

I live in East Williamsburg, less than a mile from Sure WeCan's headquarters on 219 McKibbin Street in Brooklyn. I am a member of 350Brooklyn, a grassroots, volunteer organization that works locally to address the climate crisis through education, legislation, and direct action. I also am a member of the Powers Street Community Garden and Friends of Cooper Park.

Today, I am urging Speaker Johnson to aggressively advocate for the Office of Management and Budget to grant an Economic Development Exemption for the application of Sure We Can to purchase their site on 219 McKibbin Street in Brooklyn. Because Sure We Can's landlord has given the organization an ultimatum to purchase or vacate and because, with the capital to purchase and no current avenue to raise capital under city regulations, the only way they could currently overcome this obstacle to their existence is for city council to **waive the 3-year city contract condition** requisite to Sure We Can's ability to raise capital and continue to thrive.

Today I want to testify personally. I haven't always lived in East Williamsburg. Being a renter, with the housing conditions as they are and ever-rising rents in our landlord/developer-friendly city, my family has been forced to uproot and move often within the city. One of the first things I noticed about this particular neighborhood of East Williamsburg and Bushwick, is that it is noticeably underserved by waste removal services. Where other neighborhoods I have lived enjoyed things like curbside composting (prior to the ill-advised pandemic cuts) for example, here we regularly experience gaps and irregularity in recycling and trash pick up. As trash piles up on sidewalks and parks, canners comb the neighborhood for cans that ordinarily would eventually be processed as waste, and hauled through our neighborhood with dirty trucks that render North Brooklyn neighborhoods some of the most polluted in the city. Canners do extraordinarily valuable and under-recognized environmental work.

Many of the canners in my neighborhood, including my next door neighbors, can for Sure We Can. In the bleakest and coldest months of the pandemic, morning canners could be heard every day, combing through the refuse on our block, so they could make enough income to survive. At manifest occupational risk to themselves, these brave informal workers are performing vital green services for our community, indeed filling in where our city services fail us. I looked at them as essential workers, diverting 10s of millions containers annually, distributing dignified income for hundreds of people who may not have another way to survive. Right now, this is a free low carbon service to the city. Canners do not get paid. They do not enjoy occupational safety protections. They do not enjoy health insurance. Some do not have homes. They are the most vulnerable of the vulnerable, because our city has failed to respond to these palimpsested social crises of pverty and climate collapse.

The same way our state has recognized that bottle redemption is critical to our environmental goals as a society, we must extend our thinking and recognize that we need to value the human beings who execute the collection of bottles in the waste reduction chain. I ask you you not just to waive the 3-year city contract condition for Sure We can, but consider fully subsidizing this work.



May 25, 2021

Attn: Speaker Corey Johnson

Re: OMB Economic Development Exemption for Sure We Can

350Brooklyn is a grassroots, volunteer organization that works locally to address the climate crisis through education, legislation, and direct action.

Today we are urging Speaker Johnson to aggressively advocate for the Office of Management and Budget to grant an Economic Development Exemption for the application of Sure We Can to purchase their site on 219 McKibbin Street in Brooklyn.

350Brooklyn works in partnership and solidarity with Sure We Can, because we know that canners play a vital though underappreciated role in recycling and sanitation in New York City, and that Sure We Can is one of the only institutions which recognizes, supports, and builds solidarity among this vital group of green workers.

As an environmental actor, Sure We Can's contributions are undeniable. Its canners divert over 10 millions containers annually, distributing over \$750,000 to more than 900 freelance canners in our community. These services are particularly vital for 350Brooklyn's members in North Brooklyn, who have seen gaps in sanitation and recycling pick-ups particularly during the pandemic. Through the New York State Bottle Bill, our government recognizes the environmental value of canners' work by putting a deposit value on bottles and cans. The city enjoys these services for free.

In spite of this, canners' work remain severely undercompensated, and like other informal workers and dependent contractors they receive no benefits or protections from their work. They remain among the most vulnerable and marginalized workers in the city. This is underlined starkly by anti-Asian threats and attacks perpetrated against members of the Chinese canning community, with one recent, brutal attack leaving 61-year old Yao Pan Ma in a coma. The support that Sure We Can provides to the canning community is more vital than ever today.

Sure We Can's current landlord has given it an ultimatum: purchase or vacate. Because SWC does not have 3 consecutive years of city contracts -- because there are no NYC contracts available for the work that they do -- SWC is ineligible for capital funding. This condition must be waived, so that NYC and Brooklyn do not risk losing this critical institution.

Sincerely,

Georgi Page
Chair of 350Brooklyn City Action Committee

Jan Thompson
Chair of 350Brooklyn Plastic Committee

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color.

The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
- 24/7 operating hours;
- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Abraham Velazquez

av@brotherhood-sistersol.org

517 West 212th St, Apt 3A

New York, New York 10034

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

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Thank you for your consideration.

aideen nunan

aideen2@aol.com

55 Eastern Parkway #6C

New York City, New York 11238

Dear NYC Committee on Finance,

I am writing to you to submit my testimony for the hearing which took place on Tuesday, May 25th 2021, at 10am. Along with thousands and thousands of other New York City residents, I am demanding that this committee cut the NYPD budget by at least \$1 billion. It is a terrible reality that the NYPD budget is over \$6 billion, and that's before considering overtime budget. The NYPD does not need a budget that high. That money goes towards terrorizing residents of our city without actually creating the conditions for safety and security. In fact, the NYPD create the conditions for fear. Why is their budget so large? It tells me and thousands of others that this city values policing more than it does education, housing, healthcare, job creation and many other life affirming resources and institutions.

As a long time, NYC resident, I am can attest that the NYPD has a terrible record of misconduct and abuse of New Yorkers. Defund the NYPD. Defund them if you have any care for the people who make up this city. Defund them if you actually care about safety.

Invest in us! Invest in our communities. Give us what we deserve and let Black, Brown, Queer and immigrant NYC residents decide what safety looks like for ourselves.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Akash J Singh

akashjason@gmail.com

3479012815

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

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Thank you for your consideration.

Akmal Mahatov

AMahatov@acmhny.org

28 Suzanne Circle

Fairfield, Connecticut 06825

City Council Finance Committee,

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Al Gibson

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1049 glenmore ave. 4C

brooklyn, New York 11208

ALAIN LAFOREST

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laforest.alain@hotmail.com

To the Finance Committee:

Thank you Speaker Johnson, Chairperson Dromm, and Finance Committee Members for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Alain Laforest and I am a Master of Science in Library and Information Science (MLSIS) candidate at Pratt Institute.

Prior to Pratt, I received a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English Language and Literature from Brown University. I was awarded as a Social Innovation Fellow for founding the Science Bowl Pilot Program, a summer program to promote a STEM-based academic tournament for Rhode Island High School Students.

More recently, I volunteered as an individualized literacy tutor and mentor with the Read 718 program in Bedford Stuyvesant, a non-profit that serves students in grades 3-8. The experience reminded me of going to the library on weekends with my father. My father is a clerk with the NYPL who'd take me to work with him. This led to me pursuing a career as a librarian.

As a librarian, I am passionate about developing Young Adult Services through collection and program development that holistically serves the needs of all teens in the community. Librarians are essential workers who supplement the efforts of educators throughout the city. Funding for libraries is important to maintaining the pipeline of talented individuals who wish to enter the profession. Many of my fellow upperclassmen have been furloughed from positions at the New York, Brooklyn, and Queens Public Libraries. Without funding many talented librarians who hope to serve the city are seeking opportunities elsewhere.

Thank you Speaker Johnson, Chairperson Dromm, and Finance Committee Members for both your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alain Laforest
Urban Librarians Unite

Dear officials,

I am asking you for your help to protect my neighborhood and Van Cortlandt Park and its wildlife from **NOISE**.

I am a resident of 6629 Broadway in Riverdale, Bronx, NY, 10471.

Noise in my neighborhood is a recurrent problem. The level of noise we experience daily and nightly is 90-110dB.

There are three causes of noise in my area:

1. **Loud music** from **cars** driving or parked.

Sometimes songs consist of vulgar language and profanity.

2. **Revving engines** of cars and motorbikes.

To make their cars louder people remove the muffler from the exhaust system. Hence, they increase a level of exhaust pollutants in the air.

3. **Parties** in the park with loud music.

Last Sunday May 23rd parties with loud music at 100 dB started at 1 pm.

At 9 pm I personally went through all those parties to see what was going on.

On the block between W262nd and W263rd Streets there were approximately

80 people sitting on both sides of Broadway and in the park. They openly

drank alcohol from bottles. There was a group of approximately 20 young men openly smoking marijuana. All the people were visibly drunk or drugged.

The loud music was coming from eight cars. From two of them the level of music was around 120 dB. There were approximately 20 cars double parked.

Fireworks were started.

I was scared walking through those parties. I was scared going into the park.

At that moment I felt unprotected, completely unsafe. I clearly understood that right now here we needed a presence of police!

We called 311 at 3pm. I submitted two complaints to 311.

One was about noise from a car. Another one was about a loud party in the park.

Here are the responses I got from NYPD:

NYC 311 **Service Request Closed**

Hello,

This Service Request has been closed by the New York City Police Department, NYPD.

Your request details are:

Service Request Number: 311-06302306
Type: Noise - Vehicle - Car/Truck Music
Location: 6636 BROADWAY, BRONX, NY, 10471 BRONX
Date Submitted: 5/23/2021 4:18:47 PM

NYPD provided the following information:

The Police Department responded to the complaint and with the information available observed no evidence of the violation at that time.

Thank you,
NYC311

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NYC 311 **Service Request Closed**

Hello,

This Service Request has been closed by the New York City Police Department, NYPD.

Your request details are:

Service Request Number: 311-06302873
Type: Noise - Park - Loud Music/Party
Location: 3545 JEROME AVENUE, BRONX, NY, 10467 BRONX
Date Submitted: 5/23/2021 4:47:48 PM

NYPD provided the following information:

The Police Department responded to the complaint and determined that police action was not necessary.

Thank you,
NYC311

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We called 911. They transferred us to 311. We called the 50th Precinct. They never answered our call.

The only help we got was from the Van Cortland Park authority and personally from Stephanie Ehrlich, Executive Director and Van Cortlandt Park Administrator.

My only explanation why we did not get help from NYPD is this area is poor. And poor people can be left at mercy of drunk people and drug -dealers, can be deprived from a normal life like enjoying the park or having a good night's sleep.

How we spent our Sunday afternoon – we were confined to our apartment, being afraid to go out and calling 311, 911, etc.

There is a major holiday coming this weekend. And I feel scared of what those parties will be like.

Alena Edelman

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
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I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
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- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alex Brown
drew.brown7143@gmail.com
435 Irving ave
Brooklyn , New York 11237

Finance Chair Dromm and the Committee on Finance:

My name is Alex Zucker and I'm writing because I'm concerned about this city and the harm done to New Yorkers by policing.

In particular I'm concerned about the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget, which includes a \$200 million dollar increase for the NYPD—the most expensive NYPD budget ever proposed.

The NYPD already has a budget of \$6 billion—not counting pensions!—and there is ZERO evidence that an increase in police officers and policing keeps communities safe and healthy. The evidence shows that what keeps communities safe, and what we need more investment in, is community services. NYPD must be removed from social-service roles.

What actually brings health and safety is accessible, quality, stable housing, well-funded public schools and other public institutions like libraries and cultural centers, accessible and quality health care for all, including community-based, non-coercive mental health services, and ending the criminalization of unmet mental health needs and drug use. Many communities around the country are already relying on non-police intervention and violence prevention programs that have proven to be both effective and require much less money compared to police.

Every year, NYC spends millions of dollars to keep cops who have killed and brutalized us on the city payroll. That's millions of dollars that are going toward the continued criminalization of Black, Latinx and other communities of color, instead of health care, schools and youth programs, jobs, and housing.

We need solutions to the issues our communities face, solutions that are developed, built, implemented, and maintained by the people from the communities.

We need to completely remove police from mental health responses. We need an NYPD hiring freeze, the elimination of dangerous units like the SRG, and a discontinuation of initiatives like Youth Coordinating Officers, which systematize the racial profiling and surveilling of Black, Latinx, and other POC young people.

Instead, NYC needs investments to equip local community groups who are working day in and day out on the ground with the resources to be the first line of response. Our local community groups are the ones building the supportive ongoing relationships with the people in our communities. We need to invest more resources in developing these community-led infrastructures for safety and support.

We don't need new or more police officers. ***I call for a freeze on new NYPD hires and a full investment in community-led efforts that do not rely on police. Cut the NYPD budget by \$3 billion! Instead this is what we need:***

- NYC needs immediate expansion and full funding for citywide Summer Youth Employment.
- NYC needs investments in violence intervention programs that don't rely on police.
- NYC needs health and mental health care, education, housing, and jobs.

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 28, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens experiencing major mental illness.

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color.

The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

I speak from firsthand experience. I have Bipolar Disorder Type I, and a decade ago I experienced a major manic episode with psychosis. The police were called to my Brooklyn address, and when they arrived, it escalated the situation for me. In my state of severe illness, and experiencing fear of the police response, I reacted violently. While I believe that the police responded in the best way that they were capable of, they simply were not equipped to offer an appropriate response.

Additionally, while I am a Hispanic woman, I am also white. While I did not experience serious injury as a result of my episode, it horrifies me that people undergoing mental crises are at extreme risk of serious injury or loss of life because of the color of their skin.

Though I survived that incident, I cannot overstate the toll which it took on my life over the previous decade. I can only imagine how differently things would have turned out had the first responders been medical professionals or trained peer responders.

I implore you to help make New York City a place that is safe for those of us who suffer from serious mental illness.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alexandra Mendez-Diez

amdiez@gmail.com

218 N. 7th St., Apt. 3L

Brooklyn, New York 11211

5/26/21

To whom it may concern,

I'm a resident of 6035 Broadway in the Bronx across from Van Cortlandt Park. Our neighborhood has been plagued by noise pollution into the middle of the night. Most concerning to my family and several of our neighbors are the dirt bikes, ATVs, motorcycles and souped up cars, some of which (motorcycles and dirt bikes especially) actually speed around the parade ground grass and paths in Van Cortlandt Park itself. They even do this during the day and early evening, right near our children in the park. This happened frequently last summer and it's starting to happen again. Apparently a neighbor's dog was killed and it's very frightening to think of what else might happen. There should be significantly more funding for Park Enforcement Patrol and/or the police to address this problem before something terrible happens, as well as improving the quality of life for those of us near the park. Thanks for your attention to this serious issue.

-Alexandra Sawyer

City Council Finance Committee,

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Thank you for your consideration.

Alexandra Smith

missmatchez@gmail.com

274 Hancock Street, #4

Brooklyn, NY, New York 11217

Dear Finance Chair Dromm,

I am appalled that after countless police murders, after the uprisings for George Floyd, and the millions of people who took the streets last summer, that Mayor de Blasio has the audacity to propose \$200 million **increase** to the NYPD budget, making it the largest NYPD budget ever! We were in the streets saying #DefundThePolice, and now City Council is undoing the will of the people.

I am a Bed-Stuy resident and work with young people in Brownsville, Brooklyn, and like many other New Yorkers am saddened by the increase in violent crime. However, this rise in crime is a reflection of the increased economic and social precarity brought on by the pandemic. Our communities need direct investment—well-maintained public housing, thriving small businesses, and access to good jobs and education. We do not need to increase the footprint of a police force that adds to the harassment, trauma, and violence that our communities already face.

I ask the finance committee to make good on their promise to #DefundThePolice the original \$1 billion that they promised last year, and bring the NYPD budget down to \$5 billion. We need care not cops.

Alexis Takahashi

I have lived in New York City for 15 years, I came from London to go to New York University. I recently became a citizen of this nation. All my time here I have believed in the idea that the USA, while it has its problems, is ultimately a place of liberation and exultation of humanity. The history of humanity is dark and full of violence. I believe there is an opportunity now, after a year of extreme pain, for positive growth here in this incredible city. New York needs to lead America with forward thinking policies that invest in the future and build a stronger world. Because there will be lots more problems in the future. We all know this, and holding down any part of the goodness and strength of this city will only hurt everyone. Please consider putting the resources that have gone to outdated policies of violence and shame into educating and building the morality of the individual and therefore strengthening the communities that live here and make it such an incredible metropolis. Please do not disproportionately fund oppressive and reactionary tactics such as over policing, but instead build a better world with targeted funding within communities. The time is now. Defund the police.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Alicia Sponholz
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217 w. 115th St. 5A
New York, New York 10026

New York City Education Budget Demands

We need equity in this city's education budget.

In order to have true education and racial justice in our New York City public schools and for our New York City public school students, we demand that New York City spends the influx of money to our public schools in a truly equitable manner. Over a dozen community organizations and hundreds of parents informed the list of demands listed below. We demand these be prioritized in the New York City budget.

The pandemic only highlighted the devastating reality of unequal and inequitable public school conditions. New York City has a critical opportunity to address these disparities and must take action with a budget that addresses these gaps and the needs of our students and families.

Mayor de Blasio and the New York City Council have a responsibility to New York City public school students to ensure that they will spend the billions of dollars New York City is getting in ways that are centered in equity and are research based, and uphold our student's rights. In addition, while the city is slated to receive billions of dollars to fund one-time initiatives within the next three years, it is critical for the Mayor and Council to determine how they plan to sustain investments into educational programs when federal funding runs out.

Infrastructure & Technologically-Savvy Schools

\$445 million

Class size reduction: \$250 million

We support the City Council's proposal in its preliminary budget response that \$250 million be invested in reducing class size next year, targeted first for struggling schools with especially vulnerable students. This would allow for the hiring of about 2500 new teachers, which could lower class sizes in as many as 10,000 classrooms, as every new teacher lowers the class size of every class in the same grade or subject in a particular school.

Infrastructure: \$175 million

- \$125 million to finance \$3.6 billion in bonds to add 26,550 seats to the capital plan
- \$25 million to lease and if necessary, renovate 17 parochial school buildings
- \$25 million to finance bonds to generate \$700 million for ventilation and other upgrades

Grade/Developmentally Appropriate Devices: \$20 million

We urge the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) to supply keyboards, stylus, chargers, and student support applications for existing iPads. We encourage the purchase of Chromebooks or laptops going forward for all students enrolled in middle or high school. The DOE should also provide tech support in a more localized way instead of how it has been handled centrally. We recommend dispatching tech specialists to the Borough Support Offices to facilitate district-specific support for tech liaisons in the schools, to enable speedier service to lessen the time a student is without a workable device. We also recommend these specialists be bilingual or multilingual to support language access for those families experiencing difficulty setting up the learning devices because instructions are in English.

Universal Broadband

We urge the City of New York to prioritize installation of high-speed broadband infrastructure in public housing; in neighborhoods whose median wealth is below the citywide median wealth; and in low-income communities spatially situated amid higher income communities. We also urge the DOE to renegotiate free internet subscriptions with internet & cellular service providers for the entirety of the school year 2021-2022, including the summer of 2021, regardless of the possibility of full school reopening in Fall 2021.

Supportive Schools

\$559 million

Community Schools: \$72 million

Beginning in September 2021 New York City Community Schools will be expanding from 266 to 406 schools. We demand that \$72 million is baselined for these additional 140 schools (a fully funded full service community school totals \$450K per school).

- a) Phase 1: This September, 32 new community schools (some of which are located on campuses) in the 27 communities hardest hit by COVID require an additional \$2.195 million to achieve full funding.
- b) Phase 2: Funding must be in place as the remaining 108 schools that will be added by 2025.

Fully Fund Meaningful Citywide Restorative Justice: \$225 million

- Hire school-based Restorative Justice Coordinators in every middle and high school
- Provide ongoing restorative justice training for all school staff
- Require that restorative justice trainings integrate an anti-racist approach
- Develop restorative justice curriculum with teachers and students,
- Enable school-led pass through funding to community partners to support implementation and learning,
- Recognizing that it will take time to scale up to full implementation in all schools, the City should provide \$118.5 million for implementation in 500 high schools this year.

Expand Access to Social & Emotional Supports: \$177 million

- Invest \$162 million in FY22 to hire new social workers and school counselors to continue working towards a ratio of 1:150 for all schools and 1:50 for high needs schools over the next 5 years, and prioritize hiring from Black and Brown communities.
- Invest \$15 million in the Mental Health Continuum to provide direct mental health support for students with significant mental health needs who require an integrated system of targeted, intensive support and services.
- Allocate additional funding for schools to hire community members into supportive positions based on their needs.
- Hire diverse support staff: Increased recruitment for Black, non-white Latinx, and Asian Social workers, counselors and nurses that are multilingual to assess and evaluate young children with disabilities.

Eliminate School Policing

- Disband the School Safety Division
- Eliminate the Youth Coordination Officer position
- Fully divest from metal-detection equipment, and camera-surveillance technology

Help Students Reconnect

Invest \$55 million to hire 500 community coordinators, including 150 shelter-based community coordinators, to engage in intensive strengths-based outreach to ensure that students who are disconnected from school can reengage in school and access support offered outside of school such as summer programming or after-school tutoring.

Librarians/Library Media Specialists

The New York State Education Department ordered the DOE to produce a plan in 2014 toward honoring students' right to library media specialists in all New York City public middle schools and high schools. Accounting for salaries, rising costs, and the current number of vacancies, we estimate it would cost \$30 million to bring all of our schools into compliance with state mandates. (Current estimate extrapolated from costs estimated originally by the Department of Education during a New York City Council Committee on Education hearing (see [pages 73-74](#)).

District 79 proposal for a state-of-the-art lab in the South Bronx: The cost to upgrade the library into a lab approximately \$750,000.

Schools with Strong Academic Support \$300 million

Revamp literacy instruction and provide students with the individualized academic support they need:

Evidence-based, culturally responsive reading curricula for core instruction: \$50 million

- Recommended in the City Council's response to the preliminary budget, so students can receive instruction in foundational literacy skills proven to work to teach students to read.

Targeted one-on-one or small-group intervention: \$150 million

- To be provided to students who need more help learning to read.

“High-dosage” small group tutoring in a range of subjects: \$100 million

- Recommended in the City Council’s response to the preliminary budget. Such programming must include specialized support for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students in the juvenile and criminal justice systems and must include bus service or other door-to-door transportation for students who need it to access any tutoring offered outside the regular school day.

Culturally Responsive Schools

\$1 billion

Launch intensive 3-year push to develop CRSE skills and expertise: \$350 million

- Hold summer institutes for the summers of 2021, 2022 and 2023, possibly through a partnership with EduColor, NYU Metro Center or other institutions
- Provide ongoing school-year professional development
- Build new teacher capacity

Expand CRSE and Ethnic Studies curricula and book: \$600 million

- Create new culturally responsive-sustaining curriculum
- Create website through DOE or CREHub.org to host culturally responsive lessons, activities, units etc. and make them publicly accessible to educators
- Fund schools to buy diverse and culturally responsive books for school and classroom libraries

Create Office of Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education within the Chancellor’s Office: \$50 million

- Led by the Senior Advisor for CRSE, who reports directly to the Chancellor
- In charge of overseeing and guiding CRSE plan
- Works with DOE’s research & evaluation arm to monitor and evaluate plan
- Stays in close communication and collaboration with families, youth and community members as an essential asset in building curriculum

Healthy and Safe Schools

\$705 million

- Nurses: Every school should have a permanent, full time registered nurse. Currently the Office of School Health has a policy of hiring contract nurses, which don’t have access to the Automated Student Health record, which is critical in emergency situations. Currently there are over 400 vacancies in the Office of School Health. Estimated cost to hire for existing vacancies would cost \$200 million
 - Health training around Asthma- the most prevalent healthcare related disability in children
- COVID Testing/Vaccine delivery: \$500 million for testing, tracing and vaccine delivery in schools. (does not included “Situation Room salary”)
- Early screening for dyslexia: There are 960 Psychologists in the DOE. Training them all to be able to conduct early screenings for students would cost roughly \$5M

Schools that Provide Specialized Support

\$1,000,000,178

Data Disaggregation: \$500,000

For proper data collection and disaggregation of students’ ethnic groups to identify and address inequities across ethnic groups.

- Changing internal data collection processes
 - Stakeholder engagement on how best to collect data
 - Collecting data at multiple enrollment points
- Internal rollout and training for staff on new data collection policies and procedures
- Public service announcement series explaining changes in data being requested and why it will benefit families
- Providing physical forms when necessary with new demographic data questions

Students with Disabilities: \$321 million

\$85 million in FY 22 to address the preschool special education class shortage and provide salary parity to teachers of preschool special education classes at CBOs, as recommended in the City Council's response to the preliminary budget. While we support the \$22 million investment in the Executive Budget to provide more inclusive preschool options in FY 22, there is no new funding to support preschoolers with the most significant disabilities until FY 23 and no commitment to salary parity for preschool special education teachers even in FY 23.

- Sufficient funding for compensatory services so students with disabilities can get the make-up instruction and services to which they are entitled as a result of the pandemic. In order for us to assess the \$236 million investment in the Executive Budget for compensatory and other special education services in FY 22, the DOE must release a public plan explaining how students will receive their compensatory services.
- We demand more NEST and Horizon programs in Black and non-white Latinx and other non- white immigrant neighborhoods
 - Create a free evaluation path to increase participation of BIPOC children in NEST and Horizon programs that reflect their percentages in the New York City public schools
- Conduct outreach in communities around providing universal screenings of children for Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Therapeutic Services using a culturally responsive approach

Students in Foster Care: \$7.5 million

- \$1.5 million for a small DOE office focused on students in foster care. Currently, the DOE does not have an office, team, or even a single staff member solely dedicated to supporting youth in care
- \$5 million to guarantee bus service or other door-to-door transportation for students in foster care so they can maintain school stability following the disruption of the pandemic.

English Language Learners and immigrant families: (Full 3 year budget here)

1) Urgently develop and implement a plan for catching up

ELLs and students with Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents.

