sure their voices are heard.

22 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: That's, that's
23 a... that's very important, very good answer and is
24 civic engagement a measured goal for the DOE?

25 PHIL WEINBERG: A measured goal?

1
2 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: A measuring
3 goal.

4 PHIL WEINBERG: It would be interesting
5 to have a conversation around what we would measure,
6 I think in the end you were a teacher nearly as long
7 as I, the measure of our work is that... is ultimately
8 the civic engagement of our students throughout their
9 lives but since we can't really track them into their
10 50's and 60's, it's hard to know how exactly how well
11 we have imbued them with the kind of understanding of
12 the community in which they live but we do want to
13 talk about ways in which we can continue. As we're...
14 the civics role initiative is about making sure we
15 can strengthen that... their early start in civic
16 engagement while they're... while they're with us and
17 continue to help them grow as part of our
18 communities.

19 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: That kind of
20 leads to my next question, what metrics does DOE use
21 to measure civic engagement and how does DOE work to
22 build civic engagement capacity at schools?

23 PHIL WEINBERG: So, the building of civic
24 engagement capacity is part of our curricular work
25 and it is part of all of our social studies

1 curriculum work K through 12, this is an opportunity
2 to deepen that work and especially focus on some of
3 our, our older youth and making sure that they are
4 able to access the community as deeply and as well as
5 they can. The, the metrics part is not a question
6 that I've considered well and would happily talk to
7 you about later after I've had a chance to think
8 about it. Again as, as fellow educators I think we,
9 we would... we're on dangerous ground when we start to
10 first talk about measurement rather than about
11 programs because we end up defining our programs by
12 what we say we're going to measure.

14 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Well I'm, I'm
15 going to start to define what I mean by metrics
16 because I'm, I'm getting to my... one of the points
17 here is, what DOE staff exists to foster student
18 engagement in schools?

19 PHIL WEINBERG: Well 78,000 teachers to
20 start. We do have leaders of student... as you... as you
21 noted in your testimony student activities,
22 coordinators in our schools, we do have engagement
23 with a wide variety of other organizations who... with
24 whom schools, CBOs that schools work with and we do
25 have an ongoing beyond the state standards commitment

1 to making sure our young people are aware and, and
2 active in our school communities.
3

4 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: So... but... and I
5 appreciate it because COSA is the acronym,
6 Coordinator of Student Activities, is that a mandated
7 position in, in a school building?

8 PHIL WEINBERG: I... you know it's been a
9 while since I read the regs around student
10 activities, I don't believe it's mandated, I believe
11 it's, it's, it's the preponderance of our schools
12 have COSA.

13 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Well do you
14 know how many schools have COSAs?

15 PHIL WEINBERG: I don't.

16 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: You see this
17 is... this is... this gets to the heart of what I'm
18 trying to get at because I worked with an outstanding
19 COSA in the school that I worked... I worked in which
20 belongs in Council Member Brennan's district... [cross-
21 talk]

22 PHIL WEINBERG: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

23 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: ...and I, I, I
24 think... actually think Mr... Council Member Brennan
25 knows who the COSA is, Miss Sara Steinweiss who

1
2 actually is... now she's in a different field but I
3 just want you to know that she helped organize
4 students in all forms of engagement... [cross-talk]

5 PHIL WEINBERG: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

6 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: ...she actually
7 inspired young Anthony Ramos who actually began as a
8 baseball player in the school, encouraged him to
9 expand his horizon, try out and audition for a
10 theater program and now he is a, a rock star... a movie
11 star out here in the country, who was a star in
12 Hamilton and, and so... but COSAs are not required in
13 public schools, it, it is at the discretion of a
14 principal whether or not a COSA is, is there and so...
15 which goes to the other questions about can you... can
16 you describe... can you describe existing student clubs
17 that relate to civic engagement?

18 PHIL WEINBERG: Can I describe in our
19 1,800 schools what club... [cross-talk]]

20 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Are, are
21 there... are there dedicated... can you... can you speak
22 about the type of support and capacity building that
23 the DOE provides to schools to have civic clubs,
24 student clubs, what type of financial support they
25 receive be, be... any type of capacity support?

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PHIL WEINBERG: So, the principals have great discretion over their non-personnel budget and clubs at... extracurricular activities are something that schools fund as they can or that students fund as they can. I don't have specific facts for you about what club there is at each school because it, it's something that each school defines for its own community and it's usually driven by student interest. I would tell you that in my visits to schools this year there's a great deal more political activity happening in after school clubs than there... then there was before.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: So, when, when I was an educator and I still think it's... I think it's still relevant today there was a phrase that if it's not measured it's not invested in. So, what's measured are test scores, regents and a lot of resources went towards test prep, procession activities and you know I had... I had 12th graders that did not have a civics education prior to my class because senior year in high school that's where you teach government and economics.

PHIL WEINBERG: Uh-huh...

2 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: So, the issue
3 becomes not every school has a debate team, not every
4 school has a COSA, not every school has the capacity
5 and the means to support a wide... a wide array of
6 student clubs and activities because it's all
7 depending upon resources and I think that when I
8 talked to you earlier about the metrics I think that
9 there are indicators of what level of engagement a
10 school possesses when you do have a COSA, when you do
11 have a number of student clubs, when you do have
12 dedicated personnel that work with kids beyond what's
13 required of them to receive a diploma and a degree
14 because to me I, I appreciate and I really like your
15 definition of civic engagement but to make it even
16 more simple it's doing more than what's required...
17 [cross-talk]

18 PHIL WEINBERG: Uh-huh...

19 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Sometimes
20 folks just... there's a difference between compliance
21 and engagement and some folks just want to do what's
22 required of them and nothing, nothing more and I
23 think that we have to inspire and encourage our young
24 people to go well... you know because voting is
25 actually not required and adults have to know that as

1 well, right, not just young people and we need to
2 inspire them and some of... you know just to let you
3 know some of my best lessons about civics was during
4 high... the college application period when students
5 would learn about the cost of college and we had a
6 great conversation about why is it so expensive and
7 what government programs are out there to help, help
8 support them and then when they learned how the, the
9 federal and state government actually are, are not
10 very helpful to immigrants when it comes to support
11 that... those led to very in depth conversations but
12 that's not a part of our curriculum, that was the
13 flexibility I had as an educator to teach them in, in
14 high school but I, I do believe that if this is
15 something that the DOE is deeply invested in, deeply
16 cares about and sees this as, as a very worthy goal
17 which I think they should we need to create some sort
18 of metrics of engagement and how do we help build
19 capacity in schools to have dedicated personnel to
20 work with young people. I remember where I worked at
21 the... they're resources ran short and they couldn't
22 fund a debate team anymore and debate leads to
23 fantastic engagement research involvement in
24 community. I also have a question about community
25

1
2 service hours, does the DOE require schools to have a
3 set amount of community service hours for students?

4 PHIL WEINBERG: I believe the answer is
5 the DOE doesn't, the state does as part of its regs
6 through the participation in government courses that
7 students need to pass to graduate.

8 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: And is there a
9 uniform set of hours or it's, it's school by school?

10 PHIL WEINBERG: No, no, state so it's got
11 to be uniform and I would have to get back to you on
12 what the... [cross-talk]

13 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right... [cross-
14 talk]

15 PHIL WEINBERG: ...it's been a couple of
16 years since I... [cross-talk]

17 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right, I'll,
18 I'll just let you know anecdotally I think schools
19 have different sets of hours for students, there's no
20 uniform set of hours for, for kids.

21 PHIL WEINBERG: Okay.

22 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: We understand
23 that the DOE provides the passport to social studies
24 curriculum to students in grades K to eight which
25 includes lessons on civics and government, do we know

1
2 how many school... DOE schools use this curriculum, do
3 we have that data?

4 PHIL WEINBERG: 70 percent of the K
5 through eight schools.

6 NORAH LOVETT: More than 500 schools are
7 currently actively using it.

8 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: That, that is...
9 and that, that was a very important initiative pushed
10 by Chancellor... former Chancellor Farina and I, I know
11 that she was a big social studies fan and supporter
12 and I, I do want to note that. In the interest of
13 time I do want to turn to the bills because I... my
14 colleagues have been very patient and just have some,
15 some questions on that. Beginning with Intro 561, we
16 know that pursuant to Chancellors regulation A-660
17 PAs/PTAs and presidents council executive boards must
18 provide annual financial reports to principals and a
19 fund-raising activity report to the superintendent no
20 more than five calendar days after the fund-raising
21 activity. Can you describe the review these reports
22 receive?

23 PHIL WEINBERG: I'm going to ask my
24 colleague Shona Gibson to join us.

25 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Sure.

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES JOINTLY WITH COMMITTEE
ON EDUCATION

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PHIL WEINBERG: Thanks.

SHONA GIBSON: Do I need to be sworn in?

Good afternoon... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE CLERK: Hi, I am just going to swear you in. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony?

SHONA GIBSON: I do.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Please state your name for the record.

SHONA GIBSON: My name is Shona Gibson.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Please.

SHONA GIBSON: The question was the reporting requirement of fund raising activities and the quality of the review that the principal is able to give to that report?

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Yeah, if you could describe the review of these reports received.

SHONA GIBSON: That's going.. the review is made by the principal at the school level, so it's based on the principal's ability to review that information.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right, so does the information go beyond the principal because it

1
2 says here it also goes to the superintendents so how
3 far up the chain to the DOE does this information
4 travel to?

5 SHONA GIBSON: The individual reports of
6 individual fundraising activities does not go beyond
7 school or district level, we do ask schools to report
8 a midterm and end of year quantity of PTA income and
9 expenditures.

10 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Can you repeat
11 that one more time?

12 SHONA GIBSON: Sure, the schools... PTAs
13 and PAs are required to report their fundraising
14 activities however many there are to the principal
15 within five days, what we require at the Division of
16 Family and Community Engagement is an interim and
17 final financial report from each PA and PTA and what
18 that... what that calculates is top line expenses and
19 top line income at the middle of the year and at the
20 end of the year.

21 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: So, it does
22 travel... some information does travel up to the DOE?

23 SHONA GIBSON: Aggregate, yes.
24
25

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2 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Okay and so
3 how if at all may DOE use this information when
4 assessing school resources and funding?

5 SHONA GIBSON: The Department of
6 Education does not rely on PAs or PTAs to fund their
7 schools, we look to our different equity and access
8 initiatives to target those populations that have
9 higher need, our fair student funding also addresses
10 that. We appreciate the contributions that parents
11 make to the schools, but we don't require them to
12 contribute any kind of financial.

13 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right and, and
14 so do we have data on how many schools have filed the
15 most recently required income and expense reports?

16 SHONA GIBSON: I do not have 2018 data
17 because that deadline is the end of June, for 2017 we
18 have unaudited self-reported data and although I
19 don't have those numbers in front of me we did
20 collect that last year.

21 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: So, who is
22 responsible for checking compliance with making sure
23 this information is being received by the principals,
24 superintendents and making its way to the Office of
25 Family Engagement and..

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SHONA GIBSON: We do... we do check the compliance in terms of the reporting so the reporting of midterm and financial which is what Division of Family and Community Engagement tracks is part of the principal's compliance checklist and it is part of the requirements of A-660. We check that, we monitor whether or not that's been reported and then if it hasn't been reported we follow up with those schools to ask them to submit that information.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: But... and I, I know that this, this might be repetitive but just to be... just so we're on the same page so fundraising totals by PAs and PTAs is already required to be reported to the school, is that correct?

SHONA GIBSON: Yes, you know what I'm going to ask you for clarification or perhaps...
[cross-talk]

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Yes... [cross-talk]

SHONA GIBSON: ...it would be helpful...

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right...

SHONA GIBSON: A school may have ten fundraising activities throughout the... [cross-talk]

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2 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right...

3 [cross-talk]

4 SHONA GIBSON: ...course of the year...

5 [cross-talk]

6 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right... [cross-
7 talk]

8 SHONA GIBSON: ...they have support... they
9 are expected to report the results of each of those
10 activities within five days of having the... [cross-
11 talk]

12 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right... [cross-
13 talk]

14 SHONA GIBSON: ...event what we ask for at
15 a central level is middle of the year, end of the
16 year, where are you at a very top line basis, we
17 don't ask for the individual fundraising reports.

18 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right but you,
19 you have the total amounts that... [cross-talk]

20 SHONA GIBSON: Exactly, yes... [cross-talk]

21 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: So, that
22 already... that information you already have?

23 SHONA GIBSON: Correct.

24 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Okay, so
25 that's, that's really what we're trying to get, get

1
2 to the heart of that you already collect this
3 information. And just from your opinion and Deputy
4 Chancellor you could also feel free to weigh in, what
5 impact do you think PTA funding has on schools?

