

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL
OPERATIONS

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October 19, 2021
Start: 10:14 a.m.
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing, Virtual Room 1

B E F O R E: Fernando Cabrera
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Fernando Cabrera
Darma V. Diaz
Ben Kallos
Stephen T. Levin
Alan Maisel
Bill Perkins
Keith Powers
Ydanis Rodriguez
Kalman Yeger
Laurie A. Cumbo
Farah N. Louis

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

Eric Friedman
Assistant Executive Director for Public
Affairs
New York City Campaign Finance Board

Jessica Mofield
Executive Director
Mayor's Office to Prevent Gun Violence

Eric Cumberbatch
Deputy Director
Office of Neighborhood Safety

Reinta Francois
Executive Director
Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood
Safety

Tom Speaker

Ben Weinberg

Beverly Newsome

Michelle Barnes

Jed Marcus

Ana Miranda

Ed Brown

Divine Pryor

@

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Please start the
3 recordings.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Computer recording
5 rolling.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Cloud recording is up.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Backup is rolling.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: OK. Good morning and
9 welcome to today's remote New York City Council
10 hearing for the Committee on Governmental Operations.
11 At this time we ask that all council members and
12 staff please turn on their video for verification
13 purposes. To minimize disruptions throughout the
14 hearing, please place cell phones and electronic
15 devices to vibrate or silent. If you have testimony
16 you wish to submit for the record you may do so via
17 email by sending to testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once
18 again, that is testimony@council.nyc.gov. We thank
19 you for your cooperation. Chair, we are ready to
20 begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
22 Good morning. I am Council Member Fernando Cabrera,
23 chair of the Committee on Governmental Operations. I
24 want to start off by thanking the members of the
25 committee who have joined us today, Council Member,

1 ah, Majority Leader Cumbo, Council Member Yeger,
2 Council Member Maisel, Council Member Louis, Council
3 Member D. Diaz, and Council Member, ah, Ben Kallos.
4 That's what I see so far. Today we are hearing four
5 pieces of legislation. The first relates to the
6 statutory blackout period for government officials
7 running for local office. The blackout period is a
8 period of time before an election during which
9 sitting governmental officials running for office are
10 prohibited from sending out official mass mailing.
11 Blackout periods prevent incumbents from using the
12 power of the office gain an electoral advantage.
13 Currently the state Assembly members running for
14 local offices are subject to a shorter blackout
15 period than local officials running in the same
16 election. Introduction 34, sponsored by Council
17 Member Louis, would eliminate the discrepancy by
18 reducing the blackout period for local officials to
19 30 days, the same timeframe that applies to Assembly
20 members under the rules of the state Assembly. The
21 second bill we're hearing today is an Introduction,
22 is Introduction number 66, sponsored by Majority
23 Leader Cumbo. This bill will make the mayor's Office
24 to Prevent Gun Violence a charter-mandated entity.
25

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2 First established by the mayor's, by Mayor de Blasio
3 in 2017, the Office to Prevent Gun Violence is
4 responsible, responsible for coordinating the city,
5 city's various anti-gun violence initiative. The
6 core component of this office is the Crisis
7 Management System. The system which uses a cure
8 violence approach to stop neighborhood violence at
9 its source was based on a proposal from the City
10 Council's task force to combat gun violence. As one
11 of the cochairs of that task force I'm proud to be
12 hearing a, a bill that will enshrine the office to
13 prevent gun violence in our city's charter. The
14 final two bills we are hearing today relate to how
15 city agencies enforce city public health, safety, and
16 environmental laws. Proposed Introduction number
17 167-A, sponsored by Council Member Maisel, will
18 require certain agencies to equip the inspectors with
19 devices capable of issuing warnings for a first-time
20 violation. In addition, a preconsidered introduction
21 sponsored by myself, will ensure that all city
22 inspector will, inspector issue citations using
23 portable electronic devices, similar to the ones
24 already used by the Department of Sanitation and
25 several other agencies. Together these bills will

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2 ensure, will help ensure the fair and effective
3 enforcement of our local health, safety, and
4 environmental regulation. With that I want to thank
5 Council Member Louis, Majority Leader Cumbo, Council
6 Member Maisel for their leadership on these bills. I
7 also want to thank committee staff, C. J. Murray and
8 Sebastian Bocchi for their work on this hearing
9 [inaudible]. I want to thank my own legislative
10 director, Clark Pena, for his assistance. And I
11 would like now to invite, ah, Majority Leader Cumbo,
12 ah, to give, ah, her opening statement of her bill.

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Good morning.
14 Chair Cabrera, can you hear me?

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, good morning,
16 good morning, welcome.

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Good morning. I
18 am so excited and so excited to see you on these Zoom
19 call today. You know that this is something that
20 I've been waiting for, um, and talking with you about
21 for quite a few years now. So I'm so excited to be
22 here. And I really wanted to thank you for the
23 groundwork that you laid for this legislation to even
24 be possible. When I first came into office you and
25 council member then, ah, Jumaane Williams, were

1
2 instrumental, um, in creating the cure violence model
3 that we all know, um, and is supporting our city and
4 to see the both of you as the authors and archetypes
5 of creating, um, the gun violence task force that's
6 done so much work in our community, it's an honor to
7 take that work, um, to the next level from the
8 foundation that you set. You've changed a great deal
9 in the city in terms of public safety and I certainly
10 thank you for that, and it's certainly proven to be a
11 national model. When I first imagined this office it
12 was to address the very real need to be proactive in
13 addressing in the systemic causes of gun violence. I
14 also wrote this bill to be a catalyst for victims and
15 survivors by creating a network of services that are
16 to be enacted in response to gun violence. I
17 envision not just the criminality of gun violence
18 prevention that policing addresses, namely illegal
19 gun sales and trafficking, but to prevent gun
20 violence by putting onus back on the community
21 support services and coordinated responses with other
22 city agencies. We all know we have seen a surge in
23 gun violence during the pandemic. Murders have
24 increased by over 45%, and shooting incidents have
25 increased by 97%. Geographically, the majority of

1 these shootings are concentrated within a small
2 number of Brooklyn and Bronx neighborhoods. Being a
3 representative both in north Crown Heights and parts
4 of Bed-Stuy, two of the highest gun violence
5 neighborhoods, I know this pain personally and
6 consistently. We are a district that is plagued by
7 gun violence daily. I'm here to speak for my
8 neighbors, my family, my friends, and constituents
9 when I say that we need to do more. The Office for
10 the Prevention of Gun Violence must address
11 prevention from the standpoint of the entire person
12 being supported in many ways, whether they are the
13 victim or the survivors and the entire community.
14 This need is great. We see schools that are having
15 to help students process the impact of gun violence,
16 teaching professionals becoming counselors, and
17 parents need help intervening with children who are
18 gang involved. So many parents know this. They
19 understand what their children are going through, but
20 do not know how to get the necessary help and
21 support, and they don't want to do it in a way that
22 would bring them into the criminal justice system.
23 We need to provide that level of support for so many
24 parents, um, who are dealing with the challenges of
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2 everyday life, going to work, putting food on the
3 table, but knowing that their children are being
4 occupied by many levels of gang culture and want to
5 do something about it but don't have the tools to do
6 so. We also must work with our cure violence
7 providers to make sure that they have all of the
8 tools necessary, such as professional development
9 training, understanding annual reports, understanding
10 how to file annual reports. Um, the city must work
11 to provide the infrastructure and the capacity to
12 help many of our cure violence providers who for the
13 many, for the first time are operating and working
14 with the city with governmental contractors for the
15 first time, and it's critical that we make sure that
16 they have the support so that they can do that work.
17 I just also want to make sure that we see this
18 particular office as something, we want to make sure
19 that this office exists from administration to
20 administration. This is an issue that the city of
21 course is going to have address in one way or the
22 other and it's important that the resources are
23 there, both for the preventative purposes. You can't
24 just say you solved the gun violence issue. You
25 always have to be working in prevention, and

1 prevention essentially means providing our young
2 people with the right resources, connections,
3 opportunities, job training, skills, afterschool
4 program, weekend programming. This office should
5 always be doing that work. And I just want to close,
6 um, with thanking so many people who have come
7 forward, um, to testify today. I want to thank you,
8 Chair Cabrera. I want to thank Tasha Young, ah,
9 Jason Herr on my staff, and Monica Abem previously
10 who helped us to establish this office in 2017, um,
11 and as part of my legacy I certainly want to see this
12 office exist and continue to provide the necessary
13 services so that we do not lose another child in the
14 City of New York. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
17 Majority Leader. Thank you for your leadership on
18 this bill, ah, that's going to help to codify, ah,
19 and to making sure this office, ah, continue to do
20 the work [inaudible] as well at 183rd Street of the
21 [inaudible] program and, and [inaudible] Park area as
22 well. We saw crime just go down. I mean, it works.
23 Ah, it's, it's the most pragmatic way to deal with
24 violence, gun violence. So, ah, I commend you, ah,
25 for it. Ah, and with that let me turn it now to

1 Council Member Louis, ah, who will, ah, be, ah,
2 talking about, ah, who is the sponsor of Intro number
3 34 to give a statement.
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Good morning,
6 Chair Cabrera. Can you hear me?

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Perfectly.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Perfect. Thank
9 you so much for holding today's hearing and for
10 including Intro 34, um, a part of for today's hearing
11 that I actually inherited from former member, Council
12 Member Cohen, who introduced this bill two years ago.
13 The 90-day period restricts us as elected officials
14 from providing critical information to the community
15 and limits important ways for us to, to communicate
16 and both to engage with constituents, especially in
17 times during like a pandemic where emails and social
18 medias is, is the best way for us to communicate with
19 the community. So I thank you for having this bill
20 being heard today in committee. I look forward to
21 hearing from the administration, but, most
22 importantly, from the public so that the bill could
23 operate the best way it needs to. So thank you so
24 much, Chair Cabrera, I appreciate your time.
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2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you, and
3 thank you again for your leadership on, on your bill.
4 Looking forward to having a robust, ah, discussion.
5 And so with that I will now turn it over to our
6 moderator, committee counsel C. J. Murray to go over
7 some of the procedural items.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
9 I'm C.J. Murray, counsel to the Committee on
10 Governmental Operations. Before we begin testimony I
11 want to remind our panelists that you will be on mute
12 until you are called on to testify, at which point
13 you will be unmuted by a member of our staff. I will
14 be calling on panelists to testify periodically
15 throughout the hearing, so please listen for your
16 name to be called. All hearing participants may
17 submit written testimony to
18 testimony@council.nyc.gov. The first panelist to
19 give testimony today will be representatives from the
20 administration. From the New York City Campaign
21 Finance Board testimony will be provided by Assistant
22 Executive Director for Public Affairs Eric Friedman.
23 From the Mayor's Office to Prevent Gun Violence
24 Executive Director Jessica Mofield will be providing
25 testimony. In addition, Eric Cumberbatch, Deputy

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2 Director of the Office of Neighborhood Safety, and
3 Reinta Francois, Executive Director of the Mayor's
4 Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety will be available
5 to answer questions. There will be time for council
6 member questions after each panel. During the
7 hearing, if a council member would like to ask a
8 question please use the Zoom hand raise function and
9 I will call on you in order. We will be limiting
10 council member questions to five minutes, which
11 includes the time it takes the panelist to answer
12 your question. Please note that for ease of this
13 virtual hearing there will not be a second round of
14 questioning outside of questions from the bill
15 sponsors and the committee chair. Before we begin
16 testimony I will administer the oath. Assistant
17 Executive Director Friedman, Executive Director
18 Mofield, Deputy Director Cumberbatch, and Executive
19 Director Francois, please raise your right hand. I
20 will read the oath once and then call on each of you
21 individually for a response. Do you affirm to tell
22 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
23 before this committee and to respond honestly to
24 council member questions? Assistant Executive
25 Director Friedman?

2 ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIEDMAN:

3 Yes, I do.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Executive
5 Director Mofield?

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: Yes, I do.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Deputy
8 Director Cumberbatch?

9 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: I do.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Executive
11 Director Francois?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRANCOIS: I do.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Ah,
14 Assistant Executive Director Friedman, you may begin
15 your testimony.