- Develop and offer robust, targeted academic support for ELLs and students from LEP families in schools, including ELLs with disabilities.
- Create and offer ELL summer school and extended day programs for students in K - 12th grade that fully incorporates early childhood students (K-2nd grade) and ELLs with disabilities.
- Identify and publicly announce the scope of investment and metrics of success for this effort. And clearly specify how the DOE and which leaders will own monitoring the impact of a targeted academic support plan for these students and families.

2) Invest \$20 million dollars for at least three years (\$60 million total) for grants to community-based organizations (CBOs) and schools already well-positioned to support ELLs and immigrant families. The following programs should be prioritized:

- Afterschool for ELLs, ELLs with disabilities, and students with LEP families.
- Saturday programs for ELLs, ELLs with disabilities, and students with LEP families.
- Family engagement and community education programs for LEP families.
- In-person support for ELLs, ELLs with disabilities, and LEP families, where feasible.

3) Implement and fully fund the New York Immigration Coalition's [Education Collaborative's Communications Plan](#). Transform DOE communications infrastructure by:

- Avoiding sole reliance on online and email communication.
- Focusing significant resources on forms of communication that are more accessible and easier to understand for LEP families, such as phone calls, letters on paper, videos, and face-to-face interactions, etc.
- Adapting strategies to be inclusive of families who speak Languages of Limited Diffusion and those with low literacy and/or low digital literacy.
- Centrally tracking and monitoring school-based engagement of immigrant families.

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color.

The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
- 24/7 operating hours;
- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alyssa Wilkinson

awilkinson216@gmail.com

327 Swinton Ave

Bronx, New York 10465

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Thank you for your consideration.

Amy Winarsky

awinarsky@acmhny.org

254 W 31 St

New York, New York 10001

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Thank you for your consideration.

Amy Zilliax

azilliax@mac.com

107 Lincoln Pl

Brooklyn, New York 11217

City Council Finance Committee,

Good afternoon:

Please ensure that CCIT-NYC becomes a reality. I want to be able 311 to call if someone is having a mental health issue and not just get routed to 911 instead. It is important to protect our society's most vulnerable members.

Thank you,

Andrew Gerst

Andrew Gerst

andrew.b.gerst@gmail.com

511 W. 151st St., C5

New York, New York 10031

May 24,2021

Dear Finance Committee,

As a Bronx Parent, I have seen the negative impact of police in our schools. Young people deserve safe and supportive schools, not schools that continue to invest in their path to prison. The trauma young people have faced because of police in their schools cannot be erased; the generational trauma our Bronx communities have faced after a decade of fire cannot continue in the shape of school policing and student push out. We call on you, our Bronx elected official, to stand up and fight against a budget that would further embed police into our schools' culture while taking up vital funds for the resources most needed like counselors, social workers, nurses, mental health support and restorative practices.

Do what is right and fight for schools that no longer rely on policing in all its forms. Fight for a fair budget that does not invest even one more dollar into school police. Fight for a budget that fully funds restorative justice AND that expands funding for social-emotional needs of students because fighting for police free schools means fighting for our Bronx and your Bronx!

Sincerely,

Andria L. Whited

347-541-2760

andrialaurie@yahoo.com

I have had my fair share of negative experiences with the law. I was young, reckless and misguided until I came across great coaches, mentors, and genuine human beings who helped change my perspective on my possible success. It takes a village to raise a boy into a man. It is safe to say that my mentors have helped enlightened me from the dark place I was in. At a point in time, I was homeless however I was able to secure housing through the assistance of one of my coaches who continues to provide unconditional support to my well-being. I don't have a close bond with my parents as your typical 19-year-old would, namely because of the lack of trust between them and I. Honestly, I feel more comfortable sharing confidential things and certain ideas with my mentor rather than family given I don't feel judged by him. I'm personally asking for more funding for Fair Futures so youth like myself can prosper out of the dark abyss we're often placed within. Thanks to my mentor(s), I have graduated high school and have six amazing jobs on my resume already. I'm blessed to be in the position I'm in today! More importantly, however, are my brothers and sisters still within the system who need the same guidance I was given and am still receiving by my coaches. No one can do it alone, for surely Bill Gates nor did Martin Luther King Jr. make it without a strong support system. Please don't under-appreciate our heroes who don't wear a cape but help us elevate mentally every day.

Thank you,
Angel Villamil



YOUR NAME

63-- 72nd Street, Middle Village, NY 11379 | 646-345-9633 | AngelaCGilkes@gmail.com

May 23, 2020

Dear Recipient:

My 4yo son, Tyler Gilkes has attended Forest Hills West/Adapt Community Network (a 4410 school) in Middle Village for the past 2 years. When he aged out of the NYC Early Intervention into the NYC CPSE program his appointed Case Worker advised us that the traditional preschool program we had him enrolled in could not meet his needs and recommended a full-time special needs classroom setting with support services.

It is a misconception that special needs parents CHOOSE private schools. The reality is that the New York City public school system does not have the capacity to support the needs of our children. It is the CITY that chooses to contract 4410 schools like Forest Hills West for our children. So it is added insult to injury that the CITY chooses to not properly fund them.

We were lucky to get a spot in a school so close to home, I say lucky because there are so few classes available to support the preschool age group and many 3-5yo have to travel by bus daily. Many schools are struggling and some have closed. Even with Covid restrictions relaxed my son isn't able to go to school full-time because his teachers are covering two classes due to lack of funding. Under the FY22 Budget 4410 school's will not receive any additional funding. Other early childhood teachers will receive a salary increase in October 2021-but our 4410 teachers will not.

Tyler's teachers and their peers at other 4410 schools aren't any less educated, less skilled or working any less than their counterparts yet they are not compensated accordingly. It's dedication and passion that drives them, but passion can't put food on the table, passion can't support their families. It is because of his teachers and the support they have provided to him and to our family that he has made so much progress.

NYC not valuing the school and not valuing the teachers is not valuing our special needs children. My son and all the children that the city places into separate 4410 schools at the bare minimum deserve equality.

I hope that you right this wrong and adjust the budget to support the 4410 schools that support our children.

Sincerely,
Angela C. Gilkes

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- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anna Berg
annaberg45@gmail.com
133 W 24th st
NY, New York 10011

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Thank you for your consideration.

Anna Gianni
jaydeen.jahir@wifimaple.com
611 West 177th Street, Apartment 26
New York, New York 10033

Teach Sign Language in school

Hello,

These are my proposals for how NYC schools should spend billions in new funds to improve our schools:

Sign Language should be taught in schools. It's a beautiful language with a rich culture, and supporting evidence why learning it has its benefits and can be applied in various settings. Babies can start learning it as early as few months old. It has also been shown to be an effective mode of communication for nonverbal individuals with Autism and other disabilities. It can also provide great career opportunities. Teaching Sign Language in schools would result in deaf people being able to communicate with more people. With this comes more awareness and acceptance of the deaf community leading to more inclusion. Why should deaf people adapt to hearing society, why can't we meet them half way?

Provide more nutritious food at school cafeterias, instead of the heavy processed and sugar packed meals which often lack necessary nutrients. Kids need nutrients to grow physically, but also to provide their brain fuel. By providing kids with adequate nutrition, attention and focus in school would improve as well as reduction in various negative behaviors which would lead better learning outcomes. This is important especially now after what we've been through with the pandemic. Many children rely on school food as their main source of nutrition, why not provide them with nutritious and healthy meals. This would also address the waste issue, because a lot of the food is discarded by the students as well as the obesity epidemic.

I believe that these proposals would add value to our NYC schools and our children that attend them. Thank you.

Anna Maternia
Parent/CEC24 Member
1732 Harman Street
Ridgewood, NY 11385

Antonia Ferraro Martinelli
66 2nd St.
Brooklyn, NY 11231
917-670-0565

FY2022 Budget Hearing:
How shall \$8 billion in Federal Covid Education Funds Be Spent?

May 25, 2021

Good morning Councilmembers. My name is Antonia Ferraro Martinelli. I am a parent of three children and a member of the Community Education Council in District 15 Brooklyn. Thank you for holding these hearings today to solicit feedback on how New York City shall spend \$8 billion in federal education funds.

Our schools faced a year like no other. I watched our schools scramble to provide technology and food to students. I watched schools hit roadblocks as they tried to hire essential staff due to withholding of register growth money and withholding of exemptions from the hiring freeze. The withholding of money from the city and state to our DOE had direct, negative impacts on our children in schools. They implemented social distancing requirements and complex, ever-changing schedules all in the face of severe staffing and funding issues. Now that our circumstances have dramatically improved due to vaccination, it is imperative that we develop a plan for next year so that our schools can hire staff and allocate resources appropriately. I hope that my recommendations help inform that plan.

- **Class Size Reduction** - One third of NYC students are in classes of 30 or more. Allocating funds to a five-year class size reduction plan will assist in social distancing and give reticent parents more confidence in the health and safety of the in-person classroom environment.
- **Additional funding for early childhood literacy that focuses on decoding and fluency** - Children with dyslexia, in particular, are not well-served systemwide leading to a backlog of Carter Cases that diverts public funds to private schools.
- **Implement Schoolwide Enrichment Models (SEM) at all schools** - The phasing-out of G&T has left many questions that could be answered by implementing universal schoolwide enrichment at all our schools. Even those who advocate for G&T programs support more enrichment. The SEM is a way to end the racially segregated G&T classrooms, expand enrichment, tackle Covid-related learning loss, and increase interest and enrollment growth in our public schools.
- **Implement Universal After School programs** especially for High School students who are overlooked but desperately in need of mentorship and guidance in the hours after school.

- **Mandate a guidance counselor at every school** - Students have faced the Covid crisis without support. Schools are facing an influx of students in temporary housing that need additional support.
- **Technology replacement funding** - When our city went into lockdown last year, our schools distributed all their in-house ipads and laptops. All of this tech needs to be replaced by the fall.
- **Digital Infrastructure upgrade funding** - Schools need sufficient capacity to manage advanced technology and other needs (onsite internet connections to schools, wifi onsite)
- **Free Wi-Fi for All** - Our schools must ensure all families with Pre-K-12 students have access to free Wi-Fi. Internet access has become integral to education in the same way busing is integral. Schools must be mandated to offer a free Wi-Fi option to all families.
- **Food** - In light of the impact of COVID we must continue free food for all families and in all communities with appropriate funding statewide. I have spent some time working at a weekend food pantry and I have seen a wide cross section of the community on those lines, including many children, parents and grandparents.
- **CRSE and SEL** - Implement mandatory workshops in CRSE (*Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education*) and SEL (*Social Emotional Learning*) for all teacher certification applicants. We are a diverse city in a diverse state under a diverse nation. If we have learned anything from the last four years, it should be that education must train us to understand and respect each other's differences so that we may see the commonalities.
- **Translation and Interpretation Technology** - CECs and Parent Coordinators need technology to improve to access for families that do not primarily speak English.
- **School Nurses** - 1 in 4 schools still do not have a dedicated nurse. Pay parity issues between DOE and DOH nurses make filling these positions difficult, and contract nurses do not have access to medical records databases, a potentially dire situation for students with medical conditions like diabetes.

Thank you again for allowing me to offer my testimony today. I hope I was able to illustrate the needs of our public schools, teachers and students, as I have observed them in my capacity on CEC15.

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Thank you for your consideration.

anya raychuk

anaraychuk1976@yahoo.com

624 East 222nd street #1F

Bronx, New York 10467

Arriella is my beautiful miracle! From the moment God blessed me with her, I have been advocating for her- fighting the fight with her. When my water broke at 20 weeks, I fought for five weeks to remain in the hospital, knowing that around-the-clock medical care was her best chance for survival. Born at 25 weeks, my little NICU baby fought for her life every hour. Simultaneously, I fought for her to receive the best medical care from the top specialist. While we waited for early intervention to have a spot for us, we began private therapy. With my history of advocating for my daughter, I was ready to continue my advocacy as we looked into preschool special education programs. We toured different special education programs, and found a program that was right for Arriella.

I waited with fingers crossed and prayers said, for a seat at Harry H. Gordon, a preschool special education program. Our prayers were answered! Arriella started at Harry H. Gordon in a classroom setting ratio of 12 children, to one special education teacher, and two teacher aids. Like other parents of children with disabilities, I was nervous to send my non-verbal little baby into the world of "School." However, after meeting with the teacher and staff, I understood just how special and necessary special education programs are. The teacher works one-on-one with my child. She not only understands three to five year-olds; she understands children with special needs. The two, preschool aged children and children with special needs, require different levels of understanding and a different teaching approach. Special education teachers in special education programs, understand that difference. They are well-trained and certified in teaching and understanding special education and special education students. Our teacher, like other special education teachers, takes the time to learn my child and all of the children in her classroom.

Today, Arriella is an active, social, verbal, vibrant child. She is able to feed herself and is working on enhancing her self-help skills. Harry H. Gordon helped Arriella find her voice and her confidence by embracing who she is.

Although we were fortunate to obtain a seat in a special education program, not every family is as fortunate. I believe that but for Harry H. Gordon and all of the attention and care they have for my child's overall progress, Arriella would not be the active, social, verbal, vibrant child she is today. Adequate funding for special education programs are needed so that other children and families alike are afforded the same opportunity to flourish as non special education preschoolers. A shortage of special education programs is not acceptable in a society that values preschool education for all.

This year, I was alarmed to learn that there is inadequate funding, funding discrimination, when it comes to special education programs; such as a significant salary disparity between special education educators in special education programs and their public school counterparts. Special education teachers do more than teach academics, they teach life skills and independence to our children. Special education teachers in special education programs should be paid more than their public school counterparts; but at the very least, the same as their public school counterparts.

I am pleased that our government has heard our pleas to end the funding discrimination of special education programs. Now, our government must work to fully end this funding discrimination. Although our government is headed towards the right direction, there is still additional work to be done. The Executive Budget includes a new investment of \$22M in FY22, going up to \$85M in FY 23, for preschool special education. While I appreciate that the Executive Budget includes an investment to some of our proposed initiatives, such as adding integrated 3-K classes and hiring inclusion coaches, there is no funding allocated to address the shortage of preschool special education programs and classes. Thus leaving children in need of special education programs, without a classroom to attend. Additionally, the Executive Budget does not provide for salary parity to teachers of special education programs. Under the City's current salary parity agreement, other early childhood teachers will receive salary increases in October 2021. Without the salary increase, preschool special education educators in special education programs will be forced to take teaching positions with general education programs, resulting in leaving our special education children without qualified special education educators.

Inadequate funding to special education programs, funding discrimination, can end with the FY 22 budget. We strongly recommend that the final FY22 budget include \$85M to address the preschool special education class shortage and to provide salary parity to teachers of preschool special education programs.

Without adequate funding, funding discrimination prevails and our special education children are separate. Separate but equal? No, separate is not equal! End this funding discrimination today.

Thank you.

April Vega Diffut,
Proud parent of a special education child in a special education program

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

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- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

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Thank you for your consideration.

apshire1@gmail.com

75 Hawthorne St 5J

Brooklyn, New York 11225

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Thank you for your consideration.

Arielle Wisbaum
awisbaum@nypli.org
261 W 25th St
New York, New York 10001

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Thank you for your consideration.

Ava Goncalves
agoncalves@fountainhouse.org
21-48 35th Street
Astoria, New York 11105

**Testimony of Bei Chen for New York City Council
Committee on Finance**

Re: Fiscal Year 2022 Executive Budget

May 25, 2021

My name is Bei Chen, I live in Brooklyn with my husband and my three-year-old son Aaron.

When Aaron turned three, I learned that he has autism. Aaron's doctors told me to ask the DOE for preschool special education services. At a meeting, the DOE said that Aaron needs a small special education class and services like speech therapy to help him speak. I tried right away to get Aaron the things he needs. The DOE did not have a seat for Aaron in a small class with speech, so I had to place Aaron in a preschool class that does not have speech therapy.

I am glad that I found a class for Aaron because I know how important it is for children with autism to get services when they are young. Aaron feels happy in the school and is learning so much from his teacher, Ms. Angelina. I know many families still do not have a preschool special education class for their children since the City does not have enough seats, and they are very scared.

Thank you to the City Council for saying that the City should have preschool special education classes for all children who need them and should pay teachers in these classes the same as Pre-K teachers. Ms. Angelina does a great job with Aaron- she should be paid the same as other teachers so she can keep working with students like my son who need more help.

Please put \$85 million in the budget for preschool special education this year and pay preschool special education teachers the same as other preschool teachers.

Thank you.

To whom it may concern,

I'm a tenant of 6629 Broadway (corner of 261 Street and across from the park) that has overwhelmingly been abused by people from outside the area. Including cars and vans with NJ and CT license plates). I've have resided here since 2015 with the quality of life vastly diminishing since the revamping and beautification of the park. This has started early summer 2019 through fall 2019, continuing same time frame 2020. This year it already begun the first warm weekend in April. The MAJOR ISSUE is: Multiple groups of 20+people each within a small area, not complying to Park regulations. (Large tents set up with catering, including multiple tables and chairs, festive backdrops, balloon arches and bouncy houses and playing loud music well into the night. Trash and food leftovers dumped on the grass or tossed over the fence and hanging on greenery. Many times children are left unattended while climbing up the trees and breaking the limbs. They are CREATING a DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENT (Open Flame Grilling, Heavy Drinking, Hookah Smoking, Urinating and Defecating in the woods). Visitors double park in the bus lane which forces MTA buses to veer into the outermost lanes. All of this also occurs at the adjacent park on 262 Street and Broadway, leading towards Yonkers.

This is an issue that NEEDS a MORE AUTHORITATIVE personal who can hand out fines and have the individuals leave the premises if they choose to continue to behave in an unlawful manner. With such crowds accumulating in a small area, I'm afraid that one day tempers may flare from someone intoxicated, a fight will ensue with the possibility of a tragic outcome. (I'm amazed it hasn't happened with regards of a shooting in VCP 242nd Street a few years ago). I have numerous photos dating back to 2019 regarding ALL of the above grievances that I would be more than happy to submit justifying the need of IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.

Thank you very much in advance!

Belinda M. Hancock

City Council Finance Committee,

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Bess Beauzile

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113 24 201Street

Jamaica, New York 11412

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kew gardens, New York 11415

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Beverly Rice

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3 East 85 Street

NY, New York 10028

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Thank you for your consideration.

Brandon Holmes

bjholmes.ny@gmail.com

520A Decatur Street

Brooklyn, New York 11233

I am testifying on behalf of my cousins, aunts, and neighbors who have been brutalized by the City of New York for generations, and myself who was displaced as law enforcement, the war on drugs, and gentrification separated my family for decades. For years, we have seen the DOC present new arguments on why they need more resources, more training, more staff to address their own shortcomings. And every year, the Mayor and Council document hours of New Yorkers' testimonies exposing our lived experience as Survivors of Rikers Island and the loved ones of people who cannot be here today to tell their stories... And DOC gets richer. Two weeks ago, DOC Commissioner Cynthia Brann, appointed by Mayor de Blasio in 2017, finally submitted her resignation after a legacy of noncompliance with a Federal oversight commission, countless reports of sexual misconduct and abuse by her officers, and dozens of deaths under her watch. Cynthia Brann should have been fired. But instead her agency continued to grow and develop its legacy of brutality.

Historically, the Department's fear-mongering and disgusting lack of accountability or transparency has won out. These Officers who testify only in the final hour, not in the weeks and months leading up to the budget process, **MUST BE STOPPED**. They regale you with what they believe are war stories: of slashings, of gang violence, all of which, to date, their current practices and leadership have failed to address.

Do not fail our City. You must reject any expansion of the Department of Correction and its authority inside City jails and **ACTIVELY DECREASE** their operating budget and reduce their staff capacity. We have years of documentation establishing the case for divestment from a Federal court appointed monitor. It is unacceptable that New York City Council and Mayor de Blasio have allowed this brutal agency to spiral out of control for as long as it has, given the insurmountable evidence of wrongdoing and zero accountability.

As advocates, we are clear what we are up against. The Mayor has been dragged to take the position of closing Rikers and repairing this legacy of harm, but now we have an opportunity to look at our City budget investments in a completely new light.

At over eight times the national average, New York City has the single largest jail staffing ratio in the United States. Despite their operational advantages and a significantly reduced population this agency continues to uphold the legacy of torture and brutality which drove our electorate to shutter the facilities they operate and oversee. This year we must all be reflecting on a massive failure to reduce NYPD's budget in response to the historic movement for Black Lives and the peaceful protests that mobilized 10s of 1000s of New Yorkers.

- **DOC has been given far too many chances.** In 2015, a Consent Decree was reached and a Federal Monitor was appointed to the DOC as a result of lawsuits against the Department for subjecting people held on Rikers Island to excessive and unnecessary use of force. The situation has only worsened since then – and after nine damaging reports, it makes you wonder if anyone voting on the agency budget since 2015 has read the Nunez Monitor's findings. **Some key highlights:** Use of force rates have increased by [259% since 2015](#) (p.19), and the Department remains out of compliance with the key areas of the Consent Decree. Most recently the Monitor stated “The City and Department have established a record of non-compliance in the most

fundamental goals of the Consent Judgment, most especially regarding the use of force and accountability for violations of these requirements. This history of non-compliance is longstanding and substantial," (p.4) and the Department is now under a remedial order. It is past time for elected leaders to exercise power to hold DOC accountable and reduce their harm by reducing their inflated budget.

- **This high ratio of staff to people in custody has not made the jails safer** - in fact, it seems to make them less safe, according to findings by the Federal *Nunez* monitor in their [Ninth Report](#).
 - "The Department maintains one of the largest, if not *the* largest, staffing complement for jails in the United States, which is particularly notable given the decreasing inmate population. Having significantly more Staff than inmates places the Department in a unique position. The Department does not struggle to meet minimum staffing requirements, but the abundance of Staff presents other challenges and obstacles." p.23
 - "Several Staff practices have been repeatedly found to increase the likelihood that force will be used. More specifically, a pattern of unprofessional conduct and hyper-confrontational behavior by Staff, an overreliance on alarms and the Probe Team, misuse of OC spray, use of painful escort techniques, and improper use of head strikes have all plagued the agency's use of force." pp. 25-26
 - "Although by policy, a Probe Team should consist of four to seven Officers and a Captain, often significantly larger numbers of Staff (up to 30) respond. The Probe Team response is often a show of force and can be disproportionate to what initially triggered the incident. . . . Once on scene, Probe Teams often demonstrate an inability to establish a constructive dialog with inmates, which prevents Staff from identifying the source of the inmate's concern and precludes the opportunity to resolve the situation without physical intervention. " p.28
- **An excess of staff only increases the opportunities for people to abuse their power.** For example, eight officers were charged in [January 2020](#) and [February 2021](#) with smuggling drugs into the jails; and a class action settlement cited hundreds of [invasive strip searches](#) that violated protocol. The more staff the department has, the more misconduct they can engage in, and the chances that the Department will hold them accountable further diminishes as more and more incidents and pending investigations pile up.
- Because DOC has so many excess staff, and because the City has given them extremely generous benefits that do not exist for other workers, **the cost of keeping a person in DOC custody for a year is approximately \$472,000.**
- **DOC does not hold their staff accountable.**
 - The Federal *Nunez* Monitor's [most recent report](#) stated that consistently high levels of use of force are "compounded by lack of accountability due to both uniform leadership's inability to identify and address the Staff misconduct and the backlog of investigations, which creates and exacerbates a corresponding delay in imposing formal discipline." (p.3)
 - At the end of the most recent monitoring period in June 2020, there were approximately 4,450 pending use of force investigations, the majority of which had been pending over six months, (p.67) and over 900 cases pending imposition of final discipline for incidents that occurred over a year earlier (p. 176)

I will remind you of the attitude and comments former COBA president Elias Hasmudeen shared in past years testimony and the culture COBA's new leadership continues spreading throughout the DOC: they hold the belief that Correction Officers are the police of the City's jails. It's no secret that COBA demands that the City protect and provide for them in the same way the NYPD is treated. So I call on our City Council during this budget cycle to treat DOC like NYPD. Put them under a microscope and draw the connections between the disparities of health & equity in our communities and our government agents in law enforcement. They have both been found guilty of and have heavily documented histories of the same atrocities: harassment, murder, abuse and violence.

The majority of our City Council members will be leaving office due to term limits or new ambitions meaning that this is the last year that this body will be able to realize a vision for true budget justice and a safer City for ALL New Yorkers.

Brandon J. Holmes

Freedom Agenda

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Thank you for your consideration.

Brooke Taylor

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40 rector street

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Thank you for your consideration.

Bruce Rosen

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600 West End Avenue apt. 1A1

New York, New York 10024

Written Testimony for Committee on Education Hearing 3/23/21

My name is Caitlin Delphin and I'm a special education teacher at a high school in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn and member of Teachers Unite. Here is my testimony from the hearing as well as information in response to Councilmember Dromm's question about providing jobs for current School Safety Agents, who are primarily Black and brown women.

The Teamsters union that represents school police has tried to convince city council members that they should maintain school policing jobs on account of the fact that many school police are women and people of color. Council members should not be sidetracked by this attempt to hijack a racial and economic justice framework in order to justify the harmful policing of young people. What the NYPD and Teamsters neglect to mention is that the women of color who are employed as school police are among the most poorly paid workers in schools, with many unable to afford rent. There is also incredibly high turnover: in this last year alone, a full 10% of the school police force have chosen to leave their jobs. That's close to 500 people who voluntarily quit school policing roles during the midst of a nationwide job shortage and economic crisis caused by COVID. Our communities deserve better than low-wage policing jobs that harm young people of color.

Teachers Unite stands with students and parents in calling for the city to divest from policing and punitive disciplinary practices and to invest in quality education and in the staffing, supports, and programs that truly create safe and supportive school communities. Replacing police with Restorative Justice Coordinators, Paraprofessionals, Youth Advocates, Community Outreach Coordinators, Parent Coordinators, and more will create quality jobs for local residents, including people of color harmed by disinvestment. Positions should also be created to hire paid staff from the community who are at the door to greet students, check-in visitors, and keep people safe. These jobs will contribute to the safety and community of a school and pay workers of color well. Most importantly, these jobs will support students, instead of harm them.