6 SHONA GIBSON: I think that it's
7 difficult to make a general statement about that, I
8 am so happy to be here by the way and thank you for
9 your support of parent engagement, we are so grateful
10 to have parents be involved whether they donate their
11 time, their expertise or their money, I don't know
12 that we have... are able to make a direct correlation
13 between the fundraising amounts and the impact in the
14 school. Funding is used for different purposes and
15 the PTA does different things in different schools.

16 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: And I want to...
17 I, I echo that, I, I am eternally grateful for the
18 involvement of our families in, in our... in our
19 schools and they are key difference makers in our
20 schools and our communities and I certainly
21 appreciate that but I think you, you touched on
22 something that's kind of in my follow up question,
23 what's your sense or your knowledge... you know from
24 your experience and knowledge of how much PTA money
25 or whether PTA money is spent on funding personnel at

1 schools like teaching assistants, teachers as
2 compared to other personnel services like library
3 books or items that... what... that it's spent on?

4 SHONA GIBSON: We, we, we don't track
5 that, and I'd also like to make a point... make it
6 clear that PTAs may donate their funds to the
7 principal and then the principal will use them to
8 their discretion... [cross-talk]

9 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right... [cross-
10 talk]

11 SHONA GIBSON: ...like I know you are very
12 familiar with A-660, there are certain requirements
13 around what a PTA can hire directly in terms of staff
14 and generally they do not make direct hires because
15 the restrictions are such... not only are there
16 restrictions on who they can hire but that they are
17 then liable for all of those federal labor laws of...
18 surrounding hiring and, and getting a certificate of
19 insurance so in a lot of cases if the PTA is doing
20 fundraising it's being earmarked for whatever the
21 membership agrees it, the fundraising is earmarked
22 and that's another thing that I'd also like to remind
23 everyone that you can't fundraise for the sake of
24 fundraising, you have to say this is a fundraiser for
25

1 student graduation celebration or this is a
2 fundraiser for a particular event so while we don't
3 track it at a central level I'm sure that the
4 principal has a very clear idea of what the, the PA
5 or PTA is donating or using their funds for in the
6 school level.
7

8 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right, right
9 and can you just provide any example of what a school
10 could use the funding for?

11 SHONA GIBSON: A school can use funding
12 for a number and do use for a number of things, there
13 are schools that will use the funds that they raise
14 to support photograph day, there are schools... we'll
15 use photographs as a fundraiser as well, there are
16 schools that... PTAs where they use their fundraising
17 to support a movie night or a pot luck dinner or a
18 welcome parents of a different community or, or...
19 [cross-talk]

20 PHIL WEINBERG: Trips to college...

21 SHONA GIBSON: Trips to college, yes
22 thank you, education workshops for parents, there's a
23 couple of schools that use their PTA funds to support
24 the costumes for the school's student play and
25

1
2 performances. There's a wide range of activities that
3 PA and PTA can fund.

4 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Are you aware
5 of schools that have used PTA fundraising money to
6 purchase air conditioners for schools?

7 SHONA GIBSON: I am not.

8 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Okay and have
9 you heard of any cases where PTA fundraising money is
10 used to pay for salaries of educators in, in a school
11 building, can, can PTA money be used for the.. for
12 those purposes?

13 SHONA GIBSON: According to the
14 regulation the funds raised by PA/PTA cannot be used
15 for full time staff in the school during school
16 hours, it can be used for staff for after school or
17 weekend programs for services that are directly to
18 students, it cannot be used for administrative staff,
19 can also be used to support supplemental staff in the
20 school during school hours but a PA or a PTA cannot
21 use funds.. or a school cannot use the PA/PTA funds
22 raised for direct staffing, that is the
23 responsibility of the Department of Education.

24 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right.. [cross-
25 talk]

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2 PHIL WEINBERG: That's, that's why we're,
3 we're raising the fair student funding floor and why
4 we're investing in all the equity and excellence
5 initiatives... [cross-talk]

6 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: I'm very happy
7 about fair student funding, we have more work to do
8 but yes and I know that you mentioned that you don't
9 have the most up to date... or most recent data in
10 fundraising totals this past year but can you speak
11 to some of the highest amounts that you've seen in
12 the past raised by particular schools, amounts that
13 were some of the highest that you've seen?

14 SHONA GIBSON: I can speak generally,
15 there are a very small handful of schools that raise
16 in excess of 500,000 dollars, the average over the
17 entire city is about a thousand dollars.

18 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: The average is
19 what, I'm sorry?

20 SHONA GIBSON: The average fundraising
21 end of year report is about a thousand dollars.

22 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: And there...
23 you're saying there are some schools that raise over
24 500,000 dollars, have there been schools that have
25 raised over a million dollars?

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SHONA GIBSON: Yes.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: So, there is a... there's a disparity in terms of where the school is located and which community it's in, is that correct?

SHONA GIBSON: That is correct.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: But this is data that the DOE already collects?

SHONA GIBSON: The end of year and final amount... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: End of... correct... [cross-talk]

SHONA GIBSON: ...yes... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: So... and that is the intention, that is the only data that this committee, that myself that we're interested in, we don't want to put an ounce of any onus on any PTA or P, PA or PTA, we simply just want transparency on what the DOE already has in its possession, that is the only thing that... and we will work with DOE and advocates and parents and families to make sure it's tailored to that language exactly.

SHONA GIBSON: Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Okay, I... Intro
3 672... thank you very much, really appreciate it, yes.
4 How, how if at all does the DOE currently notify
5 students of job opportunities in city government?

6 PHIL WEINBERG: The same way we notify
7 our students about all the opportunities at the end
8 of their high school career. We have... there are
9 fairs, post-secondary fairs, there are offices with
10 counselors in them where information that we have to
11 distribute to students we do distribute.

12 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right, so this
13 kind of goes back to my... to the civics issues, not a
14 lot of folks know about DCAS and that goes for a lot
15 of, you know our... even, even... not just kids but in
16 general and what the purpose of this was that there
17 are many great careers in civil service that I
18 believe some folks wait very late, later in their
19 life to, to learn about and I believe that the, the
20 intention is to notify students in high school as
21 they're working towards their high school diploma to
22 make them know how their diploma carries weight but
23 if they continue to pursue their academic career into
24 college that it makes a difference in terms of
25 income, in terms of benefits, in, you know retirement

1 security, these are conversations they should be
2 having already in high school...

3
4 PHIL WEINBERG: Oh yeah, I've been... I
5 would say we are, I mean the, the, the pithily
6 college access for all is about making sure our
7 students understand their options at the end of their
8 high school career but also understanding that we're
9 working towards something, in your own words that's
10 beyond a diploma and that's the goal of every
11 educator in the city to make sure students understand
12 their opportunities and see a pathway to a life that
13 they want to lead and that they make an intentional
14 choice to lead, there's no... what the goal of... the
15 goal of the work that we're doing right now is to
16 know that in high school every ninth grader
17 understands that every, every piece of work they do
18 builds towards opportunities for them when they leave
19 high school and that every middle school student
20 knows that they build toward opportunities in high
21 school while they're doing their middle school work
22 and we don't want to pressure our youngest students
23 to think that they're future hangs in the balance in
24 second grade but we do want us all to be working
25 together to make sure we're creating as many pathways

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2 and as many opportunities for our students as are
3 possible so the career awareness not just DCAS but
4 career awareness is a... is, is a moral obligation that
5 the DOE has taken on and, and embraced because we
6 think it's important for our students to know they're
7 working towards something.

8 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Oh, I agree
9 and the only reason why we just highlighted DCAS is
10 because you almost create... you know we invest so much
11 in our kids and want to invest more, they deserve
12 everything, we want to create a city pipeline where
13 they come from our school system and they work in our
14 city and they live in our city and help our city
15 continue to grow and I think... I, I want to just
16 expose them to the knowledge of what careers exist
17 within city government and to also further
18 incentivize what that diploma means and how if you
19 continue to pursue your degree but sometimes they
20 don't learn about DCAS until they're in their 20's or
21 some folks in their 30's or even beyond. If they want
22 to be an officer or if they want to be a sanitation
23 worker there's a test, it's, it's not just you go to
24 some sanitation garage and say I want to... I want to
25 apply for a job and.. but they shouldn't learn that,

2 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: Thanks very
3 much to both of you for convening this important
4 hearing and to the Deputy Chancellor and Deputy
5 Commissioner for joining us. Obviously it's a... you
6 know such an energizing time of youth engagement and
7 activism just all across the country obviously on
8 issues of gun violence most notably in the news but
9 we've got, you know people from Integrate NYC here
10 where students have been pushing and leading the way,
11 chair the effort to get air conditioning in all our
12 middle schools comes from student advocacy on the
13 steps of this building like every year some of the
14 advocacy that, that you guys both spoke to, there are
15 young people involved in the effort to lower the
16 voting age in Albany, those are New York City high
17 school students who are leading that effort and
18 participatory budgeting as we already have, it
19 already has just a great, you said of youth leaders
20 involved. So, you know I'm glad we're sort of
21 catching up here both in the city council and at DYCD
22 and DOE but I, I really think it's young people who
23 are out in front and it's just important to kind of
24 own and acknowledge and credit that and I see... you
25 know I appreciate the, the DOE both in the school

1
2 diversity advisory group and through the Chancellor's
3 Student Advisory Council and other spaces have some
4 spaces for real youth leadership and voice. I guess I
5 want to ask both around participatory budgeting and
6 around student voter registration day, are there some
7 plans to make room for student leadership of those
8 processes so that we make sure we're not only
9 registering students to vote and having PB happen in
10 schools but that the... as we are developing those
11 processes that young people will have a leadership
12 role?

13 PHIL WEINBERG: Yeah, so participatory
14 budgeting without a doubt it's almost defined as
15 student leadership in many ways and we need to as we
16 develop how to do that well we need to look to you
17 honestly, who've led the way in the city around
18 participatory budgeting to make sure that we engage
19 the leaders in the community, the community of
20 schools to, to ensure that that process accesses
21 their thinking and, and their ideas and they are the
22 ones who will lead it, exactly as it happens with the
23 City Council... [cross-talk]

24 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: So, we have
25 some young people who have gotten active through PB

1
2 who I think would be great for you guys to be working
3 with as you're starting the process, there are great
4 external experts like participatory budgeting project
5 and obviously we need the involvement of principals
6 and teachers and administrators but I do think even
7 as you're setting it up and organizing it engaging
8 young people early not only as the people though
9 that'll be in the process and the schools but that
10 are helping you with the system design will be real
11 important and we're glad to help facilitate that...

12 [cross-talk]

13 PHIL WEINBERG: Appreciate it... [cross-
14 talk]

15 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: One of the
16 young women who asked the Mayor about doing PB in
17 schools at our Town Hall she's graduating from, from
18 high school but there's a... she's recruited a whole
19 set of sophomores and juniors and freshmen coming up
20 behind her so, I think that'd be good on the student
21 voter registration day as well to whether that's
22 developing a committee of young people. The more we
23 do to get young people involved in leading these
24 efforts the more likely they're really going to
25 resonate with their peers... [cross-talk]

1
2 PHIL WEINBERG: Right, well she's... if
3 she's taken the DCAS exam we'll, we'll hire her.

4 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: Alright, well...
5 one other question on student vote... student voter
6 registration day, I noticed that the goal is to
7 register every, you know eligible student, are we
8 tracking that in some way, do we know how many kids
9 registered, obviously there's challenge... not all of
10 our kids are eligible to register, what are we doing,
11 this kind of goes to the Chair's question about what
12 we're measuring?

13 PHIL WEINBERG: Sure, we, we will know.
14 The process as you are well aware is, is more
15 complicated than just having kids sign a piece of
16 paper and counting it, it's with the folks who are
17 verifying the eligibility of students now and we'll
18 have an announcement soon around the numbers.

19 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: And so,
20 you'll, you'll give some report on how many kids
21 registered and, and roughly how many you think are
22 eligible to register so we'll know how far we have to
23 go?

1
2 PHIL WEINBERG: We'll give you how many
3 registered not how many are eligible, we're not going
4 to ask students who are eligible or... [cross-talk]

5 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: Obviously we
6 don't want to, you know focus individually on
7 students and their eligibility and we don't want to
8 encourage kids who are not eligible to register but
9 obviously we don't know how well we're doing if we
10 don't have some sense of what... of what the target is...

11 PHIL WEINBERG: If we can make some
12 interpellation but we're not... we're going to
13 strenuously avoid trying to track how many students
14 are not... we don't want anyone to believe we ask for
15 that information, we don't want to have that
16 information.

17 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: Okay, I think
18 that's fair but then thinking about whether it's year
19 by year growth or what we're looking to achieve, you
20 know I think it's just an area where we need to have
21 some goals and I really appreciate that you share our
22 deep concern that we don't expose anybody to, to
23 risk. I noticed between the DOE and the DYCD
24 testimony one interesting difference D, DYCD's work
25 around civic engagement really does... is done in

1
2 partnership with and relies on and leans on community
3 based and nonprofit and civic organizations, they're...
4 that's not part of the DOE's testimony, obviously you
5 do a lot of work in the classrooms and through the
6 schools but is there... at least in my experience those
7 organizations are just essential so do you have some
8 way through FACE or at the DOE of, you know knowing
9 who you, your partners are in the civic... world of
10 civic engagement who are helping get that work done?