16 ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIEDMAN:

17 Ah, thank you, and, and thanks to, to Chair Cabrera.

18 Ah, thanks to members of the New York City Council

19 Committee on Governmental Operations and for the

20 other members who've joined us today. Ah, appreciate

21 the opportunity to testify on Intro number 34,

22 sponsored by Council Member Farah Louis, which would

23 shorten the statutory period of time during which

24 city officials are prohibited from sending an

25 official mass mailing to their constituents prior to

1 an election from 90 days to 30 days. My name is Eric
2 Friedman. I am the Assistant Executive Director for
3 Public Affairs at the New York City Campaign Finance
4 Board. Under the City Charter public officials who
5 are running from office are prohibited from using
6 government resources to send mass mailings in the 90
7 days before an election so the resources meant for
8 governing are not diverted to an election-related
9 purpose. As you know, the CFB is responsible for
10 ensuring compliance with this provision. The 90-day
11 blackout period has provided strong protection
12 against the misuse of city government resources and
13 the CFB supports keeping those protections in place.
14 However, CFB does support some changes in these
15 restrictions. There are exceptions in the charter so
16 that officials may issue communications during the
17 blackout period that are required by law, are
18 necessary to safeguard public health and safety, are
19 standard responses to inquiries, or are ordinary
20 communications to members of the public. The charter
21 provides little, if any, guidance on the scope of
22 these exceptions, particularly on the question of
23 what constitutes ordinary communications. The lack
24 of detail requires CFB to evaluate each type of
25

1 mailer that is presented to us in a very short
2 timeframe. CFB staff has worked well with the office
3 of the City Council, as well as staff in the offices
4 of the borough presidents and citywide elected
5 offices to provide preclearance on certain mailings
6 and ensure there is a common understanding of the
7 standard. However, clearer language in the charter
8 would provide more certainty for elected officials
9 seeking guidance about what is appropriate. To
10 provide clarity, the board recommends the council
11 refine the exception to cover the provision of time-
12 sensitive, factual information that is of potential
13 concern to the recipients. We look forward to
14 working with council staff on this legislation and
15 I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I'll now
18 turn it over to Chair Cabrera for any questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much
20 and, ah, Assistant Executive Director thank you, ah,
21 for your testimony. I love testimonies that get to
22 the point, ah, and I, I just have a, a few questions.
23 But let me just share someone, ah, who previously ran
24 against someone at the state level, ah, who saw their
25 mailers come in from the state, ah, [inaudible] were

1 cut off on 90 days. It's a bit, you know, you feel
2 like at a disadvantage. I, and I, I related with
3 Council Member Louis, ah, the intention of this bill,
4 ah, and I'm looking forward to seeing, ah, ah, more
5 detailed language, which I think is gonna, is gonna
6 help us, ah, to get to the finish line here. Ah, but
7 let me, let me just say, um, in terms of how, how do
8 you identify, how, how does CFB identify potential
9 violations at the, ah, right now during the 90-day
10 blackout rule?
11

12 ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIEDMAN:

13 So the way that, um, that, ah, sort of review of
14 these sort of mailers has worked, you know,
15 generally, um, like, um, our understanding is that,
16 at least on the City Council side, a lot of, a lot of
17 that review is done internally, ah, in the Office of
18 the Council. And the council's, the counsel to the
19 council will, will contact us with, with, um,
20 potential questions. Ah, you know, during the 2021
21 elections to date we've received a little bit, a
22 little more than a hundred of these questions. That
23 encompasses the council as well as the borough
24 presidents' offices and, um, ah, and, and other
25 citywide elected officials. So to our knowledge, and

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2 we'd have to do a little bit more research, um, you
3 know, but to our knowledge in recent memory there has
4 been no violations issued for, um, for any, you know,
5 violation of the [inaudible], ah, provision. Um, you
6 know, we provided advice to its offices. Sometimes,
7 um, [inaudible] will be revised so that they meet the
8 standard in the charter and, and in other cases when
9 we've suggested that a mailer, ah, is not consistent
10 with, with those guidelines in the charter then, ah,
11 those mailings won't go out.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And if there to be,
13 and I'm happy to hear there were no, ah, violations,
14 but if there to be one what would be the penalties?

15 ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIEDMAN: I
16 mean, hard, hard to say. You know, I don't have the
17 language of the charter in front of me. You know,
18 the, the, most, most penalties are, are capped at, at
19 \$10,000. I, I don't, you know, again, there's no
20 precedent here. Um, you know, we've issued no
21 violations for this, um, for this particular
22 provision of the charter because that, that kind of
23 preclearance has worked generally pretty well. Um,
24 so there, you know, again, you know, what we have is
25 a standard that allows council offices to communicate

1 important, relevant informations to their
2 constituents without, you know, seeing some of, I
3 think, Chair, what, what you pointed out are some of
4 these kind of barely disguised campaign mailers that
5 have come out of office at, at, at the state level.
6 Um, you know, I think we've talked a little about the
7 Assembly standards. Um, my understand of, of the
8 standard that is in the Assembly rules is that it is,
9 ah, there's a 30-day blackout before the primary, 60
10 days before the general election. But there are
11 also, it also provides for no exceptions. Um, you
12 know, the standard, ah, at the Assembly level as we
13 understand is that, that blackout period is, is a
14 real blackout. Um, there are no mailings that go out
15 in the last 30 days before the primary. Um, that
16 provides a good, clear bright line. Um, it, you
17 know, it kind of reduces the sort of confusion about,
18 about what we can, what, what offices can and can't
19 do. But it also means that, you know, for certain
20 important and relevant communications aren't going at
21 all, ah, in this 30 days. Um, what we have at the
22 city level, um, again, is a standard that allows for
23 that, um, that really important, um, information is
24 relevant to constituents to come out while
25

1 preventing, I think, what, you know, I think you may
2 have read we identified as, as, ah, as kind of
3 borderline abuse, um, that, that might happen for
4 some of these state Assembly or Senate offices.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you, thank
7 you so much for that. Let me turn it back to our
8 moderator, ah, so he could call up, ah, ah, members
9 who may have questions.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
11 I'll now call on council members in the order they
12 have used the Zoom raise hand function. Council
13 members, if you'd like to ask a question and you have
14 not yet raised your hand please do so now. You'll
15 have a total of five minutes to ask your question and
16 receive an answer from the panelist. And Chair,
17 seeing no hands raised, I'll turn it back to you.
18 Oh, ah, sorry. I see Council Member Yeger has his
19 hand raised. Council Member Yeger.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thanks. I'll be
22 real quick. Um, Mr. Friedman, it's good to see you.
23 Most of your testimony focused on print mailings, um,
24 ah, and, and the preclearance that comes through, ah,
25 the City Council, ah, general counsel, I suppose.

1
2 Um, have you, how has the, the, the statute also
3 applies to electronic mailings as well and how has
4 that worked, if at all have you seen that? Are you
5 getting the requests from, ah, directly from council
6 members' offices or from borough presidents?

7 ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIEDMAN:

8 Ah, emails work in largely the same way that print
9 mail does. Um, we have, you know, document emails to
10 receive from the Office of the Council, the City
11 Council. Most, most of that traffic comes directly
12 from the council's office. Um, and we have heard
13 from individual borough presidents. Um, the
14 comptroller was a candidate for office. The public
15 advocate was a candidate for, for re-election. So
16 we've gotten some requests from his office as well.
17 Um, but, but sort of, on a content basis we're, we're
18 reviewing, um, email communication as well as, ah,
19 print communications.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: So, and, I, I
21 guess, well you've kind of answered that. You don't
22 really have any, ah, cases to highlight of anybody
23 who's been penalized for having violated for this
24 provision of the charter. Have you, have you come
25 across, to your knowledge that there's been a review

1
2 of any emails, um, after they've been sent out that
3 weren't precleared that you either had a problem with
4 or that you didn't have a problem with you, or are
5 you just pretty much confident that you're seeing
6 everything on a preclearance basis?

7 ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIEDMAN:

8 You know, I think, you know, we've certainly heard in
9 the course of, you know, in the course of an election
10 from, from, from opponents, right, challengers who,
11 who, who may have gotten a hold of some mailing that,
12 um, you know, that they feel may have gone over the
13 line. But I, I, I think, you know, in practically
14 every case, um, we've seen, we've seen it before
15 they, they've gone out. I think we have a really, I
16 think strong working relationship at this point with,
17 ah, with, with staff, and again not just at the city
18 council, um, ah, borough presidents' offices, ah, and
19 the other offices. Um, I, I think what's, what's,
20 what's great about this, again, every office, you
21 know, is taking it seriously, um, wants to be sure
22 that they are on the right side of the charter, um,
23 and, again, you know, I think what our experience has
24 been that, um, that, that most relevant useful
25 information to constituents, you know, is getting

1 out. Um, and, and, you know, the, the, what the
2 provision does is it kind of requires everyone to sit
3 down and evaluate, um, whether these communications
4 are, are truly aimed at providing constituents with
5 important information, um, you know, ah, ah, and kind
6 of helping to kind of provide a backstop and ensure
7 that some of the more, um, some of these pieces that
8 might be indistinguishable from campaign mail, um,
9 aren't, aren't being sent.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: To clarify, just
12 to clarify your position, just correct if I'm, I'm
13 mischaracterizing it, but is it that the, that you
14 support reducing the time to 30 days and you think
15 the statute, the proposed introduction should be
16 clearer or that you think it should remain at 90 days
17 and put more clarity into how the statute is supposed
18 to work?

19 ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIEDMAN:
20 Our testimony is that the window should remain at 90
21 days because we think it's worked well. Um, we
22 think, we think that, ah, you know, that relationship
23 we have that kind of provides that layer of review,
24 um, has been a good, has, has also provided
25 protection, to the extent that, um, you know, members

1
2 believe that the provision has restricted them from
3 getting useful and important information out to
4 constituents, um, clearer, clearer language around,
5 especially around this idea of ordinary
6 communications might help. And we're more than happy
7 to kind of explore that further.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: OK, so just two
9 quick things. One is, um, ah, and the clock is
10 running out so I'm not gonna leave this as a
11 question, but just a suggestion. Have you, if
12 haven't submitted a proposed introduction or proposed
13 language for what you think the charter should say on
14 the exceptions, ah, um, you should. And then just a
15 second question is have you, do you recall, if you
16 know, have you actually told existing elected
17 officials no on a proposed mail, this is not good,
18 you shouldn't do this, it exceeds the, ah, exceptions
19 in the charter?

20 ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIEDMAN:
21 Ah, there's a small number of those, um, from this
22 election. Um, I think it might be as many as 15, ah,
23 out of, out of more than 100 requests we've gotten.
24 Um, you know, I, I don't have details on, on each one
25 that I can share today, but if it's something that,

1 um, you're interested in hearing more about happy to
2 provide it.
3

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: My clock is
6 expiring, so just real, real quick. Um, on those, if
7 you know, again, ah, Eric, if, on those that, that
8 you had a problem with, were they fixable in terms of
9 changing language or content, or were they, you know,
10 thumbs down, you can't send this out?

11 ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIEDMAN:

12 Ah, I think it's a mixture, like we've worked with,
13 we've certainly worked, um, worked with folks to help
14 ensure that, like in some case's it, it's kind of,
15 ah, it's, it's, hey, you know, can, can you take a
16 photo out, that's, that's, that's, um, you know, and,
17 and the office is then able to send out mail, um, you
18 know, after modifications and others, like the nature
19 of it has, has, has been outside, ah, the guidelines
20 that the charter sets and we've had to, to
21 [inaudible].

22 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Ah, I'm done, I
23 just, um, because of the nature of the questions I, I
24 just want to state for the record that I have not
25 sent any, ah, mail out of my government at all this

1 year, either electronic or, ah, or otherwise, um, so
2 just to clarify that these questions didn't pertain
3 to me personally. I just wanted to make sure that's
4 on the record. All right, I'm done. Thank you, Mr.
5 Chairman.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. Ah,
8 committee counsel?