Teachers Unite members believe in safe schools and neighborhoods where every young person and community resident can succeed and thrive. Decades of disinvestment in neighborhoods across New York City, particularly in communities of color, makes it difficult for young people and residents to access well-resourced schools and live in thriving neighborhoods with economic opportunity.

Policing and punitive disciplinary practices contribute to further harm and violence against young people, pushing them into a school-to-prison pipeline. BIPOC community members face an increasingly difficult job market, and school policing jobs may provide a career pathway while seeming to offer an opportunity to support young people.

But school police – who are incorrectly referred to as School Safety Agents to mislead youth and residents about their true purpose – do not keep young people, teachers, school staff, or community members safe. Our members are passionate advocates for police-free schools precisely because they witness the harm, trauma, and degradation that their students experience daily as a result of policing in their schools. Our members' students often describe their schools as feeling like prison.

Teamsters and the NYPD do not care about the people employed as school police. Their feigned concern for BIPOC workers is an attempt to divert the conversation away from the violence that policing inflicts on young people of color in order to uphold that harmful system. When it comes at the cost of students' wellbeing and safety, there is no justification for maintaining policing positions in schools.

The city can and should create many more jobs in schools for Black and brown community members—this is central to the [Vision for #PoliceFreeSchools](#) that the Dignity in Schools Campaign-NY is advocating for.

The people currently employed as school police should be provided with the opportunity to receive training around restorative practices and apply for fulfilling and well paid jobs in our schools. Some people employed as school police make efforts to support students outside of and despite their policing role, and have strong relationships with students. These people should be able to access restorative jobs that allow them to care for young people fully and effectively, with training and a living wage that matches and honors their important role. The city owes it to them and, most importantly, to students, to create and fund these non-policing positions. Those who work as school police because they want to be cops and harass and intimidate students should not be working in schools in any role.

Below are some frequently asked questions that we have received on this topic with answers prepared by Teachers Unite members and allies including current teachers and administrators in NYC DOE schools and former School Safety Agents.

Addressing Common Concerns with Police Free Schools

Q&A

- **I like the SSAs at my school. They work really well with our students and staff. Why would we want to get rid of them?**

The Police Free Schools movement is advocating against the culture of policing in school, many people who work as SSAs contribute to the safety and wellbeing of students, and they should continue to work in schools. They do this work in spite of their job description, not

because of it. Replacing school policing with restorative structures will mean that those people will have roles that will allow them to contribute to making safer, more supportive, and stronger school communities for the students they serve.

➤ **What happens if a student brings a gun or knife to school? What about when students get into a fight in school? Who will stop the fight if there are no SSAs?**

There will be concrete safety protocols in schools, and trained staff available to address urgent or violent situations quickly, safely, and restoratively. These staff will have training in de-escalation and approaching situations involving physical violence. Schools will continue to have people in community outreach roles to help screen who and what comes into the building. However, to create truly thriving communities, we need to do more than react to violence, we need to prevent it. That's why the Police Free Schools movement wants to put caring adults and staff in school communities who can *more* than what SSAs can currently do by preventing such violence in the first place. We want to build community where all members can feel as though violence would never have to be used. But also know how important it is to *transformationally and restoratively* respond to these situations rather than merely react.

➤ **SSAs make me feel safe. Who is going to keep us safe without SSAs?**

Students, teachers, staff, and families health, safety and wellbeing in schools is our top priority. The transition from school policed by School Safety Agents to police free, restorative schools is a transition that would take place over a period of time. Part of that process will be determining safety plans and protocols that are based in the safety of our most marginalized and vulnerable community members. We are working towards a model that supports justice and prevents violence in the long term. The Police Free Schools movement wants to build an even stronger network of safety by ensuring that community leaders, including SSAs who are interested, have opportunities for positions that are well-paid, provide opportunities for leadership within the school and do not require bachelor's degrees.

➤ **SSAs are mostly Black and brown women. Why would we want to get rid of all these jobs, especially during a pandemic and economic downturn?**

Currently, SSAs are low-paying positions based on the policing and surveilling of students and the school community. We want to create new roles for Black and Brown community members within our schools that create the opportunity for real leadership and relationship building with students. Some examples of these positions include: paraprofessionals, youth advocates, restorative justice coordinators, parent coordinators, and community outreach coordinators. The people in these positions will be DOE employees who are well paid, have benefits and union protections. These positions will draw from the school's community, including former students who experience restorative justice and would not require bachelor's degrees.

➤ **Why can't we just offer SSAs more training in de-escalation and restorative practices?**

Education justice advocates have tried retraining SSAs for years, however the retraining hasn't fixed any of the major issues with SSAs, including the disproportionate impact of SSAs

on Black, Brown, and disabled students. And while additional training SSAs in de-escalation and restorative practices might potentially help a little. In the long-term, this would act as an ineffective band-aid to what is a systemic issue of racist policing in communities as a whole. We need a transformational understanding of how justice should operate in our communities, one that, unlike our current system, does not unduly punish people of color and those in poverty. Just as the “standard” criminal justice system has disproportionately incarcerated, physically harmed, and charged communities of color, so has the school justice system through SSA’s. Even if individual SSAs stand out as exceptions, they have no choice but to operate within a model of policing that has unfairly targeted communities of color, eroding foundational community trust.

➤ **SSAs aren’t cops.**

SSAs are a school-based police force and have been employed by the NYPD since 1998. SSAs wear police uniforms and carry police equipment such as handcuffs. SSAs are authorized to make arrests and coordinate closely with the NYPD to criminalize students. Within schools, SSAs do not answer to the school or the DOE so they don’t have to work with the schools. For example, if an SSA sees an incident and they think the student should be suspended or arrested, then that student can be suspended or arrested, even if the school disagrees.

Here is my testimony from the hearing on Tuesday 5/25/21:

I’m here today to express opposition to continued funding of policing in our schools. We need to fund more teachers, counselors, social workers, and restorative justice professionals and reduce policing in schools now.

Budgets speak volumes about where we place priorities and right now the DOE budget is prioritizing policing and surveillance over the health, welfare, and actual safety of our students. This has been a long hard year for all of us, and our children have been impacted in a huge ways. Despite this past year’s difficulties we’ve had moments of connection, joy, and students letting their true selves shine through. We need to be building on these positive moments moving forward to help our students begin to heal and create communities that encourage connection and restorative processes.

My students have gained so many important skills in the last year - self-motivation, time management, multi-tasking on top of the academic skills and learning they are doing despite the schedule changes and uncertainty that we’ve been faced with all year. I am not at all concerned about an achievement gap arising among my students, I’m so proud of everything that they’ve accomplished over the past year. I am amazed at the independence and persistence that my high schoolers have shown. I’ve seen them build skills and continue to learn in a very difficult environment. However, I am extremely concerned about a care gap.

We are here at a time when many cities and towns have made decisions to reduce or end policing in schools and backed those decisions with their budgets. And we are still wavering on the shift of school safety to the DOE and debating hiring more School Safety Agents for next year

perpetrating the systems of policing that cause violence and harm to all of our students, in particular our Black and brown students as well as those with disabilities. These students are seeing a city that is beginning to slowly recover from the last year, however rather than resources for their recovery at school, they are seeing the prioritization of policing over their health and education.

This will be apparent to students from the very moment they walk through the doors of my school. The vast majority of my students have not been in the school building for over a year. On their first day back they will be welcomed by scanning - which persists at our school despite a lack of violent incidents, the discontinued existence of the school which prompted the scanning in the first place, and the [documented use](#) of [metal detectors](#) primarily in outer boroughs schools serving majority black and brown students.

I am here today to ask that in the FY22 budget, the city reject any spending on training school police, and instead invest in restorative justice, social workers and guidance counselors, and teachers.

My students need love and support right now. They need additional counselors and teachers to help begin the healing process and support them in moving forward. They need staff trained in restorative justice who see them as whole people. We know, and my students, know that the current DOE budget does not prioritize them. They know this because they see the news and see that other cities are defunding policing in the schools and other towns are supporting the return to schools and they feel it because there is always scanning to greet them, there is always a School Security Agent around the corner but there's a wait for an appointment with a counselor and their teachers are trying but stretched thin. Let's not miss another chance to show our children that they are the priority.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm concerned about my fellow New Yorkers, especially those who are disproportionately and unjustly targeted by police violence. Last year the Council and Mayor di Blasio did not truly commit to defunding the NYPD by \$1 billion dollars.

I'm concerned about the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget which includes a \$200 million dollar increase for the NYPD. This is the most expensive NYPD budget ever proposed.

The NYPD already has a \$6 billion budget and I don't believe an increase in police and police activity is what keeps communities safe and healthy. I want to see more investment in community services, by and for communities, included in the budget that the City Council passes this year. I want to see the NYPD removed from social service-related roles.

Every year, NYC spends millions of dollars to keep cops who have killed and brutalized us on the city payroll. That's millions of dollars that are going towards the continued criminalization of Black, Latinx and other communities of color and NOT towards health care, schools and youth programs, jobs and housing.

We need solutions to the issues our communities face, solutions that are developed, built, implemented, and maintained by the people from the communities.

We need to completely remove police from mental health responses. We need an NYPD hiring freeze and the elimination of dangerous units like the SRG and end initiatives like Youth Coordinating Officers that are systematizing the racial profiling and surveilling of our Black, Latinx, and other POC young people and police free schools.

Instead, investments should be made to equip the local community groups who are working day in and day out on the ground with the resources to be the first line of response. Our local community groups are the ones building the supportive ongoing relationships with the people in our communities. We need to invest more resources in developing these community-led infrastructures for safety and support.

We don't need new or more police officers—in fact, I call for a freeze on new NYPD hires and a full investment in community-led efforts that do not rely on police.

- We need the immediate expansion and full funding for citywide Summer Youth Employment.
- We need investments in violence intervention programs that don't rely on police.
- We need health and mental health care, education, housing and jobs.

Caitlyn Passaretti

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color. The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
- 24/7 operating hours;
- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Camille Casaretti
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120 2nd Street
Brooklyn, New York 11231

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

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Thank you for your consideration.

Carl Mautner

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Jamaica, New York 11432-5760

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Thank you for your consideration.

Carlos Garcia

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254 West 31st Street

New York, New York 10001

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Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
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Thank you for your consideration.

Caroline Chen
cchen@mfjlegal.org
100 William Street, 6th Floor
New York, New York 10038

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Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
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Thank you for your consideration.

Caroline Roe
cmroe7@gmail.com
200 Bennett Avenue, 4E
New York, New York 10040

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
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Thank you for your consideration.

Caroline Soussloff
carsouss@gmail.com
239 Front Street, Apt. 2
Brooklyn, NY, New York 11201

May 20, 2021

To the New York City Council Committee on Finance:

Re: Fiscal Year 2022 Executive Budget

My name is Carrie Gheith and I am a constituent and resident of Brooklyn, NY. I was pleased to see the City Council's recommendation of including \$85 million for the FY 22 budget. However, the actual \$22 million that is being proposed for FY 22 is dramatically lacking in regards to the preschool special education class shortage and providing salary parity to teachers of preschool special education classes at CBOs.

My 8 years old son, Zakariya Gheith has multiple disabilities and global delays. We were unable to find him an appropriate DOE preschool placement to accommodate his complex needs. Luckily, we were able to get him a preschool placement at Helen Keller's Children's Center before transitioning to ADAPT Community Network. These placements have been transformative in addressing his developmental delays and limitations from his multiple disabilities. He has learned to play independently, assist himself with feeding and interact with his family and peers in a meaningful way from these amazing educational programs.

The lack of salary parity for special educational preschool teachers is unacceptable. This tells me that NYC does not value my child's education as much as general educational programs. In my opinion, preschool special education teachers should be paid EVEN MORE than other teachers based on the extra services they have to provide to children such as my son who have very complicated educational needs. If you spent one hour in a special education preschool class, you would see that these special education teachers go above and beyond to address our children's educational needs in a holistic way. They teach with their heart and should be compensated for it.

The preschool special education class shortage in NYC is also unacceptable. Again, this tells me that NYC does not feel that my child needs equitable education. NYC needs CBO's that are willing to service and accommodate our most vulnerable and marginalized children for 12 months a year while the DOE is unable to provide enough adequate placements for them for 10 months of the year. Show us that you care about our children's special needs preschool education by addressing these critical special needs areas.

Sincerely,

Carrie Gheith

(Mother of Zakariya Gheith)

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Carrie Lobman

clobman@eastsideinstitute.org

410 East 6th Street, 9B

New York, New York 10009

TESTIMONY FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING 5/25/2021

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for this opportunity to testify.

My name is Carson Elrod and in late June of last year, with a few impassioned fellow Arts Workers, began a campaign called Be An #ArtsHero. The reason I started the campaign was that I, along with Arts Workers nationwide was watching in real-time the unraveling of the fabric of my reality. On March 12th, I lost three jobs. Within a matter of hours, I watched every professional actor I'd ever worked with all become unemployed at the exact same time. In the coming months, I watched theatres close permanently, my friends lose their agents because their agents couldn't exist without Artists commissions, and maybe most jarring, my social media newsfeeds turned into a long parade of "goodbyes" from Arts Workers who, without work in either the Arts & Culture or service sector, simply couldn't afford to stay in New York.

Federal relief legislation, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, demonstrated that there was a genuine bipartisan interest in saving the U.S. economy from utter ruin. Unfortunately, there was a huge oversight as relief was created. The Arts in this country makeup 4.3% of our GDP, employ 5.1 million Americans and generate \$919 billion in value-added to the economy. The sector is five times bigger than Agriculture and generates more value-added to GDP than Transportation, Education, or Construction. Yet despite that, other than a few million dollars given to the NEA to distribute, there was no dedicated relief for the country's creative economy.

In the last year, there have been some encouraging interventions, such as the Save Our Stages legislation and the city's recent City Artists Corps are fantastic first steps towards acknowledging the desperate need for relief. I feel like I can speak on behalf of so many distressed Arts Workers in expressing my gratitude for these much-needed interventions. But to access the potential efficacy of relief, we have to look at the size and scope of the catastrophe our sector faces. Just in New York, according to The Brookings Institution's study, Lost Art, there was a loss of 279,787 Arts & Culture jobs and over \$26 billion in lost sales just between April and July of 2020. That's just the first three months of the crisis. More recent studies in Bloomberg and Crain's have estimated that upwards of $\frac{2}{3}$ of all New York City Arts Jobs no longer exist.

Both the physical and the human infrastructure of New York's vibrant Creative Economy have suffered heavy casualties. Given the New York City is arguable the cultural capital of the world, it's incumbent upon us to step up, step in, and take care of our Arts Workers who do such an amazing job of taking care of the rest of the city. For instance, there has been a lot of discussion about Tourism and how to get the city's economic engines back up and running. Well, given that 68% of tourism is for Arts & Culture and that Arts & Culture tourists tend to outspend other tourists, it only follows that the city's priority should be to give tourists a great reason to come back to New York.

People are often surprised to hear that the Arts & Culture sector is an economic powerhouse and that studies have been conducted that demonstrably prove that if you want to know where an economic hotspot is going to be that you should look for where Arts Workers and Arts

Organizations are. Nationally, our growth rate is 4.45%, or double that of the median growth rate of the U.S. economy. Pre-pandemic 7% of New York's GSP came from the \$123 billion that the Arts & Culture typically generates. But the Arts & Culture sector didn't get 7% of the American Rescue Plan funding allocated for New York State, despite being the most catastrophically damaged sector of the state's economy. During the pandemic, airplanes could fly and restaurants could serve food. Theatres closed in March of 2020 and still aren't open. Museums have had to sell off their collections to keep the lights on. Arts Workers have left the city in droves. Quite simply, more intervention is necessary.

But let me end on a high note. Within the Arts & Culture sector are some of the most talented, skilled, ambitious, and dedicated hustlers on the planet. Where Arts Workers and Arts Organizations are, dynamic interdependent economies flourish and a whole host of incredible socially positive outcomes emerge. If you take a dead factory and turn it into a museum, then breweries and coffee shops and bed and breakfasts will pop up around it. Think about how much economic activity happens every night on the Upper West Side in the summer just as the 2000 people seeing Shakespeare In The Park hire babysitters, take Lyfts, ride the subway, eat in restaurants, and go to bars afterwards. This is not anecdotal, this is data driven and incredible minds like Richard Florida and Michael Seman have demonstrated that if you want to jump start local economies will improving quality of life and social cohesion, you invest in the Arts.

There are so many things that can be done, from more funding for Artist Corps programs to an Unemployment Insurance system that fully contemplates the lives of gig workers and allows them to survive between gigs to simply more dedicated relief and investment in the most negatively impacted arts workers and organizations with a particular focus on Arts Workers and organizations of color and representing traditionally marginalized groups that were disproportionately impacted by the crisis.

New York City is defined by its artists and Arts Workers. The identity of the city is inextricably linked to the hundreds of thousands of Arts Workers who work in our comedy clubs, museums, theatres, rock venues, orchestras, dance companies, and so much more. After the 1918 flu came the roaring 20's. We can already see every day that the appetite of New Yorkers to flock to Lincoln Center and Domino Park to share space and come into community with each other is enormous. You have an opportunity with your appropriations for the next few years to make sure that New York's Creative Economy not only survives, but is the cornerstone of what could be an economic miracle that could literally dazzle the world, not just with its economic impact, but with its cultural power and glory.

Dear Finance Chair Dromm and the Committee on Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Cecilia Lim and I'm concerned about my fellow New Yorkers, especially those who are disproportionately and unjustly targeted by police violence. Last year the Council and Mayor di Blasio did not truly commit to defunding the NYPD by \$1billion dollars.

I'm concerned about the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget which includes a \$200 million dollar increase for the NYPD. This is the most expensive NYPD budget ever proposed.

The NYPD already has a \$6Billion budget and I don't believe an increase in police and police activity is what keeps communities safe and healthy. I want to see more investment in community services, by and for communities, included in the budget that the City Council passes this year. I want to see the NYPD removed from social service-related roles.

Every year, NYC spends millions of dollars to keep cops who have killed and brutalized us on the city payroll. That's millions of dollars that are going towards the continued criminalization of Black, Latine, and other communities of color and NOT towards health care, schools and youth programs, jobs and housing.

We need solutions to the issues our communities face, solutions that are developed, built, implemented, and maintained by the people from the communities.

We need to completely remove police from mental health responses. We need an NYPD hiring freeze and the elimination of dangerous units like the SRG and end initiatives like Youth Coordinating Officers that are systematizing the racial profiling and surveilling of our Black, Latinx, and other POC young people and police free schools.

Instead, investments should be made to equip the local community groups who are working day in and day out on the ground with the resources to be the first line of response. Our local community groups are the ones building the supportive ongoing relationships with the people in our communities. We need to invest more resources in developing these community-led infrastructures for safety and support.

We don't need new or more police officers—in fact, I call for a freeze on new NYPD hires and a full investment in community-led efforts that do not rely on police.

- We need the immediate expansion and full funding for citywide Summer Youth Employment.
- We need investments in violence intervention programs that don't rely on police.
- We need health and mental health care, education, housing and jobs.

Thank you for listening to your constituents.

With respect,

Cecilia Lim

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

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The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color. The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
- 24/7 operating hours;
- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Chan Lin
linxchan@gmail.com
150 50th Ave
LIC, New York 11101

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in the record.

I am writing to support the recommendations of CCIT-NYC to the City Council. From my nine years of experience representing a NYC non-profit organization that serves people with severe persistent mental illness, I urge the City Council to shift the authority of response for individuals who are in mental health crisis from the Police Department to mental health workers, advocates and peer support staff. The reason for this shift is both deep expertise in the mental health field as well as personal and professional interest in being first responders. Notwithstanding the Police Department's serious efforts to re-train officers under CIT in the last few years, the fact remains that the individuals in mental health crisis require a response from professionals in the medical and mental health fields to insure the best outcome. Further, I am aware of the difficult nature of the Police Department ceding authority under emergency circumstances. However, the record of response by the Police Department is not optimal in resolving mental health crises and preventing further injury and harm to people with mental health challenges. As the mental health field has grown and expanded, the time is right for a shift of authority on first response. I urge The Council to follow the recommendations of CCIT-NYC. My professional opinion is these advocates' recommendations before The Council represent the best approach to serving individuals under mental health crisis and to make all New Yorkers safer.

Thank you for your time on this matter.

Sincerely,

Charles W. McMellon, Esq.

Former counsel for Community Access, Inc.

Charles McMellon

charlesmcmellon@hotmail.com

406 7th Street, 3

Brooklyn, New York 11215

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

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Thank you for your consideration.

-Chelsea R

Chelsea Rose

chelsea.rose1495@gmail.com

320 Empire Blvd., Apt. 2M

Brooklyn, New York 11225

Budget Council Hearing, May 25th

Good afternoon,

I was removed by the host during my live testimony during today's hearing. I don't understand why. Please find my testimonial here:

As a veteran educator - both as a public school teacher and an informal educator working with many public schools - and a parent, I am thrilled that funding has increased for public schools in this year's budget. I have observed regularly in my years as an educator that students, particularly those young people with learning disabilities, cannot learn when they do not feel safe and supported. Further, they cannot feel safe and supported unless they receive adequate 1 on 1 and small group time with caring, trained educators. This is impossible when teachers and social workers are too few and their student or case loads are too great.

Currently, class sizes are too large and there are too few ICT teachers and social workers to provide adequate services. This issue has reached crisis levels because of the pandemic. I ask the Council to commit to the following in use of the school funds:

- Ensure the NYC DOE will reduce class sizes
- Ensure the NYC DOE will increase the number of special educators and therapists dedicated to students with disabilities
- Ensure that every school has a social worker
- Ensure that every school has a nurse
- Ensure that all teachers are trained in and all students have access to culturally responsive curriculum

Thank you,

Chrissy Word

Chrissy Word | Director of Education

City Parks Foundation | 1234 Fifth Avenue, Ste 213, New York, NY 10065

p. [212-360-2787](tel:212-360-2787) |

e. cword@cityparksfoundation.org

www.CityParksFoundation.org

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City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

christian williams

cwilliams@acmhny.org

115-18 158 st basement

jamaica , New York 11434

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christina LeMoine
xtinaiillustration@gmail.com
40 PUTNAM AVENUE, 7F
BROOKLYN, New York 11238

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Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christine Helm

helmchr@aol.com

311 west 24 st, 17G

New York, New York 10011

Good day Finance Chair Dromm and members of the Committee on Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Christine Henson, and I am here to ask the Council to make the significant cuts that were promised last year and defund the NYPD. I know what it is like to be victimized by police. I witnessed my son who is affected by autism be brutalized by NYPD officers when he just needed care, a speech evaluation. I see many changes in my son because of the assault he experienced by the NYPD.

It is based on that experience that I can say that NYPD does not keep us safe, NYPD does not equal safety. My son survived the NYPD's brutality, but this should never have happened in the first place. We need to completely remove police from mental health responses, and we must do that now.

My experience and that of countless others has made it plain, the NYPD either equals death or victimization for families like my own and pouring \$200 million dollars into the NYPD is morally shameful.

The NYPD already has a \$6Billion budget, meanwhile Black and Brown communities still need quality, people centered health and mental health care, fully resourced public education, deeply affordable housing, and jobs that pay a living wage. Instead of the City continuing to bloat the NYPD's budget, we should be moving to fully fund programs like Summer Youth Employment instead.

The City has not moved one inch to fire all the NYPD officers that have killed NYers loved ones. We must fire the NYPD officers that have brutalized our loved ones in schools, on our subways, in our homes, in our cars, or on our streets. But these cops are all still on the force. We therefore cannot say the NYPD makes us safe. Resources in our communities, and care will make us safer.

I want to live in a City where I do not fear for my son's life, where he will not be targeted by the NYPD for being a young Black man, and for his autism. Shamefully, that is not the city we live in and this must be changed. There must be accountability- increasing and sustaining the NYPD's budget, power and reach into our daily lives only enables them to continue to victimize families like mine. I ask the Council to make the significant cuts that were promised last year and defund the NYPD.

PARKS AND RECREATION – Funding for PEP officers in the Bronx

Dear NYC City Council:

Eric Dinowitz and members of Community Board 8 suggested that I provide this testimony.

I would like the City to increase Parks funding for more PEP officers from Van Cortlandt Park. The quality of life for Bronx residents has declined due to large, wild and LOUD parties that occur there on a regular basis.

The decline in the quality of life has caused several neighbor families with young children have left the city.

PEP officers have a role in improving life here in the Bronx and throughout the city.

I love the City, and I love the City's parks. Please inscrease funding for more PEP officers.

Sincerely,

Chris Petitt

180 Van Cortlandt Park South

Bronx, NY 10463

646.829.6612

Dear New York City Council Financial Committee,

My name is Claire-Frances Sullivan and I live in Harlem in zip code 10031. I'm writing to voice my support of divesting money from the New York City Police Department through reform bills such as the Fair and Timely Parole Act and the Less is More Act. Both these acts would save over \$600 million annually for taxpayers like myself, and I personally would like to see that money go toward state-sponsored health care, education, housing, and accessibility/infrastructure like improvements to the MTA and other vital New York services. Less incarceration means saving money for our city, and it means better, safer, more fuller lives for me, my neighbors, and our community. Earlier this year and last year, citizens like me called for a divestment of at least \$1 billion dollars from the NYPD to go toward infrastructure like expanding in-home care for senior citizens and other people who need it, health care, and increasing the breadth of public education. These are the things I want to spend my tax dollars on. I would much rather pay for my neighborhood's public schools to feed my neighbor's children than to pay a police officer to abuse my neighbor.

Thank you for doing the right thing and divesting money from the NYPD and investing that money in my community.

Sincerely,
Claire-Frances Sullivan
Assembly District 71
Senate District 30
Zip Code 10031

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Connor Koblinski

Connor.koblinski@democracyprep.org

160 HANCOCK ST

BROOKLYN, New York 11216-2104

Damoy Salmon, 16 years old, Queens (Mom), Brooklyn (Grandma) and I am in MercyFirst. My coach's name is Ms. Alicia. I am very thankful for having Ms. Alicia in my life. She really showed me that she cared about me, she was helpful and really went out of her way to help.