11 PHIL WEINBERG: We're meeting with folks
12 now as we develop out... as we... as we build out all the
13 entirety of the program, some of the partners are
14 partners some that you just named but we're... we are
15 creating curricula in concert with school staff but
16 also with external partners.

17 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: It'd be great
18 to get... you know, know who those folks are for us to
19 have the opportunity to kind of make sure everybody's
20 on the list... [cross-talk]

21 PHIL WEINBERG: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

22 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: ...obviously we
23 want things in the classroom so the role of teachers
24 in the sort of normal DOE course of business is great
25 but I think there are a wonderful set of partners

1
2 doing this work and knowing who they are and helping
3 them connect with and communicate with each other and
4 really build a, a shared community of those.. of that
5 work would be... would be great so if we could, you
6 know, know who you guys are working with and make
7 sure we can get folks on the list and help encourage
8 that work.

9 PHIL WEINBERG: Great... [cross-talk]

10 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: Alright and
11 then I just want to turn finally to the.. to the PTA
12 legislation, so thank you both for, for doing that
13 civic engagement work and, and we're going to keep
14 pushing and, and supporting and partnering with it.
15 Mr. Chair I support the.. your PTA legislation, would
16 like to be added as a co-sponsor to the bill but the
17 back and forth you had raises for me I think some
18 bigger questions about how we conceptualize the, the,
19 the goals of the PTA, how we think they fit into the
20 departments, parent leadership and leadership
21 development and education and organizing work and,
22 and what we do to support them all and I, I guess
23 what I fear and I don't want to put this on the DOE
24 because I think this is on all of us and we know
25 there's very big... very big inequities in what those

1 PTAs are raising, there are schools in my district,
2 god bless them that are raising a million dollars a
3 year to support enrichment for their kids' education
4 but that the vast majority of schools in New York
5 City can't raise, you know anything meaningful from a
6 very low income parent base, that's part of why
7 promoting integration is important so we don't have
8 wealth disparities but we, we... I think we too often
9 act as though PTAs are enrichment piggy banks in
10 wealthy schools and unnecessary luxuries in poor ones
11 and surely that's not what, what we think or what we
12 want, I mean it seems to me they're supposed to be
13 vehicles to engage and support parent leadership and
14 parent organizing in support of their kid's education
15 because we want that in all schools regardless of the
16 income of the parents but I feel like this... kind of
17 a... this sort of like let's just leave them alone
18 philosophy, they're independent, we're not going to
19 kind of hold them up to the light or set shared goals
20 or think about how... I understand why FACE would not
21 want to lend it's time to like providing support to a
22 PTA that could raise a million dollars but that
23 shouldn't mean it isn't lending it's time to help
24 build a parent association in a low-income school
25

1 where they could be helping kids with math after
2 school. So, it, it doesn't feel like we currently
3 just have that... a good clear shared understanding of
4 what our collective goals as a system for PTA and
5 their part of parent engagement and parent organizing
6 are and then a system set up to honestly and
7 transparently track that so this bill isn't going to
8 get us all the way to that, I mean it would give us
9 some additional information which I think is good but
10 I just wonder, you know how you think about that and
11 what you think we might do together to, to move more
12 in that, more equal let's call it parent leadership
13 for all?

15 SHONA GIBSON: I, I am so glad that you
16 brought that up Council Member because one of the
17 things that I did not speak about earlier are the
18 supports that we from a central district and school-
19 based level do provide PTAs. For example, every PTA
20 as you know is part of school district, the
21 presidents of the PTAs are members of President's
22 councils which are district-based school leaders they
23 then in turn have the president of the president's
24 council be part of the Chancellor's Parental Advisory
25 Council, one of our Co-chairs is here today, we work

1
2 very closely with them at FACE level to talk about
3 issues just as you're raising, how do we raise the
4 level for everybody throughout the city. So, we have
5 a strong partnership with our parent leaders at all
6 levels, we work with them in terms of coaching and
7 professional development, I'm very anxious and eager
8 to hear any other suggestions or explore that
9 conversation because we have enjoyed a great
10 collaborative relationship with our parent leaders
11 and they are as concerned about the, the inequities
12 in the... in the city as we are but I did want to make
13 sure that it's not just a question of... we, we don't
14 get involved in their finances but we do support
15 their functionality and their ability to support
16 their school communities.

17 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: So, I think
18 what I'll ask and I'll just end here and I think this
19 is actually for both the DOE and for the Chair and
20 I'm, I'm glad to, to be a partner although maybe you
21 could just do it together, let's... to me this
22 legislation and the... and the sentiments behind it
23 maybe we could use them as a starting point for
24 imagining if we had parent leadership for all as an
25 initiative as you guys often have with your equity

2 initiatives, what, what would that look like and how...
3 what would it metric... it's metrics be and how would
4 we measure it and how could we head in that direction
5 so that we're looking at sure, what support we're
6 giving, I mean we know there's a parent coordinator
7 in every school but that doesn't mean we know what
8 support is really going to parent leadership
9 development and organizing, what's taking place in
10 those schools and yes we can't track every time a
11 parent is in there doing a before school math
12 tutoring session but there's got to be some way we
13 can think about how we're providing that support
14 across the system and then I do think we should just
15 be honest about the resources like it doesn't help
16 our efforts for equity to just close our eyes to them
17 so we won't love the public report that comes out
18 when we first provide public information on what's
19 being raised and spent in some schools and not others
20 but speaking as the representative of a school that's
21 actually able to... you know a district where a lot of
22 parents are able to raise and spend a lot even for my
23 parents we should do that, we, we can't build an
24 honest system of trying to achieve parent leadership
25 for all by just kind of closing our eyes to those

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2 get, you know the, the dance team their uniforms and
3 they, they rely on the broader community just to
4 support that effort. I don't think a school that
5 raises a million dollars might have that issue and I
6 think what Councilman Lander is trying to get at is
7 that, you know... you know FSF was born out of a law
8 suit from the state that the state has not been
9 addressing the highest needs districts across the
10 state of New York in terms of schools, schools and to
11 create some sort of a, a base amount... a base... a, a
12 formula to, to better meet the needs of high, high
13 needs districts. I do think the DOE does have some
14 role to play here to help support all schools
15 regardless of the capacity to raise a million dollars
16 or raise only 500 dollars to help build some
17 capacity, it's not just in terms of engagement but as
18 we've pointed out going back to the civics part
19 councilman some of these clubs I've talked about
20 whether... there's, there's a debate team, whether
21 there's, you know other... some of them are funded
22 through efforts through PTAs, I know that, I speak to
23 folks in the system but if a school does not have
24 those types of additional resources which the DOE
25 quite frankly should be providing that limits the

1
2 opportunities for those students and, and so I think
3 that the purpose of this is just to have
4 transparency, just to see where there are these deep
5 inequities and how can the DOE help create a based
6 support for all school communities regardless of, of
7 their zip code... [cross-talk]

8 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: Can I just add
9 one... [cross-talk]

10 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Yes, please..
11 [cross-talk]

12 COMMITTEE MEMBER LANDER: ...little point,
13 I meant to, to just say this earlier, we... there's a
14 great online resource called PTA link dot org created
15 by parents from PTAs that does some work with the..
16 with the DOE that looks to be a resource for PTA
17 partnerships and I think is mindful of many of the
18 issues that you're talking about so I would just
19 encourage that we kind of connect with and engage
20 them as we continue with this process, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Council
22 Member Levin.

23 COMMITTEE MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you. I
24 want to thank the Chairs and... I, I just want to kind
25 of follow up in this line of questioning, this

1 discussion because, you know I represent a district
2 that we say has pockets of poverty, we got... we have
3 schools that are... have adjacent zones that have
4 wildly disparate abilities to raise PTA money and
5 its... and it's just kind of the, the status quo that's
6 the way it is and I mean I like to... I, I, I went one
7 time... there was one evening I went to a PTA fund... I
8 went to two PTA fundraisers in adjacent school zones,
9 I went to one that was... raised about 25,000 dollars
10 and then the next one I went to raised 250 dollars
11 and that on its face presents a serious challenge in
12 terms of equity in our system and it perpetuates long
13 term inequities in our system and I think that... I
14 mean I'm, I'm, I'm open to what we... you know
15 progressive ideas of how we can create some further
16 equity within the system but I, I agree that this
17 bills an, an important step in that in getting some
18 clarity, I mean I, I had a former staff member who
19 was very focused on this issue, just sent me a... the
20 inside school's story that shows that, you know of
21 the 19... of the 50 wealthiest PTAs in the country 19
22 of them are here in New York City, some of them are
23 in my district and, you know these translate... these
24 funds raised translate to, to, to real opportunities,
25

1
2 real opportunities that the kids in the PTA.. in the
3 schools where the PTAs are not able to raise that
4 money don't have those opportunities. So, I'm just..
5 how, how would this administration like to approach
6 and this might have already been asked but how, how
7 does this... how does this administration, how would we
8 like to approach what we know on the ground to be
9 serious inequities in this... in, in the ability of
10 schools and its... and it's nothing against the school,
11 the school that, that raised 250 dollars is, is
12 really... it's a... it's a blue ribbon school, it's a..
13 it's a national blue ribbon school, it's a fabulous
14 school, it's a school that you all love, I know you
15 all love and, and its nothing against the PTA other
16 than the fact that the parents don't have the money
17 to donate to this PTA?

18 PHIL WEINBERG: I'm... I don't quite know
19 how to answer the question, I'd love to know what
20 you... as you came away from those two school visits
21 what you thought we should do.

22 COMMITTEE MEMBER LEVIN: I mean one idea
23 is to... is to create the kind of progressive taxation
24 essentially on, on PTAs and if they earn a certain..
25 you know if they have a, a... you know accounts of

1
2 greater than 100,000 dollars a certain amount is
3 required to be donated and 200,000 another certain
4 amount is required to be donated up to a million
5 dollars, I know that's one... that's one idea that was
6 floated to me.

7 PHIL WEINBERG: Sounds like a legislative
8 idea, yeah.

9 COMMITTEE MEMBER LEVIN: It does sound
10 like a legislative idea but I'm, I'm just wondering
11 what... I mean that's, that's a pretty serious step to
12 do something like that, what, what else are we really
13 doing and what are some good ideas out there, I mean
14 are there best practices in other cities, you know
15 how, how, how do we want to approach this because it
16 really... status quo is just perpetuating inequity in
17 our city?

18 SUSAN HASKELL: I'd like to just say
19 something quickly as part of your response because I
20 think there's a connection between what you're
21 talking about and the school resources and the
22 investment in, in youth services and this
23 administration has significantly increased the
24 resources for after school programs and enrichment
25 activities and many times young people who might go

1
2 to schools that can fundraise over six figures have
3 access to private enrichment opportunities but I
4 think our role at DYCD is to make sure that all young
5 people get access to those kinds of services you
6 mentioned, costumes for dance teams and boy did we
7 see some amazing costumes funded through the Beacon
8 and COMPASS programs in our Step it Up competition, I
9 mean I think that's a key role that we play, it's the
10 same students and very often the programs are located
11 in schools so we are able to contribute to access to
12 enrichment activities through the DYCD funded
13 programs and I just wanted to offer that up as like
14 part... it's a citywide approach, it's the school day
15 but then an after school I think that is... a key
16 component of our goal is to make sure all young
17 people can participate in those fantastic after
18 school activities.

19 COMMITTEE MEMBER LEVIN: Beyond that, I
20 mean I remember... I mean... I mean... I'm interested in... I
21 mean obviously DYCD has, has been a major partner and
22 I applaud this administration for its, it's
23 incredible investment in after school programming, I
24 thank this council especially our chairs for
25 advocating for increased funding for COMPASS and

1
2 SONYC, in particular summer SONYC, thank you Debi
3 Rose but I... but I am really... I'm, I'm... I mean around
4 the PTA question it's, it's a tough one, I mean look
5 the fact of the matter is if I look at that... if I
6 look at that list of the 19 schools two are in my
7 district and another four or so are right around my
8 district, I know these schools, I know them well, I
9 have constituents who go to those schools, I realize
10 this is an issue that people would be very resistant
11 to doing something where they're forced to share
12 their... the, the funds that they raised but I just
13 don't know how else we can really get to some
14 meaningful, meaningful achievements here.