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ah, chair, I see no
10 further questions, so if it's OK with you we'll move
11 on to the next panel.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Please. Ah, next
13 we'll hear testimony from Jessica Mofield of the
14 Mayor's Office to Prevent Gun Violence. Executive
15 Director Mofield you may begin your testimony when
16 ready.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: Thank you.
18 Good morning, Chair Cabrera and members of the
19 Committee on Governmental Operations. My name is
20 Jessica Mofield and I am an executive director within
21 the Office of Neighborhood Safety. I am joined today
22 by my colleague, Reinta Francois, executive director
23 within the Office of Neighborhood Safety, and Eric
24 Cumberbatch, a deputy director of the Mayor's Office
25 of Criminal Justice. Thank you for the opportunity

1 to testify about Intro 66 and MOCJ's work within the
2 city's public safety continuum. MOCJ advises the
3 mayor on criminal justice policy and runs several
4 programs and justice initiatives, from the New York
5 City Crisis Management System to alternatives to
6 incarceration and supervised relief. We work with
7 law enforcement agencies and personnel, other city
8 agencies, service providers, not-for-profit
9 foundations, and the public to implement effective
10 strategies that make the city safer, fairer, and one
11 having a smaller criminal justice footprint while
12 improving system coordination. Recognizing the
13 interconnected and holistic nature of public safety
14 and historically disinvested communities that also
15 experience the brunt of over policing and heightened
16 levels of gun violence, in December of 2019 the city
17 launched the Office of Neighborhood Safety. ONS,
18 housed within MOCJ, is a crucial component of the
19 public safety continuum and is necessary as part of
20 our effort to [inaudible] public safety in
21 partnership with local communities. ONS combines the
22 efforts from the mayor's action plan for neighborhood
23 safety, also known as MAP, the Office to Prevent Gun
24 Violence, OPGV, and Atlas to share resources and
25

1 holistic assistance for New Yorkers affected by
2 violence. ONS teamed to work with our network of
3 residents, community leaders, to ensure that more New
4 Yorkers have the agency and ability to define public
5 safety directly for themselves. As such, ONS relies
6 on the strength, experience, and expertise of
7 communities as guiding principles and is committed to
8 ensuring that marginalized communities have access to
9 capital and opportunity. As part of the launch of
10 ONS Atlas was created to build on the foundations of
11 MAP and OPGV's approach to foster deep relationships,
12 invest resources and support both for people released
13 pretrial and for the communities that they call home.
14 Given these initiative goals of enhancing safety,
15 Atlas, OPGV and MAP serve overlapping populations in
16 the city's highest crime neighborhoods. All three
17 are part of a larger effort to reduce violence and
18 prevent and minimize criminal justice investment by
19 addressing the root causes of violence that have
20 disproportionately impacted ONS service communities.
21 I will share here a few more details about MAP,
22 Atlas, and OPGV profiles. MAP launched in July of
23 2014 following a spike with shootings in some of the
24 city's public housing developments. Over the past
25

1 seven years MAP has become an internationally
2 recognized model by how residents co-create safety in
3 their communities through innovative problem solving.
4 Its signature initiative, NeighborhoodStat, brings
5 together residents, community stakeholders, and city
6 agency representatives to identify and solve public
7 safety and quality of life issues. Residents take
8 the lead in safety realization efforts to partnership
9 with community organizations and various city
10 agencies, including the police department, Parks
11 Department, Department of the Aging, NYCHA, and the
12 Department of Sanitation. MAP sites across the city
13 have experienced substantial drops in crime over the
14 last five years as compared to similar sites without
15 the program. Atlas seeks to address the risks and
16 needs of individuals released pretrial on their own
17 recognizance who are at heightened risk of future
18 victimization or justice [inaudible] investment. The
19 program offers therapeutic services to address past
20 trauma, mentorship, education, and employment
21 opportunities, and entry into supportive community
22 networks. Launched in 2014, OPGV works to address
23 gun violence through a shift in societal norms and
24 the work of community members in mediating disputes
25

1 to prevent shooting. The Crisis Management System
2 [inaudible] credible messengers and community members
3 whose background allow them to connect with and
4 motivate at-risk individuals. The 29 sites where
5 they implement the cure violence model and mediate
6 the conflicts on the street and directly work some
7 resources that can create peace, support, healing,
8 and this also includes the year-round employment
9 program, mental health services, trauma counseling,
10 and other opportunity related potential resources.
11 This initiative has brought measurable benefits to
12 communities citywide. Researchers have found that
13 across CMS sites shooting victimization fell by over
14 28% over the first 24 months following a site launch
15 compared to, the 24 months prior to the launch, with
16 gun injuries down 33%. Researchers also found that
17 CMS increased trust in police and decreased
18 residents' reliance on violence to settle disputes.
19 As part of the city's historic investment in public
20 safety and in partnership with the City Council the
21 mayor has increased his investment and commitment to
22 the Crisis Management System by doubling the city's
23 investment in FY22. The administration continues to
24 increase and improve its commitment to innovative
25

1 programming that enhances safety within communities.

2 I especially would like to thank the council and bill

3 sponsors, Majority Leader Cumbo, for providing the

4 opportunity to strengthen ONS's work through Intro

5 66, which would amend the City Charter to codify the

6 Office to Prevent Gun Violence. The administration

7 is grateful for the council's support and we look

8 forward to working with you to amend the bill to

9 strengthen it even further by addressing root causes

10 that challenge public safety. Amending Intro 66 to

11 include the work of the interdependent initiatives

12 that comprise the Office of Neighborhood Safety will

13 provide the necessary stability to continue this work

14 far into the future. In addition to providing

15 stability to the ONS portfolio, Intro 66 also honors

16 the administration's and the council's joint

17 commitment reflected in Resolution 1584, the police

18 reform plan that the council approved in March of

19 this year. Thank you for the opportunity to present

20 testimony on ONS work and I'm happy to answer any

21 questions.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.

23 I'm really excited to hear about the work that you

24 have done and have accomplished, ah, so you can

25

1
2 imagine you know how I feel about this and what are
3 the fact of we say, you know, myself and Council
4 Member Jumaane Williams, now he's the public
5 advocate. We saw at this very inception and, ah, and
6 where you have taken it is well, well beyond, ah, the
7 imagination of, of what all the founders were there,
8 ah, who were there, ah, and, and in the discussions
9 that took place there. I have to tell you this.
10 Anybody having discussions about cure violence, ah,
11 about, ah, the work that you guys do, I always say
12 that we have literally the best program nationwide,
13 ah, and the results, ah, that you have brought forth
14 is, is, tangible, visible, ah, and life-saving. And
15 so I can't say enough. There's not enough adjectives
16 to praise the work that you guys have done and like,
17 and like I mentioned before I seen in my own
18 district, ah, literally saving lives. Ah [inaudible]
19 started the [inaudible] program there. We were
20 having some big problems there. Now since the
21 inception we haven't had, ah, in those 10 block, ah,
22 area we haven't had one gun shooting. I mean, it's
23 amazing. And before that it, it, it was getting very
24 dangerous, ah, because of the gun shooting that, that
25 was taking place. So I salute you, I commend you,

1
2 and I admire the work that you guys are doing. Ah, I
3 wanted to ask you one question. I want to turn it
4 over and I want to recognize we've been joined by
5 Council Member Levin, who also will have a question,
6 and, and Majority Leader [inaudible] both of you in a
7 second. But I just want to, um, many other
8 questions, but I just want to ask one key question.
9 You mentioned that you would like to see the bill
10 improve. Can you give us the specifics you have, any
11 specific how you would like to have the bill improve?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: So in terms
13 of improving, I think it's more so about being able
14 to build upon the foundation that we talked about
15 through the three initiatives. Um, being able to
16 continue to be innovative and continue to build upon
17 the work that you all have been at, at the forefront
18 of leading so [inaudible] can actually take place, so
19 when we, we use the phrase improve it's just that the
20 space and grace to continue to grow and evolve in
21 this work under the, under the codification of the,
22 the Office of Neighborhood Safety.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
24 Let me turn it over now to the sponsor of the bill.
25 I have to tell you, she's been, ah, she's been a

1
2 vanguard for this bill. She was relentless. We
3 gotta pass this bill before I get out [laughs], um,
4 termed out...

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: [laughs]
6 [inaudible].

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: ...ah, in the
8 council. So I have to salute her for, for, again,
9 ah, she's been fighting for this bill and, ah, is so
10 good to have her, ah, join us, and I know she has
11 some questions and I'm gonna turn it over to Council
12 Member Levin. Ah, we need unmute Majority Leader.
13 There you go.

14 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: OK. Thank you so
15 much. Um, yes, this, this certainly is, um, an
16 exciting day and I, so everyone at MOCJ, lot of
17 friends here, but I'm gonna go beyond the friend role
18 and y'all will still love me afterwards. Um, 'cause
19 I really want to get to the heart of some of these
20 questions, you know, and it's, and it's not, because
21 the role, and I know that you all share this, the
22 role is to get to the solution and it's hard to play
23 all these different sides when you're trying to get
24 to the solution. But may main goal with this bill is
25 twofold, but I'll go that second part of it, was

1 really so that we could have a comprehensive agency
2 response, and agency, when I say agency, I mean many
3 different agencies from, it could be from ACS to
4 NYCHA to DYCD to the Department of Cultural Affairs,
5 to mental health, like an interagency response , um,
6 Board of Elections, to, to each shooting in the City
7 of New York that's gun violence related, um, how
8 close do you think we are to achieving that goal?
9 Are there enough resources to achieve that goal? And
10 the reason why I ask is because as a council member,
11 and we've spoken about this often, when we go in to
12 try and handle a shooting in our district the needs
13 of the victim and of the community are so deep that
14 as a council member you can't provide the level of
15 support that that family needs individually and to do
16 the regular day to day work of this job. And it also
17 becomes very mentally, um, for lack of better words I
18 would say draining in many ways, because many
19 families that I've connected to, you become their
20 source of mental health support and you become, um,
21 who they lean on. You know, I get many calls at
22 midnight, many calls at, you know, all throughout the
23 week, but they can be screaming calls, they can be
24 angry calls, they can be yelling calls, they can be

1 hang-up calls. It's, it's, it's this type of pain
2 that so many people are experiencing and I know it's
3 not just the mom, but it can be an entire school, it
4 can be an entire building. It can be a whole
5 community. So how close are we in that and, and does
6 this office need to be funded at a even higher level
7 to, to reach that level of a goal?

9 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: So thank
10 you for the question and I think it's, it's a
11 question that's spot on with, with our philosophy
12 and, and, ah, overall framework. So we, we
13 definitely view, ah, preventing gun violence as an
14 interagency and interdisciplinary practice, um, which
15 includes going beyond traditional law enforcement and
16 prosecution, but really being proactive and properly
17 culturally competent in responses with community-
18 based organizations, individuals, and then also the
19 city agency structures that have impact on people's
20 lives and community. So with most shootings that we
21 respond to it's never just a siloed approach. Um, we
22 play a role as a hub, switching [inaudible] for the
23 city. Um, we work across city agencies. We work
24 across CBOs. We've worked with victims and alleged
25 perpetrators, um, in the effort to prevent violence,

1
2 in the effort to heal individuals that have been
3 harmed, ah, by violence, and also to prevent
4 retaliation. Um, as we continue to grow and, and
5 ultimately codify this office, building out our
6 capacity is critical. Um, right now we have a staff
7 of roughly 21 individuals. Um, but as we grow and
8 continue to, to see this great need to link services
9 together, link agencies together, and work across
10 systems, we need to build our capacity as well, um,
11 within, ah, the Office of Neighborhood Safety.

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: When you say when
13 we respond to a shooting, how do you all make the
14 determination that this is a shooting that's going to
15 get the full weight of this office? This is one that
16 we're gonna wrap our entire arms around with that
17 level of support.

18 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: Yes.

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: What makes, what
20 makes a situation rise to that occasion?