Life was challenging, I didn't have a lot of hope before working with Ms. Alicia, she helped me do a lot of things that I needed to be successful when I leave MercyFirst.

She helped me get my permit and having hopes of getting my license and she helped me work towards getting my citizenship. She helped me figure out what I needed and how to help me. For my permit, she worked on figuring out how to take the test online, get my documents and get me to the DMV to take my picture. It's important that New York City baseline funding for Fair Futures in the city budget because it gives youth hope to know there is possibility and support in getting things that they need for their futures and achieving their goals. There are limits to what programs can do, and Ms. Alicia helped me do things that are important for becoming independent.

City Council Finance Committee,

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Thank you for your consideration.

Dan Frey

mastergradius1976@gmail.com

9118 3rd ave, 1r

brooklyn, New York 11209

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Committee on Finance

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Thank you for your consideration.

Dana Zakharova

DZakharova@acmhny.org

500 w 167th street

Manhattan, New York 10032

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Daniel Johansson

johanssond@aol.com

888 Grand Concourse

Bronx, New York 10451

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Thank you for your consideration.

Daniella Oria

daniellaoria@gmail.com

1 Charles st.

White Plains, New York 10606

Testimony of Daniella Rufino for New York City Council

Committee on Finance

Re: Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Hearing – Preschool Special Education

May 25, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony about the proposed budget. My name is Daniella Ruffino and I live in Brooklyn. I am the parent of Isabella Jimenez, a preschool student with a disability.

I am here to discuss the need to **address the shortage of preschool special education classes and provide salary parity to teachers of these classes.**

Isabella was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder as a toddler. At her first preschool special education IEP meeting, the DOE determined that she needed a small preschool special education class to meet her educational needs.

Because of the pandemic, Isabella started the school year in a fully remote classroom. However, like many children with disabilities, Isabella did not learn well with remote instruction. She was not receiving all of her special education services and could not pay attention through a device. Isabella regressed and failed to make any progress.

As more schools opened for in person instruction in the fall, I was eager for Isabella to get into the classroom. However, Isabella's preschool program was not able to offer her a seat in person. At first, I was told to wait to see if a seat became available. Then, in February 2021, after months of waiting, the school informed me that they could not offer Isabella or other students in-person services due to budget cuts and lack of seats. When I tried looking for a seat in other preschools, programs told me that they were full. I was devastated and frustrated that my daughter could not go to school. After several weeks, I finally found a new program for Isabella in April, but I worry about the skills and learning opportunities she lost because there was not a program that could offer her the in-person instruction she needs to make progress.

I would like to thank the City Council for recommending \$85 million in your response to the budget to address the shortage of preschool special education classes and pay their teachers the same as Pre-K teachers. I was glad to hear that the Mayor included funding for preschool special education in the budget proposal. But there's only \$22 million for this coming year, and none of that funding will go to help the preschoolers with the most intensive needs, like my child. There's \$88 million proposed for the following year, but still no commitment to pay teachers at preschool special education programs run by community-based organizations the same salary as other early childhood teachers at CBOs.

3-K and Pre-K are not for all unless there is a seat for every child who needs one. There is no early childhood salary parity unless preschool special education teachers are included. Please ensure that the final budget includes **\$85 million for Fiscal Year 22 to ensure a preschool**

special education class seat for every child who needs one and pay preschool special education teachers the same salaries as other early childhood teachers. Thank you.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Danielle B. Kushner, MD
Forensic Psychiatrist, NYC

Danielle Kushner
danibarrk@gmail.com
318 Warren St. Apt C7
Brooklyn , New York 11201

Parks and playgrounds in a place like New York City are sacred places. They are our backyards, our access to nature and our places to let imagination roam free. They are essential to our health and happiness. Park funding should not be cut and should be increased dramatically.

The pandemic has demonstrated how vital these places are to our city and its residents. I stand in solidarity with New Yorkers and ask that we commit at least one percent of the city budget to parks and playgrounds.

NYC Parks suffered a 14% budget cut, amounting to \$84M, in FY2020. This left NYC Parks dramatically under-resourced.

The loss of seasonal staff, PEP officers, and gardeners, along with a hiring freeze, has been devastating for parks workers trying to cover the 14% of NYC land that is under NYC Parks jurisdiction.

2020 parks conditions were the worst on record since NYC Parks began recording them in 2004. The biggest issues were accessibility (parks and comfort station closures), safety, and park conditions (trash, etc.).

NYC Parks is chronically underfunded and understaffed: there are not nearly enough City Park Workers, Gardeners, Urban Park Rangers, or PEP officers. 300+ PEP officers are expected to patrol 14% of NYC – in the summers, they're pulled to waterfronts and large parks suffer from overuse and lack of oversight.

NYC cannot replace parks workers with volunteers – NYC needs a fully funded and fully staffed Department of Parks and Recreation.

The proposed budget does not return to pre-pandemic levels: staffing levels, the Parks Equity Initiative, and basic maintenance like tree pruning/sidewalk repair/tree stump removal/invasive species control are not addressed.

Restoring the NYC Parks budget is the bare minimum. The majority of these positions are not baselined, which means they must be renewed every year by elected officials and do not guarantee parks workers their jobs. We need to move beyond a cycle-to-cycle funding model. 1% or more of the city budget must be for NYC Parks.

There remains a hiring freeze at NYC Parks leaving permanent staff nearly 200 short – a huge issue.

Please restore and increase funding for our parks.

Darren Hinton (Play NYCe)

My name is Darren Mack. I am a Co-Director of Freedom Agenda, which is a member-led project, dedicated to organizing people and communities directly impacted by incarceration to achieve decarceration and system transformation. I'm also a survivor of Rikers Island.

The failures of the city to address DOC staff misconduct, abuse, and mismanagement has led to a Federal monitor, which reported what survivors of Rikers have known for far too long, which is that more C.O.s equals more abuse. According to the 11th Nunez Federal monitor, **“The size of the Department’s complement of Staff, particularly the number assigned to the jails, is highly unusual and is one of the richest staffing ratios among the systems with which the Monitoring Team has had experience. This is true even with the unusually high number of Staff who have not reported to work due to chronic illness, COVID-19, and other reasons.”** [p. 10-11] Furthermore, clearly pointing out management not understaffing as the source of the problem, the monitor also reported that, **“The Department struggles to manage its large number of Staff productively, to deploy them effectively, to supervise them responsibly, and to elevate the base level of skill of its Staff. All of this has a direct impact on the Department’s ability to reduce the level of violence and ensure the safety and well-being of Staff and incarcerated individuals.”** [p.10] This is a scathing report considering that after ten other previous reports by the monitor DOC still has failed to rectify these matters over the years.

It’s been almost three decades since my incarceration on Rikers Island and some of the things that contribute to the culture of violence by DOC staff have not changed. One major issue is that DOC does not hold their staff accountable. **“The fact that most discipline is imposed long after the incident significantly undermines the meaningfulness and effectiveness of the response to misconduct. That Staff continue to operate in the Facilities—often for years—after engaging in misconduct is a major contributing factor to the toxic culture that pervades this Department,”** the report asserted. [p.240] Lack of accountability has been and continues to be a driver of staff violence on incarcerated people as well. If this is occurring during a time when there is a spotlight, monitor, and movement around the nyc jails crisis then one can imagine what was going on when none of these elements are present and over 20,000 incarcerated people on Rikers. The report also stated that, **“It is notable and disturbing that under a best-case scenario (which is assuming that the system is functioning properly, which it rarely is), that the current process to impose discipline can take over one year to**

achieve from the time of the incident (this includes the completion of the investigation, prosecution of the case and ultimate imposition of discipline). Such a system can only be described as inherently dysfunctional and ineffective.” [p.14] This is one of the reasons why advocates have called DOC the Department of Corruption.

I encourage the City Council to reject the proposed \$160 million dollar increase for 400 more C.O.s and redirect those resources towards violence interrupters and credible messengers who can reach those people and communities that are hard to reach by other city agencies. Redistribute those resources into non-police responses to people with serious mental health issues like the CAHOOTS program in Eugene, Oregon. We need investments in parks, libraries, and last but not least the Community Land Trust. Cancel the proposed new class, deflate DOCs bloated budgeted, and invest in impacted communities that have been historically under-resourced like Brownsville, the South Bronx, East New York, East Harlem, the Lower East Side, South Jamaica, and Stapleton.

Thank you,
Darren Mack, Co-Director of Freedom Agenda

Literacy: A Social Justice Issue

When he was almost three years old, at the bus stop, my son looked up at a sign and proudly said “MTA spells BUS”. This was pre-reading, I was told.

But Isaac could not hear rhymes, and hated Dr. Seuss. He hated Sesame Street but liked the shows that had a plot to follow. His pre-K teacher was concerned that he didn’t know his colors, although his health form stated that he was colorblind. She didn’t mind that he was not able to segment sounds in words – the first stage of reading. She did say he was bright and a joy to teach.

I thought I won the lottery when Isaac was accepted to a public progressive school of choice. The books he brought home from school got memorized quickly but not read. We read other books out loud to him every day. His kindergarten teacher told us he was bright and a joy to teach.

In first grade, he was clearly struggling. Our school’s response? They had Isaac attend a one-week summer program at school for teacher professional development in teaching reading. He was not the only struggling reader. The instruction needed to improve.

In second grade, a school evaluation showed that he was indeed bright, but Isaac couldn’t read or express himself in writing near grade level. We heard the psychologist and mentioned to the school team that dyslexia runs in our family. We were hushed. The team told us he would do fine in a co-teaching class with a special ed teacher and a general ed teacher. But he did not do fine. Neither did many others.

His teachers had been trained at prestigious institutions, including Bank Street and Teachers College. My son learned great content from them, yet he kept falling further and further reading. He was frustrated and began to suffer from anxiety and depression. I was taken aback: I could not believe the teachers did not know how to teach him to read.

So, we enrolled him in a specialized dyslexia school which has its own Teacher Training Institute, and we sued the city for the tuition, successfully. Now my son knows how words work. He can read. He learned how to write, research and take notes. His frustration dissipated. But at the dyslexia school, the content in social studies and science did not go deep. After reading for homework, Isaac independently sought out information from podcasts & audiobooks, and yes, YouTube. We take trips to the museums. Certainly, it is easier for a parent to introduce a kid content than to teach them to read.

I start to wonder about all the kids he left behind? What would become of the kids that don't have parents that will advocate and have resources to spend? What about the kids that are both victims of poor instruction and low expectations? Why don't teaching colleges teach teachers how to teach reading? Why, with all the evidence, is there still controversy over how to teach kid to read? Dyslexic students are just the canaries in the coalmine. Why are we okay with only teaching just one third of kids to read?

Debbie Meyer

To Whom It May Concern:

I live in Sector A of the 34th precinct and have been active in the Community Council Meetings as well as Build the Block since 2015. The critical issues facing our neighborhood, particularly along Amsterdam Avenue from 183-190 Streets and traveling farther North are as follows:

- Drag racing (often by vehicles designed for speed and noise).
- Motorcycle and motorbike racing—weaving in and out of traffic, threatening oncoming cars and traveling onto sidewalks.
- Routine defiance of traffic laws including running red lights, double parking, blocking bus stops, and vehicular intimidation of pedestrians.
- Aggressive spectator crowds in groups of 25-150 people, gathering to promote these activities on the street and sidewalks.
- Vehicular performance stunts including spinning in circles, spewing tire dust, blasting backfiring shots meant to alarm and intimidate.
- Party-goers setting up on the sidewalk and street—boom-boxes, drinking, dancing, drug dealing.
- These above-listed activities continue through the night and into the dawn and are especially prevalent in warm weather.

The 34th precinct's response to these issues has been consistent:

- They cannot chase cars, motorcycles or motorbikes. They cannot monitor the area on a regular basis—they don't have the personnel.
- They cannot confiscate bikes, motorcycles or boom boxes—too time-consuming and will not change behavior.
- Officers cannot respond because the public wants to defund the police.

In a bid for help, letters have been sent to the mayor's office, Senator Robert Jackson, Council Carmen de la Rosa, and other city officials. There has been no response.

Clearly noise, along with attendant activities, not only degrades quality of life, it encourages bolder, more aggressive behavior. We are held hostage by the those who break the law and those who have been elected and designated to uphold the law. I believe, along with others, that the siege of urban violence (in all its manifestations) gripping Washington Heights deserves a wider audience, one that is more willing and able to resolve these issues.

Deborah Barrett
dee23barr@gmail.com

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

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I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
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- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Cooper
decooper1953@gmail.com
320 West End Ave, Apt. 2A
New York, New York 10023

Demetrius Napolitano, Former Foster Youth, testifying for Fair Futures

My name is Demetrius Napolitano and I am testifying today to ask the Mayor and the City to baseline \$20 million in support of Fair Futures so young people in foster care can have the 1:1 supports they need to thrive.

When I was 2 months old, I was placed into the NYC foster care system, where I spent the next 21 years of my life. I lived in nearly 30 different homes, experienced a failed adoption, experienced all forms of trauma and abuse, and then aged out of the system.

However, the system did give me 1 support that forever changed my life trajectory - someone who believed in me, someone who never gave up on me. At the time, we didn't have Fair Futures funding for "Coaches," but this 1 agency staff embodied exactly what a Fair Futures coach does today. She met me on my level, provided me with emotional support, and was the first person to believe in my goals and dreams and help me see them through.

Today, because of the 1:1 support I received from my "Coaches/Mentors" over the years, and because of the innate resilience/potential that myself and other foster youth have, I am proud to say that I represent the 20% of foster youth with a high school degree, and 3% with a Bachelor's degree.

I received my BA from NYU and have been a professional speaker, mentor, and advocate for over 10 years, including on Capitol Hill. I recently launched my own non-profit called Fostering Meditation and travelled to India to receive deep training and certification in yoga, meditation, and mindfulness, and have brought this work to the NYC foster care system.

I currently give meditation classes to nearly 400 Fair Futures staff each month through the Fair Futures systemwide learning communities. I have met nearly 150 Coaches across all 26 agencies, seen their faces, and felt their authenticity and their dedication to supporting the young people they coach in foster care.

My story is not unique in that hundreds of young people with Fair Futures Coaches have been able to change their life trajectories. I am here today to serve as the voice for the 3,000 young people that Fair Futures serves. I am here today to ask the City to not tear away the Fair Future Coaches and staff from these young people. These staff work so hard to build trusting relationships with the young people and they are deeply trained on HOW TO HELP THEM with the goals and dreams. Please do not be the cause of more trauma and disruption in their lives.

In my work with Fair Futures staff, I can honestly say that this is the most authentic, impactful program that foster care has ever seen. That is because it is truly a community, a family.

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Good morning,

Thank you to The Council for holding this important hearing and for allowing me to speak. My name is Destiny Kelly and I am a junior in high school. I have been in foster care at NAC for 3 years and I came into care because my mom had caught a DUI.

I am here today to share my story and ask for your support in saving Fair Futures. Fair Futures staff have helped me by providing me with resources, connecting me with others, and giving me their time, among others. When I need assistance in any type of situation I know I can count on my team at NAC to help me at any time. For example, Shelanthia, my Education Specialist, has not only provided me with academic support such as getting tutoring for SAT prep through the New York Foundling and helping me prepare for college, but also with career development support, by helping me apply to Summer Youth Employment. She has provided me with support that I wouldn't have been able to get without Fair Futures and she is also always available anytime I need her and for that alone I am very grateful to have someone like Shelanthia that I can count on.

I joined NAC's Teen Group hosted by Komal, my Fair Futures Coach, and Shelanthia in October. What I like about Teen Group is the welcoming community feeling I gain from it—although it is virtual, I still gain the in-person feeling when participating. Komal and Shelanthia are very helpful in building this type of community because not only is it fun but informational: we learn about things and get the chance to hear others' opinions on important issues such as social justice and mental health. Also I like that Komal and Shelanthia are basically like mentors because they let us take the lead on things.

I am grateful for the support that Fair Futures staff have provided me in order to achieve my academic and career development goals. All foster youth deserve this support in order to be successful adults, which is why Fair Futures needs \$20 million baselined.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today.

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

dforbes@brooklyn.cuny.edu

135 Eastern Parkway, 9J

Brooklyn, New York 11238

4410 Preschool Funding

I would like to thank the council members for their time and attention to the issue of 4410 preschool funding.

4410 preschools need your help now. We need you to understand what is at stake.

There is a crisis developing that requires immediate action on your part.

The 4410 provider agencies are on the verge of closing. We need to be funded in order to survive. Our programs serve the neediest children with the most significant developmental disabilities. Comprehensive services for these children will not be able to be incorporated into integrated concept programs. We know there will be a continued need for our placements. Children referred for 4410 placements come from all NYC communities. I represent the point of view from El Barrio/Harlem East and East Tremont, Bronx. We need you to assure 4410 placements available for these children. Our families and their children suffered the most devastating effects during this pandemic. We offered educational, speech, occupational, physical therapies. Social emotional support and family counseling and links to community based resources. We offered remote only instruction, hybrid instruction and we are beginning to fully re-open for all in person learning come July offering full time, school based services. We were here as essential workers throughout the pandemic.

We are now faced with losing our teachers to programs that will pay them substantially more. We are a 12 month service and require our teachers to work with the most significantly disabled children for 12 months of the year. Our children have substantial behavioral, cognitive and motor disabilities. Many are on the autistic spectrum. Our teachers and therapists have to make decisions whether to leave our 4410 agencies to earn more and have summers off. They can do this while working with typically developing children. They will not be burdened by the hours of paperwork required by special education teachers. Most of our teachers do this work by staying longer hours at school and working nights and weekends. Many while attending their graduate programs and raising families. About half of our teachers are fully certified. We risk losing them as well. Help us keep them.

We know our teachers have the heart and passion to work with this population of children. We need to give them the financial support and recognition allowing them to continue. Many of our teachers are in graduate programs that require dual certificates and extensions to those certificates. This is a highly educated workforce. Most of our teachers are from the communities we serve. We have done our work to recruit a teacher base that looks like the children, families and communities we serve. Help us retain our teachers.

Due to the extensive educational requirements, our teachers have debt. Most function on college loans in spite of the many programs that offer scholarships and funds for educators. Tuition is very expensive. Fees, books and technology are also expensive. Not all of our teachers can get into the CUNY programs and are forced to attend a

private college at a very high tuition rate. We have established donation and grant based funds to help these teachers.

The implications of NYC leaving the 4410 community based programs without additional funding will have a devastating effect not only on preschool children with disabilities but on entire communities.

The NYC Council has the power to help 4410 preschools. Please use your power! Help us maintain these essential 4410 preschool services to every child in every NYC community.

Diane Fitzpatrick

City Council Finance Committee,

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Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

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Thank you for your consideration.

Diane Parker

Dparker@acmhny.org

462 East 144th Street

Bronx, New York 10454

**Testimony of Dilia Tejada for New York City Council
Committee on Finance**

Re: Fiscal Year 2022 Executive Budget

May 25, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about the proposed budget. My name is Dilia Tejada and I live in the Bronx with my three-year-old son, Devyn.

I am here to discuss the need to address the shortage of preschool special education classes and provide salary parity to teachers of these classes.

When Devyn was a toddler, he was diagnosed with autism and began receiving Early Intervention services. As his third birthday approached, I had him evaluated for the preschool special education program and everyone agreed he needed a small preschool special education class that specializes in serving children with autism. But when it came time for Devyn to start preschool in January, the DOE did not have a seat for him. I tried contacting the DOE several times to ask for a seat but did not get one. Devyn was sitting at home with no special education services as the Mayor announced he was expanding Pre-K and 3-K – which don't provide the support my son needs. After contacting an advocate, I finally got a seat for Devyn in a preschool special education program at the end of April- after waiting four months - but it is not even the type of class listed on Devyn's IEP. I felt I had no choice but to accept the program because Devyn had gone so long without any services, and I was worried. I had seen Devyn lose skills he had learned during Early Intervention- he stopped following simple commands, he had a shorter attention span, and he showed more frequent challenging behaviors. I worry about what that lost time has meant for Devyn and I worry about the hundreds of students who, like him, are not getting the preschool special education classes they need and have a legal right to receive.

I would like to thank the City Council for recommending \$85 million in your response to the budget to address the shortage of preschool special education classes and pay their teachers the same as 3-K and Pre-K teachers. I was glad to hear that the Mayor included funding for preschool special education in the budget proposal. But \$22 million for next year is not enough, and none of it will go to help the preschoolers with the most intensive needs, like my son. There's \$88 million proposed for the following year, but still no commitment to pay teachers at preschool special education programs the same salary as other teachers.

3-K and Pre-K are not for all unless there is a seat for every child who needs one. And my child's preschool teacher should be paid the same as – if not more than – other early childhood teachers. Please ensure that the final budget includes \$85 million for Fiscal Year 22 to ensure a preschool special education class seat for every child who needs one and pay preschool special education teachers the same salaries as other early childhood teachers.

Thank you.

Dear Finance Chair Dromm and the Committee on Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Edward Hong and I'm concerned about my fellow New Yorkers, especially those who are disproportionately and unjustly targeted by police violence. Last year the Council and Mayor di Blasio did not truly commit to defunding the NYPD by \$1B.

I'm concerned about the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget which includes a \$200MM increase for the NYPD. This is the most expensive NYPD budget ever proposed.

The NYPD already has a \$6B budget and I don't believe an increase in police and police activity is what keeps communities safe and healthy. I want to see more investment in community services, by and for communities, included in the budget that the City Council passes this year. I want to see the NYPD removed from social service-related roles.

Every year, NYC spends millions of dollars to keep cops who have killed and brutalized us on the city payroll. That's millions of dollars that are going towards the continued criminalization of Black, Latine, and other communities of color and NOT towards health care, schools and youth programs, jobs and housing.

We need solutions to the issues our communities face, solutions that are developed, built, implemented, and maintained by the people from the communities.

We need to completely remove police from mental health responses. We need an NYPD hiring freeze and the elimination of dangerous units like the SRG and end initiatives like Youth Coordinating Officers that are systematizing the racial profiling and surveilling of our Black, Latinx, and other POC young people and police free schools.

Instead, investments should be made to equip the local community groups who are working day in and day out on the ground with the resources to be the first line of response. Our local community groups are the ones building the supportive ongoing relationships with the people in our communities. We need to invest more resources in developing these community-led infrastructures for safety and support.

We don't need new or more police officers—in fact, I call for a freeze on new NYPD hires and a full investment in community-led efforts that do not rely on police.

- We need the immediate expansion and full funding for citywide Summer Youth Employment.
- We need investments in violence intervention programs that don't rely on police.
- We need health and mental health care, education, housing and jobs.

Thank you for listening to your constituents.

With respect,

Edward Hong

From: Elise Brown <info@email.actionnetwork.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 12:44 PM
To: Finance Testimony
Subject: Testimony Before the Council of the City of New York, Finance Committee

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially,

Elise Brown

Lower East Side

Elise Brown

a.elise.brown@gmail.com

105 Stanton Street, 2L

New York, New York 10002

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Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeta Markuci
Imarkuci@yahoo.com
7 West 96th Street, Apt 8E
New York, New York 10025

Hello, my name is Elizabeth and I live in Harlem.

I was deeply concerned when I learned the NYPD police budget was \$10.9 billion dollars and most of those billions were funded by NYC taxpayers.

That's why I'm asking you, the City Council, to immediately reallocate \$1B of the NYPD's \$10B operational budget back to the communities in NYC. Public safety is only achievable when we invest in what centers the needs of disenfranchised populations.

I for one know that the City Council's failure to adequately defund the NYPD last year made me realize that my City Council Member had failed me and our community. Instead of funding the NYPD, the City Council could reallocate that money towards community-led safety initiatives, permanent housing, mental health resources, improving education, funding school nurses, and enacting restorative justice measures in our schools. Last year, the City Council failed the people of NYC. This year, you have the ability to do better.

Thank you.

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Thank you for your consideration.

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300 Mercer St.

N.Y.C., New York 10003

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

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Falguni Kayasth

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254 West 31st. Street

New York, New York 10001

Hello my name is Gabby and I have worked at Sure We Can for almost a year and a half. Over this past year of the pandemic I have led weekly mask distributions in our neighborhood, taken community members to get tested for covid and to get the vaccine. I have seen our community *survive* a global pandemic. Working the desk here every day I've seen people who have found themselves out of work turn to canning as a way to put food on the table. But even before the the pandemic Sure We Can has been facing a crisis. For the past few years we have been trying to evade eviction by acquiring Capital funding in order to purchase our lot.

This constant fear of moving has kept us in a state of limbo which prevents us from doing our important work to the greatest capacity. We need an economic development exception to the capital funding requirement for three consecutive years of 50000 + and City contracts. There are no City contracts for the work that we're doing. Despite informal waste picking leading a global movement to reorganize and redesign Waste Management Systems given the fact that they're almost globally failing in keeping the waste that we produce inside of our way stream. There are no City contracts that exist for community-based management of metal glass and plastic waste in it in New York City.

As a city we need to be exploring how we can improve our waste management system. Canners have been a working example of a just and sustainable approach to keeping our single use under control and within the waste stream for decades. we have had no way to have three consecutive years of contracts because there's no contracts this so we are begging for this economically development exception

if our mission resonates with you, if the work that we are doing here at sure we can to support represent and empower Canners, informal workers, recyclers to be at the center of this conversation of redesigning the way our city deals with its waste please use your voice and your position of power to speak up and grant us this much-needed exception.

I hope it goes without saying but I feel obliged to mention that in 2021 we are experiencing a global climate crisis. And this is only the beginning. The actions we take this year, this month, and even this week have a have the potential to mitigate some of the worst effects of this climate crisis we all facing right now together.