15 PHIL WEINBERG: Are there... do you things
16 in other cities?

17 SHONA GIBSON: I again would love to
18 explore this further. One thing that I, I would like
19 to point out that along with Chair Treyger money is
20 not the sole purpose of a parent teacher association
21 or a parent association their purpose is to support
22 the school community and there are many, many ways
23 that they are able to do that. One thing... [cross-
24 talk]

25

1
2 COMMITTEE MEMBER LEVIN: I mean... [cross-
3 talk]

4 SHONA GIBSON: ...and, and to your point
5 about sharing best practices and Councilman Lander's
6 parent leadership for all we do very much appreciate
7 the, the leadership of the parent leaders that we
8 have in president's council, in CPAC in helping us
9 think through these issues... [cross-talk]

10 COMMITTEE MEMBER LEVIN: But money... but
11 money matters, I mean if money didn't matter then,
12 then some of these PTAs wouldn't have half a million
13 dollars, it's not just because they feel like giving
14 money that they need a tax write off, they're doing
15 it because they want to support their schools with
16 real resources, money... [cross-talk]

17 SHONA GIBSON: And I, I... [cross-talk]

18 COMMITTEE MEMBER LEVIN: ...is resources...
19 [cross-talk]

20 SHONA GIBSON: ...I'm not going to disagree
21 that there is inequity in the affluence of
22 communities throughout New York City and that it is
23 reflected in some of the school communities. As
24 Deputy Chancellor Weinberg said a progressive
25 taxation or a, a thing like that would... is not framed

1 funds that are generated are reflections of the
2 limitations or the excess of the families that are in
3 that school. In my district where I'm representing
4 the council, the 42nd district there are 50 percent
5 of the people who earn less than 25,000 dollars
6 annual income so they don't have excess income, you
7 know throw away... disposable income and they're
8 challenged but we don't think that the students
9 should be deprived of having these opportunities that
10 these extra funds provide and I, I like the, the idea
11 that my colleague has offered about if I heard him
12 right taking all of this money, putting it in a pot
13 and giving it out perhaps as one base level to all
14 schools and then as the need... a factor of need so
15 that students can get the ability to do more than
16 just what the classroom curriculum provides for them.
17 So, I think that we need to address that issue, we
18 need to find a way, we need to be creative and find a
19 way to make it happen because it's another measure
20 and another indicator of the injustice that poor and
21 black communities are subjected to because of the
22 inequities in job opportunities, work opportunities,
23 health and housing opportunities and their being able
24 to not have the access to the income of other
25

1 families in other communities and I think that we can
2 become very creative. This council has demonstrated a
3 lot of its ability to be creative and we look forward
4 to working with you and someone did mention, it's
5 another important piece beside... I'm always going to
6 talk about the money, that is a given but besides
7 that the opportunity for parents to come together to
8 be able to have parent workshops, be able to find out
9 how the system really works and be able to find out
10 what opportunities do exist is another important
11 feature and just because there are low numbers at the
12 attendance doesn't mean that people are not
13 interested in what's going on, every parent wants
14 better for their child than what they had and if
15 parents are working two and three jobs and if they
16 don't have the car fair to get to where this next
17 meeting is although we're doing better with that
18 because they'll be able to pay half fair but that's
19 not an indication that parents are not concerned
20 about what's going on with their children and so I
21 look forward to working with you to see how we can
22 get some equity in regards to the funds that are able
23 to be distributed to different schools, all the
24 schools in the city. Thank you.
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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. Thank you.
Council Member Dromm you didn't have a question?
Okay, thank you. Thank you, so I just want to revisit
DYCD, a couple of questions that we needed some
information for the record and you have like three
premier programs that are civic engagement around
civic engagement; Teen Action, the Mayor's Youth
Leadership Council and Neighborhood Development Areas
that... they're programs that you would say were
basically civic engagement directed programs?

DARRYL RATTRAY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay, so I just need
some information about them. So, according to the
data in city open data base, January 5th, 2018 there
was a report that 59 facilities throughout New York
City offered the Teen Action program for youth 13 to
21 years old, has this number increased or decreased?

DARRYL RATTRAY: So, Teen... let's look at
Teen Action as two different components one...
originally, we had a funded component of Teen Action...
[cross-talk]

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

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2 DARRYL RATTRAY: ...in that design we
3 created a curriculum, teens achieving change together
4 in our neighborhoods... [cross-talk]

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

6 DARRYL RATTRAY: ...what, what that number
7 is, is the programs that are implementing that
8 curriculum I believe in that report so we, we no
9 longer fund Teen Action programs... [cross-talk]

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

11 DARRYL RATTRAY: ...but it's, it's
12 integrated in the work that we do with all of our
13 mentoring sites, with our youth councils, with our
14 core programing.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, have you seen an...
16 is there... has the numbers remained level in terms of
17 activity?

18 DARRYL RATTRAY: They've increased
19 because we've increased our programing portfolio so
20 now we, we have more programs doing civic engagement
21 across the SONYC programs, across our Beacons, across
22 our Cornerstone sites, we've also increased our
23 approach of partnerships and the more we see programs
24 brought together in neighborhoods the more they do

1
2 civic engagement activities with their young people
3 and young adults.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And then what
5 communities in terms of demographics or socioeconomic
6 status have you seen the most impact of these
7 programs and is there a noticeable difference in
8 certain communities as compared to others?

9 DARRYL RATTRAY: Wow, it's, it's an... it's
10 an interesting question because if I'm in Far
11 Rockaway and the young people decided that because of
12 gun violence that they're going to... the youth
13 council's going to help organize a sleepover in the
14 community center for the neighborhood and in that
15 community center during that sleepover I, I actually
16 attended ... we didn't stay the night but Council
17 Member Richards were... was at the sleepover, we were
18 there till about midnight or one o' clock in the
19 morning but young people were having discussions and
20 workshops around stopping the violence in Far
21 Rockaway compared to the example in Williamsburg
22 where young people wanted to take back the park, we,
23 we see these activities happening across the city,
24 it's hard to measure whether there was an uptick in
25 any one neighborhood, that's something that we can go

1
2 back and take a look at to see if there measurement
3 points to that but we see it across the entire city.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Would you say most of
5 your programs are in... what socioeconomic base...

6 [cross-talk]

7 SUSAN HASKELL: Overwhelmingly we're
8 serving a higher needs population so if you think
9 about our Cornerstone community centers are embedded
10 in NYCHA developments, our Beacon community centers
11 are located in schools of higher need, our COMPASS
12 program, a good chunk of them were located in target
13 zip codes, we have an RFP out for those programs
14 right now and we did have our high school programs in
15 high needs schools, we had an expansion of middle
16 school program for... toward the goal of universal
17 access and when we began the launch of that SONYC
18 initiative we looked at... we looked at the zip codes,
19 the home zip codes of the young people... the
20 expansion... the, the young people who participated in
21 like the expanded access to middle school after
22 school programs... [cross-talk]

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

24 SUSAN HASKELL: ...and we learned that the
25 majority of them were from low income zip codes, so

1
2 we feel very confident that we're reaching young
3 people in need.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, is the
5 distribution equitable throughout the entire, you
6 know service... New York City area or what is the...
7 what's the distribution based on?

8 SUSAN HASKELL: Geographic and equitable
9 distribution is like the foundation of any... [cross-
10 talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: It is equitable...
12 [cross-talk]

13 SUSAN HASKELL: ...awards that we're making
14 so we'll... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, there's a per
16 student rate that, you know you've kind of put into
17 the formula?

18 SUSAN HASKELL: I would say more that we
19 look at community diversification so that when we
20 have an initiative and we're funding it we want to
21 make sure that we touch all parts of New York City
22 and that we're touching the higher needs areas
23 geographically.

24

25

1 the youth leadership activities that are happening
2 that positive peer relationships are happening with
3 caring adults and we, we are under... our, our
4 understanding is that if a young person is
5 participating in a high quality program that they are
6 going to develop into the kinds of leaders that we've
7 been discussing.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And so those, those
10 sorts of measurables are what drives the resource
11 distribution for, for your programing?

12 SUSAN HASKELL: I would say that our...
13 the... what drives where our resources go is where the
14 most need is, I would say that more so than... [cross-
15 talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Based on what need...
17 what, what, what metrics are you using to determine...
18 [cross-talk]

19 SUSAN HASKELL: Very often... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...need... [cross-talk]

21 SUSAN HASKELL: ...it's, it's income,
22 sometimes it's numbers of young... youth population in
23 a certain age group in that geographic area, it's
24 looking for equity across the city so that all of our
25 resources aren't overwhelmingly in one borough, that,

2 that they're distributed fairly across the city, that
3 we've hit different council districts, community
4 districts, we've looked at areas where there are high
5 numbers of young people leaving foster care for some
6 of our more vulnerable populations and as you
7 discussed NDA are in areas that are in anti-poverty
8 for, for areas of very low income.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: In your Mayor's Youth
10 Leadership Councils the... they help to drive some
11 policy issues, could you talk about those?

12 DARRYL RATTRAY: So, these are 20 young
13 adults who were trained, they go out to ten hubs
14 throughout the city... [cross-talk]

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

16 DARRYL RATTRAY: ...at the hubs... at one hub
17 location... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And the hubs are
19 located where?

20 DARRYL RATTRAY: These are... the hubs are
21 located in Beacon and our Cornerstone programs.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay...

23 DARRYL RATTRAY: And youth, youth
24 councils from... throughout that neighborhood they come
25 together into the hubs to discuss the community

1
2 issues, what they want to focus on. Two points, one
3 the, the Mayor's Youth Leadership Council has
4 rebranded itself as my Brothers and Sisters Keepers
5 Youth Council, the council decided on that and they
6 took a vote, but they look at issues throughout the
7 neighborhood. One issue that came up across the city
8 was community police and teen relations and we
9 started... they, they've activated discussions,
10 workshops with the community, with police officers to
11 help mend... immediate some of that concern.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And do you feel that
13 you have adequate resources for, for the programs
14 that are promoting civic engagement in our
15 communities?

16 DARRYL RATTRAY: Yes, more though is good
17 but yes, we have adequate resources, one thing that
18 we do at DYCD is that we know that the, the budgets
19 for providers, nonprofits is limited, and they do a
20 great job with the funding we give them, but we also
21 create these larger citywide opportunities that they
22 can tap into so now you have programs across the city
23 able to say look, there's a... I mean Step it Up is a
24 great example, we have a dance team that's just a
25 dance team that just comes to practice now that dance

1 team can connect through citywide initiative, culming
2 it at the Apollo, culming it at BAM, part of the
3 dance team's efforts, 50 percent is your performance
4 the other 50 percent is your social campaign, this
5 year was anti bullying, now that dance team becomes
6 leaders within that community, leaders within that,
7 that, that fold, that resonates citywide through our
8 social media, that resonates locally to parents who
9 are coming out to participate, people who..
10 disconnected youth who see what's happening in their
11 community, they're all engaged, all connected and of
12 course we have the culmination which is amazing.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And do you think that
15 you're in all of the communities that you, you need
16 to be in, are there gaps in, in service... [cross-talk]

17 SUSAN HASSELL: We do.. we look really
18 closely about the geographic distribution to make
19 sure that it's equitable and I encourage anybody
20 who's interested in knowing what resources are
21 available in that community to go to discover.. google
22 discover DYCD, you can put in your community and find
23 out what local services there are for young people;
24 high school, middle school, elementary school,
25 leadership opportunities, community centers, SYEP,

1
2 recruitments sites, we want to make sure that people
3 can find out where the resources are and that app
4 will help make that information available.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And my last question,
6 is there a correlation with your civic engagement
7 programs and DOE curriculum?

8 SUSAN HASKELL: We are excited to, to
9 support DOE in their efforts to launch these civics
10 for all curriculum and the other activities that we
11 just... that we spoke about, the Participatory
12 Budgeting and in voting drives so we definitely look
13 forward to working together to see how we can support
14 that in the out of school time hours.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: That's great, so
16 there's a commitment to engage in participatory
17 budgeting in our after school and our programs?

18 DARRYL RATTRAY: Absolutely a commitment
19 and they've been doing that already, so we have
20 examples across the city. I actually attended... we had
21 a DYCD spring into health and there was participatory
22 budgeting happening where young adults, young people
23 were at that event.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Is that happening
25 citywide or... [cross-talk]

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SUSAN HASKELL: I think we... there's a couple of things going on because DOE has this new participatory budgeting process which is really exciting for students to make change in their schools and then DYCD is making efforts to tap into the larger citywide participatory budgeting processes of council so we have held some sessions as I mentioned in my testimony with DYCD staff so we understand what is going on in communities with participatory budgeting so we can provide that support to them, that's a mouthful participatory budgeting, to our community based providers and then at the youth leadership conference that we had we invited provider staff to come and learn what's happening in the communities and I think what happens in the schools is going to be a primer for the young people to take that... those action steps in their community with their council members and..

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, I'm going to look forward to working with you in our participatory budgeting process next year. And I want to thank you, is there... Mark...

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Yeah, I just have some... just two wrap up questions, just to wrap

1
2 up on the issue of the civic engagement piece, Deputy
3 Chancellor do you believe that there are, off the top
4 of your head or your knowledge or experience, do you
5 believe that, there, there, there are any
6 chancellor's regulations or state regulations or
7 guidance that limits or restricts the level of
8 engagement in school communities?