21 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: So I would
22 say every shooting is just as important as, as the
23 next one. So we, we never want to look at an
24 individual shooting incident and diminish, um, the
25 impact that it has on the family, the community, and,

1 and the individual and any and all of those involved.
2 So every shooting we, we take seriously. Um, we're,
3 we're not geographically based in every location in
4 New York City. So we don't have the capacity, depth,
5 and outreach to be everywhere. Um, now in the areas
6 where we have our program boundaries, our program
7 operation, that is where we focus primarily all of
8 our resources on. Anything that impacts those areas,
9 that's what would get the greatest magnitude of our
10 service, ah, provision. We do go outside of our
11 areas to assist in other districts, other precincts,
12 um, that may have shooting incidents where we can
13 lend services. Um, but our primary focus are the
14 areas in which we are targeted, um, and have very
15 strategic, um, efforts in place.

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: What would us ay,
18 um, in terms of one of the questions that, I mean,
19 it's, it's a, it's a bit complicated, but let's say
20 with shootings in our city and our different
21 communities how long would you say you have both the
22 capacity to follow victims of gun violence and their
23 families? So, you know, the trauma of a shooting
24 lasts for a very long time and a lot of people are
25 still dealing with the psychological impact of it.

1 Do you, do, does the city and/or does the office have
2 at its fingertips the level of mental health
3 practitioners that is needed to address this?

4 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: So I think
5 that's a great question and, you know, coming out of
6 COVID, um, the initial impact of COVID-19, a lot of
7 our work, ah, was really geared and centered, ah,
8 around victim services and a lot of our efforts were
9 really, you know, moving people from dangerous
10 situations, making sure that families had access to
11 victim services, ah burial funds, or supportive care,
12 group network. Um, [inaudible] family members to,
13 ah, supportive networks within CMS. Um, and that,
14 that was a, a huge undertaking, um, by, by our
15 office. I think as a city, as a whole, um, the
16 amount of harm that has been done, um, as a result of
17 COVID-19, um, losing individuals, um, through the
18 pandemic, but then also having a pandemic on top of
19 an ongoing endemic, the epidemic of gun violence, um,
20 this syndemic has really took its toll on community
21 and I think we, we can never have enough, um,
22 culturally competent, healing, um, organizations,
23 individuals, and community, and if there was ever a
24 time to increase that it's now.
25

1
2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I want to make a
3 suggestion from, um, and then go into a bit more
4 questions. I think from my experiences with the
5 mental health protocols with the city is that for
6 many communities of color mental health is such a
7 foreign dynamic in terms of something that we access
8 for help that I believe that a person should be seen
9 five or six times before all of the protocols and
10 bureaucracy of getting that mental health happens.
11 So, for example, when you go, you know, there's a
12 question of do you have insurance, we want you to
13 fill out these forms, do you have a check or money
14 order or payable so that you can pay for these mental
15 health services. Do you have this, can you access
16 that. I feel like with many people that they are in
17 such need of support and assistance that going
18 through the bureaucracy I have found has turned a lot
19 of people off and they just say oh, they wanted \$75
20 from me. Oh, they wanted a co-pay. Oh, they wanted
21 all my insurance. I didn't have insurance. Oh, they
22 wanted these things. I feel like we need to change
23 that so that we can at least get people in and then
24 start to talk about later on down the road do they
25 have these things once we receive them, made them

1 comfortable, gotten them to see the, the goal of what
2 it is that we're doing, um, and, and how this can be
3 a resource of help and support, as well as, you know,
4 I, I've also heard a lot about many of the spaces
5 that people go to are not so welcoming or not the
6 most therapeutic of environments, where they seem
7 more, they seem more like they're, like trauma spaces
8 in a sense and, and it further makes people say like
9 I don't want to be in the space, or I don't want to
10 be here. So it's, you know, when, when you have the
11 money to pay for mental health services the spaces
12 are really nice with comfortable couches and leather
13 this and nice tablecloth that. Not necessarily
14 saying that, but I'm saying something that's more,
15 um, comfortable and welcoming, um, to individuals. I
16 also wanted to ask, um, I noticed with the Vision
17 Zero, um, campaign that with the legislation came a
18 whole marketing campaign, and I feel like marketing
19 is really important where they would have the
20 billboards that would talk about it. You know, if
21 you're going 50 miles per hour versus 25 miles per
22 hour what could have happened, what it would have
23 looked like, and these are like all over the place.
24 Has there ever been any sort of a budget put forward
25

1 from this office in terms of like, you know, you're
2 having people like let's Taj Gibson from the New York
3 Knicks, who's doing a lot of work on this same dadada
4 dah about it. You're, you're having a lot of the
5 people in the NBA, in the hip hop industry, and all
6 these faces and places, and when it's go orange month
7 for a gun violence awareness month we turn the whole
8 city orange, and we talk about it, and we have all of
9 this, because I've, I feel like there's this thing
10 where the city wants to address gun violence but they
11 also don't want to put it out there that we have a
12 gun violence issue in our city, but you need to have
13 the same level of citywide campaign with the same
14 level of, um, you know, like if you were to put a
15 picture of me saying like gun violence is not the
16 way to go, that's not gonna have the type of impact
17 as Taj Gibson saying that that's not the way to go,
18 and I just call him because I'm not much into
19 basketball and he's probably the only ball player I
20 know right now. But, I'm just saying in that sense
21 we need to have like a citywide campaign with
22 credible messengers who young people look up to, um,
23 for help, for support, you know, 'cause we're, we're
24 asking young people to change their way of thinking,
25

1
2 and when you get into that space you often need
3 someone to speak to when you're that angry. You need
4 someone to walk you off the ledge in a sense, from
5 hurting or harming someone else. It's kind of the
6 same, you know, it's kind of the same dynamics as
7 suicide prevention. Like creating ways and spaces
8 for young people to channel their energies in other
9 ways, but also to say that, you know, that maybe some
10 of the same industry that might have glorified this
11 are now saying this is not the way to go.

12 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: Yeah, so,
13 ah, I want to touch on, ah, first the recommendation
14 [inaudible] that you, you gave, um, which I think is
15 spot on and critical, um, to providing any quality
16 of, ah, service and care, especially after, um, a, a
17 [inaudible] incident. So, um, removing barriers and,
18 and really ensuring, um, that people aren't faced
19 with bureaucracy in times of crisis is definitely
20 part of what we do, um, as we work with individuals
21 on the ground and how they relate across government
22 and how they relate across agencies. So that's,
23 that's always, um, part of our work. Um, we approach
24 this work from the standpoint that oftentimes agency
25 and government do harm, more harm to the community as

1
2 opposed to hearing. So our approach is actually spot
3 on with what your recommendation and solution, um,
4 is, embodies. Um, in terms of the campaign, um,
5 we've launched several campaigns over the years. Um,
6 we do have active campaigns. Jessica is going to
7 speak towards the, the campaigns, I think. Ah, our
8 approach is that we don't want the city to, um, not
9 be involved with in addressing gun violence. We want
10 everyone to feel, um, that gun violence impacts us
11 all, um, regardless of if a shooting incident takes
12 place in Brownsville we want the Upper West Side to
13 feel the magnitude and, and the weight to [inaudible]
14 to do something about that. Any New Yorker, every
15 New Yorker, when a New Yorker is harmed we're all
16 harmed. So, Jessica, can you talk more about the,
17 the campaigns that we have?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: Sure. So
19 the campaign that we, we currently have active is the
20 Stay Strong Stay Safe campaign, and that really talks
21 about the intersectionality between, ah, gun violence
22 and also COVID. So what we used is a social media
23 campaign where we actually leveraged all of the ZIP
24 codes that has the highest, um, the highest
25 propensity and rates for not only COVID, but also gun

1 violence in black and brown communities, and
2 geotargeting all of those [inaudible] goes to ensure
3 that when people on their social media we're meeting
4 them where they're at. We're meeting them where they
5 receive information. And it was really about lifting
6 up the men and women of the Crisis Management System
7 that do this work every single day. Not only them,
8 but also [inaudible], um, in community that play an
9 essential role of what [inaudible] looks like. You
10 know, you talked about healing and, you know, yes,
11 healing is [inaudible], but also with [inaudible] and
12 how we feel it in our body. So also understanding
13 that there's a role for everyone to play whether it's
14 our spiritual advisor, whether it's our neighbors,
15 whether it's our partners, you know, really lifting
16 up what these individual stories look like to ensure
17 that everyone knows that although these circumstances
18 happened to you, there's a role for you in this.
19 There's a role for you to be a part of what healing
20 looks like across community and really stopping gun
21 violence. So we have that on our Stay Strong NYC
22 website and we also spoke about the ability to use
23 influencers, social influencers that have a role in
24 really heightening the level and visibility of what
25

1 these community storytelling campaigns look like. So
2 we have partnered with Tracy Morgan and Rosario
3 Dofin, ah, for this particular campaign to be a part
4 of our flagship video, also with young people. And
5 in addition to that we also leverage radio. Ah,
6 during critical times throughout the year, whether
7 it's right before Memorial Day weekend, as you know,
8 the unofficial kickoff right before Labor Day and
9 also, you know, pre-COVID when we had, you know, a
10 weekend with no shooting we was able to amplify the
11 voices of our community members by partnering with I
12 Heart Radio to do that. Ah, we've also created
13 poster makers and in fact was able to leverage, ah,
14 the likeness and social media of the Breakfast Club.
15 So we actually have a, a call to action for any
16 influencer that has a [inaudible] media call in to
17 join us in putting our messages for people to stand
18 [inaudible] because I think the biggest thing is not
19 only talking about behavior and cultural change. For
20 a community those narratives and messages also
21 humanize people and allow for even greater and deeper
22 interagency connection because exchanging cultural
23 with those agencies as well once they have access to
24 [inaudible].
25

1
2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I think, I think
3 that's a good foundation and I think that's headed in
4 the right direction. I guess I'm a bit out of tune.
5 I haven't really felt, um, [inaudible] experienced it
6 in my, in my day to day. I kind of think like
7 something similar to the, the taking the knee
8 approach, something like that. Like I feel like gun
9 violence in our community has not really been
10 condemned in a big way and I feel like because it's
11 not condemned in a big way because it's most
12 psychological because you realize that when someone
13 pulls a trigger you're ending your life as well as
14 their life, right? So two families and, and, and the
15 subsequent community are both harmed. So it's hard
16 to like, it's hard to attack in your own community
17 when that happens because you, you're now knowing
18 that two families are gonna be impacted in the same
19 way. But there's nothing that, there's, I've never
20 really, you know, I mean, just speaking honestly like
21 there's so many celebrities that have come from New
22 York City from Jay Z to Naz to Puff Daddy to all
23 these basketball players to all of this. There's
24 nobody that's out there that's really like, nah, man,
25 that's not the way, you know, that's not cool, that's

1 not what we support, that's not what we, you know,
2 there's no NBA knight where they say like, you know,
3 we're condemning this violence in our communities.
4 Like this thing has to be like full. It has to be a
5 full campaign that is in every single thing that we
6 see and do because it's, it's, it's kind of treated
7 as a neutral thing in our community. It's neither
8 highlighted nor condemned. It just happens and
9 people kind of in their own silos have to deal with
10 the aftermath of it, the reality of it, but there's
11 nothing that's really condemning it, um, in that kind
12 of way. So I'll, I'll just, 'cause I know, I don't
13 want to take the entire time away from my colleagues,
14 and I have other questions and I would like for them
15 to get in before we lose those and hopefully we can
16 come back to me. I just want to, you know, follow up
17 finally with the question around the office that I
18 would like to see it do is more capacity building.
19 Um, you all understand that many of these
20 organizations for the first time are dealing with
21 government contracts or dealing with accountants or
22 dealing with, um, while many of them, of course have
23 obviously clear business minds, dealing with a
24 contract with the city is a lot for a master's design
25

1
2 graduate in public administration, like, or, or not-
3 for-profit administration. It is a lot to throw a
4 new organization into. Has there been a thought
5 about there being almost like an office within the
6 office to handle the back end of a lot of this work,
7 because as you know, in my district a group in our
8 district is having the same types of issues and it
9 essentially means that they are unable to perform the
10 services that they were contracted to do. So has
11 there been a thought about putting forward an office
12 within the office to work alongside, to do training,
13 to help with support, to keep the 990s, the tax
14 returns, the accounting, all of that, um, in, in, in
15 order?