New York City does not have the time for us to be relocated. We are participating in discussions happening right now about expanding the bottle Bill about increasing extended producer responsibility. We cannot focus our energy on re-establishing connections in a different neighborhood to a different community of recyclers. connections that have taken Sure We Can 10 years to make. Global Studies show informal Waste Management individual waste picking already plays an incredibly important role in our Global effort to keep Plastics and single-use materials out of our natural environment and in our way streams. As the only formal organization in this city that is created by and run by canners, you should be excited by sure we can and excited to use your voice to advocate that we be granted this exception. Thank you.

Hello Finance Chair Dromm and the Committee on Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm deeply concerned about the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget, which includes a \$200 million increase for the NYPD. This is the most expensive NYPD budget ever proposed.

Everyone wants to live in safety and security, but I do not believe that an increase in police activity or the size and scope of the police will actually make our communities safer. In fact, if policing was the source of safety, we would already be one of the safest places in the world. By budget, if the NYPD were a military, it would rank among the top 30 most expensive militaries among almost 200 countries worldwide.

It is clear to me, and to many other New Yorkers, that these massive investments in policing completely fail to achieve goals of community safety and security. Instead, the police are often a source of insecurity for people throughout our city. Black, Latinx, low-income, and immigrant communities, as well as people with disabilities, experience persistent police violence and surveillance. Last year and during many instances in the past, the police responded to peaceful protests with brutality -- instances which they continue to lie about, including in a recent public safety Council hearing. There is almost zero accountability for police violence in our city, which allows it to persist and leaves families waiting years and years for justice. Lastly, and crucially, policing does not address the causes or manifestations of persistent poverty and inequality, homelessness, mental health crisis, skyrocketing housing costs, lack of opportunity, gender-based violence, and more.

Last year there was a revival of a long-standing public discussion around the role of policing in our city and country. In follow-up to the statewide mandate, the Mayor has put out a police "reform and reinvention" plan which articulates a number of ideas, but which unfortunately totally fails to address the root of the problem. It is evident to me that we do not need more training, more community or youth engagement, better equipment, or other surface-level modifications to the way policing is conducted. On the contrary, in order to actually stop police violence and also make our communities safer, we need a large reduction in the size and scope of the NYPD. This budget is an opportunity to make such key changes.

Instead of further investment in the NYPD, I would like to see:

- Deep cuts to the NYPD's bloated budget, and reinvestment in community services, including housing, healthcare, education, jobs, and health.
- Removal of NYPD from all social service-related roles, including mental health first response and schools (and this is not the same as moving SSAs from the NYPD to the DOE). This is a long-standing community demand, and in many instances, the NYPD *themselves* have indicated that they are not the appropriate actors to be doing this work.
- The immediate firing of all officers who have killed New Yorkers and committed other acts of police brutality.
- A full NYPD hiring freeze and investments in other jobs programs especially for youth,

but also for individuals at all stages of their careers who are in need of career opportunities (including prospective and former NYPD who may be affected by the proposals detailed in the above points).

- Investments in community-run violence intervention programs that are not affiliated with the police.

Thank you for your time.

Genevieve Riccoboni
Central Harlem (District 9)

My name is Gilly Nadel and I'm testifying for the May 25th Finance Budget Hearing, specifically about education in the budget.

I am the parent of a public school student, and I have been teaching in New York City public and charter schools since 2001. I urge the city council to earmark at least the proposed \$250 million for reducing class sizes, and also to set aside an equal amount of money to ensure that there are two teachers in every classroom in neighborhoods with low average income.

I've taught in Chinatown, the Lower East Side, Crown Heights, and Bedford-Stuyvesant. My students have experienced enormous stress their whole lives. I've had students come to school the day after one of their parents was deported or a favorite aunt was shot dead. Most of my students have only one parent, and in many cases that parent works two or three jobs, so that many of my middle schoolers end up taking care of themselves and their little siblings in the evenings. Some of my students live in homeless shelters. Some live in foster homes. Some are immigrants from war-torn countries and have not attended school for several years. Even the kids with the most stable families live in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, violence, and incarceration.

Because of all these stresses, my students arrive in school hyper-vigilant and risk-averse. It takes a lot of personal attention to get them to feel safe and open to learning.

In the last few years I've worked in a charter school, and my classes have 20 to 25 students and two teachers. I'm able to hold individual conferences with each student at least once a week -- and with the most high-needs students every day. I'm able to call parents to tell them about the smart things their kids say, and to create differentiated materials for students with learning disabilities or English as a new language. One teacher might lead a whole-class discussion while the other works with a small group of kids who need the material delivered differently, or else she can support individual students who might otherwise act out and stop the whole lesson.

When I was a public school teacher, I had as many as 34 kids in the classroom and no second teacher. I never had time to confer with individuals, only groups. I wasn't able to reach out to parents unless something was seriously wrong. I always felt rushed and overwhelmed. Even worse, so did the kids. Multiple students with disruptive behavior triggered each other, so a lot of learning time was lost.

Why do 9 additional children make such a difference? With each additional student, there is an exponential rise in the noise level, the number of hands in the air, the number of interactions everyone has, and the inputs the brain has to deal with. Children who are coming to school with high levels of stress find this additional brain load overwhelming. They are more likely to shut down or become explosive, and that feeds right back into the stress for the other children. Smaller classes are calmer, quieter, more functional environments, and that means stressed-out kids can allow themselves to feel safe and simply learn.

Moreover, a single teacher cannot keep an eye on all the kids in a room at once. That makes it easier for kids with learning difficulties to avoid working and engage in off-task behavior. Some kids get tired of waiting to get help and simply give up. There's more bullying and more

frustration on everyone's part. Two teachers are able to see much more of what's going on in the room at any given moment, and they're able to give all the kids the emotional and academic support they need so they can focus on learning.

I'm alarmed by Mayor de Blasio's proposal to fund more assessments. The last thing NYC students need is more testing -- and the last thing we as parents want to see is more education money funneled away to private companies. The city council should focus instead on decreasing class sizes and putting a second teacher in every classroom, especially in our neediest neighborhoods.

Thank you.

Gilly Nadel
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Gina ANDERSON

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Brooklyn, New York 11226

Executive Budget For Fiscal Year 2022
Summary of CB11M Budget Requests
Economic Development & Culture

FUNDED— ie. accommodate using existing resources; funding restored, currently in design

1. Create, renovate, upgrade 125th public library (311202213C)
2. Create, renovate, upgrade Aguilar public library (311202215C)
3. Provide, expand occupational skills training programs (311202203E)
4. Provide, expand occupational skills training programs (311202208E)
5. Assist with on-site business compliance with city regulations (311202215E)
6. Support local, long-standing businesses (311202241E)

NOT FUNDED— ie. needs further study, fiscal constraints, bring to the attention of elected officials

1. Support non profit cultural organizations (311202235E)
2. Expand programs for industries, fashion films, advanced food manufacturing life sciences and healthcare

FUNDING UNCERTAIN— ie. recommended for funding, but availability of funds uncertain

1. Extend library hours & enhance programs (311202221E)

TESTIMONY

Advocate to provide and expand occupational skills and training programs to ensure the opportunities in high skilled level jobs for our residents as well as financial education, employment opportunities and home ownership education.

Advocate for the expansion of programs for industries in fashion, film production, advanced food manufacturing, life sciences and healthcare.

Support for our non-profit cultural organizations

Giselle Malave

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Hanna Fazio

hfazio@communityaccess.org

434 Bleecker St, #1R

Brooklyn, New York 11237

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

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Thank you for your consideration.

Harold Looney

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318 85TH ST

Brooklyn, New York 11209

Hasan Williams

Testimony for ACS Hearing on Fair Futures

Hello, I am Hasan Williams, 28, current Harlem resident but also a former foster youth who aged out of JCCA.

I have been a long-time advocate for fair futures because I truly believe in the model. I would like to see services and resources expand for these youth. Often times great ideas die by the wayside because tradition scares us from breathing life into change – this cannot happen with Fair Futures.

I spent many years in care myself. We did not have coaches at the time. I understand need for a youth to have a Coach – having someone truly in their corner that is not a social worker seeking to check a box for the day ... someone who actually listens and focuses on my individual desires for my life. Without a Coach, I had to be my own coach and constantly stumble over what came next. Having a coach makes this process less of a guess and more of a conversation. Every youth needs it.

Having a coach is essential to development as they can often be a nod or nudge in the right direction with reassurance in the wisdom and life experience coming from a trusted individual.

Fair futures is unique compared to other initiatives because it builds community from within by placing mentors with youth. There is no doubt that quality and equity of the community will improve over time.

This is why I feel the mayor needs to baseline 20 million and add supports for older youth ages 21 to 26.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Heather Samuels

Hsamuels@acmhny.org

1880 Bathgate Ave

Bronx, New York 10457

Testimony to the New York City Council, Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2020

My name is Herbert Murray and I'm a member of Freedom Agenda. As a young adult, I was arrested for a murder I did not commit, and subsequently, served 29 years in prison.

Today, I do not wish to focus on my time in prison, but I'd like to speak about the community I grew up in. I grew up in Brooklyn in the 1960s and 70s, before the financial crisis that some New Yorkers remember so well. My family and my community were not wealthy. I lived in public housing. But the systems that supported New Yorkers no matter how much money they had were still intact: Schools were open at night for recreation, tutoring, mentorship and other meaningful programs that kept us from the streets.

Drugs were present in the community, and for people who had or developed addictions, they caused a lot of harm. That harm could have been best addressed by treatment. But instead, the City took an approach that did far more harm. The funding that had supported our communities was taken out of all programs that were beneficial and reinvested in policing and prisons. We didn't know it at the time, but that was the beginning of mass incarceration. The jails on Rikers filled to bursting, and more were built, while our community centers closed.

We have made some progress since then. The crack era is past, though individuals and families who were criminalized are still discriminated against in employment, housing, and other basic programs. There are less people in jail now than there were 20 years ago, or even 5 years ago when the #CLOSERikers campaign started. But we still have not taken the next step - reinvesting back into the communities that have been most harmed by mass incarceration.

In fact, the Mayor's budget proposal makes me worry that we haven't learned anything from that failed approach of the 1980s. This year, the Mayor proposed increasing the Department of Correction's budget. New York City has the most expensive jail system in the country. There are also twice as many officers per incarcerated person as there were 7 years ago, and a Federal monitor said this month that overstaffing in the jails is leading to more abuse of people in custody. But the Mayor wants to add more officers to the failed agency? How could New York City justify spending more money to hire 400 more jail guards? We should be spending that money to instead to address the root causes of incarceration, by doing things like ending homelessness and providing universal summer jobs.

The NYC jail system costs almost \$3 billion a year, and another \$11 billion is given to police. The monies from both departments must be reinvested back into the communities that mass incarceration has stolen from. I urge the City Council to reject the Mayor's plan to increase the DOC budget, and invest those funds in our communities instead.

\$ \$ BUDGET FOR AAPI ORGANIZATIONS

Dear City Council:

We are writing from the Asian American Podcasters Association to share our view that NYC funding for Asian Americans and AAPI organizations is severely lacking.

APIs make-up 15% of the population here, and yet we do not receive even close to 15% of city funding.

We implore you to allocate NYC funds accordingly going forward.

Thank you for your time.

lee uehara + andy wang

Tel. (212) 655-9840 |

POB 250570, New York, NY 10025 USA

AAPODCASTERS.ORG



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Hugh Polk

hpolk44@gmail.com

21 South End Ave. #206

New York, New York 10280

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Thank you for your consideration.

Jacques Engelstein

jengelstein@acmhny.org

454 West 35th Street, Apt. 2R1

New York, New York 10001

My name is Jadein Rivera and I am a Youth in the Fair Futures Program through Abbott House. Before I joined Fair Futures, I had been disengaged with my academics and social environment. After coming into care, I felt detached and not feeling supported. I felt lost and didn't have any clear direction at the time after going through a personal loss in my family. My motivation and drive towards my academics was lacking after going virtual due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since I've been working with the Fair Futures Coaches, I have begun to feel more motivated and supported by the Abbott House coaches. I have since gathered my vital documents and received my working paper since working with my coach in a short time. My confidence in believing that things will turn out fine has been increasing through relationship building sessions with my coach, in which I was disinterested in socializing before working with him.

I hope I can continue to be a part of Fair Futures. After attending the Fair Futures rally at City Hall, it made me realize how much the program had positively affected many youth like myself in the foster care system. I witnessed people talk about career success, as well as people graduating from college when they felt like life had turned its back on them. Fair Futures Program provided an outlet and voice for people who feel like they haven't been heard. Now I am here today using my voice in hopes of being able to take advantage of the program like many of my peers have.

Jadein Rivera

Fair Futures Member

Dear NYC Council members —

I'm writing to testify that Upper Manhattan is in dire need of funding to help offset/address a host of health and safety issues. Since last summer, Inwood has been overrun by illegal motorized vehicles on sidewalks and in parks, dangerous and illegal fireworks, drag racing by cars with incredibly loud modified mufflers and amplified music played at deafening levels well into the morning hours when children, working parents, elderly and all Uptown residents need to sleep in order to function properly.

Please allow for the funds necessary to allow elected officials to combat these issues.

Thank you,
Longtime Inwood resident & mom
Jaime Harkin

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Jamie Usera

jamie.usera@gmail.com

4321 49th Street Apt B2

SUNNYSIDE, New York 11104

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Jayette Lansbury

lansburyhunt@aol.com

8 Lindsay Street

huntington, New York 11743

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Jean Folkes
trilany@aol.com
380 E 18th Street, Apt 2J
Brooklyn, New York 11226

Dear City Council Members,

The pandemic has made New York less safe for many of us in many ways – and we have an opportunity to invest in meaningful public safety, a term which has unfortunately become synonymous with police. There are a number of current initiatives that have been shown elsewhere to be more effective than policing – and they are also more cost-effective.

Specifically, I'm writing to ask for the city budget to reflect the following:

1. Invest at least \$3 mil into the **Hate Violence Prevention Initiative's** community-based approach to fighting hate, and fund the Asian American Federation's Hope Against Hate campaign.
2. Invest in **mental health first responders**. Other cities have found that these programs are extremely effective in reducing arrests and associated costs; they also identify and meet citizen needs. (For example, see Denver's Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program.) Human and social services prevent violence, while police only respond to violence. Taking budget dollars away from our bloated system of policing gives us the opportunity to prevent violence before it happens.
3. **Fully invest in meaningful restorative justice**. Dignity in Schools Campaign-NY is asking for \$118.5 million in FY 2022, allocated directly to schools and their communities. This money would be used to hire restorative justice coordinators; develop curriculum with teachers; provide training to teachers, staff, and communities; and more.
4. **Expand access to social workers and guidance counselors in schools**. I am asking for \$162 million to expand hiring, as well as \$15 million to the Mental Health Continuum, an evidence-based wraparound approach to student mental health.
5. **Remove police from public schools** – including the School Safety Division, school-based School Safety Agents, Youth Coordination Officers, metal detectors, and camera surveillance. Police in schools make students feel LESS safe, not more safe (Bracy, 2011) and likely increases referrals to the justice system for minor infractions (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). It amounts to criminalizing students for having needs, rather than trying to meet those needs. And removing police from public schools would free up some of the funding to invest in the interventions that DO make students feel safer (points 3 & 4 above).

A budget is a moral document. It tells us what we value – and the current budget says that we value policing above the well-being of our students, above public health, about educational and social needs across our communities. I implore you to consider what real public safety could mean for all New Yorkers.

Jena Barchas-Lichtenstein, PhD
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Brooklyn NY 11215
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Thank you for your consideration.

jen.scarlott@gmail.com

2501 PALISADE AVE, Apt. D2

BRONX, New York 10463

My name is Jenna Harvey and I work for the global network WIEGO, (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing). WIEGO supports informal workers across the world, including recyclers and canners, in strengthening their organizations and movements, and advocating for increased rights and protections for this essential, but excluded part of the workforce. In New York City in recent years, we have had the privilege of working with and learning from Sure We Can. We know from our work with informal recyclers globally, that despite the critical environmental services they provide, they are often stigmatized for their work, excluded from public policy and cut off from systems of support. This is no different here in New York, where canners are also often part of other underserved groups, including immigrant and the elderly.

Over a decade, Sure We Can has worked carefully, sensitively and consistently to conduct outreach to canners here in the city, and to provide not only a safe and accessible space for can redemption, but also connection to a larger community and environmental mission. In the process, they have worked with diverse community partners and mutual aid groups, and have linked canners to broader networks of support. Sure We Can recognizes that canners are environmental agents, with invaluable knowledge about the circular economy. As a result, Sure We Can has provided support to canners in coming together, organizing, developing a shared worker identity and articulating a policy agenda focused on environmental and economic justice. This agenda, and the services that canners provide, represent an invaluable resource to the city and state government in pursuing their environmental goals.

In addition, canner leaders at Sure We Can are doing groundbreaking work on advocacy for extended producer responsibility models that support and integrate canner livelihoods – which have provided critical lessons for the WIEGO network and our informal recycler partners in the global north and south who are similarly wanting to influence EPR models in their own contexts.

The locus of this work is Sure We Can's community space and redemption center in Brooklyn. On any given day the space could be filled with canners hard at work sorting, leading and participating in meetings on advocacy and strategy, PPE distribution and more. The space allows Sure We Can to meet multiple needs and provide mutually reinforcing supportive services at once. It also provides a critical safe, inclusive community space for a historically marginalized group of workers. If Sure We Can were to lose their physical space, it would damage the community ties and the network of support and knowledge generation that they have carefully built over almost ten years. The Sure We Can space is an irreplicable asset to the community and to the city itself, and it must be protected and supported. For this Sure WE Can needs funding to be able to purchase the property that it has leased for the last decade. But also, critically, they need Speaker Corey Johnson to pursue an Economic Development Exemption at OMB for SWC's capital application.

Allowing SWC to remain in their existing site is to allow this community of support to strengthen, grow and plan for the future. This can only bring benefits and value to the city in its stated environmental and social goals.

Caring Parents was thrilled to see Early Childhood educators finally get the fair pay and recognition they deserve. We were also happy to see that some special needs students were acknowledged in the budget proposal.

But it's not enough. The children who need the most, are still getting the least. More self-contained inclusion classes are being added, but what about all of the children in size 6 and 8 classes? What about the ones in size 12 CBO classes whose needs are not met by inclusion classes? Why should they have to wait

Why are these children constantly ignored? Over and over and over, it feels like our elected officials are pretending they don't exist. It's a deliberate erasure, and I'll tell you why.

First, the ECE pay parity agreement goes into effect in 10/21. Where do you think those teachers are going to come from? Many will leave their jobs at 4410 (CBO) locations, where the majority serve the children with the most severe needs.

That's the first hit. But the real death blow is holding CBOs to the same standards as 3K and preK. Presumably this means partially regarding certification and experience. It definitely means extending their day. How can you do this without offering pay parity? There is zero incentive to work in a CBO for unfair wages and crappy benefits.

You are making this way more complicated than it needs to be. Pay parity would allow the teachers of the students who need the most support to stay in their current positions at CBOs/4410. The city has given no clear explanation as to how they will ensure these critical programs continue. Once again, it seems like you're just trying to make them, and in turn, our children, disappear.

It feels like you deem them unworthy of your attention, and are starting them off in a world that does not belong to/accommodate them. A world in which they will always be an outsider because considering their needs is just too difficult on an institutional level.

Jennifer Stewart

Thank you to the members of the committee for soliciting testimony on this critical issue.

My name is Jessica Marshall. I have lived in New York City for over 20 years, and am currently an adjunct professor at Pace University. I have a loved one who struggles at times with extreme emotional reactions have both participated in and co-led the National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder's Family Connections support group

People who have the disorders that lead to enormous emotions can be very scary for those not trained in the research-support strategies for de-escalating emotional dysregulation. Speaking from my own experience, your natural reaction when faced with someone acting out is to yell back at them – and, perhaps, to try to overpower them.

And as I've learned – not from the well-intentioned traditional therapists we reached out to over the years, but from the data-driven strategies developed by University of Washington professor Marsha Linehan and shared by the NEABPD's Family Connections support group -- those are the worst things you can possibly do when working with someone in emotional distress.

I have called 911 when I didn't know what else to do, when I wanted help for my loved one. It made things worse, not better. And I have now seen the yelling, the use of force -- sometimes deadly -- that happens disproportionately to people of color whose loved ones call 911 in the same situation. It doesn't have to be this way.

CCIT NYC – a network of over 80 organizations across NYC– has created a research-supported, best practice approach to handling mental health crisis calls. Trained peers and health workers have been shown to keep loved ones safe while saving money for the city and letting police focus on enforcing laws.

New York City can help lead the way, providing compassionate, effective care for people in crisis. I beg you to take advantage of the opportunity at hand.

Testimony to be delivered to the New York City Council Committee on Finance

Re: Fiscal Year 2022 Executive Budget

May 25, 2021

Hi, I'm Jeurry Amarante.

When I was in public school, I needed help learning to read. I had the will but needed help from my teachers and it wasn't there.

In my last year of high school, I realized that I wasn't in the place I wanted to be to get my diploma. I asked for help and the school just sent me to a GED program.

There, a counselor there that noticed that I was struggling to read and that I needed help. So, she sent me information about Advocates for Children where I met a lawyer who helped me get tutoring at this place called Linda Mood Bell. I did that, and I learned to read with private tutoring and hard work that I was more than happy to do. Things finally came together.

Now I'm working and reading and living my life. I went from being a non-reader to reading Catcher In the Rye and The Outsiders and really enjoyed both books.

I'm here to say that other students shouldn't have to fight as hard as I did to be taught properly how to read.

Please make sure the city budget has enough money for all students to learn to read. Advocates is recommending at least \$50 million for evidence-based curriculum and \$150 million for individual or small-group tutoring to students like me who need it. That makes sense to me.

I don't want any other students to have to go through what I did to get where I am today.

Thank you.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my strong support to defund the NYPD and re-allocate the funds into community investments.

I have spent the last almost 6 years living here in NYC, and have stayed throughout the pandemic. Last year, as I protested and marched along with thousands of others in response to the call to end police killings, I witnessed excessive police presence at peaceful protests, as well as preparations for kettling (a war tactic no country should use on it's on citizens exercising their first amendment rights). Yesterday marked the one year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd by a cop in Minneapolis. As I walked home from a vigil in his honor, I passed no less than three dozen NYPD vans. People are not even allowed to mourn in peace without the threat of criminal detention. This is not how I want my tax dollars to be spent.

While I know the number touted for the NYPD budget is somewhere around \$8 billion, I also know the true cost is more than that, which means that if the NYPD were compared as a stand alone military force it would rank higher somewhere in the top 20 globally, and has a higher budget than the military of North Korea. I understand that crime has risen in the past year, but the time has come for us not to double down on a fruitless investment in a system and force which only serves to create violence, but rather to use this opportunity to imagine a New York City where all are able to thrive and get the support they need. Throughout the pandemic, many people have lost their jobs, housing and access to services. People who are already suffering should not be criminalized for the unfortunate circumstances they find themselves in. Instead of reacting with fear, we must come together as a city to react with empathy and compassion.

We must use this opportunity to defund the NYPD by at least \$3B over the next 2 years. In parallel, we need to shift these resources to addressing the underlying issues that cause crime. We need to build and (in some cases) repair affordable housing, increase the amount of long term shelters so that every New Yorker has a safe place to sleep at night, take police away from our public schools so that children have a safe environment to learn in and increase access to mental health services. As we emerge from the pandemic in the current months, it is imperative that we build a better, more equitable city for all New Yorkers.

'Prisons do not disappear social problems, they disappear human beings. Homelessness, unemployment, drug addiction, mental illness, and illiteracy are only a few of the problems that disappear from public view when the human beings contending with them are relegated to cages.' - Angela Davis

Thank you,

Jocelyn St. James

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color.

The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
- 24/7 operating hours;
- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

John Kvarnstrom

jkvarnstrom@acmhny.org

58 Lincoln Avenue

Brooklyn, New York 11208

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

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Johnny Albarracin

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**BROOKLYN
DEFENDER
SERVICES**



Testimony of the Article 10 family defense providers:

**Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defenders Service, Center for Family Representation, and
Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem**

Presented before

The New York City Council Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

This testimony is submitted jointly by the Bronx Defenders (BxD), Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS), Center for Family Representation (CFR) and the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (NDS). Our offices are the primary providers of mandated legal representation to indigent parents in Article 10 cases filed in family court in each of our boroughs (collectively the “family defense providers”). Together, we have created a model of interdisciplinary representation for parents charged with abuse or neglect and at risk of losing their children to the foster system. Our model connects clients with attorneys, social workers, and parent advocates to provide comprehensive representation and advocacy both in and out of court. We thank the Committee on Finance for the opportunity to testify about the critical services our agencies provide to low-income families in New York City.

The COVID-19 crisis has altered every aspect of City life. This disruption has been particularly acute in the family court and foster system (also called the “family regulation system”). The harrowing cascade of physical and mental health consequences, economic devastation, and social disruption have fallen disproportionately on the families we serve: low-income communities and Black and brown people. These conditions have exacerbated the harm of family separation for parents and children, created conditions ripe for family regulation involvement, and slowed the progress on existing cases. It has also made the filing of termination of parental rights petitions—an attempt to dissolve a family—more likely because cases are pending longer and families

are less able to fulfill the service plan requirements required to regain custody of their children. The family defense providers have met this challenge and have continued to provide effective representation to parents during this crisis in and out of court. As we outline in detail below, our clients and their families will face more hardship for the foreseeable future —with serious emotional and legal consequences —as a result of the many interruptions in services, limitations on in-person contact, and restricted access to due process in family court that has continued for more than a year.

The primary goal of our representation is to ameliorate the underlying issues that drive families into the family regulation system, and to reduce the harmful consequences of system involvement, including criminal charges, housing and income loss, education issues, and inability to adjust immigration status. Collectively we represent over 12,000 respondent parents in Article 10 cases each year. Since New York City first contracted with institutional providers to represent parents, we have represented over 40,000 parents in family court, touching the lives of more than 80,000 children, the vast majority of whom are Black and brown and live in the most marginalized low-income communities in New York City. With our model of representation in place, the foster care census has been reduced by almost 50% in New York City from over 17,000 children in 2007 when we formed to just under 8,000 today.