9 PHIL WEINBERG: I'd be surprised if there
10 were restrictions on the engagement. The restrictions
11 are who can come into schools, fingerprint that kind
12 of stuff.

13 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Have... you've
14 never heard of cases in schools where school
15 officials were encouraged or discouraged from talking
16 about issues, hot topic items, political issues that
17 are very relevant to today's world?

18 PHIL WEINBERG: If we're talking about
19 one offs where people might have been nervous about a
20 conversation there's 1,800 schools and we've been in...
21 we've had schools for 150 years, you know there are
22 regulations that limit speech in our schools, there
23 are laws around... limiting the freedom of speech in
24 schools in different ways than, than in public
25 because of the ways in which there can be movement

1
2 to kind of limit our, our students, of course it has
3 to be safe, it has to be, you know constructive and
4 productive but I, I don't want a school community to
5 feel nervous about talking about these items and...
6 because it does lead to... it should lead to action, it
7 should lead to next steps... [cross-talk]

8 PHIL WEINBERG: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

9 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: ...and so I, I
10 would appreciate, you know making sure that we can
11 work together to make sure that we expand capacity
12 and... for further engagement and the final question I
13 have about the PTA issue is that is there currently
14 any base floor amount of support that we provide to
15 all PTAs in New York City like does every PTA get a
16 certain amount of money?

17 PHIL WEINBERG: No...

18 SHONA GIBSON: No, the... we do not provide
19 certain base financial support to PTA, we provide
20 support in terms of having a person in the school
21 called a parent coordinator who helps the PTA, we
22 have online resources, we provide training, we have a
23 Chancellor's regulation, we have a person at the
24 district level who can support higher level issues
25 with PTAs, but I don't think... [cross-talk]

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2 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Is... was, was
3 there ever a base amount provided to PTAs in DOE
4 history or Board of Ed history?

5 SHONA GIBSON: Not to my knowledge but I
6 would have to get back to you on that.

7 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Deputy
8 Chancellor are you aware of any history where some
9 base amount was provided to every PTA?

10 PHIL WEINBERG: My recollection from the
11 past 34 years is no but I would... it's not my area of
12 expertise.

13 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: And do you
14 believe that, that the DOE would consider providing
15 some base level support to all PTAs regardless of
16 their zip code and, and their fundraising capacity?

17 PHIL WEINBERG: I think it's a
18 complicated issue but if you're providing funding
19 we'd happily talk about it.

20 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Well, I mean
21 this is... again I want to be very clear, fundraising
22 totals do not determine engagement because engagement
23 takes many shapes and forms and all communities are
24 engaged in, in some form and fashion and we
25 appreciate our families and our parents but if a

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2 school community could raise over a million dollars
3 on top of what the school receives already that does
4 impact the level of... or the number of opportunities
5 for, for the students in that building and I
6 celebrate and appreciate those communities that have
7 that type of capacity but I am concerned that the...
8 that the DOE is not doing enough to make sure that
9 that level of opportunity is not shared across the
10 board because if I follow along with the Mayor's, you
11 know excellence in Equity for All I want to make sure
12 that that is felt in every zip code in New York City
13 so I thank very much the panel, if any of my
14 colleagues have an additional follow up questions, my
15 Co-chair you can close it out.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Well I'd like to thank
17 this panel for your... wow, where did that come from..
18 I'd like to thank you all for your testimony and
19 your, your answers and I can assure you there's going
20 to be more follow up in regard to the PTA legislation
21 and thank you for being here and we're going to call
22 the next panel. Thank you.

23 [off-mic dialogue]

24 COMMITTEE CLERK: Erik Joerss, New York
25 City Charter School Center; Laura Jankstrom, Citizens

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2 Committee for Child.. for Child Care; Viviana Perez,
3 Democracy Prep Public Schools; Marco Battistella,
4 CAPC, Co-Chair; Reyes Claudio, Brilla Public Charter
5 Schools.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Are we going to set
7 the clock, we're going to set three minutes.

8 [off-mic dialogue]

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Okay, is everyone
10 there? Okay, I'm just going to read the names again
11 Erik Joerss, New York City Charter School Center;
12 Laura Jankstrom, Citizens Committee for Child Care;
13 Viviana Perez, Democracy Prep Public Schools; Marco
14 Battistella, CPAC and Reyes Claudio, Brilla Public
15 Charter Schools. From CPAC, Marco Battistella, oh
16 okay, sorry about that. Okay and we don't..

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, you can begin your
18 testimony, please state your name and you can begin.

19 ERIK JOERSS: Good afternoon, my name is
20 Erik Joerss, I work for the New York City Charter
21 School Center. Thank you for the opportunity here to
22 testify. I'm going to be very, very brief as we're
23 not a school but an organization that supports
24 schools, this civic engagement on the ground isn't
25 something that we do a heck of... a heck of a lot of

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2 other than to support schools and one thing I'll
3 mention is after hurricane Maria we were able to help
4 organize the charter sector to deliver ten tons of
5 goods down to Puerto Rico and again credit to the
6 schools, we mainly to help facilitate. In terms of
7 legislation we are supportive of Intro 672 to
8 disseminate materials on civil service examinations,
9 we would just like to make sure that the kids who
10 attend charter public schools have access to those...
11 to those materials as well and that is all I have to
12 say.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you so much, I
14 didn't even... [cross-talk]

15 ERIK JOERSS: You're welcome... [cross-
16 talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...have to invoke the
18 three minute, everyone will have three minutes for
19 their testimony...

20 ERIK JOERSS: I like... I cede the rest of
21 my time.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you, next.

23 VIVIANA PEREZ: Hi, my name is Viviana
24 Perez and I'm the Civics Program Director at
25 Democracy Prep Public Schools and I'd like to thank

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1
2 you for the opportunity to have me here today. As you
3 may gather from our name our charter network has a
4 focus on civics education. We have a mission of
5 educating responsible citizen scholars for success in
6 the college of their choice and a life of active
7 citizenship. We focus on civics education and have a
8 multifaceted approach to do so, all of our students
9 at all of our campuses engage in get out of the boat
10 campaigns every year. They also engage in lobbying
11 and political participation as well as a day of
12 community service. As young as kindergarten our
13 students are out on the street on election day
14 encouraging people to vote, it's always nonpartisan
15 and our older students conduct voter registration
16 drives. In the 2016 election we registered over 300
17 people to vote here in the city. For political
18 participation again, it's important to note that it's
19 nonpartisan, we encourage them to contact their
20 elected representatives for anything that is of
21 importance to them so some of you may have received
22 letters from them in the past. We also take kids who
23 participate in charter school advocacy day in Albany
24 as well as the voter day May. So, each year hundreds
25 of our students participate in that and then our day

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2 of community service our little ones are out there in
3 community gardens beautifying their environment and
4 our older students have a say in what they do, and
5 they choose opportunities as diverse as working with
6 the friends of Van Cortlandt Park, local food banks
7 and senior centers and they really love working with
8 preschool children. Additionally, we have school-
9 based opportunities that a staff member at each of
10 our schools is responsible for. This past year we
11 raised over 5,000 dollars for the hurricane relief
12 across all of our schools. We've had countless coat
13 drives, lessons on suicide and proposals to amend our
14 school rules, we're really pushing scholar choice and
15 voice in having them have a say in the community.
16 We've seen... as we mentioned... or your council members
17 mentioned earlier our students were also inspired by
18 the activism at Parkland and they hosted many
19 different walk outs. It was really empowering to see
20 them do that. There is so much more that they do. We
21 also have graduation requirements for them, they have
22 to master different civic skills, they also have
23 volunteer graduation... volunteer hour requirements. I
24 have been very fortunate to work with our students as
25 they visit the nation's capital, our capital and

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2 watch them engage with elected representatives. I've
3 also had countless alumni contact me to talk about
4 the election, they're really interested in knowing
5 what's going on in their community back home and then
6 telling me what they're doing and how they're often
7 leading voter registration drives at their college
8 campuses and our community service is always one of
9 the most impactful opportunities for students. They
10 often talk about how it has really helped them. so,
11 they really enjoy the community service and it's
12 given them different opportunities to think about
13 what they want they want to do with their lives as
14 well.

15 REYES CLAUDIO: Thank you for the
16 opportunity to speak today. My name is Reyes Claudio
17 and I am the Network Director of Operations at Brilla
18 Public Charter Schools located in the South Bronx. I
19 am also a proud mother of three boys under the age of
20 eight, one of which currently attends Brilla and
21 another whom will attend this August. I often think
22 about the life choices they will make as teenagers
23 and how it will or break them as adults. My hope as
24 an administrator in an educational institution is to
25 inspire, inspire our students to a path of higher

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2 education, realize their potential and the... and make
3 an investment in the betterment of their future and
4 communities. We are building tomorrows leaders and
5 leaders serve different roles in communities. The
6 reality with all that children face is that college
7 isn't the only path our students will end up taking.
8 The goal is to give every student the opportunity to
9 attend and graduate college if, if that is their
10 desire and path. For the other students that for
11 countless reasons have different paths what are we
12 doing? This bill will not only guarantee anything...
13 will not guarantee anything for anyone that doesn't
14 want it but what it will do is increase student
15 awareness of civil service exams, making potential
16 employment information more accessible and encourages
17 students to pursue an alternative path of employment.
18 Our students attend public charter schools, the key
19 word being public. They deserve to have the same
20 information shared with them about these
21 opportunities as high school students graduating from
22 DOE schools. I ask you to treat not only my children
23 equally but all children attending public charter
24 schools. Thank you.

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2 LAURA JANKSTROM: Good afternoon... is this
3 on... good afternoon. My name is Laura Jankstrom and
4 I'm the Director of Civic Engagement Programs at
5 Citizens' Committee for Children. Thank you for
6 holding today's hearing on youth civic engagement
7 opportunities. COMMITTEE CLERK appreciates the
8 measures that that Council Members undertake in their
9 districts to provide opportunities for youth civic
10 engagement including voter registration efforts,
11 engaging youth in participatory budgeting and local
12 community boards, offering internships to high school
13 and college students and other discreet efforts by
14 members and committees to increase youth input and
15 participation. We also appreciate the
16 administration's commitment to increasing
17 opportunities for young people through the Civics for
18 All initiative, DYCD Youth Councils, DOE borough
19 student advisory councils and NYC Service Youth
20 Leadership Councils. Finally, I want to thank the
21 youth of NYC whose leadership and ability to find new
22 solutions to old problems inspire me every day. The
23 current political landscape has led to an increased
24 awareness of politics and youth voice and it is
25 critical that we harness this. In addition to being

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1
2 vital to our democracy, civic engagement also
3 contributes to individual wellbeing. All forms of
4 civic engagement are positively associated with
5 subsequent income and educational attainment for
6 youth. Civic engagement opportunities... and for youth
7 civic engagement opportunities develop leadership and
8 problem-solving skills and foster team work,
9 connection to community and youth adult partnership.
10 In 1999, COMMITTEE CLERKC developed the Youth Action
11 program for New York City high school students
12 through which we offer a rigorous introduction to
13 local civic life and experiential training to equip
14 students with advocacy tools. An important component
15 of our Youth Action programming is when the youth get
16 to meet with elected and appointed officials and
17 their staff. It is hard to overstate the profound
18 effect that these meetings have on young people
19 especially when youth realize that their leaders are
20 people who are just like them with diverse
21 experiences and struggles that youth growing up here
22 can relate to. Young people often leave these
23 meetings with a profoundly different more positive
24 view of government than they had going in as well as
25 a sense of their own agency as citizens. We want to

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1
2 thank the city council and administration for giving
3 our young people a seat at the table and we look
4 forward to future meetings with you. in recent years
5 our Youth Action members have played a critical role
6 in advancing specific policy measures including
7 increased funding for SYEP, the passage of Raise the
8 Age New York, Universal School Meals, expanded after
9 school and summer programs, increased capacity for
10 the RHY system and more. Last fall one of our Youth
11 Action cohorts conducted research on youth civic
12 engagement opportunities that are supported by the
13 New York City Council and administration specifically
14 looking at BSACs, YLCs, Participatory Budgeting and
15 community boards. COMMITTEE CLERK's recommendations
16 support those that the youth developed and are
17 further informed by our involvement in two working
18 groups that have been convened to address the topic
19 of youth civic engagement and those recommendations
20 are that New York City schools should educate
21 students about city and state government as well as
22 the federal government, that the Department of
23 Education and NYC Service should strengthen their
24 outreach efforts to get more youth involved in BSACs
25 and YLCs. Of the 230-youth surveyed by our

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2 participants less than three percent had ever
3 participated in a BSAC or a YLC. I have just two
4 more. All Council Members should participate... should
5 participate in Participatory Budgeting and allow
6 youth to be a part of the process and public hearings
7 related to youth issues should whenever possible be
8 held when school is not in session so that youth can
9 weigh in. Thank you.