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: Absolutely.
17 We are actually moving in that direction right now
18 through the release of the crisis management RFP that
19 went live yesterday we are actually doing that in
20 partnership with United Way, where the backbone of
21 what it is that they do with communities is capacity
22 building, linking them to private and public
23 partnerships, and also working with them to make sure
24 that they have, you know, access [inaudible] right
25 infrastructure support. So human resources

1 development, how do you develop fiscal reports, how
2 do you present to your board, how do you create a
3 board, what do board resolutions look like, so really
4 thinking about the infrastructure of removing
5 organizations away from democracy and partnering with
6 this organization that could provide, ah, the
7 scaffolding support for them to have capacity
8 building, because these are interim social
9 enterprises, although they are nonprofits, and we
10 want them to be successful so that they can continue
11 their innovative work to really be community
12 [inaudible].

14 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Um, I'm, I'm glad
15 to see that a lot of the things that we're discussing
16 are things that are in the works. I'll turn it over
17 to my colleague, turn it back to, ah, Council Member
18 Chair Cabrera and perhaps it can go back the me later
19 on.

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: We would
21 love that.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Absolutely,
23 absolutely. Thank you so much, Majority Leader.
24 Committee Counsel, I believe that we have also
25

1
2 Council Member Levin and then I'll, I'll ask some
3 questions.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you. Thank
6 you very much, Chair. I apologize, um, I'm by, I'm
7 home sick and I got my 2-year-old running around. So
8 I apologize for any noise in the background. Um, so,
9 um, I, I just want to first off, um, ah, thank, um,
10 our Majority Leader for this legislation. I'm
11 excited to see it pass, um, and I'm, and thank you,
12 Chair, for conducting this hearing. Um, to the team
13 from MOCJ, um, I, I have a, a lot of respect for the
14 work that you do. Um, ah, I want to thank, ah,
15 Reinta for being part of, um, ah, the group that, um,
16 worked through a restorative justice initiative that
17 we're going to be, um, hopefully seeing funded
18 starting at the beginning of the year. That came out
19 as, um, the, this, ah, the, the, the process that
20 closed Riker's, um, ah, ah, I know that, um, through,
21 through that process I became familiar with the work
22 that Eric does and, um, you know, from the people
23 that I, ah, know and, and, um, ah, trust their
24 opinion, um, what I've heard is that, um, Eric does
25 some of the best and most important work in the

1
2 entire city, um, and, um, is a model that, um, ah,
3 in, in his ability to cut through bureaucracy, um,
4 and, ah, get resources to the communities that need
5 them, um, and he does just remarkable work. So I
6 wanted to just acknowledge and I appreciate you. Um,
7 ah, and then I, I want to make sure that I don't miss
8 an opportunity, um, because I only have a couple of
9 months left in the council, um, to, ah, express my,
10 ah, my strong desire to see, um, the MAP program
11 expanded into, um, two developments in my district,
12 um, Gowanus Houses and Wyckoff Gardens. I know that
13 the MAP program is, ah, nearby in Red Hook and, um,
14 you know, as we're going through the Gowanus rezoning
15 process right now, um, you know, made it clear, ah,
16 'cause this is coming from the community at Gowanus
17 itself and at Wyckoff itself, um, that what the
18 community wants more than, um, you know, new capital
19 investments into their, um, developments, which are
20 important, um, but, ah, they also want, um, ah, the
21 human infrastructure that, that MAP program can
22 bring. So I'm gonna be advocating over the next few
23 weeks, um, ah, to see the MAP program funded and
24 expanded, um, into those two [inaudible]. Um, um,
25 you don't have to comment on that [inaudible], um,

1 and, I, I, my, my question is so, you know, there's,
2 and I don't mean to be provocative here. But, um,
3 ah, you know, I, I saw an opinion piece in the *New*
4 *York Post* today about, um, about gun violence in, in,
5 um, particularly from 2020 and 2021 in New York City,
6 um, and the increase in the number of shootings and
7 the increase in number of [inaudible] and, um, and
8 everybody seems to have, um, an opinion about why
9 this is happening in our city, but nobody has any
10 data about it, or any real insight, if you read this,
11 ah, this opinion piece today, it, it, you know,
12 basically, ah, points the finger at, you know, the
13 politicians, um, which is fine but it doesn't, it
14 doesn't really support it with any hard data, nor
15 does it take into account other considerations like,
16 you know, that shootings have gone up all around the
17 country and, and, ah, [inaudible] all around the
18 country in the last, um, several years and, um, New
19 York is not, um, is not immune to that. And, um, you
20 know, and, and frankly we see the police commissioner
21 publishing, I think just last week, um, an opinion
22 piece, um, stating that he thinks that the reason
23 there for the increase is bail reform. And I'm just
24 wondering if, if, ah, your team at MOCJ has, you
25

1 know, I'm assuming you're, you're considering
2 [inaudible] about it and if you have any thoughts on
3 why this is happening and [inaudible] especially why
4 we think over the last two years we've seen this
5 [inaudible].
6

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: Thank you.
9 I'll, I'll take the question. I think at, at the
10 core communities of color have for a very long time
11 experienced, um, adverse social determinants, um, and
12 the infrastructure, the agency, um, what is supposed
13 to be the supports for community have never, um,
14 stepped up to fulfill its, its, its overall mandate,
15 um, and the fracture that happened in, in enduring
16 COVID-19, um, only exacerbated that. So a lot of
17 the, the social supports, whether they were ideal or
18 not, um, just the fracturing of that with people
19 along, um, a lot of those things served, um, even
20 though as we, we may not see the connectivity as, um,
21 public safety stewards or, or, public safety supports
22 or mental health supports or social support. Um, but
23 all of those things were fractured in the most
24 vulnerable communities amongst the most vulnerable
25 individuals. Um, and then we see things like gun

1 violence, um, played out. But it doesn't stop with
2 gun violence. It's also suicide. It's also, um, so
3 many other harms that are happening, ah, across
4 community, um, so I, I think the fracturing of, of
5 social supports, um, and the, the recognition that
6 the supports that are in, um, black and brown
7 communities have never been up to capacity for the
8 need, um, that there's to support the individuals and
9 I, I think, um, you know, gun violence has been
10 endemic and black and brown communities and has not
11 been lifted to the level, um, to merely address that
12 need, and when we talk about a pandemic coming in on
13 top of an epidemic, um, that synergistic effect,
14 we're seeing the results and, and the outcomes and
15 we're, we're in the, in the midst of battling that.
16 So that's my humble opinion.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very
19 much, ah, Mr. Cumberbatch. Do, do you, um, do you
20 see, um, sorry, I got my son with me. Do you see the
21 investment in, in your effort being, um, being enough
22 right now or do you think, do you think that, that,
23 that this is a question of dollars and cents in terms
24 of resources, or are there other kind of programmatic
25 resources that you, um, that you could, that you can

1 use from, um, from the city? And others, and others,
2 ah, partnerships from the state or federal government
3 as well?
4

5 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: Yeah.

6 Welcome all partnership. Um, I think there's always
7 a need for further resources. We're, we're,
8 underresourced and there's, there's a need for
9 resources but not just throwing money at problems or
10 issues, really letting data drive us and evidence
11 inform, ah, what the interventions need to look like
12 and how we continue to build and tailor them.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I think Council

14 Member Levin, yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Just lastly, um,

16 we need, when it comes to data what, um, what
17 partners are you working with? Which partners are
18 you working with in terms of academic institutions
19 or, um, you know, other types of, um, ah, of
20 resources to help, to help drive that, um, discussion
21 around qualitative and quantitative data?

22 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: Yeah, so we

23 work very closely with John Jay. Um, they follow a
24 lot of the, the efforts that we have on the ground.

25 They've done numerous studies, um, that show the, the

1
2 work and, and, um, its effect on community, its
3 effect on individuals, um, behaviors, um, propensity
4 to use violence, um, ah, shooting and homicide rates,
5 ah, decline in areas where we, we have intervention
6 so, you know, we have a, a great set of data that
7 exists, um, for this work and then we also work with
8 MOCJ Research, um, and I'm [inaudible] work with
9 researchers from across the country, um, that, that
10 support this effort as well.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Council Member
12 Levin? I think he's occupied.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: All, all, all
14 good, Chair. Sorry [inaudible], sorry. We gotta
15 [inaudible]. Thank you very much to the MOCJ team.
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
18 Council Member, and that is indeed a greater mission.
19 Ah, I have a few questions here. I, I want to follow
20 up on that question. What, what, when we're talking
21 about in an ideal world how much more resources would
22 you need in order for this bill, ah, to, if I may
23 quote unquote be fully funded, so you could
24 accomplish the mission is set before you.

1
2 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: I, I don't
3 know a exact number. I think, you know, we can talk
4 through what expansion looks like, and I think that
5 would be the next exercise, or really looking at, um,
6 where we need to be in the city, ah with what types
7 of interventions, where those touch points are, um,
8 and then of course to how we can grow to scale. Um,
9 so I think that's an exercise that, that would have
10 to happen. Um, but I, I can say at this point, you
11 know, we, we are significantly expanded into areas
12 across the city. It takes time for programs to come
13 to scale, um, build up and actually show evidence.
14 But ideally I think, um, more expansion is, is
15 necessary, um, and I think utilizing, um, public
16 health approaches to address public safety concerns,
17 um, is the, the right way to move forward.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Ah, I mean, are we
19 ready for expansion right now, or are we just trying
20 to solidify the programs that are already expanding,
21 ah, so they could, you know, function at 100%.

22 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: Yeah, I, I
23 think in order to load on, um, what we're building,
24 um, we really have to get this infrastructure, um,
25 solidified. So I would say expansion is for future

1 growth, future, um, you know, vision. But right now
2 I think we're at a, a point where we need to be, we
3 need to have stability where we are right now. And I
4 think that's, um, building the, the staffing capacity
5 of ONS, um, to strengthen what is being deployed in
6 communities.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: How many more staff
9 do you need in your office right now?

10 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: How many
11 staff does the police department have now?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: [laughs]

13 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: I would, I
14 would say, you know, we, we want to be comparable to,
15 um, other, other city offices, um, that exist. So,
16 you know, when we first started this, we started this
17 with one, one person, then we scaled to two, three.
18 Um, right now, with the merger between the Office to
19 Prevent Gun Violence, Mayor's Action Plan for
20 Neighborhood Safety, and Atlas we're roughly at 22
21 people. Um, and it's very important for everyone to
22 understand that, you know, these services are
23 interdependent, um, and OPGV's focus is primarily on
24 individuals, um, and changing culture and MAP is
25 focused on environmental, um, concerns and the

1 structures that, how, how the structures relate to
2 the people, and Atlas, ah, wrapping families around
3 with supports. So, you know, as we build those
4 structures and think about expanding it's, it's
5 really not only expanding just Office to Prevent Gun
6 Violence, um, but it's with government to do this on
7 a holistic approach, it's expanding in all three of
8 those areas, and I really believe, you know, it's,
9 it's a substantial, um, expansion.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah, I do know.
12 If you could start, ah, coming up, there are people
13 in the Zoom call who's gonna have, you know, who are
14 gonna be voices in the, into the next administration,
15 and so it will be helpful if we have that now, you
16 know. When I mean now I mean in the next couple of
17 months, so data could be spoken into the next
18 administration so, you know, there won't be a lag,
19 ah, in terms of planning and in terms of projecting,
20 ah, the needs, ah, for the office. I had a couple of
21 more questions. I know, ah, Council Member D. Diaz
22 has questions, too. Ah, I wanted to ask you, you
23 know, as you know if the Office to Prevent Gun
24 Violence is now housed within the Mayor's Office of
25 Neighborhood Safety. What was the goal behind this

1
2 move forward and how has this move affected the work
3 of the Office to Prevent Gun Violence?