Since fiscal year 2020, we have also provided two critical additional services to parents, made possible only with City Council funding of the Right to Family Advocacy Initiative through the Family Advocacy and Guardianship Support Initiative. First, we represent parents during an ACS investigation, with the primary goal of preventing family separation and court filings. Second, we represent parents in administrative proceedings to help parents clear or modify their State Central Register (SCR) records that result after Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) investigations , thereby expanding their employment opportunities.

The City Council plays an important role in monitoring the ACS’ Services and in ensuring that the families affected by ACS involvement have legal assistance that is adequately funded to achieve positive outcomes for family reunification. Our testimony today addresses the importance of increased funding of the City Council’s Right to Family Advocacy Initiative, and restoring our Article 10 funding to FY21 levels in FY22. Specifically,

- **We are asking the City Council to fully fund the *Right to Family Advocacy Initiative* at the level requested in FY21 which provides representation to parents during ACS investigations, avoids unnecessary family separation and case filings, and provides representation in SCR hearings; and**
- **We are asking the Council work with the Mayor’s Office to ensure the City maintains funding for the family defense providers at the FY21 level. The current FY22 contracts through the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice**

(MOCJ) are baselined at an amount that represents an \$8.7 million decrease across the providers (more than 30% of our budgets) and must be restored.

I. We ask that the *Right to Family Advocacy Initiative* be fully funded at the level requested in FY21.

Thanks to the support of Speaker Corey Johnson and Councilperson Stephen Levin, the City Council allocated \$1.5 million in FY20 for the four family defense providers (\$325,000 for each organization) to provide representation to low-income parents during ACS investigations, as well as at Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) hearings that are necessary to amend an indicated case from the State Central Register for Child Maltreatment (SCR hearings). This undertaking, called the *Right to Family Advocacy Initiative*, provides desperately needed due process, legal representation, and advocacy services to low-income individuals and families involved in the Family Regulation system. Our Article 10 contracts with The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) do not fund us to provide this critical representation before a court case is filed and without these advocacy services, the low-income Black and brown parents disproportionately targeted by the family regulation system would not have access to counsel before an Article 10 petition is filed. With the funding provided by the City Council in FY20, the family defense providers collectively represented over 1,160 parents during child welfare investigations and in SCR hearings.

Last February, just before COVID-19 swept through the City and New York came to a stand-still, the Article 10 providers jointly applied to renew the *Right to Family Advocacy Initiative* for fiscal year 2021 at 3 million. The funding request for FY21 reflected an increase from the prior year of one million to maintain the program and to meet the rising need for the services. This year's funding request is at that same level of FY21. Because the City needed to address multiple challenges and shortfalls in revenue in FY21, as the pandemic raged, funding for the initiative was understandably reduced in the current fiscal year to \$216,666 per provider. Even with reduced funding, we have served, collectively, 1,140 parents in the first several months of FY21, providing nearly all our services virtually, including community outreach. The need for the advocacy funded by this initiative continues and has become even more essential during the pandemic. We expect the demand to increase as our clients come from the communities most in need and most impacted by the compounding physical and financial hardships of the pandemic. Therefore, we are asking for 3 million (\$750,000 per provider) so that we can continue to provide these vital services in FY22.

A. Low-income parents do not have access to counsel during ACS investigations, resulting in unnecessary traumatic and harmful family separations and case filings.

Currently, parents with family regulation involvement who cannot afford to hire counsel are not provided assigned attorneys until ACS files an abuse or neglect case against them in family

court. Before a case is filed in court, however, crucial decisions are made that have grave consequences for how cases proceed, including whether the family will be diverted to prevention programs and services; whether a case will be filed in court; and, most significantly, whether children will be separated from their parents. Without access to counsel during this critically important investigative stage of an Article 10 case, parents are forced to meet with ACS, make critical decisions, and navigate the City's intervention into their family's life on their own. When parents are required to proceed under these circumstances—without knowing their rights or how the investigative and Family Court process works—the result is that too many children are separated from their parents, many unnecessary cases are filed, and invaluable court time is taken away from important hearings and other critical matters impacting families' lives. For all of these reasons, the Commission on Parental Legal Representation established by Chief Judge Janet DiFiore in 2018 recommended that parents be granted access to counsel during these investigations.^[11] In addition, the standards of practice for parents' attorneys adopted by the American Bar Association in 2006 recommend that attorneys actively represent parents during an investigation.^[12] Because representation at the investigative phase of a case is an effective and much needed bulwark against a multitude of avoidable harms to families which occur within the family regulation system, it is crucial that the City fund this type of advocacy.

B. Low-income parents do not have access to counsel in SCR hearings and are denied employment opportunities, unjustifiably and categorically.

Parents are also not given access to counsel in SCR hearings that are necessary to amend an indicated case from the State Central Register for child maltreatment. New York parents who are listed on the SCR are routinely denied employment based on unproven allegations of child abuse and neglect. New York State has one of the most restrictive SCRs in the country and SCR records remain accessible to employers and others for years, restricting parents' ability to work and support their families. The majority of parents listed on the SCR never have cases filed against them in court and never have the allegations against them reviewed by a judge to determine whether they are supported by evidence and actually warrant drastically limiting a person's employability. In these cases where there is no court filing, parents are never assigned an attorney to inform them of their right to challenge their listing on the SCR which could bar them from employment. Last year New York law was changed and there will be some modifications that could benefit parents, but the law does not go into effect until January of 2022 and when parents will have access to a new type of rehabilitation hearing. It is critical that the City provide low-income parents with access to attorneys to represent them in these hearings and remove unjustifiable and unreasonable barriers to their employment. This is even more urgent as the unemployment rate in New York City remains high. People who challenge their inclusion in the SCR and have their names cleared can get jobs that serve society and financially support their families once they are cleared.

C. The *Right to Family Advocacy Initiative* helps families avoid separation and court filings.

For two years, the City Council has generously funded the Right to Family Advocacy Initiative through the Family Advocacy and Guardianship Support funding initiative. Through the *Right to Family Advocacy Initiative*, low-income parents in New York City have access to attorneys and social work assistance when they are faced with an ACS investigation or have been denied employment due to having an indicated case on the SCR. Teams of attorneys, social workers, paralegals, and parent advocates are available to advise parents about their rights, their choices, and the consequences of decisions during an ACS investigation. As a result, parents are more meaningfully engaged in the process and ACS is better informed about a family's circumstances. We are able to assist parents in providing helpful information to ACS, identifying their strengths and resources, accessing services and material assistance, and addressing the issues that brought their children to the attention of ACS in the first instance. Our advocates attend case conferences and appointments with ACS, schools, and medical providers to support our clients. This support often results in resolving cases without ACS having to file a petition court.

Throughout the pandemic, each of the providers continued to represent parents during investigations and in SCR proceedings. We continued to conduct intake by phone, text, WhatsApp and video, and adapted our procedures to obtain e-signatures on releases and other documents needed to assist parents. We appeared by video or phone at SCR administrative hearings and ACS conferences to provide advocacy and to prevent court filings. Many critical services like day care and counseling were abruptly discontinued during the pandemic and our social work staff helped connect parents to virtual replacement services, and supported them in addressing essential needs, like locating food pantries and PPE. We also assisted clients in applying for public benefits, navigating the challenges of remote schooling, and by providing crisis intervention and support in myriad ways.

Through early advocacy and identification of appropriate services and resources, we avoid unnecessary and traumatic family separations and often keep family court cases from ever being filed against the families we assisted. This essential work has resulted in tremendous fiscal savings for the City, preserving valuable court resources and time for cases that require court intervention.

D. The pandemic has already resulted in an increased demand for our assistance and we expect that demand to grow as the City re-opens.

It is well understood that the novel coronavirus has disproportionately impacted Black and brown low-income New Yorkers. In 2019, the vast majority of the families prosecuted by ACS were from this same demographic and from low-income communities. Accordingly, the COVID-19 crisis and the cascade of physical and mental health consequences, economic devastation, and social disruption have fallen disproportionately on the families we serve. In addition, parents

who benefited from the eviction moratorium but who lost part-time work during the pandemic will now face housing insecurity and homelessness. These are the very conditions that give rise to increased reports to the SCR, lead to ACS involvement and result in unnecessary family separations and court filings that would be avoided if parents had access to counsel and social work advocacy during the investigation. Parents who had critical services interrupted and may be struggling as a result are also more likely to find themselves investigated by ACS. In addition, we expect the ‘reopening’ of schools, daycares, and other services to lead to an increase in reports to the SCR and ACS investigations. Parents will need representation and assistance navigating ACS investigations, under circumstances where they are already strained by the impact of the pandemic.

In addition providing in person and virtual Know Your Rights presentations in partnership with other community-based providers, we have also created a Know Your Rights website for parents. The website is designed to provide critical information about ACS investigations and about how to contact us, in English and Spanish. We anticipate that both our community outreach efforts, and the visibility and accessibility that the website provides will result in heightened demand for our services when it is launched in the near future.

Providing parents with legal assistance and social support in order to prevent unnecessary family separation and family court filings should be an urgent goal for the City. Children, who have already suffered interrupted connections with friends and families as a result of the pandemic, should not be further harmed by unnecessary separation from their parents. In addition to preventing unnecessary family separation, early defense is especially critical because the family court, which is already dealing with a backlog of cases, is likely to be further overwhelmed if an increase in investigations leads to more court cases. Funding early defense will ensure that cases that do not need to be filed in court are properly diverted to preventive services. Finally, everyone who suffered economic loss during the pandemic will be looking to re-establish employment and financial security; for parents burdened with an SCR record as a result of ACS involvement, their need to preserve and expand employment will be no less critical. And given that the majority of parents impacted by ACS are Black and brown, SCR advocacy is an important measure towards addressing the racial economic disparity that is an embedded consequence of ACS involvement.

Even before the pandemic, we could not meet the need of every parent facing an investigation or needing advocacy with the SCR. Therefore we are asking that the Council provide us with adequate funding to meet this demand that increases economic mobility for parents, saves the City money in reduced foster care and court filings, eases the burden on the city’s Family Courts and prevents the short- and long-term harmful consequences of family separation.

II. Family defense provider FY22 revenue must be maintained at FY21 levels.

Despite more than a decade of excellent interdisciplinary representation that is saving the City substantial monies in foster care costs, the Mayor’s budget has a dramatic decrease in funding for the family defense providers in FY22. This is not related to COVID-19 and the budget concerns that are affecting the City, but actually reflects a funding pattern that has occurred for the past four years. A decision was made to baseline our contracts at \$8.7 million—less than we were allocated in FY16—and in each year since then we have had to work hard and wait a long time to have our budget restored to necessary levels. It is imperative that the City Council work with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), MOCJ, and the Mayor to restore our FY22 funding to FY21 levels in the budget that is passed on June 30. This is all the more important because MOCJ has informed us that we will not receive COLA monies in the FY22 contract, unlike the previous years.

Our effectiveness in reducing the length of foster care is well documented. The largest study of parental representation in family court ever conducted found that holistic, interdisciplinary institutional representation in New York City significantly reduces the time children spend in foster care.^[5] This study compared length of foster care stays for the children of BxD, BDS, and CFR’s clients with the children of parents who were assigned solo attorneys pursuant to Article 18-b of the County Law, Indigent Defense Legal Panel Plan. The study found that representation by multidisciplinary providers reduced children’s time in foster care by nearly 4 months during the 48 months following filing of the petition, through earlier reunification outcomes translating to up to nearly \$40 million in annual savings in foster care expenditures for New York City. According to the study, these outcomes were achieved without any difference in safety to children between the two groups.

A. History of the Article 10 contracts and funding

The current contract term for the four family defense providers is FY14-FY 20, but MOCJ has extended the contracts for a seventh year, and will extend the contract again for an eighth. The base revenue in the Article 10 contracts for FY22 is currently set at FY16 levels even though each year since then, MOCJ has provided each of the Article 10 providers increased revenue for FY17, FY18, FY19, FY20, and FY21 through the contract amendment process. MOCJ has not given us assurances that it can do the same for FY22.

Although we are requesting that the family defense providers receive the same funding as last year, even FY20 and FY19 revenue levels were insufficient to meet the total cost of the practice and we expect it will be insufficient for FY21. The revenue has not kept pace with increased costs in salary, rent and health insurance. As well, over time, the backlog created in the courts has made it more likely that every Article 10 client would face supplemental proceedings—when it takes longer to resolve a case, there is a greater likelihood that additional matters will be filed against a client—and under the current structure of our contracts, our revenue corresponds to

pending *client* load, rather than pending case load. The result is an extreme shortfall in our budgets because the City has not increased our funding sufficiently to meet the increase in our pending client loads after 2016, the number of cases per client, the growing complexity of our caseload which includes many cases that are more than five years old, and the expanded need for critical casework outside of court by our social workers and parent advocates.

We would be on solid ground if we argued that we needed an increase in our budgets due solely to the enormous needs our clients face right now. They are the poorest people in the City who face the most obstacles during the best of times. During the pandemic, which is affecting our client communities at a much higher rate than other neighborhoods in the City, we are often the only resource they have to help them access basic necessities like food, PPE, and a safe place to sleep. The increasing need of our client base in light of COVID-19 and the related City shut down and the impact of that need on their families and Article 10 cases justifies our funding request at the full level requested in the prior fiscal year. We are mindful of the competing budget priorities facing the city in this challenging moment and are requesting only that our budget be restored.

B. Active, pending client loads remain high and are expected to increase in FY 22, as ACS files more cases and a backlog of unaddressed matters increases; this makes immediate restoration of our revenue critical so that we can maintain sufficient staff to handle our current clients and new clients as well as address the needs of the families we work with during the continued pandemic.

Initial case filings in the early stages of COVID-19 were lower, as ACS and court actors all adjusted to the physical shut down of the court and offices, but filings have increased and are back up in many months in some boroughs to pre-pandemic levels. Although intake is inconsistent, the vast majority of cases are family separation cases, which require the same intensive, up front work we had to do prior to the pandemic. Our offices are essentially doing the same number of preliminary hearings to reunify families. At the same time, however, our ability to secure important due process protections for parents remains dramatically limited, even though the family court has gradually expanded its virtual capacity. This is particularly true for those hearings that result in children leaving foster care, which is the most likely predictor of expeditious case resolution. Hundreds of cases have been adjourned several months in the future despite our efforts to see progress on our cases. The court has not had sufficient capacity to hold fact finding hearings which results in a much higher percentage of our cases being at the pre fact finding stage. Significantly, many clients' matters have no future adjourn date at all. To cite just one data point, 60% of CFR's clients' matters have no next scheduled court date and CFR is now closing cases at half the rate it was prior to the pandemic. This means that even if the family court can reopen or create more virtual capacity, there is already a significant backlog of cases the court must address and that backlog will increase. These limitations and delays only make it more likely that complicated supplemental proceedings like TPRs and custody petitions will be

filed. The work required to reduce the backlog will be time consuming, complicated and staggering. It is essential that we are fully staffed and prepared for that eventuality.

C. MOCJ should restore our FY22 revenue to FY21 levels because active, pending client load (not annual intake) drives our costs and is a more accurate measure of our workload.

Our workload cannot be assessed based on the number of new clients we are assigned (intake). Many of our clients have more than one case and the longer they have a case pending in family court, the more likely they will have more cases filed. Every supplemental matter adds time and workload to the representation. The longer cases pend, the more likely it is that supplemental petitions are filed against our clients. While intake may fluctuate, *it is the pending client load that determines how many attorneys, social work staff and other supports we need to run our practices and serve clients well.* Cases that resolve quickly are the exception. In most cases we work with clients for a long time—on average, more than two years. It is therefore common for us to be litigating two or more matters that involve different discovery, legal standards, and court proceedings for a client simultaneously, sometimes before different jurists. There are no statutory requirements for cases to go to trial within a set timeframe, yet when children are in foster care for 15 out of 22 months, federal law requires, with few exceptions, that a petition to terminate parental rights (TPR) be filed. A petition to terminate parental rights, if successful, has been called the ‘civil death penalty,’ because it wholesale dissolves the legal relationship—and usually any connection at all—between a parent and child. In cases involving domestic violence, substance use, incarceration, mental illness, children with complex needs, or difficulty obtaining safe and permanent housing, 22 months is a very short time to address the myriad barriers to family reunification, and that is why our interdisciplinary teams are so critical to the representation of parents in child protection proceedings. Supplemental matters, like custody and termination cases, often involve new parties, different attorneys, new motion practice, and new needs for investigation and retaining forensic experts. That is why the current measure of our contracts, new annual intake, is not an adequate measure of our workload. Our work is defined by our current pending caseload and should be measured by that standard.

Our pending client loads, while flattening somewhat, are much higher than they were in FY 16 as a result. Higher pending client numbers means we need more attorneys and administrative staff to handle these cases, as well as more social workers and parent advocates to help parents negotiate service plans, attend meetings and conferences with caseworkers, support and expand visitation, and fulfill the requirements of the service plans required by ACS. To provide quality representation, move cases toward permanency, and ensure children do not languish needlessly in the foster system, our staffing must ensure that each attorney is handling a manageable pending client load. We believe that the target for pending clients should be set at 50, and that

has been recognized by the Commission on Legal Representation as the appropriate standard.^[10] In order to meet that pending client target, we would not only need to have the \$8.7 million restored, but we would need to add additional funds.

D. COVID-19 and its harrowing impact on low-income NY families makes it likely that we will see increased ACS filings and court cases filed in FY22.

The social and economic instability caused by COVID-19 is precisely the type of circumstance that gives rise to the vast majority of calls to the SCR, ACS investigations, case filings, and forced family separations through the foster system. Much of our work to come will be a continuation of our efforts to ensure that families are supported and children are not unnecessarily and traumatically separated from their parents due to poverty or instability. It will, however, be significant and require more resources than ever before in the wake of the catastrophic COVID-19 pandemic.

New York City's family defense providers have met the challenge of an extremely limited Family Court through continued high quality representation of parents during this crisis. We have represented parents in new cases filed in the virtual court, including litigating emergency hearings to prevent foster care placement; worked to conference and resolve as many pending cases as possible; and advocated in agency conferences with ACS and foster care agencies and with Family Court Legal Services regarding visitation, access to services and reunification of families. We created a digital flyer with our contact information translated into several languages that ACS agreed to provide to parents when it summoned them to virtual court. Our social work staff connected parents to virtual services when in-person services were abruptly discontinued, preventing interruption in services that could lead to children entering the foster system or delay their return home. And social work staff continued to advocate at the full array of foster agency and ACS conferences by phone and video, even in person.

ACS and foster agencies have unilaterally and summarily restricted the ability of families to visit in-person, despite court orders from before the pandemic and despite ACS's own guidelines to evaluate each case individually to assess whether in-person visitation can continue safely. Families were left to maintain their bond, even with infants and very young children, virtually over telephone and video chat. For many parents, this has meant that their access to their children has become dependent upon their access to the requisite technology and WiFi. Our attorneys and social workers have had to renegotiate the terms of almost every case where children are separated from their families because of foster agencies' and foster caretakers' inability or refusal to continue in-person visits and their insistence on limiting the amount of contact parents have with their children. In the face of this massive and systemic distancing of families that have already been separated, the court's capacity to hear applications by parents to enforce their rights to spend time in-person with their children or to reunite families with children in foster care has been greatly reduced and remains limited. As a result, our staff have shifted focus to helping our

clients navigate these newly-erected obstacles to remaining connected with their children by negotiating creative solutions with ACS and foster agencies.

Despite these efforts, our clients' access to the court remains drastically curtailed and many cases have been adjourned to a date in the far future. Some have no adjourn date at all. This means that we cannot close cases as frequently as we did in the past. To cite one data point, in the last two quarters of 2020, CFR's average intake was 187 cases and average cases closed was 106, meaning there was a net increase in pending cases of 81 per quarter. The change in case closing rates was also significant. Now, CFR is closing on average 106 cases per quarter, compared to 224 cases in the same time period of 2019. An increasing backlog, and an inability to close our cases, means that our pending caseload will increase.

At the same time, we believe that ACS will increase the number of cases it files over the next several months as the court reopens. As the vaccine is rolled out, and school and other children's programs open, allegations of maltreatment that often lead to court filings are also likely to increase. This, combined with a backlog, will make it even more important for family defenders to have the revenue needed to staff at prior fiscal year levels.

There is no quantitative or qualitative metric that can capture the cascading impact this pandemic is going to have on New York City's families with ACS involvement. All of these changes have amplified the intensity of separation between parents and children in foster care and, by default, increased the length of stay for every single child in foster care. We fear that once we return to some level of normalcy, there will be an absolute flood of Termination of Parental Rights ("TPR") proceedings as well, meaning that many of our clients will face permanent and irrevocable termination of their families because of the obstacles created by the pandemic. Our continued ability to work around these obstacles and implement creative solutions is more critical than ever.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have and you can reach us at the contact information provided below. We greatly appreciate this opportunity to provide you with information on the critical importance of maintaining our funding to ensure that parents faced with the loss of their children are provided high quality mandated legal representation and on the importance of continuing and enhancing the *Right to Family Advocacy Initiative*.

Bronx Defenders, Emma Ketteringham

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Brooklyn Defender Services, Lauren Shapiro

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Center for Family Representation, Michele Cortese

mcortese@cfrny.org

Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, Zainab Akbar

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^[1] New York has long recognized a parent’s right to counsel in child protection proceedings. In a pioneering 1972 decision, *Matter of Ella B.*, 30 N.Y.2d 352, the New York Court of Appeals recognized the equal protection and due process right to indigent parents to assigned counsel in child neglect and abuse cases. Three years later, sections 261, 262, and 1120 of the Family Court Act codified a broad parental right to counsel. Additionally, numerous provisions throughout Article 10 of the Family Court Act address implementation of the parental right to counsel in child welfare proceedings.

^[2] See Commission on Parental Legal Representation, Interim Report to Chief Judge DiFiore (February 2019), pps. 27-28. See also Martin Guggenheim & Susan Jacobs, *A New National Movement in Parent Representation*, 47 CLEARINGHOUSE REV. 44, 45 (2013), available at <http://www.cfrny.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/A-New-National-Movement-in-Parent-Representation-Clearinghouse-Review.pdf>.

^[3] *Interim Report to Chief Judge DiFiore*, pg. 26.

^[4] Center for New York City Affairs, The New School, *Watching the Numbers: A Six-Year Statistical Survey Monitoring New York City’s Child Welfare System* (November 2016), available at https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53ee4f0be4b015b9c3690d84/t/5849a22f725e254385d753eb/1481220657883/FINAL_Watching+the+Numbers_2016.pdf.

^[5] See study at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S019074091930088X>; see also *Providing Parents Multidisciplinary Legal Representation Significantly Reduces Children’s Time in Foster Care*, by Martin Guggenheim & Susan Jacobs, June 4, 2019.

^[6] See, e.g., *Matter of Jamie J.*, 30 N.Y.3d 275, 280 n.1 (2017).

^[7] See Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, *Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Brain Development*, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVwFkcOZHJw&feature=youtu.be>.

[8] See, e.g., Jayesh M. Rathod, *The Transformative Potential of Attorney Bilingualism*, 46 U. Michigan J. Law Reform 863-920 (2013).

[9] Data are from the New York State Unified Court System, comparing 1,140 at the end of 2016 (see the second row, penultimate column of the chart available here: <http://www.nycourts.gov/publications/pdfs/Family-Court-statistics2016.pdf>) with 1,584 at the end of 2017 (see the second row, penultimate column of the chart available here: <http://www.nycourts.gov/publications/pdfs/Family-Court-statistics2017.pdf>).

[10] Commission on Parental Legal Representation, Interim Report to Chief Judge DiFiore, February 2019. See also Indigent Legal Services, Standards for Determining Financial Eligibility for Assigned Counsel February 16, 2021, pg. 31 (“*counsel shall also be provided for parents in child welfare proceedings during a child protective agency investigation and sufficiently in advance of their first court appearance..*”); written testimony of American Bar Association, Government Affairs Office, e.g. ABA, Indicators of Success for Parental Representation, at ii-iii (describing results of evaluation of a Texas pilot project setting a cap of 50 clients and finding that after six months, “the model had already improved the quality of representation for parents,” and resulted in reduced continuances and delays). See also ILS Model Upstate Parental Representation Office Request for Proposals (“Given the unique complexities involved in state intervention cases, caseload limits are essential to permit attorneys to comply with their ethical responsibilities. This RFP therefore contemplates an office average of no more than 50 clients per attorney at any given time.”), available at <https://www.ils.ny.gov/files/Parent%20Representation/RFP-Upstate%20Model%20Parental%20Representation%20Office%20Grant%20032017.pdf>.

[11] Commission on Parental Legal Representation, Interim Report to Chief Judge DiFiore, February 2019.

[12] See American Bar Association, Standards of Practice for Attorneys Representing Parents in Abuse and Neglect Cases 10 (2006), available at https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/child_law/aba-parent-rep-stds.pdf

[13] Total clients represented includes all clients for whom Early Defense & SCR advocacy began between July 1, 2019 - April 30, 2019 and is now concluded. It does not include cases that began during this time period, but which are still pending.