10 MARCO BATTISTELLA: Hello, how are you?
11 My name is Marco Battistella, I'm the Chair... the Co-
12 chair of the Parent, Parent... of the Chancellor's
13 Parent Advisory Council so effectively represent all
14 PA and PTAs in... of the city... of public schools in
15 this... public schools in the city. I give you a
16 written statement that comes from the executive board
17 of CPAC, I'm not going to go and read it, there is no
18 point in that I'd rather, rather prefer to make a few
19 comments based on the testimony we heard from, from
20 the DOE as well as comment that, that you made. So,
21 the first thing I'd like to say is we feel we need to
22 maybe collaborate more with you to work because the,
23 the feeling that most parents... the... with whom I share
24 the, the written laws when it felt there is not
25 enough understanding of what a PA/PTA is in this law,

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2 that's our feeling whether that's true or not is, is
3 a... is a different... is a different story and so we
4 feel like we want to invite you to come to our
5 meetings when... if you want to explain what you want
6 to reach and discuss directly with, with the PA/PTA
7 leaders what are the goals and also hear from, from
8 them what their suggestions might be in terms of how
9 to achieve the permanent goals. A few things that I
10 noticed in, in the testimony it looks like the only..
11 about three million dollars actually are raised by
12 PA/PTAs, I did not have this number but the testimony
13 was that the average is about 2,000 times about 60
14 other schools that make it a little bit over three
15 million, or maybe my math is wrong or maybe I did.. or
16 maybe I misheard the, the testimony but that was a
17 little surprise I actually expected it to be a little
18 bit higher, not necessarily that much higher but I
19 expected it be higher but if that was the number that
20 would be actually 0.001 percent of DOE budget, a
21 very, very little amount or 0.5 percent of the
22 difference between funding all schools for... on self-
23 fund, funding compared to the 90 percent that most
24 schools are funded right now as well as its 0.5
25 percent of what the state is supposed to be giving

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2 every year to the school as coming to their company
3 from... so just, just to put things in perspective but
4 I also strive to... I like PTAs to be more about
5 empowering parents to advocate for the education of
6 the children. I don't want PTA to be fund raising
7 act... fund raising enterprises and I think that's
8 really the most important aspect that PA and PTA need
9 to be... to get supported, my fear is that when you
10 require the DOE to pass information then the DOE will
11 push down on PAs and say you are not going to become...
12 you cannot be official at PTA or a PA unless you
13 provide this information and then parents will feel
14 oh I cannot get involved or I cannot do this. I'm,
15 I'm here for questions.

16 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Yeah, thank
17 you very much for that, I really appreciate that and
18 what I heard the, the DOE testify was that the
19 average PTA fundraises somewhere in the amount of
20 1,000 dollars, they didn't give us the data as far as
21 every school, they do have... they did admit under oath
22 here that they collect that data and they have that
23 data but they did not tell us the breakdown, they did
24 tell us that some schools raise over million dollars
25 and... but most schools obviously they said do not and

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2 we are not asking for anything other than what they
3 already have to be transparent. So, this is... this
4 should... this is no... there should be no onus and we'll
5 make sure that the language is carefully tailored to
6 ensure that there's no, no burden placed on a PA or a
7 PTA whereat... the burden is on the DOE to just make
8 transparent what they already have collected and
9 that's basically it.

10 MARCO BATTISTELLA: If I can... [cross-
11 talk]

12 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Final response
13 then the next panel, yes.

14 MARCO BATTISTELLA: Just, just one
15 question I will have asked last is how many PTAs
16 actually report that information because I now... I
17 don't believe that the majority of PTA do report the
18 information, I'm pretty sure that the PTAs that do
19 collect a significant amount of money probably report
20 it but not all... I'm certain that not all PTAs report
21 this information and I want, want to make sure that
22 when you... if, if they are mandated to... don't make
23 them mandate to report something that they... anyway
24 was 200 dollars, if... [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Right. Right,
the, the... [cross-talk]

MARCO BATTISTELLA: What I... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: ...the
Chancellor's regulations already require principals
to report all fundraising activities for... at the
school or actually PTAs to the principal and then
provided to the superintendents so that's already
required, that's a... that's already a regulation...
[cross-talk]

MARCO BATTISTELLA: I... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: ...there's no
new regulation... [cross-talk]

MARCO BATTISTELLA: I'm not sure how, how
often they actually... if, if... [cross-talk]

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: That's a...
that's a different issue. Thank you very much,
thanks.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. I just want
to ask about... how did you get the money to take the
young people on trips or to Washington?

VIVIANA PEREZ: Before the budget
hearing... more of... oh thank you, that would be our
Office of the CEO who has knowledge of our budget, I

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2 don't have the intricacies of that, but I can get it
3 to you.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, you don't know if
5 it's through outside fundraising, internal
6 fundraising or a, a... [cross-talk]

7 VIVIANA PEREZ: It's not internal...
8 [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: ...sponsor... [cross-talk]

10 VIVIANA PEREZ: I'm sorry I cut you off,
11 it's not internal fundraising, the students do have
12 to pay a sliding scale which I know is based on need,
13 if they can't pay then they don't. I do know that we
14 don't do much external fund raising.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, if a... if a student
16 couldn't pay though there would be something put in
17 place where they would still be able to participate?

18 VIVIANA PEREZ: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Okay and, and you, you
20 were saying that with the DOE sponsored charter
21 schools that the information isn't shared, that you
22 do not get the same... [cross-talk]

23 REYES CLAUDIO: So, Erik can also help
24 with this question but... so in terms of for charter
25 schools not all information is shared or we're not

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2 held to the same exact regulations based on our
3 individual charters so... for me when I understood what
4 the bill was like I was in agreeance and wanted to
5 support it, I also wanted the voice to be heard that
6 like that will also be shared to charter schools as
7 well because we are public charter schools so our
8 students are in... do not pay to go to our schools it's
9 just a lottery process so I just wanted to make sure
10 that they were included in that.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I think that's very
12 important and speaking to the Chair of the Education
13 Committee that it, it seems if that's the case that
14 we're setting up two disparate systems where again
15 then equity becomes an issue so thank you for your,
16 your testimony, uh-huh.

17 ERIK JOERSS: I think part of where the..
18 part of where the issue may lie and it's not with an
19 individual but is structurally charter schools since
20 they operate outside the district structure don't
21 have the same, same requirements of reporting to New
22 York City, they report to their authorizers and I
23 think somewhere along the line that has been... from
24 the school side and from the council's side kind of a
25 lack of communication where the council thinks oh, we

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2 don't have oversight over this so we're not thought
3 of necessarily as part of the school family in the
4 same way and at times things that the students would
5 benefit from get left off the table, I think that we
6 don't interact as much and as well as, as we all
7 could, it'd be better if, if we all did a better job
8 around that.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And so, do you engage
10 in civic engagement sort of on the same level that
11 the public school does or is it a part of your
12 curriculum?

13 ERIK JOERSS: Tough to say, each charter
14 school is, you know kind of left to... left to their
15 own to decide how best to... provided they follow
16 health and safety laws... [cross-talk]

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

18 ERIK JOERSS: ...left to decide what's
19 appropriate for their curriculum but... [cross-talk]

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

21 ERIK JOERSS: ...yes, we have had schools
22 that do participate in participatory budgeting and we
23 have had schools... we do an... a lobby day and advocacy
24 day and a lot of our schools civic, civic activity is
25 part of... is part of the model and built into it.

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I thank you and thank
3 you all for staying and for testifying. We'll now
4 call the next panel.

5 ERIK JOERSS: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Okay, the next panel is
8 Denis Yu, Sophia Zheng, Andy Cai, Joseph Rogers and
9 Michael Rvadeneyra.

10 [off-mic dialogue]

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Alright, you can
12 identify yourself and you can begin your testimony.

13 JOSEPH ROGERS: My name is Joe Rogers.
14 Sorry, yeah. Good afternoon, thank you Chairs Rose,
15 Chair Treyger. My name is Joe Rogers and I'm here
16 representing the Center for Educational Equity at
17 Teachers College, Columbia University. In New York as
18 I think probably everyone in this room or certainly
19 those in... up here in front know in the Campaign for
20 Fiscal, Fiscal Equity case it established that the
21 states... the state has a constitutional obligation to
22 provide the opportunity for a sound basic education
23 and that's an education that prepares them to be
24 productive civic participants and to gain competitive
25 employment. And we focus a lot particularly in the

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2 past decade on the second part, college and career
3 readiness some would roughly equate to college and
4 competitive employment as the preparation for
5 competitive employment. We haven't focused as much on
6 the second half of that constitutional right under
7 the state constitution, preparation to participate in
8 our democracy and a couple of specific examples that
9 the judge gave in the Court of Appeals on that case
10 were preparation to be an informed voter, right,
11 which requires a fairly high level of skill as you
12 can appreciate as law makers and to be able to serve
13 effectively in a jury, you know again weighing issues
14 from multiple perspectives, critical thinking,
15 working in a team. So, that has been given short
16 shrift again particularly over the past decade and as
17 co-council for CFE, our Executive Director Michael
18 Rebell led the charge with parents and, and advocates
19 and educators in order to, to win that right but yet
20 as we found in a statewide study a few years ago two
21 thirds of the study schools that we visited and, and
22 where we interviewed dozens and dozens of educators
23 12 of them were in New York City reported that they
24 lacked the essential resources that they need in
25 order to prepare young people for, for civic

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2 participation with the knowledge and skills they
3 need. And that was particularly true in schools
4 serving high concentrations of students in poverty.
5 Earlier today there was a lot of conversation about
6 equity and what we need to do to achieve equity and
7 that also obviously applies to civic participation. I
8 want to speed ahead here a little bit and mention
9 that our ED, Michael Rebell wrote a book called
10 *Flunking Democracy; Schools, Courts and Civic*
11 *Preparation*, which I hope you all will read and
12 perhaps we can provide you with copies, I think
13 you'll find it useful and we've also recently
14 completed an in depth pilot study or rather case
15 studies of six high schools, three of them here in
16 New York to assess the level of opportunities able to
17 provide their young people to prepare them for civic
18 participation and then we also recently convened a
19 conference at Teachers College with Generation
20 Citizen who I know is in the room and may testify
21 later, the Women's City Club and Democracy Prep and
22 the Citizens Committee for Children also a part of a
23 New York State civic preparation coalition that we
24 launched in April in order to guide the state toward
25 fully realizing students opportunities in this area

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2 and obviously whatever the state says their
3 regulations and requirements apply to the city. We
4 look forward to collaborating with you, providing
5 research support and other policy support and legal
6 analysis to help you work towards fulfilling this
7 obligation and providing all of our young people with
8 the opportunity to participate in our democracy
9 effectively. Thank you.

10 DENIS YU: Good afternoon everyone. My
11 name is Denis Yu and I'm the Program Coordinator from
12 the Coalition for Asian American Children and
13 Families. We would like to thank the Committee Chairs
14 Deborah Rose and Mark Treyger as well as the other
15 Council Members on the Committees for Youth Services
16 and Committee on Education for holding this important
17 hearing today. Some background about CACF, we are the
18 nation's only pan-Asian children's advocacy
19 organization with a mission to improve the health and
20 wellbeing of Asian Pacific American, APA, children
21 and families and to do that we promote better
22 policies, funding and services for APA children and
23 families many of whom are underserved and
24 underrepresented and they struggle with barriers such
25 as poverty and language accessibility. Some

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2 statistics about APAs in New York City, you know
3 we're the largest growing racial group at 15 percent
4 and growing, speaking over 40 languages from 100
5 different regions and yet one out of two APA children
6 are born into poverty, 78 percent are foreign born
7 and 28 percent speak little to no English, so you can
8 imagine that it's very hard for APA children and APA
9 families in general to participate in society and
10 develop a community. And we have a citywide youth
11 leadership program called the Asian American Student
12 Advocacy project which we launched in 2004, we
13 recruit New York City public high school students and
14 give them the tools that they need to advocate on
15 issues in the community and today we have two of our
16 youth here to talk about their experiences and they
17 will talk more about what they learned from the
18 program and I actually have a testimony from one of
19 our youth who are... who is unable to make it today
20 because of Regents. So, I would like to... Oh, it was
21 part of the packet. So, I would like to share the
22 testimony of Edison Zhu. Good afternoon, I'm Edison
23 Zhu, a Junior at the Bronx High School of Science.
24 I'm a youth leader from the Asian American Student
25 Advocacy Project, a youth leadership program under. I

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2 want to thank the Committee on Youth Services and the
3 Committee on Education for holding this hearing
4 today. I grew up in a bubble. In a low-income
5 community where crime and poverty are evident, people
6 were repelled by its reputation. For me, it's an
7 environment that I could be committed to and improve
8 upon, but I did not know how to make a lasting
9 impact. All I had were short term solutions, like
10 giving out articles of clothing and care packages to
11 those in need or going out on weekends to volunteer
12 and fundraise. I didn't really consider getting
13 involved politically because I didn't think getting
14 involved politically was possible for a teenage boy
15 living in a community with no political presence. My
16 family and this community did not engage in politics
17 at all. Thus, I felt like the world of politics and
18 representatives from the New York City legislature
19 seemed far beyond me. All I needed was a push. I
20 lacked confidence and knowledge, but I gained
21 confidence and knowledge about politics from ASAP.
22 ASAP has led me to realize that politics isn't as far
23 away as I thought. It can be just an email or phone
24 call away. ASAP empowered me to become more
25 politically aware and involved by showing me how to

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2 bring positive change through advocacy. Now I am
3 confident that I can carry out advocacy work without
4 worry and take progressive steps to achieve
5 educational reform and improve my community.
6 Opportunities to learn and engage politically and
7 civically are important to get youth not only
8 interested in politics but to show youth that they
9 can make a difference for themselves and for their
10 communities. What distinguishes... what distinguishes a
11 civilian from a citizen is the responsibility to
12 serve and defend the nation. Students may not be able
13 to defend the nation, but we can serve to better our
14 nation. We can serve for a better future where there
15 is peace and equity. But we can only serve if we're
16 given the confidence and the appropriate guidance
17 from those before us who have given back to their
18 home school and community. I want to once again thank
19 you all for holding this important hearing and for
20 giving me this opportunity to testify.