4 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: I think,
5 well, first, the, the thought or the, the idea behind
6 is that all of these programs enhance one another.
7 Um, so if we're going to do, um, initiatives, rolled
8 out initiatives that address public safety they
9 should be tied together, um, because it only
10 increases the impact and the touch points. Um, all
11 of the programs as I, as I previously stated, um,
12 play off each other in different roles. So as OPGV
13 may be working with an individual, um, that
14 individual also has a residence and that residence
15 may be where MAP is doing services. And there's
16 agencies and other organizations that have an impact
17 in that environment and MAP may be coordinating those
18 agencies and, and those organizations on how they
19 react and respond to all of the residents in that
20 community. And then we have justice-involved young
21 people in that area as well. Um, Atlas then wraps
22 those families with function family, ah, therapy and,
23 and other resources and support. So it's, ah, a
24 cumulative effect, um, to be, ah, as beneficial, um,
25 and intentional in these areas as possible,

1 addressing it, um, through, through multiple
2 disciplines.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: All right, my last
5 questions is in regards, ah, you know, as the bill
6 gives the director of the office, ah, to prevent gun
7 violence a number of concrete Powers and duties. How
8 do these compare to the director's current
9 responsibilities?

10 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: I, I think
11 ultimately, um, you know, as we grow we're, we're
12 seeking to have, um, more autonomy and more
13 independence. And I think ultimately codifying this
14 will, will provide, um, that type of, um, launching
15 point, so to speak, where, you know, right now we're
16 in an office within an office, um, and so forth. I
17 think we would be at a place, um, where we can stand
18 alone.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah, got it. So,
20 so within that model maybe it doesn't, we should look
21 at whether does it continuing to make sense to be
22 under the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety if
23 you wanted to be independent it's something that we
24 should have that level of discussion. So you could
25 have autonomy 'cause, you know, the last thing is too

1 many hands in the, the pot, trying to cook this, this
2 meal, ah, so to speak. Ah, so, so with that let me
3 turn it over, ah, to Council Member D. Diaz and then
4 I believe Majority Leader has another question.

5
6 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: Good morning
7 and, and thank you Chair [inaudible] conversation.
8 Majority Leader also for bringing this Intro forward.
9 MOC, I, we're, we're no strangers. As, as you know
10 the 37th Councilmanic District does not have a Cure
11 Violence group that works with us. Can you give me
12 some more information and reference to the crisis
13 management RFP that's out? And if not for sitting in
14 this conversation I would have not known of it.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: So the RFP
16 that was released yesterday focuses on 31 communities
17 across the city, ah, for our community-led approaches
18 to public safety. So it's in the 7-5, which you are
19 talking about specifically, um, and it also includes
20 Franklin Clay Lane. That falls within your district,
21 ah, for school conference medallion services. So
22 there's about five different schools that are within
23 that campus that we're looking to expand to, in
24 addition to ensuring that we have a holistic approach
25 to community healing and wellness. So that RFP

1
2 allows us to be able to have a diverse group of
3 partners, ah, that allows us to extend our, our
4 [inaudible] not only into communities but also school
5 campuses that in dire need of having touch points,
6 ah, with individuals that are able to meet a
7 [inaudible] and also to connect to the network of
8 services that they provide. Well, we will be sending
9 out shortly because we want this to be a totally
10 inclusive process that involves all levels and actors
11 of community. We will be inviting you all to
12 participate in our evaluation committee so that not
13 only does it encompass community members, it also has
14 the council districts and also city agency partners
15 that are integral to ensuring that this ecosystem to
16 support community actually works and we have people
17 that represent those communities being a part of
18 that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: Ah, thank you
20 for the reply. I look forward to a more detailed
21 conversation. Lane is one out of my jihad spots in
22 the 37th Councilmanic District. Thank you for
23 allowing me this opportunity.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: Thank you.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
3 Council Member. Ah, I, I just wanted a point of
4 clarification that 31, ah, is not in addition to what
5 we have, right? It's 31 overall?

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: So there
7 will be two additional, um, two in the Bronx, it will
8 be in the 4-0 and also in the 44th precinct, ah, that
9 we would see new sites for FY23, so the upcoming
10 fiscal year.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Oh, I'm so happy to
12 hear it, um, it is coming to the Bronx. Thank you so
13 much.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: [laughs]

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Ah, you know I have
16 to root for the Bronx, come on. Ah, Majority Leader,
17 you, you had stated that you have another question,
18 or is that pretty much it?

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Just one
20 additional question.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Um, and many of
23 it was covered during your questions. But I wanted
24 to know, at this time what agencies are included in
25

1 your interagency approach to addressing, um, each
2 shooting in our districts?
3

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: Sure, so it
5 really runs the gamut between NYCHA, HRA, DHS, um,
6 HPD, the Department of the Aging. Sometimes it
7 includes ACF, the Department of Education, um, DYCD,
8 especially when it pertains to incidents that occur
9 in close proximity to Cornerstones and/or have young
10 people that are participants of Cornerstones, um, and
11 sometimes even Parks, and Sanitation. Ah, so it
12 really, really runs the spectrum of what's actually
13 happening, not only with that family in that
14 community or in that particular services.

15 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I would also like
16 to make the recommendation to include the Department
17 of Cultural Affairs in that, um, listing of agencies
18 and, um, I think for the incoming, I think what would
19 be helpful for the incoming council members because
20 there will be so many coming in, I think it would be
21 good for them to understand how to work best with
22 your office in terms of how do they work with your
23 office to handle a shooting, um, within their
24 district, what are the resources, what are the, um,
25 what are the things that they can do to provide for a

1 family so that they can be that intermediary to
2 resources and services. Um, I also just want to add
3 in closing that, um, I think that it's important that
4 the new incoming class just get that proper training,
5 because it can be a very overwhelming experiencing,
6 attempting to address issues of gun-related violence
7 in our districts and I think that that would be, um,
8 really helpful if they had a real understanding of
9 how the office functions and works and what they can
10 expect. But, um, I'm looking forward to seeing the
11 capacity of this growing. I think it would also be
12 great if there could be more, I guess events in the
13 district, the same way the, prior to the pandemic
14 there was the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic
15 Violence would do these types of forums and seminars.
16 It think it would be really important to do some like
17 in a positive light, like the Mayor's Office to End
18 Gun Violence but perhaps under a different in a sense
19 to say like here's a fun event for youth and teens,
20 here's how you can get a job, here's how you can
21 career training, we're gonna have a concert, we're
22 gonna have this. There's gonna be food. There's
23 gonna be prizes. There's gonna be how you can sign
24 up for football, basketball, tryouts here with this
25

1 program. Like really something that makes connecting
2 young people to opportunities, um, a fun thing to do,
3 because at of the day, I mean, and I always say this,
4 a lot of gun violence is because we tell our young
5 people to say no to guns, gangs, drugs, unprotected
6 sex, all of these different things. We're telling
7 them to say no to these things, but we're not
8 providing for them what to say yes to. And so it's
9 critical that we have, um, events, opportunities,
10 experiences for them to say to. Like I really want
11 the children and the young people of New York to be
12 flooded with opportunities and things for them to do
13 that allow them to harness their passion. So I, I
14 join the chorus with all of my colleague. I, I thank
15 you all for your testimony and I thank you all for
16 the work that you are doing and for building out, um,
17 the vision for this office and for it to continue to
18 grow because we shouldn't see this office and, and
19 its growth in comparison to the level of shootings in
20 our community. We should see it more as a
21 preventative measure and there should always be
22 preventative measures that are steeped in connecting
23 our young people to opportunity. And I think that
24 that should always be the office at its center, is to
25

1 connect young people to activities and opportunity.

2 Thank you so much.

3
4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: Thank you
5 all. Um, you know, to respond to, you know, some of
6 the key points that you made, you know, Majority
7 Leader. We have worked with DCLA in terms of
8 actually having a artist in residence, and also
9 through our cleaned up court, where it's called the
10 Love Where You Live grant, where we actually
11 [inaudible] the ability to have, um, arts-based
12 interventions, ah, with organizations that work with
13 young people to ensure that the beautification of
14 their neighborhood has language and competent
15 messaging around [inaudible]. So that's something
16 that we definitely want to continue to further
17 through our work, ah, not only with DCLA but other
18 agency partners. And in addition to actually having
19 visibility and events in communities, we've done over
20 150 public safety events throughout the city and we
21 hope that with the continued investment in our
22 internal infrastructure we'll be able to increase
23 that and also increase our ability to enhance our
24 community storytelling [inaudible].

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
3 Ah, let, let me just, ah, accentuate, ah, the need
4 for the next council members. You know, all of us at
5 the council we, we kind of organically went through
6 the process with you right, with the cure violence
7 programs. But this new, ah, batch of council
8 members, 36 of them, ah, as I recall, ah, some of
9 them are clueless as to, ah, how it works. So, ah,
10 one of the things that might, it will help, ah, maybe
11 sometime in December, ah, for, to invite them and to
12 give, you know, even if it's a one-hour, ah, you
13 know, basically how it, how the programs work, who
14 has what programs, what district, and so forth, the
15 data, ah, the efficacy of them, and also how they
16 could be supportive, and, and to talk about the
17 future as well. So, so with that let me turn it to
18 Council Member D. Diaz, which I think is gonna be our
19 last, ah, council member asking a question and then,
20 um, then we'll, we'll go to public.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: Thank you for,
23 for my last question, it's, it's back to, to mom.
24 Jay, I want to make sure and when you were saying the
25 acronyms at DHS I know it to be Department of

2 Homeless Services, but we also know DHS is also known
3 for the Department of Homeland Security and I don't
4 want to scare anybody off.

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: We were
6 talking about...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: The meaning of
8 DHS.

9 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: Yeah,
10 Homeless Services.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: Right.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: OK.

13 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: We, we
14 don't work with Homeland Security in any capacity.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: OK, and I just
16 put it out there, you know, just [inaudible]...

17 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: No, I
18 [inaudible]...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: ...[inaudible] we
20 don't want scare anybody where there might be a need.

21 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: ...I
22 appreciate, I appreciate this opportunity to clarify.
23 I appreciate that. Good catch.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: I appreciate you
25 all [laughs].

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2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
3 Council Member D. Diaz. That was fantastic.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: It only means I
5 paid attention [laughs].

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, indeed, and
7 you're here. That says a lot. That says a lot. You
8 always care. Thank you. You're, you're so in touch
9 with the community. Ah, so with that let me turn it
10 over to committee counsel and I want to thank, ah,
11 MOCJ team for being here again. I, I, I have the
12 highest admiration for the work that you guys have
13 done from the very beginning and you have scaled up a
14 program that is to be covet, ah, nationwide, ah, and,
15 and you have truly modeled how it works. And
16 sometimes people ask me, well, if the crime is so bad
17 right now how do we know they're so effective? You
18 know, you're, you're not the police department. The
19 police department does what they do and MOCJ team and
20 all the programs do what they do. I think sometimes
21 people mix, ah, the, the two things and then there's
22 what we elected officials do and don't do. Ah, they
23 contribute and plus everything that is going on in
24 society, but I have to tell you, you, you, you have
25

1 really come through and, ah, you truly deserve, ah,
2 the trophy of admiration. Thank you so much.

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MOFIELD: Thank you
4 all.