[14] Villarosa, Linda (April 29, 2020) “ A Terrible Price: The Deadly Racial Disparities of Covid-19 in America”; New York Times; Mays, Jeffrey C. Andy Newman. (2020 April 8). “Virus is Twice as Deadly for Black and Latino People Than Whites in N.Y.C” New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/nyregion/coronavirus-race-deaths.html>

[15] Grench, Eileen. (2020 April 28). “Parents Expecting Ipads Deliveries Got Knock on Door from Child Welfare Workers”. The City. https://thecity.nyc/2020/04/some-parents-awaiting-ipads-got-visit-from-child-welfare.html?utm_campaign=mailchimp&utm_source=daily&utm_medium=newsletter

Hello, I am here to speak as a community based 4410 preschool special education program director. I ask that the final FY 2022 budget include \$85M to address the preschool special education class shortage and **most importantly provide salary parity to teachers of preschool special education classes at CBOs like mine**, as already recommended in the City Council's response to the preliminary budget. The Executive Budget includes a new investment of \$22M in FY 2022, going up to \$88M in FY 2023, for preschool special education. While I am pleased to see an investment in preschool special education and support several of the initiatives proposed, there is no funding slated for FY 2022 to provide salary parity to preschool special education teachers – and still **no commitment to providing salary parity even in FY 2023**. Under the City's salary parity agreement, other early childhood teachers will receive salary increases in October 2021, a difference of over \$20,000 on average, which would lead many preschool special class teachers to flock to general education classes and leave children with disabilities without teachers. I had one classroom that went through three teachers in a year. I just had another teacher leave this month. Not because they wanted to, but because they need to be able to financially support their families. Preschoolers with significant disabilities should not have to wait another year for the City to make needed investments to meet their needs.

Thank you.

Jolene Gunther-Doherty

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color. The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
- 24/7 operating hours;
- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

jonmacone@yahoo.com

222-12 100 Avenue
Queens Village, New York 11429

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jonathan Molofsky

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61 Eastern Parkway

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Yo Josefa Santana le pido por favor ayúdanos a conseguir este lote. Porque para mí es muy importante. Yo aquí me siento feliz porque comparto con la comunidad.

Yo soy recicladora y formo parte de la junta directiva de Sure We Can. Me gusta mi trabajo de reciclar porque así ayudo al medio ambiente y con la limpieza de la ciudad. Así que por favor ayúdanos.

Además hay muchas personas en la comunidad que necesitan apoyo para poder sobrevivir. Y aquí es que ellos pueden buscar su dinero.

Para nosotros es muy importante Sure We Can porque aquí recibimos muchas formas de ayuda. Por ejemplo, durante la pandemia recibimos ayuda como: máscarillas, guantes, comida, gel antibacterial. Hasta nos dieron ayuda de dinero. A través de Sure We Can nosotros recibimos apoyo significativo.

Yo no quiero perder este sitio. Aquí nos reunimos para trabajar y también celebrar juntos. Somos una comunidad unida aquí. Es un espacio comunitario. Gracias por esta oportunidad para usar mi voz.

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joseph Martin

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West 31st St, 2

New York, New York 10001

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

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29 W 65th St Apt 1G

New York, New York 10023

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joy Leonard

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201 32nd Street, 3, 3rd fl

BROOKLYN, New York 11232

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joyce Hunt
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1075 Webster Avenue #9A5
Bronx, New York 10456

Justin Pollack
174 West 76th Street
New York, NY 10023

City Council Executive Budget Hearing

Testimony of Justin Pollack

May 25, 2021

Earlier this year, I was enthused to see the Council address the archaic laws that governed the vending of food on public streets. The new law provides a critical update to this important industry. For the individual vendors, though, this is going to require a constant focus on complying with new law.

As an investment professional, I have committed hundreds of millions of dollars to private businesses, including quite a few enterprises based here in New York City. Most of these companies have full-time staff that can interpret regulations and negotiate the formalities of city's governing institutions, while also operating a profitable business. Yet, I've found that the well-intentioned rules that all businesses must observe are difficult to follow despite the fact that I'm a native New Yorker and English is my first language.

That gives me deep insight to the challenge for vendors who must operate within the same guidelines, but with far less support. I've spent years working with the non-profit Street Vendor Project as a member of their Advisory Board. Street vendors represents the best of New York – they are all small businesspeople who are largely drawn from our immigrant population, minority communities, and military veterans across the five boroughs.

I applaud the City Council for leveling the playing field with the passage of the new law, but the next step is ensuring that vendors comply with the policies of the new Office of Street Vendor Enforcement. That will require an effort that is beyond the capabilities of the municipal administration. The City is not equipped to quickly educate the 20,000 vendors who operate outside on the street, without the benefit of desktop technology, and who speak many different languages. Instead, I suggest utilizing the foundation laid by the Street Vendor Project over the past two decades. With a limited amount of fiscal support, just \$500,000 from the Council, Street Vendor Project can continue its work instructing its members to ensure compliance with the new law. Street Vendor Project can do this in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, Bangla, and many other languages. So, I encourage the Council to take the route of leveraging the infrastructure that is readily available from Street Vendor Project to ensure that implementation of the street vending law is fulfilled.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Justin Pollack

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color.

The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Justine Marosi

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490 Madison st

Brooklyn , New York 11221

City Council Hearing Testimony,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kaitlin Morrison

Kaitlin Morrison

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160 w 24th st, 7c

New York, New York 10011

Speech:

Good afternoon, thank you to the Committee for listening today. Thomas Edison once said, "Many of life's failures, are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." In only two years of serving, Fair Futures has helped pave the way and uncover a bright future that is often lost in the experience of being in foster care. Our kids have come such a long way, with success finally at reach, we cannot give up now!

My name is Kaitlyn Chavez and I am just one of many advocates fighting to give our youth a fair chance at having a fair future. Besides providing basic supports and resources, Fair Futures has allowed youth to identify with and become comfortable in a system that so often feels negligent. The harsh reality, is that there's an abundance of youth who see ACS as the enemy, hate their agencies and roll their eyes at the mention of "help, support or social worker." These kids have been through it all already, but they've never been through it all with Fair futures by their side. As they begin letting their guards down and welcoming help, a sense of pride eventually develops which inspires them to join Youth Advisory Boards and understand how crucial this program and funding for it is.

Not guaranteeing this funding would be taking away their sense of stability almost like putting them back in the system for the first time. No check ins for Chantal, when she's fighting with depression and has no will to respond. No tutoring for Steph, when she's been an A+ student but the stressors of a global pandemic have made keeping up unbearable. No job placement support for Michelle, when she already has to debunk the stereotypes attached to her by having a learning disability. Our youth are not defined by their current situations but their futures are dependent on whether or not they receive the support they need from fair futures to even visualize the success that lies ahead of them which myself and all of my colleagues already see in our youth before we've even begun the work.

From re-engaging disconnected youth, to providing a safe space for them to have a voice, Fair Futures is an absolute necessity in the Foster Care system and not baselining the funding for basic needs would be a disservice not only to our youth but New York City as a whole.

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kallyn Krash

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72 PARK TER W, Apt. E38

New York, New York 10034

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

Good morning.

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Karen Rosenthal
krose18@gmail.com
1020 grand concourse apt. 16g
The Bronx, New York 10451-2605

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today.

Our city must commit to ensuring that people who experience a mental health crisis receive adequate support to de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. The most appropriate individuals to respond to people experiencing mental health crisis are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers who are trained in de-escalation techniques. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color. Any single death of a person in need of medical care at the hands of police is unacceptable.

I respectfully ask City Council to authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I strongly support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

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Thank you for your consideration.

Karina Albistegui Adler
nk.albistegui@gmail.com
847 46th ST, A
Brooklyn, New York 11220

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

Our family's story:

My daughter struggles with depression and sometimes she feels it's too hard to go on and she expresses thoughts of suicide. She's been in and out of treatments.

About two years ago she was in treatment in a PHP program and one day she told her therapist that she was thinking of suicide. We thought she was in a safe place and it turned out she was not.

The treatment place called 911 and the police showed up. They handcuffed my crying daughter, shoved her in the back of the police car, made fun of her and humiliated her. I have to add that she was never violent or aggressive so it's highly questionable why they had to handcuff her in the first place. There was nobody there to protect my sweet daughter. She cried for help and she got pushed to the ground. Why???

We recently talked about this experience and she told me: "mom, I can't even imagine what they would have done to me if my skin were a different color...?"

As I am writing, my eyes swell with tears. People who struggle with mental illness, they need people around them who understand and care. People who can deescalate the situation and not pour gasoline on the fire. And certainly they don't need to be judged and treated disrespectfully.

It's time to make some changes!

Thank you!

Katalin Kapoor

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Thank you for your consideration.

Katalin Kapoor

katalin26999@gmail.com

19 Roselle Avenue

Pleasantville, New York 10570

Good morning Finance Chair Dromm and the Committee on Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Kateline Hullar. I live in District 33. I'm writing to urge the city council to materially decrease the amount of funding NYPD receives this year.

I'm deeply concerned about the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget which includes a \$200 million dollar increase for the NYPD. This is the most expensive NYPD budget ever proposed. The NYPD's budget is already grossly inflated and taking away from the services and programs that will truly help New Yorkers thrive. Besides being unqualified to deal with the social issues that have arisen from a difficult year, the violence committed by NYPD has shown that they are not the place to continue to invest New Yorkers' tax dollars.

The NYPD does not need to be in schools or involved in social services helping New York's most vulnerable populations. In fact, time and again they prove to be violent toward those exact communities and people. New York needs to invest in health care, education, meaningful and well-paying jobs, youth programming, and housing solutions, not police.

We need solutions to the issues our communities face, solutions that are developed, built, implemented, and maintained by the people from the communities.

I call for a hiring freeze for all new NYPD officers and administrators in addition to removing police from mental health responses and all school settings.

Thank you for your consideration.

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Good morning.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Katherine Durkin

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309 E 83rd St

New York , New York 10028

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Kathleen Wakeham
ksw@att.net
325 East 12th Street
New York, New York 10003

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Kearyann Austin

KAustin@acmhny.org

2 Ellwood Street

New York, New York 10040

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Thank you for your consideration.

Kelli Hamilton
kelpuf@gmail.com
3333 Broadway, C20F
NEW YORK, New York 10031

To the Finance Committee

I wish to testify to the need for increased funding to the 34th Precinct in Upper Manhattan.

I am have been a resident of Washington Heights at West 189th Street and Amsterdam since 2011. At that time, the neighborhood was very quiet. Amsterdam at West 190th was regularly closed to non-local traffic on Friday and Saturday nights due to the increase in speeding vehicles and stunt driving. This blockade of the street was a regular practice in the neighborhood until the late spring of 2016.

At that time, I was told that the decision had been taken to remove the police blockade of the street due to low staffing levels. From that time forward, we have been deluged by an increase in motorcycle and car traffic, stunt driving, and large crowds of people, sometimes with 30-50 cars showing up in the area.

People from outside the neighborhood regularly double and triple park across the street from our building, which borders on Highbridge Park. A typical Saturday evening will involve a cacophony of competing boom boxes and car stereos, at high blast. Last week, I went to bed after 11pm several times hearing very loud music outside, which was clearly well above the legal decibel limit.

I have attended Sector meetings, Build the Block meetings, and discussed the situation with our NCOs on a regular basis. Calls to local officials have been made. Occasionally the police do blockade the street, but generally leave after 9 pm. As soon as the police leave, speeding vehicles reappear, do donuts in the middle of the street, motorbikes drive through the park and up on side walks, and the cars double park and turn on their stereos.

I was walking my dogs on a park path last Summer when a motorcyclist speeding toward us threatened to run me over if I didn't step off the path. I refused to move, and he veered off at the last minute. Challenging behavior toward pedestrians in our parks is not unique to my situation. Just a couple of weeks ago, a senior man was assaulted by motorcyclists riding through Inwood Hill Park.

Last Sunday I filed multiple noise complaints and called the Precinct, seeking help to deal with the noise issues and the stunt riding. I was told by our NCO that of the 8 squad cars in our Precinct, 4 had been diverted to Midtown or Brooklyn to help with demonstrations. However, it is clear that our Precinct simply cannot spare the staff to deal with these issues outside the neighborhood, as important local policing simply does not get done.

I have videos of the noise and congestion on Amsterdam that night and the stunt riding, both of which I will try to attach. Both of these videos are typical examples of what we deal with many nights a week. We are grateful when it rains, so we can be left in peace.

Officer Edwin Rodriguez of the 34th Precinct told me that DOT statistics show a marked increase in traffic fatalities and injuries in my neighborhood starting in 2016. In recent years, cars have crashed into my building at the corner of West 189th & Amsterdam and into the corner of the wash & fold at West 188th & Amsterdam. Each of these accidents occurred on either side of PS 189, which is on Amsterdam between 189th & 188th Streets. Furthermore, George Washington H.S. is a couple of blocks away on the same street. It think it is clear that children are put at great risk due to the unregulated nature of the stunt driving and high speed driving that is typical of this part of the neighborhood. Unfortunately our pleas to DOT to install speed humps has been ignored, due to to M101 bus line on Amsterdam.

I ask that sufficient funds be provided to the 34th Precinct to ensure that the Precinct can properly monitor the neighborhood for reckless driving, illegal fireworks and loud gatherings that prevent residents from getting a good night's sleep. Make no mistake: this is not a quality of life issue. I lost a client last year when I was unable to get sufficient sleep due to fireworks going off until the early morning hours, and was late for work the next day. When it comes to sleep, this is not about quality of life. This is about survival.

letssoar@gmail.com

May 26, 2021: A Permanent Full-Time Nurse for Every School

The federal government provided funds to New York City, and school nurses must be included in this budget. The health and welfare of children in schools has not been a priority for this administration. There is a crisis in our schools due to a severe shortage of Permanent Full Time Nurses. With over 400 vacancies citywide, our children are at risk.

School Nurses are engaged in direct and preventative care with an emphasis on family involvement. We have 200,000+ children with asthma, 2,000+ diabetic children, 40,000+ children with severe allergies requiring EPI pens, and countless others with both physical and emotional disabilities.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- It is difficult to attract nurses at a lower salary that is not competitive with the industry's prevailing wage for nurses. Retention is therefore poor: 50% leave the job in 3-6 months.
- DOH nurses perform the same professional job and role in the school for less salary and benefits compared to DOE nurses. DOH nurses are also First Responders for NYC emergencies.

There must be Equal Pay for Equal Work!!!!

- During the Pandemic, Travel Nurses were hired from around the country and paid higher rates, – amounting to about double the rate that our local nurses get for doing less work. ALSO – these traveling nurses are leaving NYC at the end of this school year.
- We stand to have 400 vacancies with NO plan to solve the problem before the 2021-2022 school year.
- Contract nurses do not have access to online health records (ASHR) or develop relationships within their school communities.
- School Nurses are expected to leave their schools unattended and travel to other schools to administer medications and treatments.
- Conditions in Medical Rooms need improvement. Some Medical Rooms do not have air conditioning and proper ventilation. This can compromise children with asthma when being treated by the nurse.

People take notice when there are emergencies and fatalities, but by then it's too late.

We need to take action now and care for the children in our schools.

Keyrisa Gillies

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kijana Roberts

KRoberts@acmhny.org

120-34 Queens Blvd

Kew Gardens , New York 11415

Good morning,

Thank you to The Council for holding this important hearing and for allowing me to speak. My name is Komal Goomany and I am a Coach at NAC. I am reading the testimony of my youth who cannot be here today.

My name is Paul Anthony Urbanek. I'm 21 years old and I got into foster care in April 2018 when my mother passed away from a heart attack, right before I turned 18. I got diagnosed with autism when I was a baby. I'm currently living in a group home.

I am here today to share my story and ask for your support in saving Fair Futures.

Fair Futures staff at NAC have supported me when I was in care and continue to support me after I aged out. Joel was a great Education Specialist to me. We talked regularly on the phone about my plans and goals for the future. He helped me with summer youth, vocational training, and told me about higher education options. He also helped me by giving me education support during the pandemic. My social worker, with guidance from David, our Housing Specialist, helped me find housing—the group home staff treats me very well and helps me become more independent, like teaching me how to prepare simple meals, and making purchases.

When I left care, I met Komal, the Fair Futures Coach at NAC, and Shelanthia, the Coach supervisor, through the Teen Group. The teen group always has informative topics for youth to talk about, including climate change, police brutality, and mental health, among many others. Komal and Shelanthia always give everyone the chance to speak their mind. We also do fun projects that allow us to be creative. Through the teen group, I found a community of other youth at NAC during the pandemic and made new friends who are friendly and smart.

I am grateful for the support of Fair Futures staff during my time in care as well as transitioning out of care. Every foster youth deserves educational, vocational, housing and emotional support, which is why Fair Futures needs \$20 million baselined.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Kristen Edwards
kristen@womenscommunityjustice.org
1818 Newkirk Ave Apt 6k
Brooklyn, New York 11226

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Thank you for your consideration.

Kristin Jamberdino

kj3763@gmail.com

175 E 96th St. #18B

New York, New York 10128

Testimony for NYC education budget

Hello,

I would like to share my thoughts about the education budget for New York City. My councilman is Steven Levin and the councilman overseeing my son's school district is Antonio Reynoso.

Please be sure to earmark a lion's share of the budget for school infrastructure improvements and new school buildings.

- My son has had no in-person teaching at his high school all year. This is due in large part to the overcrowding at his building; social distancing, as it's currently required, would not be possible were all kids to attend at the same time and be taught in-person. His school also shares a building with two other schools, further exacerbating the problem. He attends The Brooklyn Latin School in Williamsburg.
- The school is so overcrowded that more than 800 students share one science lab. They need a new school building.
- On top of that, my son attended a K-8 school in Ft Greene Brooklyn (formerly Arts & Letters) where kids could not use the water fountains due to lead in the pipes. Not for a few months—for several years. (That last I heard, it still wasn't fixed.)

Our schools are crumbling. Lead is in the pipes. The bathrooms are falling apart. The ventilation systems are outdated with promises from the city government to fix them that have not been fulfilled.

Most urgently, these all will prevent us from re-opening fully, with 5 days a week in-person instruction next year. I have seen no plans for how to fix these problems for middle and high schools that have, frankly, had the worst experiences this year. How will the city make sure middle and high school kids have a full, real, in-person education next year? Whatever you need to set aside in the budget to make that happen, it needs to happen. This is an emergency.

More broadly, are our children so worthless that that don't deserve functioning school buildings that can actually fit them?

All of the plans for curriculum improvements are nice. But how can any of them matter if we don't give kids functional and safe places to learn? And this year, we learned that falling-apart schools are closed schools.

This year, New York City has reneged on its promise to properly education my child due to, in part, decrepit and inadequate school infrastructure. Please make it right.

Sincerely,

Laine Falk

9-- Kent Ave #102

Brooklyn, NY 11205

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Laura Grund
laura.grund26@gmail.com
302 W 79th St, Apt 5B
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Leah Gitter

leah.gitter@gmail.com

106 Spring St. 6S

New York, New York 10012

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Thank you for your consideration.

Liadain Smith

liadain.smith@gmail.com

15 West 11th Street, 5C

New York, New York 10011

My family has been in New York City for almost 40 years and I demand that City Council defund the NYPD and invest in our communities. As an Asian American, it pains me to see the rise of anti-Asian violence and it angers me to see clowns like Andrew Yang use this violence as an excuse to call for increased police funding. We know that the policing and surveillance of our communities does not make us safe. The creation of the NYPD Asian Hate Crime Taskforce is abhorrent. Defund the police and invest that money into our communities through healthcare services, grassroots organizing, and education (and get cops out of our schools).

Ligaiya Romero

City Council Finance Committee,

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Thank you for your consideration.

Lisa Archer

larcher@acmhny.org

254 W 31st Street

New York, New York 10001

To the esteemed members of the NYC City Council:

The people of New York City demand change. We can no longer live in a place where the police department receives more funding than every other city entity. The police **do not** keep all communities safe.

Our communities need resources to thrive, not cops terrorizing certain demographics of people with their intimidation tactics, overt racism, and militarized force.

It is past time to significantly slash the NYPD budget. We need to reinvest money into mental health resources, housing, and education. The future of our city depends on it.

Do the right thing. Do the brave thing. Dare to imagine a city not controlled by a police state. Make significant cuts to the NYC Police Department budget. Defund the NYPD.

Sincerely,
Lisa Preti
Queens Resident

City Council Finance Committee,

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lorial Crowder

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511 W. 157th Street

New York, New York 10032

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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Lorie Goshin

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530 1st Street

Brooklyn , Texas 1125

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luisa cuautle

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40 Rector Street

New York, New York 10006

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Lydia Shestopalova
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TESTIMONY for CITY COUNCIL May25, 2021 HEARING on the BUDGET

M. Toro (347-512-7644) m_toro_2004@yahoo.com

SUBJECT of TESTIMONY: SENIOR CITIZENS

1

As a member of **Park Slope Center for Successful Aging**, I've experienced many ways our center helps us.

I first went there for help with **SLIMB** and **SNAP**. I needed help filling out forms correctly and guaranteeing proof of delivery after having multiple problems in the past.

Nancy, a volunteer from **LiveOn NY** visited monthly to help anyone who needed it with paperwork and also by walking the paperwork over to the appropriate agency, guaranteeing proof of delivery. (And Long Ho helped me by email and phone.)

And I also got help many times from PSCSA's director and a student intern so **Health First's Medicare Advantage** would **approve** a dental procedure at NY Methodist (after delays and denials for multiple confusing reasons when I called myself).

While getting help, I saw the 11:00am **exercise classes** (now on Zoom) and found Chair Yoga and Tai Chi very helpful for arthritis.

And the meals too, where we sat around tables and found friends.

I discovered our center is a wonderful community. I believe this developed over time, as PSCSA became a place that means different things to each of us. And a place that members had struggled to keep open until they connected with **Heights and Hills** who supports our center now.

I also believe PSCSA can be a MODEL for other centers.

But activities have been disrupted by concerns around coronavirus.

We need MORE FUNDING to ADAPT our center.

2

After being stuck at home more than a year, we've put on weight. Worse still, as seniors we got weaker and our health has suffered. We need to strengthen our muscles, and improve flexibility and our balance. For me, this means I need access to Red Hook pool (which was closed last summer). And for the Tuesdays and Thursdays **Senior Swim classes** to resume there. And bring back the crew from the **Aquatics Group** who teach classes. (I can't manage the two buses I'd have to take to get to Sunset Park pool.)

I suggest that all Olympic size outdoor city pools be fully staffed so the entire pool area is open for swimmers. (Red Hook pool has only opened half its area for years.)

Kids also need this after being cooped up so long.

This is an urgent **health issue!**

3

I doubt I'm the only senior who needs more **benches at bus stops**--at the very minimum, benches need to be where we **transfer** from one bus to another!

Why? Standing while waiting for a bus is painful + aggravates arthritis even days later! In Park Slope I can usually find a stoop on 9th Street or a protective cylinder next to a fire hydrant on 5th Ave to sit on.

At Coney Island Ave & 18th Ave there's only a bench along 18th Ave to wait for the B8 towards Bensonhurst. To go back home on the B68, the only place to sit is 18" high fencing surrounding a tree.

(Sitting at that height on a very narrow metal fence is uncomfortable. Last time I did, when I was getting up to go towards the bus, I fell backwards inside the fencing). I could hardly get up. Luckily someone passing by pulled me up, and his friend asked the bus driver to wait for me.

Another bus stop that needs a bench is for the B61 (travelling in both directions) at Bartel Pritchard Square.

How about durable, foldable **benches** at **bus stops**, like a **single seat** version of Citi Bike stands? Of course, real benches would be best.

I've considered carrying something with me to sit on. But then it would be difficult to carry groceries, too. One time I even sat on the curb as the pain from standing worsened.

Seniors need to be able to "travel"! Install many more benches, PLEASE!

4

Emergency Broadband Benefit came just when I needed it. My \$49.50 deal for 12 months with Spectrum ends in June. Then it goes back to the regular price--\$79.99.

I was approved for the \$50 monthly credit. But whenever EBB ends, my option is sitting outside a nearby laundromat when the weather is nice. Unfortunately, the weight of my old laptop makes it hard to carry where there's free Wifi.

I've looked into wifi for low income people, but zip code 11215 (where I live) is not eligible,

PLEASE, when EBB ends, find a way to extend it!

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
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May 25, 2021

I'm grateful for this opportunity to address the critical issue before the Council on behalf of Disability Rights New York, the state's congressionally mandated Protection and Advocacy System for people with disabilities. I'm Marc Fliedner, Director of the PAIMI Program at DRNY, which provides legal advocacy for people with mental illness. My comments draw from our recently published document entitled SYSTEMS IN CRISIS: IDENTIFYING CRITICAL ISSUES IN RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS CALLS. The document, developed in partnership with two clinical psychology graduate programs at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, is available for PDF download on our website, drny.org.

People with mental illness and those of us who advocate on their behalf are unwilling to accept another death, more harm, no accountability when someone requiring assistance while in crisis is killed by police officers responding to 911 calls. When viewed through the appropriate cultural, historical and ethical lenses, it is clear that the NYPD must be replaced as first responders to the vast majority of mental health crisis calls.

It is time to acknowledge and deal with the engrained and pervasive culture clash that is ignited when police and people with mental health diagnoses, overwhelming black, indigenous and people of color, interact in our city under crisis circumstances. Police have always been the wrong fit for response to these situations, and the potential for harm when they do respond is at least as large today as it ever was.

Think about it. Police culture defines response to mental health crisis calls as one of the big three types of calls that place them in the greatest danger. They therefore respond to such scenes with the presumption that they are in danger, armed with their service weapons, handcuffs and restraint techniques, but without the skill set to properly assess and deescalate the situation. While Commanding officers and union bosses may fight for maintenance of power over these situations, do we really think police officers on the street embrace being required to play a role that they are fundamentally unprepared for?

From the other perspective, people in mental health crisis bring to this interaction a litany of negative lived experiences. Many of these folks have experienced significant trauma, quite often racial trauma linked to the institutions of policing, with the presumption that police are going to harm them or take them into custody. Where both parties come to an event with fear and distrust of the other, how could we possibly expect that it is going to end well?

And so to the critical question: if police are to be replaced as responders on a majority of mental health crisis calls, what is the model for replacement? DRNY supports adoption of a multidisciplinary team response model, to include mental health professionals and peer support and utilization of crisis stabilization centers.