21 ANDY CAI: Good afternoon, my name is
22 Andy Cai, I am from Brooklyn. I'm currently a Senior
23 at Stuyvesant High School. I'm here as a student
24 leader from the Asian American Student Advocacy
25 Project, ASAP. I want to thank the Committee on Youth

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2 Services and the Committee on Education for holding
3 this hearing. Through ASAP, I realized there are
4 people that advocate for issues in the Asian Pacific
5 American, APA community and they actually make an
6 impact. I was accustomed to the stereotype that APAs
7 are quite and don't speak out, so this was quite
8 shocking for me to hear. What was even more shocking
9 for me was that high school students can also make
10 impacts. The previous cohort of ASAP youth leaders
11 had helped get a bill passed through City Council, I
12 didn't think that people my age were capable of
13 creating a changing government. I was excited about
14 the prospect of making an impact in my community, but
15 I got nervous thinking about the type of work that
16 high... these high school students were doing. They
17 spoke with Council Members and government... other
18 government officials and press. I wasn't a good
19 public speaker and I was scared of making mistakes
20 and embarrassing myself in front of others. I wanted
21 to do things behind the scenes such as setting up
22 meetings and helping others prepare to speak. In
23 2016, we started a campaign to support Resolution
24 0792 which establishes January 30th annually as Fred,
25 Fred T Korematsu Day in New York City. To gather

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2 support for Resolution 0792, we had to meet with
3 Council Members and their legislative directors to
4 discuss the importance of Fred Korematsu Day and the
5 impact it would have. ASAP trained and prepared us to
6 meet with the Council Members in the off... in the
7 office. We learned how to email and call Council
8 Members to set up meetings. I was like the one that
9 does... did the background... did the behind the work...
10 scenes work, and I sent emails, I didn't want to go
11 to the actual meeting because I was scared of
12 speaking with a government official. I didn't have
13 much confidence in myself. The Program Manager of
14 ASAP and my fellow ASAP youth leaders encouraged me
15 to go the meeting. They told it would be a good
16 experience and it would help me improve my public
17 speaking. I decided to listen to them and I did
18 multiple mock legislative meetings with my fellow
19 youth leaders to prepare. Despite all the
20 preparation, I was still nervous going to my first
21 legislative meeting. As I waited to speak, I
22 nervously shifted in my seat. When I finally spoke
23 during the meeting, I tried to calm myself, but I
24 still stumbled over my words. Luckily, I didn't make
25 any major mistakes. I realized that speaking to a

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2 government official wasn't as bad as I thought it
3 would be. For most of us there, it was the first time
4 speaking with a government official. Although we
5 couldn't get the Council Member to sponsor the
6 Resolution, we came out of the meeting feeling happy
7 and proud that we actually went through with a
8 government official. This encouraged us to keep
9 working to gather support. The following year, we set
10 up more meetings and I didn't feel as scared. I got
11 more comfortable speaking with elected officials as I
12 went to more meetings. ASAP empowered me and improved
13 my self-confidence. Over the last three years with
14 ASAP, I enthusiastically attended meetings with
15 numerous Council Members, testified at City Hall
16 hearings and helped get Resolution 0792 passed. I
17 never thought I would be able to do any of those...
18 these things three years ago. I wasn't sure if
19 Council Members would listen to us high school
20 students, they were powerful people who decide what
21 laws get passed in New York City and we were just
22 students. ASAP helped me gain the skills and
23 experience to speak with... before you today and it's
24 also taught me that my voice and the voice of high
25 school students matter. Thank you again... once again

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2 for holding this hearing and giving test... opportunity
3 to testify.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: I want to thank you
5 for testifying and you've done a great job and it's
6 not easy to speak for three minutes and I think
7 you've mastered the skill, thank you for testifying..
8 [cross-talk]

9 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: A plus.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yeah.

11 ANDY CAI: Thank you, thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Next.

13 SOPHIA ZHENG: Good afternoon everyone. I
14 am Sophia Zheng, a member of the Asian American
15 Student Advocacy Project, ASAP from the coalition for
16 Asian American Children and Families, CACF. I'm also
17 a junior in Manhattan Hunter Science High School. It
18 is my great pleasure to speak here, thank you all
19 for... thank you to the Committee on Youth Services and
20 the Committee on Education for holding this hearing
21 today. I was born and raised in China for 15 years.
22 When I was young, I felt a strong sense of social
23 responsibly, even though my parents barely talked to
24 me about the importance of my role in society. I was
25 told by most adults that youth cannot change

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2 anything. Because my voice was barely heard, my
3 passion for engaging in politics and society weakened
4 a lot. Some youth around me do not even care about
5 politics and making contributions to society. In my
6 sophomore year, after immigrating here for several
7 months, I was lucky to catch an opportunity that
8 changed my... changed me and society, joined ASAP. In
9 ASAP, I started learning about the barriers and
10 inequalities embedded in New York City system and the
11 policies that impacted the Asian Pacific American
12 community. We are also encouraged and supported to
13 improve New York City's public education system
14 through policy advocacy. In the past years, ASAP
15 youth leaders worked on developing a campaign to have
16 more inclusive and diverse curriculum in high school.
17 We believe that there are still tensions between
18 racial and ethnic groups and that learning about
19 different communities and having diverse role models
20 would address harmful stereotypes and prevent
21 bullying. One major campaign we have worked on is the
22 Fred Korematsu campaign. Council Member Daniel Dromm
23 approached us to support the Resolution 0792, which
24 establishes January 30th as Fred Korematsu Day in New
25 York City. We thought it was a great opportunity to

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2 honor such an important civil rights leader and to
3 practice our advocacy skills. We met with the Chair
4 of the Committee of Cultural Affairs, Council Member
5 Van Bramer. We also contacted other Council Members
6 to set up meetings with their, their office. After 35
7 Council Members supported the resolution, a public
8 hearing was held in City Hall on October 25th, 2017
9 and ASAP was the only youth group who testified,
10 which emphasized the need for youth's voices. As
11 ASAPers speak... spoke at the first inaugural
12 celebration for Fred Korematsu Day this past January.
13 I told myself, hey, good job. After the campaign, I
14 have been asking myself many times, what did I gain
15 in the process? To carry out a campaign like this,
16 ASAPers have developed multiple strategies and skills
17 to organize community members, facilitate meetings
18 with decision makers and prepare presentations. We
19 also improved our task management, teamwork,
20 effective communication and public speaking skills.
21 Most importantly, we gained a strong sense of social
22 responsibility and know the fact that we the youth,
23 the future generation, can have a positive influence
24 on society and history. What would I be if I did not
25 have an opportunity to attend ASAP, if I was not told

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2 about the issues in our community, if I was not seen
3 as an important part of society? Again, I was lucky
4 that I have the chance to engage in society but what
5 about my peers, who are the future of our country?
6 For us, civic engagement opportunities are as
7 important as education, where we can be informed,
8 trained to think critically and take action and are
9 provided with a platform to exert our power and
10 potential. I'm glad that there are opportunities like
11 ASAP, but there should be more, since many youths
12 should have a... should be aware of the influence they
13 can make have... they can have on society. I believe
14 that, when I look back in ten years, I will truly
15 realize and appreciate the effect that youth civic
16 engagement opportunities such as ASAP have had on my
17 entire life. Thank you again for having this hearing
18 and giving me the opportunity to speak about my
19 experiences.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you, thank you
21 for that very articulate presentation.

22 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: A plus.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Do you think that... how
24 would you... is there something that we can do to
25 engage more young people in programs like yours?

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2 ANDY CAI: I would say... it's kind of hard
3 to find programs like ASAP, I was lucky that... I go to
4 Stuyvesant and so Stuyvesant is very involved of
5 telling the students about different opportunities
6 and so... I found out about ASAP through a newsletter
7 that Stuyvesant sends out to their... all their
8 students, if there was some way like maybe more
9 schools had like... could connect with the... these
10 community-based organizations, learn about these
11 opportunities and then send them out to their
12 students they would be aware of these opportunities
13 and take advantage of them.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, there should be
15 some sort of database or platform that makes all of
16 these programs available so that people would know...
17 young people would know?

18 ANDY CAI: Yeah, I think something like
19 that would help a lot because I have other friends
20 that wanted to do something like this, but they
21 didn't know that there were opportunities like this
22 out there they just weren't aware.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Debi can I
25 just... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Sure.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: So, you mentioned that you go to Stuyvesant High School?

ANDY CAI: Yes.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Does Stuyvesant High School require a certain number of community service hours?

ANDY CAI: No, they do not.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: They do not?

ANDY CAI: They do not.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: So... interesting, so when you take government class there's no requirement in the class to, to get involved in the community, are there any types of courses you've taken that require you or encourage you to be active... be active in civic life outside the school community... outside the school?

ANDY CAI: To my knowledge, no, Stuyvesant doesn't have any requirements on how many... they don't require you to do any community service.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TREYGER: Interesting because one... as a former high school teacher, not Stuyvesant we, we did have a requirement of a certain number of hours and I felt as an educator that

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2 there's nothing that compares to seeing civic life
3 and being a part of it, some of my students went...
4 visited senior centers and helped teach seniors how
5 to use a computer, how to use... and that was a great
6 exchange between seniors and young people, they, they
7 worked... they helped clean up the neighborhood, they,
8 they, they got involved in neighborhood in, in ways
9 beyond just a lesson plan or, or the, the classroom
10 experience but I'm very inspired by your remarks
11 about making sure that, you know students in all
12 schools regardless of what school you go to that we
13 empower kids because this, this is your... this is...
14 this is about you and your future and we have to make
15 sure that you are empowered with every possible tool
16 to succeed so again I, I applaud all, all of you here
17 today for your very powerful meaning, meaningful
18 testimony, thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. And we'll
20 have the next panel, this is the... and the last.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Sarah Zapiler, Julisa
22 Perez, Anyhara Garcia, and DeNora Getachew.

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And when you come up
24 please say your name and the organization you're
25

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2 representing, and I want to thank you for your
3 patience. It looks like we lost a few...

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: I know we lost a few...
5 [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: It looks like we lost
7 a few. So, state your name and your organization
8 please.

9 DENORA GETACHEW: Okay. Is it on now,
10 there we go. Good afternoon Council Members Rose and
11 Treyger. My name is DeNora Getachew and thank you for
12 the correct pronunciation of that. I am the New York
13 City Executive Director of Generation Citizen, we are
14 a nine-year-old national, nonpartisan organizations
15 dedicated to educating and empowering the next
16 generation of civically engaged leaders. Thank you
17 for the opportunity to testify today at today's
18 timely and important hearing about youth civic
19 engagement opportunities. I'd be remiss if I didn't
20 start by thanking the council for the substantial
21 investment in Generation Citizen over the last two
22 fiscal years through the civics education and city
23 school's initiative. Because of the council's
24 leadership and prioritizing civics education in
25 communities citywide, Generation Citizen has educated

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2 over 7,000 middle and high school students in over 50
3 New York City public schools. We've launched college
4 partnerships with four new CUNY colleges; Buruch
5 College, John Jay College of which I'm an alumna,
6 Medgar Evers, Queens College and deep into our
7 partnership with Hunter College to recruit over 200
8 democracy coaches who we call college interns to co-
9 teach our Action Civics curriculum and to service
10 peer to near peer mentors in public school
11 classrooms. We've also cultivated the future civic
12 workforce by providing community college interns with
13 stipends for teaching Action Civics in over 280
14 public school classrooms. So, thank you for your
15 leadership and support with that and we appreciate
16 the opportunity to continue to partner in the years
17 ahead. As has been discussed during today's hearing
18 we're facing a civic reckoning, we now all realize
19 both in post parkland moment but also in a... in this
20 politically diverse climate what it means to
21 deprioritize civics education and the impact that it
22 has on our democracy. We know that civic
23 disengagement and illiteracy are rampant especially
24 in our most underserved communities and that's the
25 work that we are prioritizing at Generation Citizen.