5 DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUMBERBATCH: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll now
7 turn the public testimony. Please be advised that
8 for this portion of the hearing we will be calling on
9 individuals one by one to testify. Each panelist
10 will be three minutes to speak. Please begin once
11 the sergeant has started the time. Council members
12 who have questions for a particular panelist should
13 use the Zoom raise hand function and I will call on
14 you after the panelist has completed their testimony.
15 For panelists, once your name is called a member of
16 our staff will unmute you and the sergeant at arms
17 will set the time and give you the go ahead to begin.
18 Please wait for the sergeant to announce that you may
19 begin before delivering your testimony. I would now
20 like to welcome Tom Speaker to testify, followed by
21 Ben Weinberg, and then Beverly Newsome. Tom Speaker,
22 you may begin on the sergeant's announcement.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1 TOM SPEAKER: Good morning, Chair Cabrera
2 and members of the Governmental Operations Committee.
3 My name is Tom Speaker and I am a policy analyst at
4 Reinvent Albany. Reinvent Albany is a watchdog
5 organization that advocates for open and accountable
6 government. Ah, today, I'm testifying in regards to
7 Introduction number 34 of 2018. Reinvent Albany
8 strongly opposes this legislation because we believe
9 it would unfairly benefit incumbents during
10 elections. While we understand that elected
11 officials may want more opportunities to notify
12 constituents of important information, allowing for
13 mailers so close to an election increases the chance
14 that funding for constituent outreach will be used to
15 improperly influence voters. We note that the
16 current law restricts New York City incumbents from
17 mailing their constituents for only six of the 48
18 months officials are in office, unless they running
19 for other office. New York City prohibits sending
20 mailers within 90 days of an election. But the New
21 York State Legislature's limit under the Assembly's
22 rules and the Senate's guidelines is typically 30
23 days, though the State Assembly's limit for general
24 elections is 60 days. Some localities have no
25

1 limits. Because of these lax restrictions there are
2 countless instances of New York State elected
3 officials deluging their constituents with mailers
4 close to elections. This month, for example, Nassau
5 County Executive Laura Curran sent out a mailer
6 notifying constituents about the upcoming November 2
7 election when Curran's name will be on the ballot.
8 The mailers noted Curran's name and title. Earlier
9 this year in May State Senator Kevin Parker flooded
10 constituents with mailers prior to the June election
11 in which he was a candidate for New York City
12 comptroller. Last year in March constituents
13 reported that former State Legislators David Buchwald
14 and David Carlucci were sending out large number of
15 mailers prior to the June primary election for NY17.
16 It's clear that constituent mailers have been
17 exploited prior to elections and it's like that this
18 practice will only grow worse if this bill passes.
19 Some might argue that elected officials need more
20 opportunities to contact constituents. But the law
21 already provides plenty of exceptions. For example,
22 officials may send mailers when there are public
23 safety or health emergencies, or within 21 days of
24 the passage of the city's budget. We therefore see
25

1
2 no reason to change the law. Thank you for allowing
3 me to testify today. I welcome any questions you may
4 have.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [inaudible] a quick
6 question. I noticed that, and thank you for your
7 testimony and, ah, I hear your concern. But what I
8 didn't hear, and maybe you could address, what
9 happens when you have a city official running, or
10 vice versa, Assembly, or Senate, or running against a
11 city official, and, and, and it puts the city
12 official in a great disadvantage. I experienced that
13 myself in one of the races that I had. And so, ah,
14 for the very same reasons that you just mentioned,
15 ah, that, that they're able to send these mailers.
16 Do you think it would make more sense for the state
17 to come down with a top-down rule for the entire
18 state for every single county, ah, whether city or
19 state?

20 TOM SPEAKER: Yeah, our view is that the
21 state's law is too lax and we think that the best
22 approach, instead of weakening the city's law, in our
23 view, would be to strengthen the state law instead.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But as it stands
25 right now do, do, would you agree that it puts the

1
2 city elected official at disadvantage to the state
3 for, for the reasons that you mentioned?

4 TOM SPEAKER: Um, well I hope that the
5 only reason that a city official would send out a
6 mailer would be to help their constituents, of
7 course. But, um, you know, I, I suppose if the
8 mailers were being used for, um, other purposes, in
9 that sense it could be a disadvantage. But I think
10 that candidates for office already have other
11 resources they can use if they want to send out more
12 mailers, such as using their campaign funds. Um, and
13 as I said before, I think the best approach would be
14 to strengthen the state law.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
16 ah, Tom, ah, for your testimony. Ah, do we have any
17 other questions for council members?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I don't see any hands
19 raised, Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: OK, thank you.
21 Thank you so much.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'd now like to
23 welcome Ben Weinberg to testify, followed by Beverly
24 Newsome, and then Michelle Barnes. Ben Weinberg, you
25 may begin your testimony.

1 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

2 BEN WEINBERG: Thank you. Good morning,
3 Chair Cabrera and distinguished council members.
4 Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak
5 today. Um, my name is Ben Weinberg and I am the
6 director of policy at Citizens Union. We would like
7 to state our opposition to Intro 34-2018 regarding
8 the mailer blackout period. A more detailed memo of
9 our position has been sent to the council. It was
10 noted that the disparity between city and state rules
11 gives an advantage to state lawmakers over their
12 opponents who serve as city officials. Therefore,
13 the city's blackout period to be shortened we believe
14 that argument is inaccurate and misguided. So first,
15 that discrepancy does not necessarily lead electoral
16 advantage. Let's look at recent examples. In this
17 primary in June nine State Legislators ran for city
18 offices, but only two of those won. All other seven
19 who lost to Council Member, ah, all other seven,
20 sorry, lost to council members who were under that
21 stricter, stricture blackout rule. In 2017 the last
22 municipal election, the two legislators who ran for
23 City Council against city officials who were under
24 that 90-day restriction lost their races. So that
25

1 supposed advantage, ah, is not necessarily a decisive
2 factor in, in campaigning against city officials.

3
4 Second, our city's robust system of good government
5 rules should be applauded and not relaxed, relaxed.

6 So the city is a leader in campaign financing ethics
7 and lobbying regulations, and elected officials here
8 are more restricted than elected officials in other
9 jurisdictions, um, but the point of those

10 restrictions and those regulations is not the

11 advantage or disadvantage of our local elected

12 officials, but to create a more healthy democracy

13 which these regulations actually do. Ah, third, the

14 real effect of cutting back on mass mailing blackout

15 period would not be in helping council members who

16 are running against state legislators, but in hurting

17 new candidates who are trying to enter the political

18 arena. New York City has taken important steps to

19 level the playing field in campaigns to encourage

20 newcomers to run, to ensure that incumbents do not

21 have unfair advantage over challengers. We have the

22 most generous public campaign finances in the state,

23 in the nation and the result has been a more diverse

24 field of candidates and fair elections. Weakening

25 the prohibition on the use of government resources

1
2 for mass mailing would be a step in the opposite
3 direction. Ah, rather than weakening the city's
4 regulations and regressing into the 1998 version,
5 which is that original 30-days version, ah, over 30
6 years ago, no, 20, 20-something years ago, ah, we
7 should be looking to strengthen this regulation at
8 the state level, as some have mentioned before.
9 Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and I'll
10 be happy to answer any questions.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
12 Ben. Any questions, Committee Counsel, for members?

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No hands are raised,
14 Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: OK, thank you so
16 much.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'd now like to
18 welcome Beverly Newsome to testify, followed by
19 Michelle Barnes and then Jed Marcus. Beverly
20 Newsome, you may begin upon the sergeant's
21 announcement.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 BEVERLY NEWSOME: Good morning. Are you
24 able to hear me?

25 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

1
2 BEVERLY NEWSOME: OK. Good morning. My
3 name is Beverly Newsome. I'm the president of
4 Ebbetts Field Tenant Organization. The Office to
5 Prevent Gun Violence should be part of the charter
6 because we need to always have an agency that does
7 more than react to shootings and deaths resulting
8 from shootings. Currently when a shooting occurs in
9 our community we see candles, caution tape, and
10 police cars. In some communities this only closes
11 windows and quiets voices, setting the stage for
12 another occurrence. Being a part of the charter
13 espouses the importance of gun education and supports
14 that the [inaudible] experiences this type of
15 violence. In my view support should be a mixture of
16 former police officers who are now trained as mental
17 health professionals mixed with civilian mental
18 health professionals. The credible messengers should
19 be individuals professionally trained to communicate
20 effectively and to defend themselves, because
21 sometimes that may be necessary. All not-for-profit
22 staff should resemble the community they're
23 supporting. Therefore, very diverse. Funding needs
24 to not be influenced by changing politics. Community
25 should be the driver of the proposed actions,

1
2 policies, and the focus of the organization. A
3 community advisory board should be created to support
4 the not-for-profit in all things. The size of the
5 credible messenger staff should at least match
6 community affairs, including [inaudible] officers of
7 NYPD. These credible messengers, this credible
8 messengers team should be funded to expand by the
9 same percentage of gun-involved crime. Credible
10 messengers should not just show up because of a
11 crime, but will be doing outreach in the community
12 [inaudible]. Recently Ebbetts Field experienced a
13 shooting which resulted in NYPD cars on the patio,
14 caution tape, and signs asking residents to turn in
15 individuals with illegal guns for \$1000. No
16 communication to the community, nor was their
17 community engagement. Some residents expressed
18 discomfort with both the shooting and the level of
19 policing. We do need change. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I'd now
21 like to welcome Michelle Barnes to testify, followed
22 by Jed Marcus, and then Ana Miranda. Michelle
23 Barnes, you may begin on the sergeant's announcement.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
25

1
2 MICHELLE BARNES: Yes, good morning. My
3 name is Michelle Barnes Anderson and I lost my only
4 child to gun violence, and I believe that the Mayor's
5 Office to Prevent Gun Violence should actually stay
6 standing as a permanent agency because your family is
7 not the person that need or the only people that can
8 help you get through this. You also need
9 organizations that can help you get through the red
10 tape and the bureaucracy. I mean, I lost my son and
11 I lost my mind. But yet when I was trying to get
12 through some things to try to find out how can I get
13 his property it was the Mayor's Office of Gun
14 Violence, To Prevent Gun Violence, that helped me get
15 through that. When I tried to start, ah, a resource
16 at the juvenile detention center it was the Mayor's
17 Office that helped me get through the red tape to
18 actually start this program that's in the progress
19 that's going on right now. I'm trying to help
20 prevent other children from getting murdered and I'm
21 sitting in the middle of this crime right here in the
22 ZIP code that you would like consider as one of one
23 the highest [inaudible] it's called 11201, but yet my
24 son was murdered. Yet it was three other kids that
25 was murdered. And because we don't fit in the high

1
2 ZIP code, being I haven't campaigned the ad in our
3 area while our kids are still being murdered. It's
4 the Mayor's Office to Prevent Gun Violence that's
5 helping us with getting through bureaucracy to get
6 some of the things. As, as the Majority Leader said,
7 she cannot be a sounding board for every single
8 person. I have used her also to try to help. But
9 she has a whole community, a whole district for all
10 sides that she has to help. And this organization
11 they can come in and they give a call with the
12 Mayor's Office to Prevent Gun Violence and people
13 respond, people answer. Mothers like me are sitting
14 right here and can't get through a lot of different
15 things and that also plays a big part on our mental
16 health. I lost my mind and [inaudible] commit it. I
17 have abused alliance and prescription drugs trying to
18 get through the pain. But I had resources that can
19 help me through the Mayor's Office of Gun Violence to
20 get through red tape, because when you're trying to
21 get some things and you can't that put a big effect
22 on your mental space. Although I may have insurance,
23 some mothers don't have insurance. Some mothers
24 don't have people that they can contact. But if you
25 have a organization, a agency that's there and the

1
2 promise that you help mothers like me get through
3 this you'll prevent not only mental health but we
4 will also be preserving, um, gun violence and we're
5 not just, my child is already gone but I'm trying to
6 save other children, and the Mayor's Office can help
7 to prevent from both sides of the barrel, from the
8 front of the barrel and behind the barrel. So think
9 this is something that should be staying in the
10 agency. It shouldn't matter because we have a high
11 statistic in one area, because what if the statistic
12 go low, that means that the gun violence is gonna
13 stop so we don't need the office anymore? No, the
14 office needs to stand to make sure those numbers stay
15 low. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I'd now
17 like to welcome Jed Marcus to testify, followed Ana
18 Miranda, then Ed Brown. Jed Marcus, you may begin
19 upon the sergeant's announcement.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Ah, Jed, we can't
22 hear you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jed, you may need to
24 accept the request to unmute.

25

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2 JED MARCUS: Got it, I'm with you. I'm
3 sorry. I'm, better?

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, perfect.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

6 JED MARCUS: I'm with you, ah, coming to
7 you from One Community, which is an organization in
8 Fort Greene and Clinton Hill and, ah, our focus is,
9 is equity in our community. Our community has, has
10 great resources and simultaneously many of the people
11 in our community, mostly in our large public housing
12 projects, developments, are, um, separated from
13 those, those resources by many psychological, social
14 and, um, economic barriers. And so, ah, we work
15 closely with the council member to make sure that
16 resources are generally available. I would like to
17 say that, number one, we support the bill; number
18 two, I think it's important that the bill state and
19 the general recognition be the, that community
20 violence is a public health issue and not a criminal
21 justice issue, and it's a criminal, ah, public health
22 issue that requires the integrated response of the
23 many agencies that the Majority Leader, ah,
24 mentioned, and that has to be integral to the, to the
25 operation, not only of the office, but on the on the

1
2 ground day-to-day support for people in the
3 community, that there has to be a vehicle on the
4 ground which enables all the agencies that we
5 mentioned - mental health, family services,
6 education, criminal justice, and social work to, to
7 respond to the specific needs of individuals in our
8 community who are at risk. The, ah, final thing I'd
9 like to say is that many of the people who are
10 engaged in violence are locked in situations that
11 give them very few alternatives. And, again, I'm
12 repeating some of the things Majority Leader said.
13 Um, many of us, many of the people who are on this
14 call have a wide range of alternatives. Their lives
15 offer them many vocational, educational,
16 recreational, spiritual alternatives, whereas many of
17 the people who are, who are involved in gun violence
18 and at risk within our community have very few
19 alternatives at a time when they're making major life
20 choices. The people who are the most at risk are
21 making choices about their peers, about their
22 schools, about, about role models, about, um, their,
23 their futures, about, ah, and, and they're modeling
24 new things. They're changing their clothes every
25 day. They're changing their hair every day. And so

1
2 these are, these are young people who need outlets
3 that are not currently available to them. And so in
4 addition to looking at violence that's occurred it's
5 very important that we look at prevention by offering
6 people a wide range of resources, and so I would
7 suggest that an important function for the office is
8 working with organizations that marshall resources
9 within our communities. Thank you, Chairman Cabrera,
10 and thank you the other members of the committee.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Let me acknowledge,
14 first of all, ah, Committee Counsel, we've been
15 joined by Council Member Rodriguez.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks, Chair. I'd
17 now like to welcome Ana Miranda to testify, followed
18 by Ed Brown. Ana Miranda, you may begin upon the
19 sergeant's announcement.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 ANA MIRANDA: Hi, can you guys hear me?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes we can.

23 ANA MIRANDA: Hello?

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, we can.
25

1 ANA MIRANDA: Oh, hi. Hi, well, yes, so
2
3 I agree that we should have the office to stand. I
4 also experienced losing a loved one to gun violence,
5 my child's father, and at that time I had no
6 resources. I didn't know where to turn. I didn't
7 know what to do, and I had to kind of figure it out
8 with my on our own. So having the office there
9 allows people like myself the opportunity to walk in
10 and get the necessary attention that we need, the
11 immediate attention that we need instead of trying to
12 figure it out on our own. Instead of calling on the
13 phone and no one's picking up, we can walk directly
14 into the office, as well as other organizations who
15 are in these, in our communities, doing the footwork,
16 you know, should also be able to say listen, this is
17 what's going on with this individual. You know, I
18 only have this to offer, what do you have to offer,
19 and kind of connect us, and everyone's working hand
20 on hand together, um, as a community and we want at
21 this time should be working hand on hand. We need as
22 much help as we can get. Our communities are in
23 trouble, and we are lacking resources and if we can
24 get organizations to come in get the help that they
25 need to help other families, if they can't provide a

1
2 resource themselves because of the lack of funds then
3 that's what it needs, and if that's what it takes
4 then that's what we need to do. Um, I, I, I just
5 feel like we need the office and it needs to stay
6 and, and like, you know, Michelle said, whether the
7 rates go low and we feel like it's under control we
8 need make sure that it stays low.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you, Ms.
10 Miranda.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I'd now
12 like to welcome Ed Brown to testify. Ed Brown, you
13 may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 ED BROWN: Hello, can you hear me?

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, sir.

17 ED BROWN: OK, good afternoon, everyone.

18 Um, I'm just gonna be brief. Ah, my name is Ed
19 Brown, as you've heard. I'm the former [inaudible]
20 president at the Ingersoll Houses, um, in downtown
21 Brooklyn. And, um, I experienced, you know, um, gun
22 violence myself as a youth growing up and then also,
23 um, when I was [inaudible] president, um, my, ah,
24 oldest son was shot six times and I support this
25 office because I know that, um, if at the time we had

1
2 a office such as this, you know, I would have had,
3 you know, the office I needed to reach out, his
4 mother as well. You know, we went through a lot.
5 I'm still, I'm still suffering from the mental
6 damage. Of course, my son is as well. Thank, thank
7 God he's still alive. But at the time, um, I was
8 fighting hard to, um, get the Ingersoll Community
9 Center open and, um, to provide resources and, and
10 different programming and workshops for the young
11 people in the neighborhood to keep them from, you
12 know, situations like this. Ah, an office like this,
13 you know, it's a no-brainer. We need this, a
14 direction connection that addresses the issues
15 because, um, although gun violence was prevalent,
16 prevalent in our communities for many years it seems
17 to be on steroids right now and the more resources
18 and the more connections we can make directly to the
19 top that can send down resources and, and the things
20 that we need to get our young people, and not just
21 our young people, but some of our older men are
22 still, you know, engaging, um, I think it's a no-
23 brainer. I support this 100%, actually 1000%, and
24 we, we need to treat this going, no matter who the
25 mayor is. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I see
4 Majority Leader Cumbo has her hand raised. Majority
5 Leader?

6 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I just want to
7 thank everybody, um, for testifying. Ah, many of the
8 individuals that you heard on this call are part of a
9 monthly meeting, um, that I began to figure out ways
10 that we as a community can work our Cure Violence
11 provider, G. Mack and, and other community partners
12 to end violence in our community. Um, but I think
13 that what I really want, um, to say, too, I want to
14 thank Michelle Barnes for her courage. Um, there's
15 so many mothers that I met on an everyday basis it's
16 only after years of knowing them will you discover
17 that they've lost a child to gun violence, and it's
18 because for many people this becomes such a dark
19 cloud that they turn inward and they close off that
20 particular painful experience in their life and that
21 loss of a loved one. And then some are able to
22 utilize that experience to champion for others, um,
23 to keep the memory alive in a way and to do many
24 activities, events, and programs to keep their life
25 going. And so I really applaud Michelle for being

1
2 able to do that. Um, but I want to address also
3 that, um, what Beverly talked about, and that's that
4 these shootings still occur, and as she just
5 described that image of a police tape, um, the
6 caution signs, and those things, that's really
7 traumatizing elements to see in your community and
8 your building to know that someone was shot and/or
9 killed in your neighborhood and the only explanation
10 that you know is that there's police tape,
11 potentially a day after or two, there's a candlelight
12 vigil, there, there are candles, there are liquor
13 bottles, there's all these sorts of things and
14 flowers that are laid down, um, for the person. You
15 know, we've become desensitized to the fact that that
16 is a normal part of our lives in black and brown
17 communities and that absolutely should not be the
18 case. So my goal is, you know, for this office to
19 really be that on the ground so that people
20 understand, you know, obviously we want to prevent,
21 but in that period and space where we're addressing
22 these issues that community at Ebbetts Field, not
23 even just because of the incident she described just
24 decades of caution tape need that level of support
25 within that development and, and many other

1 communities to address the, the issues, the trauma,
2 the, the terrorization, um, of losing a child that
3 for me as a mom of a 4-year-old, when I just think
4 about now that I'm a mother, all that goes into
5 bringing a life and, and bringing life into
6 adulthood, it's, it's unfathomable that somebody
7 could take that away from somebody else. And that
8 level of trauma is do deep that it can't be a thing
9 that's kind of glossed over. It can't be a pamphlet.
10 It can't be, it's gotta be real, deep, therapeutic,
11 psychological, help that will never make that person
12 right again, but to help them to be able to manage
13 and to turn that pain into something that can become
14 livable or productive for them to help others. So I
15 just, I just hope that while we're codifying, God
16 willing, this office into law that it's also expanded
17 to provide more because caution tape on your way to
18 school and, and, and candles burning should not be
19 the reality that our children or anyone becomes so
20 desensitized to that it just becomes a way of life.
21 So thank you so much.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And now
25 I'd like to welcome Divine Pryor to testify. Divine

1 Pryor, you may begin following the sergeant's
2
3 announcement.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 DIVINE PRYOR: Thank you so much. Thank
6 you so much and, ah, good morning. Ah, my name is
7 Dr. Divine Pryor and I am the president and chief
8 executive officer of the People's Police Academy,
9 located at Medgar Evers College in the City of New
10 York. I first want to, ah, say kudos to the Majority
11 Leader, Laurie Cumbo, because I think that, ah, she
12 spoke volumes in laying out all of the different
13 dimensions to the trauma that individuals, their
14 families, their communities, experience as a result
15 of gun violence, and the fact of the matter is, is
16 that for far too long we've only dealt with the
17 symptoms and we have not dealt with the causal
18 factors. I think that the Office to Prevent Gun
19 Violence should be a permanent office. I think it
20 should be signed into legislation. I think that it
21 should have been long ago, and I think that when it
22 is, and I believe that, ah, this attempt to do so
23 will be successful that when the Office to Prevent
24 Gun Violence actually is a part of the legislative
25 mandate that we will actually have a, a foundation to

1 build on. But one of the things that we need to be
2 aware of is that Office of Gun Violence has done
3 something that most offices that are similar to it
4 around the country have not done. What has it done?
5 It has first of all raised awareness about the whole
6 issue of gun violence and really promoted the idea of
7 a public health approach to violence as opposed to a
8 law enforcement approach. For years and years we've
9 only used law enforcement as the heavy arm to address
10 violence, not realizing that the violence that we see
11 across the country is really symptomatic of a lot of
12 deeper issues in communities that historically have
13 not been addressed. Issues around poverty, issues
14 around concentrated housing, ah, issues around poor-
15 quality health care, issues around inability to
16 properly educate all our children have all
17 contributed to the environment. High rates of
18 unemployment, mass incarceration, all of these things
19 have contributed to the conditions which we now see
20 as violence manifested in so many different ways.
21 The other that it's done is produced policy. The
22 office hit the ground running and began to address
23 policy that made it possible for other agencies who
24 otherwise would not have been in this area to
25

1 actually take part in creating an environment where
2 we could be safer and we could be healthier. And
3 that is monumental. So you have the Department of
4 Education and the Department of Health and the New
5 York City Housing Authority and the NYPD and so many
6 other city agencies working collaboratively in
7 cooperation with each other to co-produce public
8 safety and then the third thing you did is put the
9 community at the forefront. They realized that those
10 who were closest to the problem were also closer to
11 the solution, and so they immediately began to
12 recruit individuals who had some involvement in the
13 system, some investment in lifestyles that were less
14 than safe, and asked them what is it that we could
15 and should be doing to address...

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 DIVINE PRYOR: ...[inaudible]. Thank you
19 so much, ah, for the time. There's more. I'll
20 provide the remainder in writing. Thank you so much.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you, Doctor.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Ah, I
23 believe we've heard from all of the registered
24 witnesses on the call, so at this time if your name
25 has not been called and you wish to testify, please

1 raise your hand using the Zoom raise hand function.

2 Seeing no hands raised, I'll now turn it Chair

3 Cabrera for closing remarks.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,

5 Committee Counsel for a great job, ah, that you

6 performed today. And also I want to thank, ah,

7 Sebastian Bocchi and also, um, our legislative

8 director, Corey Pena. I want to thank, ah, all of

9 the sponsors of the bills, ah, that were mentioned

10 today. Thank you for your leadership. Looking

11 forward, ah, having a greater discussion and so we

12 can get things to the finish line. And I want to

13 thank all the committees members that are, ah, still

14 here, like Council Member Yeger, and, ah, Council

15 Member Levin. Thank you, and all the council members

16 who participated and last and we think all of the,

17 all of you who testified today. Your input is

18 valuable. Ah, it's taken into great consideration,

19 ah, and we want to make these bills, ah, better, ah,

20 because when we make them better, ah, we're were

21 able, ah, to, to have a better city and have a better

22 execution plan. So with that, ah, we conclude

23 today's hearing. Thank you, everyone. God bless.

24 [gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date November 12, 2021