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2 We've bringing civics in education back into the
3 classrooms in a new and exciting way through a
4 pedagogy we call Action Civics so it's not school
5 house rock with all due respect to those of us
6 including myself who learned that way, it is action
7 oriented, it is project based, it is student led. I
8 include in my testimony the core components of Action
9 Civics and you will hear from one of our students who
10 will talk about that work. Our young people are
11 prioritizing and grappling with the issues that we
12 all are facing so affordable housing, gun violence,
13 policing, police brutality and how can they actually
14 improve their communities by directly engaging with
15 government so they're calling their elected officials
16 and proposing concrete solutions, everything from how
17 can they get a traffic signal installed at a key
18 dangerous intersection like a group of girls in
19 Brooklyn did to how can they advocate for legislation
20 in Albany to improve the health education curriculum
21 about how addictive opioids are so it's not theory,
22 it is action. As I said we're focused on that civic
23 engagement gap, how do we get to those young people
24 in underserved communities who we know are 50 percent
25 less likely to study civics in the classroom or have

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2 a conversation about politics around their dinner
3 table because if we can't get them to be engaged in
4 our democracy we're going to have bigger problems. I
5 want to also say that we are excited to learn more
6 about the administration's civics for all proposal
7 and to work collaboratively with you and the
8 administration to make sure that we can bring Action
9 Civics to all but that it's Action Civics, so I don't
10 want to talk just about civics education on one side
11 and advocacy on the other. Being.. I want to close by
12 saying we're not naïve enough to think that our work
13 in the classroom is alone is going to empower young
14 people to be civically engaged, that's why we pushed
15 for the Department of.. DYCD to include civic
16 internships in SYEP and want to continue to have
17 conversations about that along the lines of the work
18 that we do through our community change fellowship
19 because we know that that is a way to continue that
20 next step in the civic journey but also create a
21 future civic workforce as was discussed before. Last
22 but not least, I want to thank as Joe gave me a
23 shout, shout out from the Center for Educational
24 Equity, we are also advocating for civics legislation
25 at the national level but also here in New York State

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2 because we know that we can't be in every classroom,
3 we can't serve every young person but what we can do
4 is advocate for Action Civics as a national standard,
5 make sure that teachers are getting the resources
6 they need to teach it in every classroom and that we
7 can assess student learning. So, thank you for the
8 opportunity to partner with the council in bringing
9 civics education to more young people to ensure that
10 we're giving them the knowledge, skills and agency
11 necessary for long term civic participation. Thank
12 you.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you.

14 ANYHARA GARCIA: Good afternoon, my name
15 is Anyhara Garcia and I'm one of... and I'm a student
16 at International High School for Sciences, and an
17 incoming freshman at the city college of New York. As
18 an alumna of Generation Citizen Action, I
19 participated in Generation Citizen Action program
20 during the second semester of my senior year in high
21 school which is located in Council Member Daniel
22 Dromm's district, district 24. GC is an education
23 program designed to civics education back into middle
24 and high school classrooms in an action-oriented way
25 and empower young leaders to exercise their civic

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2 duties and participate in civically engaged
3 activities. Throughout that semester long program, GC
4 partners with schools to implement a twice weekly
5 action curriculum during in class time to educate
6 middle and high school students about how to confront
7 and take effective action to address community issues
8 by engaging directly with politics. Students start by
9 debating what they would change if they were decision
10 makers in their school, their city or their state.
11 The students then build consensus to choose an issue
12 impacting their community or... and address
13 collectively. The student analyzes the underlying
14 root causes and agree upon a solution and a solution
15 plan to take action which may involve lobbying
16 elected officials or to even building a coalition.
17 The program culminates with civics day, there is a
18 student final presentation where students actually go
19 and present their projects and they get judged by the
20 action they took and what they did. After coming to
21 an agreement, the issue that my class decided to
22 focus on is making CUNY tuition free. As immigrants
23 and minorities, we experience many obstacles here in
24 New York City. Many of our classmates suffer the
25 disadvantage of being undocumented. This barrier

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2 prevents them from having the chance to apply for
3 federal financial aid. As a result, many are not able
4 to pay for college tuition in either four years and
5 two-year colleges. It is hurtful to see people's
6 dreams die due to the lack of money. Having in mind
7 that this goal will impact all of New York City and
8 that it would take a lot of effort, dedication and
9 persuasion, we proceeded on researching the main root
10 causes... the main root causes and during the intensive
11 research we came up with an organization that is
12 actually working also to, to solve this issue. We are
13 supporting New York State bill S4749 proposed by
14 Senator Toby Ann Stavisky. This bill makes both CUNY
15 and SUNY free, however, since 2011, it, it has been
16 stuck in the higher education committee. Regarding
17 this fact, this bill is the first step... diverse step
18 to a greater change. As part of our advocacy
19 campaign, we're using social media to attract readers
20 to our blog. That blog has a video with testimonies
21 of people who have a connection to this issue.
22 Furthermore, it also has a bill... has a copy of the
23 bill and ways to contact your representatives. This
24 will give people the chance to communicate with their
25 local representatives and let them know how important

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2 this matter is for every one of us. Our goal is to
3 get people to support it so that the next years
4 juniors won't be forced to choose between college and
5 work. Participating in GC had a profound impact on me
6 and my classmates. As we started this project we
7 didn't know how important it is for everyone to be
8 civically engaged. Over the course of the semester,
9 we started to notice how easy it was to talk with our
10 elected representatives. We were shocked that there
11 are so many community meetings around us that we
12 never had the knowledge of including that we could
13 have... that we could come here to the City Hall to
14 testify at public hearings. Many of our classmates
15 register to vote and decided to keep working on this
16 project within the classroom. We learned about the
17 process of decision making and how essential our
18 voices are. During the time of the school shooting in
19 Florida, we exercised our First Amendment right and
20 participated in the national walkout date on March
21 24th, 2018. This did not just only give motivation to
22 seniors, but it also helped juniors and sophomores
23 and freshman's as we saw them joining us during the
24 walkout. All of this was accomplished with the help
25 of Generation Citizen class which empowered us to use

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1
2 our voices and to take actions that will lead to a
3 bigger change. As I conclude my testimony, I would
4 like you all to keep in mind how important it is to
5 encourage the youth to be civically engaged. I've
6 seen a number of children from various schools who
7 have many wonderful ideas on how to improve their
8 communities. Let's actually make America great..
9 better again by educating and encouraging the future
10 generation. Thank you so much for this incredible
11 opportunity, thank you all council members for
12 listening... for listening to my concerns. And as GC
13 says, "don't talk about change, lead it".

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Yes, you, you are
15 phenomenal, thank you. I, I just have a, a question
16 for Generation Citizen, we're very familiar with it
17 and, and the work that you're doing, and we know... you
18 provided a strategic plan for 2017 through 2020, are..
19 what are the weaknesses that you saw in the strategic
20 plan and are there any specific goals that you find
21 may be harder to obtain than others?

22 DENORA GETACHEW: That's a great question
23 Council Member Rose and thank you for being such a
24 strong partner on Staten Island because we are
25 working with many schools in your district. I would

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2 say that the biggest challenge for us is having all
3 these CUNY volunteers, right, so they are the life
4 blood of our program and the way that we were founded
5 and our historic model back on Brown University's
6 campus eight... nine years ago. We love those college
7 volunteers but actually recruiting them, training
8 them and getting... dispatching them to classrooms all
9 over the city is something that we're continuing to
10 improve. I think as we think about the role that
11 these near peer mentors serve in classrooms... [cross-
12 talk]

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

14 DENORA GETACHEW: ...we want to make sure
15 that we're sending students to those classrooms who
16 are able to support the teachers but also have that
17 sense of cultural competency that when they're
18 walking in an underserved classroom that they can
19 relate to those students and support their learning
20 in the classroom and so one of our major goals in
21 this three year initiative plan is making sure we do
22 a better job of training those college volunteers and
23 getting them to stay with us for the long term.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: How many do you have?
25

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2 DENORA GETACHEW: Here in New York City
3 we recruit as our largest flagship site of all the
4 six sites around the country we have over 225 college
5 volunteers a year from 11 colleges and universities
6 citywide.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: And is that the extent
8 of sort of the staffing for, for this project?

9 DENORA GETACHEW: So, we... I am fortunate
10 to have a team of, as of today, eight employees, we
11 have frontline facing program associates who are
12 mentoring and supporting those college volunteers
13 making sure that they're observing the classrooms,
14 visiting them, making sure they're staying on track
15 with their lessons and planning and supporting the
16 teachers and then we have a program manager and a
17 program director who are overseeing that work and
18 then I lead our New York City site so we... there's a
19 lot of us making sure that we're... making sure the
20 program is actually being implemented successfully
21 and that we're doing a good job and then this year of
22 note we have launched a teacher professional
23 development model for our program... [cross-talk]

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

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2 DENORA GETACHEW: ...where we're working
3 directly with teachers to equip them with the skills
4 and resources they need to teach Action Civics in the
5 classroom, to support student led nonpartisan
6 advocacy and I want to stress that part, right, we,
7 we all say that politics is the dirty word but it's
8 not, right, we live in a political system, what is
9 somewhat more discomfoting for teachers is talking
10 about partisan politics and so we want to make sure
11 that we're supporting teachers in supporting their
12 students... [cross-talk]

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

14 DENORA GETACHEW: ...and advocating for
15 systemic change by directly engaging with politics
16 and not be in partisan.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: You say that... can you
18 maybe address why we have... we saw the lowest youth
19 turnout in the midterms, the 2014 midterm elections
20 of, of young people?

21 DENORA GETACHEW: That's a great question
22 especially when think... when you look at the numbers,
23 right, so in 2016 when you combine millennials so 18
24 and 29 year olds with people of color and unmarried
25 women they make up the second largest voting block in

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1
2 our country yet, in the 2016 presidential election
3 they did not... young people did not turn out in record
4 numbers, in fact only 50 percent of them turned out
5 and we know eight percent of them turned out in the
6 2014 midterms, part of that is because of the lack of
7 civics education, right, so that's one of the root
8 causes for the lack of civic participation among
9 young people, part of it is the distrust in
10 government and systems and I say that with all due
11 respect to the city council having worked here
12 previously and, and a big believer in democracy,
13 young people don't believe in structure and system in
14 the way that older generations do and part of that is
15 our fault, right, so they, they know that they can
16 create things and that they can have great ideas but
17 they don't need to engage with government to scale
18 and launch those ideas they view the private sector
19 and entrepreneurship as a way to effect change. So,
20 young people today are much more likely to want to
21 make a difference, it's not that they don't want to
22 make a difference they just don't see government as
23 the way to do that and so by getting civics education
24 back into the classrooms most importantly in an
25 action ranted way we can re-instill in the next

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2 generation the importance of engaging with government
3 to effect change on issues they care about.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Wow, government can't
5 compete with social media and, and I guess pop
6 culture, right?

7 DENORA GETACHEW: Well... but we've got a
8 train young people, right, that they aren't just
9 activists so I want you... we talk to our young people
10 all the time about the power of social media to
11 effect change and to fuel their advocacy efforts but
12 it isn't that alone that's going to bring... get the
13 piece of legislation passed, right, so I often give
14 the example of... from the time that there was the
15 convention in Seneca Falls until the 19th amendment
16 was passed so 72 years and even if we have twitter I
17 don't think it would have been 72 days but maybe it
18 would have been a little less, we still have to do
19 that, use all the tools in the toolbox to effect
20 systemic change so that's everything from lobbying
21 for a piece of legislation, contacting direct..
22 elected officials directly and actually moving that
23 ball forward.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: So, you don't think
25 it's because they feel that the inertia of, of

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government or that government is too slow, it's...
[cross-talk]

DENORA GETACHEW: I, I think that's part
of it, right, like we do live in a 21st century
democracy and that's why we talk about action civics
and not school house rock with all due respect
because if you can like and hug and retweet things on
the internet and get a response immediately, yes, we
need things to move a little bit faster but we also
need them to understand that systemic change does
take time even in a 21st century democracy.

CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you so much for
your testimony and thank you for what you're doing,
and I want to thank everyone who came for this
hearing today and this meeting.. this hearing is now
concluded at four o'clock.

DENORA GETACHEW: Thank you.

ANYHARA GARCIA: Thank you.

[gavel]

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

June 26, 2018