In addition to the risk of death or serious physical and psychological harm to people with mental illness, DRNY urges the Council to acknowledge the many harmful criminal law consequences impacting people with mental health diagnoses when NYPD respond to these calls. Provisions of the Mental Hygiene Law afford police wide authority to first make determinations about the state of the individuals' mental health, determinations they are woefully unprepared to make, and then detain and remove these individuals from the response scenes, often their own homes. NYPD officers rather uniformly refer to these detentions as "mental health arrests." There should not be a presumption that a person who needs help is subject to arrest. These removals invariably end up generating involuntary commitment proceedings, depriving these individuals of their freedom for weeks, months, years. In addition, these folks are routinely charged by police with offenses like resisting arrest or attempted assault and are thereby sent off to criminal court, further reinforcing the stigma people with mental health diagnoses face in everyday life. The reality is that the harm to people in crisis that is created in the moments when police make these decisions can negatively define the rest of their lives.

Other critical issues DRNY is urging the Council to carefully consider in providing leadership on this issue include:

- The need for response team members from different disciplines to be trained and consistently retrained as a team, so the roles of each team member are clearly defined;
- The need for this training to be culturally competent, with acknowledgement of the intersections between people with mental illness and members of BIPOC communities;
- The need to utilize existing neighborhood-based mental health resources and develop of new ones in underserved neighborhoods; and
- Adoption of a presumption against non-confinement.

In addition, DRNY supports the following elements of the Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC) proposal not addressed above. This proposal calls for:

- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
- 24/7 operating hours;
- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million, and please make sure the \$112 million is used to make the kinds of real, substantive, and critical change outlined above.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marc Fliedner,
Director, PAIMI Program, DRNY
Marc Fliedner
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25 Chapel Street Suite 1005
Brooklyn, New York 11201

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

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May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

Both my sister and my sister-in-law were diagnosed schizophrenics. They both had encounters with the police before their untimely deaths--if they had not been white women, I shudder to think how they would have been treated!

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color.

The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Margaret Seiler

mcgseiler@gmail.com

248 12th Street

BROOKLYN, New York 11215

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Thank you for your consideration.

Margie Staker
margiestaker@cs.com
156 Prospect Park West, #2R
Brooklyn, New York 11215

Marianne Mollmann
185 Prospect Park Southwest, Apt 202
Brooklyn, NY 11218

May 25, 2021

To Finance Chair Dromm and the Committee on Finance, NY City Council:

My name is Marianne Mollmann and I have lived in New York City for 18 years. This city is my home and I love it.

I am deeply concerned with NYPD's discriminatory use of violence, unjust targeting of minority populations, and demonstrated inability – and perhaps unwillingness – to de-escalate violence where they encounter it. Our city's budget is disproportionately going towards the police department, which is charged with solving social ills that have been exacerbated by the defunding of social programs. Ironically, these social programs have been defunded precisely in order to fund the police. You can and must do better.

Instead of solving this crisis, the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget includes a \$200 million dollar increase for the NYPD. This is the most expensive NYPD budget ever proposed, and directly counter to what the city needs. The NYPD already has a \$6Billion budget and experience shows that an increase in police and police activity does not keep communities safe and healthy. What we need is more investment in community services, by and for communities. We also need to see the NYPD removed from social service roles. Asking a police officer to provide mental health services or perform social work is unfair to the police officer, who is being set up to fail. It is also deeply damaging to mental health patients or those in need of social services, as they are served by police officers without appropriate training. Again, you can and must do better.

Every year, NYC spends millions of dollars to keep paying wages to police officers who have killed or exacted violence against my friends and neighbors across the 5 boroughs. Millions of tax dollars are going towards the continued criminalization of communities of color and *not* towards health care, schools and youth programs, jobs and housing. I am a practicing Quaker. It goes against my religion to pay for violence. But even if it didn't, the City Council should not approve a budget that underwrites exclusion, discrimination, and suffering. For the third time, you can and must do better.

The problems that face our city are not insurmountable. The data is clear: solutions that are developed, built, implemented, and maintained by people from the communities who need them are always the most sustainable and ultimately the cheapest.

- The NYPD does not need to be involved in mental health services or placed in schools – remove police officers from health and education!
- The NYPD does not need more officers – enact a hiring ban!
- The police does not need a Special Response Group whose accountability is to its own unit members rather than to the communities it should serve – disband it!

Instead, investments should be made to equip local community groups who already are the ones responding to community crises with much fewer resources and much better results. You need to invest more resources in developing these community-led infrastructures for

safety and support. Defund the NYPD and give that money to community-led groups not reliant on police.

Respectfully,
Marianne Mollmann

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Maribel Maria
mmaria@nylpi.org
229 East Kingsbridge Road
New York, New York 10458

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New York, New York 10025

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Thank you for your consideration.

Marisol Cruz

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500 west 167 street

New York, New York 10032

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Mary Fridley

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423 Westminster Road, 3rd Floor

Brooklyn, New York 11218

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Thank you for your consideration.

Matthew Estep
matthew.estep@ahrcnyc.org
99 Ocean Ave Apt 5G
Brooklyn , New York 11225

Melissa Riker, Inwood NYC - Testimony for NYC Budget Hearing, May 25, 2021

Dear Representative Dromm, Members of the City Council and Administration,

Thank you for hearing the voices of your constituents. Representative Dromm, I applaud your constant empathy and clear kindness throughout the hearing.

I ask you to listen and read deeply this year in particular. The decisions made in this year's budget will decide how our city functions far into the future. I ask that you let it tell the story of what you claim to value.

My name is Melissa Riker, I am a choreographer and dancer living and working in NYC for over 20 years. I am the Artistic Director of Kinesis Project dance theatre, the Executive Director of EstroGenius Festival, Founder of Dance Rising Collective and Co-Director of Women in Motion - the thread between all of these efforts is advocacy for artists in need of a visible platform. My dances via Kinesis Project are large-scale outdoor public performances bringing dance directly to the public of NYC.

I am an artist, presenter, dance teacher of children and professionals and dance teacher of incarcerated young women.

I am testifying today in support of structural and supportive funding models for the Cultural Community of NYC, a sector still closed due to the pandemic, and a sector that will continue to be effected for years to come by the sudden closures causing the disappearance of work for artists, designers and cultural workers.

The assumption in the main stream is artists, dancers especially, are resilient, and while this is true, our lives and survival cannot be left hanging on our individual creativity and resilience, that leaves an entire sector depending on individuals with plenty of creativity, but very little sustainable income.

It is time for further understanding by City Council and the Mayor's Office about how art is made, what craft, training, and invention entail and what is needed to

support individual artists in NYC - in other words: what does it take financially to see quality, supported performances come back AND what would it look like to have a city with artists who are valued for their contributions to the vibrancy of NYC?

As you review the budget for the the rebuilding of New York City, please consider letting it tell the story of the value of the layers of culture, how it happens and the human beings who create it: we teach in the schools, we lead seniors to heal, we create intergenerational understanding, we offer beauty, and we offer a window in to everyday creativity, which all leads to empathy and healing in society.

I press City Council and the Administration to:

- Fund de-segregation of data collected as a way across the board for the city to actually understand how the varied populations of our city and the needs of the city, begin at the school level, continue at a population level.
- Acknowledge that there is no structure in place to support the infrastructure of art making and take action by implementing budget items to bring work back to the sector in an equitable and comprehensive way.

To do this, I see the following opportunities for City Council to support artists in NYC:

I join my colleagues in supporting the \$70M Cultural Plan for Recovery in order to:

- Fund the DCLA to restore and add to funding for both CIGs and program groups
- Restore the funding for critical cultural initiatives
- Baseline the funding for the Coalition of Theaters of Color

Finally, additional funding from the administration to support the cultural sector across our city so we can heal our communities and lead the city's economic recovery.

I celebrate and am so grateful for the administration's support of independent artists with the Artists Corps, and ask that the Council plan to continue this program, along with the creation of an Artist Registry, to create ongoing support for our cultural workforce so artists can thrive in our city and it will remain the cultural capital of the world.

Finally, I request that you bring and keep artists to the table to make these decisions, I strongly suggest: Lucy Sexton of New Yorkers for Culture and Arts; Sade Lithgow, Coalition of Theaters of Color; Alejandra Duque Cifuentes, Dance/NYC, Jennifer Wright Cook, The Field; Denise Saunders Thompson, International Association of Blacks in Dance.

Thank you,

Melissa Riker

Kinesis Project dance theatre

kinesisproject.com

dancerising.org

estrogenius.nyc

Melissa Riker
908-370-2027

Artistic Director/Choreographer

www.kinesisproject.com

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[Seattle Waterfront, July 2018](#)

In Our Wake 2019

Seattle Waterfront, February & August 2019

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TOP PICK in the [Gothamist](#), [New York Times](#) and *Dance Enthusiast*

May 25, 2021 Finance Committee Testimony

As you look forward at the proposed budget for New York City, I ask you to consider first those individuals and businesses that have been most deeply impacted by this pandemic. The federal relief issued to New York State and New York City was based upon the overall devastation that the pandemic raged upon these districts and their economies and should be applied in turn to those sectors most harmed.

And no part of the economy has been more deeply impacted than arts, entertainment and recreation, which has represented the second greatest job losses in the country at an unemployment rate that is **1.5 times that of the national unemployment rate**. (These losses are second only to oil and gas industry, which has been struggling for years under the previous administration's policies.)

Significant relief must be heavily dedicated to the recovery of the cultural economy, which represents 13% of the New York City gross product – a higher percentage of GSP than anywhere else in the country and representing hundreds of thousands of jobs. In 2017, an astonishing 12 percent of all creative industry jobs in the United States were located within the five boroughs – compared to less than 3 percent of all jobs nationally. ***But the pandemic has driven artists out of New York City.***

With high rent and no work, and a staggering 72% unemployment rate among musicians and singers alone, **our artists have fled New York City** to live with family and friends across the country. This dramatic human capital loss, or “brain drain”, will have devastating effects on or sector for years to come. We must invest in the arts to create the opportunities and financial incentives that will bring this talent back to what has long been known as the creative capital of the nation. I ask you to **allocate \$5M in the upcoming budget** to provide first and last month's rent payments to artists as an incentive to return to New York City.

Many people believe the other relief programs have “taken care of culture”, but that is simply not true. The federal Shuttered Venue Operators Grant, previously known as Save Our Stages, has still not issued any grant relief to venues. Due to the deep complexities of the statute that formed this program, thousands of organizations and producers were deemed ineligible or lacked the resources necessary to apply to the program. The program also fails to take into account the complexities of the creative ecosystem, which relies heavily on contracted “gig” labor. All of the support companies that keep the arts functioning – costume shops, scenic shops, prop shops, press agencies, theatrical marketing firms, casting agencies – do not qualify for this relief program.

Similarly, the Payment Protection Program is focused entirely on employment and a restoration to previous levels of employment. As the Arts & Culture sector relies heavily upon freelance workers, a grant program that is tied to employment does not serve our sector well. And all of these programs are founded in trickle-down economics, which does not create the relief necessary for the workers on the ground.

ARTS AND CULTURE DRIVE THE ECONOMY. The average arts attendee spends approximately \$31.47 beyond ticket costs on meals, retail, parking, lodging, local transportation, childcare, and souvenirs. These dollars provide vital income to local merchants, energize the arts districts, foster a healthy residential real estate market, and pay salaries and wages in non-arts sectors. A slower recovery for arts and culture will extend the length of recovery for the many industries the creative economy affects.

New York City must act *now* if we are to kickstart the economic recovery of this city. Hospitality, transportation, retail, real estate and restaurants all need arts and culture to thrive. **If you fail to invest in the artists, you fail to invest in the recovery of our economy at large. We must start to value the artists**, arts-related businesses, and non-profit cultural institutions that have been major economic drivers to this city for decades. I urge you to provide the incentives necessary to **bring artists back to New York.**

May 26, 2021

Greetings Finance Chair Dromm and the Committee on Finance,

My name is Meropi, and I am a theater maker, nonprofit leader, and member of the Justice Committee. I am also a New Yorker living in Brooklyn, and I'm concerned about my fellow New Yorkers, especially those who are disproportionately and unjustly targeted by police violence. Last year the Council and Mayor di Blasio did not truly commit to defunding the NYPD by \$1 billion dollars.

I'm concerned about the mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget which includes a \$200 million dollar increase for the NYPD. This is the most expensive NYPD budget ever proposed. The street that I live on in Brooklyn is very heavily policed. In fact, there has been a 24-hour police presence on the block for the past few years, and I never understood why. I never could figure out what they were doing there, and I was too intimidated to ask. This is because I had seen too many of my fellow Black and Brown New Yorkers harassed, targeted and harmed by the NYPD. As a person of color, I do not feel safe with NYPD hanging around my block.

Then last October, there was a terrible shooting on my block, in which 6 people were shot and one died. And I couldn't help but wonder, where were the police then? Despite their 24-hour presence on our street, they were unable to prevent this violence.

A few weeks ago, it happened again – I heard the dreaded gunshots on our block, and once again the constant presence of the NYPD was unable to prevent one of my neighbors from being shot. Thankfully the young man survived this time. But what about the next time? And the next?

The NYPD already has a \$6 Billion budget, and based on the experiences I've shared above, I don't believe an increase in police and police activity is what keeps communities safe and healthy. I want to see more investment in community services, by and for communities, included in the budget that the City Council passes this year. And I want to see the NYPD removed from social service-related roles.

Every year, NYC spends millions of dollars to keep cops who have killed and brutalized us on the city payroll. That's millions of dollars that are going towards the continued criminalization of Black, Latinx and other communities of color and NOT towards health care, schools and youth programs, jobs and housing.

We need solutions to the issues our communities face - solutions that are developed, built, implemented, and maintained by the people from our communities. Investments should be made to equip the local community groups who are working day in and day out on the ground with the resources to be the first line of response. We need to invest more resources in developing these community-led infrastructures for safety and support.

We don't need new or more police officers—in fact, I call for a freeze on new NYPD hires and a full investment in community-led efforts that do not rely on police.

Thank you for reading and considering this testimony. I urge you to do the right thing by reducing the NYPD's bloated budget and redirecting those funds to community-led safety solutions.

Sincerely,

Meropi Peponides

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

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The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
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- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Andersson

mdja17@yahoo.com

66 West Gun Hill Road, #1B

The Bronx, New York 10467

Good Afternoon. My name is Michael Valentin, 17, living in Manhattan at the New York Foundling. I am a proud member of a great mentoring, tutoring, and coach program called "Fair Futures".

Throughout the Pandemic I have been home not being able to go out and socialize, and just feeling alone, bored, and stressed out. Sometimes I did not feel like doing my work, even though I wanted to graduate and go to college. My mentor Ayana from "Fair Future" has motivated me to continue to push myself, to do my very best and complete ALL of my assignments. When I need help with my homework I can email, or call my mentor who will assist me and encourage me to focus on my work. If I have a problem with anything I can speak with my mentor, even when I feel stressed out. After speaking with my mentor, I feel better and motivated to continue to do well.

Fair Futures also holds virtual group meetings where we can discuss different topics. In the group I feel like I have people to talk to. In the sessions we are comfortable enough to share our feelings and ideas with each other. We also have the opportunity to meet in person (Socially distanced) to have fun activities like go to the mall, hang out, and just recently last Thursday we went out to a maze game called beat the bomb. It was pretty cool not gonna lie I would recommend going there.

Mr. Mayor De Blasio, and New York City Council, Please continue to fund "Fair Futures". The program for teenagers to engage in positive activities, and socialize in a positive way. I feel like a family when it comes to them

City Council Finance Committee,
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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Perles
michaeljperles@gmail.com
425 east 6th st
New York, New York 10009

Good morning Finance Chair Dromm and the Committee on Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Michelle Pelan, and I'm concerned about my fellow New Yorkers, especially those who are disproportionately and unjustly targeted by police violence. Last year the Council and Mayor di Blasio did not truly commit to defunding the NYPD by \$1 billion dollars.

I'm concerned about the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget which includes a \$200 million dollar increase for the NYPD. This is the most expensive NYPD budget ever proposed.

The NYPD already has a \$6 billion budget and I don't believe an increase in police and police activity is what keeps communities safe and healthy. I want to see more investment in community services, by and for communities, included in the budget that the City Council passes this year. I want to see the NYPD removed from social service-related roles.

Every year, NYC spends millions of dollars to keep cops who have killed and brutalized us on the city payroll. That's millions of dollars that are going towards the continued criminalization of Black, Latinx and other communities of color and NOT towards health care, schools and youth programs, jobs, and housing.

We need solutions to the issues our communities face, solutions that are developed, built, implemented, and maintained by the people from the communities.

We need to completely remove police from mental health responses. We need an NYPD hiring freeze and the elimination of dangerous units like the SRG and an end to initiatives like Youth Coordinating Officers that are systematizing the racial profiling and surveilling of our Black, Latinx, and other POC young people. We need police free schools.

Instead, investments should be made to equip the local community groups who are working day in and day out on the ground with the resources to be the first line of response. Our local community groups are the ones building the supportive ongoing relationships with the people in our communities. We need to invest more resources in developing these community-led infrastructures for safety and support.

We don't need new or more police officers—in fact, I call for a freeze on new NYPD hires and a full investment in community-led efforts that do not rely on police.

- We need the immediate expansion and full funding for citywide Summer Youth Employment.
- We need investments in violence intervention programs that don't rely on police.
- We need health and mental health care, education, housing, and jobs.

Thank you,

Michelle

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

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- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michelle Ronda
michelle.ronda@gmail.com
3216 42nd St, FL 1
Astoria, New York 11103

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

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Thank you for your consideration.

Michelle Spadafore

Michelle Spadafore

mmspadafore@gmail.com

101 Vernon Ave #3

Brooklyn, New York 11206

Miguel Ortiz

05/23/2021

TESTIMONY

My name is Miguel Ortiz, and I am a former foster youth. I wanted to express how important it is for youth in foster care to have a coach. Too many youth foster care are fighting through life without any guidance and therefore, they are slipping through the cracks and either ending up dead or in prison.

When I was in the foster care system, I had met my coach at 16, I dropped out of school and I was involved in the streets. I felt that any point my life would get taken or I would end up in prison like all the people I grew up with. But, my coach saved my life and made me recognize my true potential. With her help, I turned my life around.

I earned my high school diploma, and then I earned my Associate's Degree from LaGuardia CC. Now I am 26 with my own apartment and I'm in my first ever career job earning 45,000 a year! If it wasn't for my coach who stuck by me through my best and worst moments I wouldn't have been able to get to where I am now. I also just wanted someone to support me no matter what -- that's what my coach did.

There's thousands of foster youth yearning for guidance, support, and trust –with the help of a coach, these foster youth's lives can be transformed. Without coaches, more and more youth in foster care will continue to become statistics. A coach can not only help transform a youth's life, but a coach can also save one too.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Mike Litrownik
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130 Degraw Street, Apt 3
BROOKLYN, New York 11231

Miranda Jackel | she/her | mirandajackelnyc@gmail.com | (917) 748-7737

My name is Miranda Jackel. I'm a New Yorker and a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice NYC, a 7,000-member organization that advocates for reimagining public safety, equitable and integrated public education, quality housing for all, and an end to mass incarceration. I'm submitting testimony because I believe the Council has a moral imperative to reduce the NYPD budget and invest in real community safety. Recently, it has been painful for me to watch so many of my neighbors on the Upper West Side complain of feeling unsafe while demanding a greater police presence. The fact is, anxieties and violence have often been a direct result of those who are supposedly "protecting and serving." This past summer, during Black Lives Matter protests - 93% of which were peaceful, according to TIME - it was the police that incited violence across the country, with our city's officers being among the most egregious offenders. The NYPD was guilty of pepper spraying, kettling, beating, and arresting New Yorkers simply exercising their right to protest: these gatherings did not become dangerous until the NYPD made them so. Not only is allowing the NYPD's bloated budget to remain untouched condoning these aggressive and inhumane tactics, by neglecting to invest in necessities, like quality housing, healthcare, and education, especially, after a devastatingly painful year for our city (despite our resilience in the face of it), is itself a form of violence. I remember staying up late into the night last year watching the Council vote on the budget and feeling overwhelmed with rage and heartbreak, as I witnessed a fierce and courageous movement speaking truth to power be grossly ignored. I know that my feelings were only a fraction of what the Black and Brown organizers who have spent decades on the frontlines of this fight were experiencing. Today, I am calling upon the Council to do better, by heeding the demands of the NYC-based grassroots organization Justice Committee. This would mean reducing the NYPD's operating budget by a minimum of \$1-1.5 billion, requiring greater NYPD budget transparency, and blocking increases of any NYPD budget lines in FY22 (including denial and cancellation of any new policing-related initiatives). Moreover, it would require ending the policing of schools, homelessness, and mental health response, an end to the Youth Coordinating Officer initiative (which racially profiles and surveils youth of color), cuts to the Public Relations budget, a decrease in the overall officer headcount, and a total freeze on new NYPD hires. I urge members of the Council to be bold and act on principle, rather than political calculations. Uplifting and investing in communities over policing is good policy, and it's an incremental, yet essential, step towards justice in our city. Thank you, members of the Council, for reading my testimony.

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

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Executive Budget Hearing
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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Miriam Bensman
miriam.bensman@gmail.com
8414 114 St.
Richmond Hill, New York 11418

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

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Thank you for your consideration.

Miriam Fisher
fisherfreund@hotmail.com
337 w21st st
nyc, New York 10011

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Thank you for your consideration.

Mitra Bonshahi
mitrabonshahi@gmail.com
231 Nassau Ave apt 2L
Brooklyn , New York 11222

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Thank you for your consideration.

mkruvelis@gmail.com

148 Linden Blvd
Brooklyn, New York 11226



Good morning, my name is Mohamed Attia, I am the Director of the Street Vendor Project. The Street Vendor Project (SVP) is a membership-based organization working to improve the working conditions of the approximately 20,000 people who sell food and merchandise on the streets of New York City. SVP, founded in 2001, strives to improve and expand vending as a viable, lawful employment option for immigrants, military veterans, and other entrepreneurs, and to increase public appreciation of how central vending is to our city's fabric.

As the only organization that focuses on street vendors in New York City, through direct legal representation, small business development and training, organizing support, leadership development, and strategic legislative advocacy. We have connected nearly 3,000 street vendors to resources and information about housing, food access, and loan and grant opportunities in the past year alone.

The Street Vendor Project (SVP) requests support from New York City Council to further develop and expand the essential multilingual services we offer to street vendors, an estimated population of 20,000. These vendors are our City's smallest business owners who provide fresh, affordable food and merchandise from trucks, tables, and carts to communities across the five boroughs. Vendors have special needs related to the mobility of their businesses. Additionally, it can be difficult to establish relationships within the vendor community due to language, residency status, and other barriers.

In January 2021, New York City Council passed landmark legislation, Introduction 1116-B, reforming the entire street vending system. As a result of the passage of the legislation, a new Office of Street Vendor Enforcement to oversee compliance will be launched, a new Street Vendor Advisory Board will be formed, and 4,000 new supervisory licenses for mobile food vendors will be introduced over the next decade (400 licenses per year). Additionally, the current system of mobile food vendor permits will transition to a new supervisory license system, effectively ending the decades old underground market.

The news of the bill has excited street vendors across the city who are eager to apply for a supervisory license and become part of the formalized economy. SVP staff members are fielding hundreds of calls per week to advise vendors. As the only

organization that focuses on street vendors in New York City, our services were already in high demand throughout the COVID-19 crisis, as we connected nearly 2,000 street vendors to resources and information about housing, food access, and loan and grant opportunities. Vendors across the five boroughs reach out to SVP because of our long history working within the community. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated New York City, street vendors, many of whom are undocumented immigrants, have seen up to a 90% loss of income in their daily lives.

This high volume of intakes has presented an unsustainable demand on a small staff body and the organization, hence our urgent request of support to increase our ability to respond. With the increased need to inform vendors of the updated rules and regulations, as well as to respond to urgent COVID-19 related needs, SVP requests support to expand capacity for our culturally and linguistically specific outreach services across the five boroughs. SVP proposes to hire Outreach & Education Specialists who will conduct outreach to vendors across the five boroughs in a variety of engagement methods, with each of these positions focused in one of the five most common languages spoken by vendors: Arabic, Bengali, Mandarin, Spanish, and Wolof. Additionally, the Education and Outreach Specialists will work with SVP's Graphic Designer to create linguistically specific materials, as well as materials for the illiterate population. To monitor and evaluate progress, the Education and Outreach Specialists will document and track their education and outreach efforts by collecting vendors' demographic information, initial knowledge (or lack thereof) of the bill, and resources needed.

Additionally, the Education and Outreach Specialists will work with SVP's Graphic Designer to create linguistically specific materials, as well as materials for the illiterate population. In addition to providing extended education and outreach to vendors across the five boroughs, the Outreach & Education Specialists will also inform vendors about SVP's two critical resources: our Small Business Consultation Program and our Environmental Justice Initiative. SVP's Small Business Consultation Program provide our members with the tools, resources, and skills to grow their business, including information on available services that we and our partners offer, relating to small business development, small business legal services, financial literacy, and microloans.

With the help of the Council, we're hoping to ensure that street vendors not only survive in our city but also thrive and prosper as essential part of the City's fabric.

Thanks

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
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- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

nancy adelman

nancyleeadelman@yahoo.com

205 third ave

nyc, New York 10003

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Thank you for your consideration.

Nancy Bedard
nancybedard_nyc@yahoo.com
9 Vernon Place
Mount Vernon, New York 10552

Good Evening Everyone

My name is Nancy and I'm here this evening as a Caring Parent. I want to tell you my story.....

I am a parent of twin boys who are both autistic. John and Adam both received early intervention and special education services since Pre-k. From grades K-5 Adam attended a 12:1:1 class in a community school and was provided with special education services including an individual para-professional. For the 2018/2019 school year (6th-7th grade), Adam was placed in a District 75 School.

While attending District 75 school for almost two years Adam was mentally, physically, and emotionally abused because the school system didn't know how to deal with Adam. Adam had a prior IEP which stated he needed OT, PT, counseling and a 1:1 para. I later found out he never had services because they didn't have enough therapists and teachers to administer the services. While in District 75 school Adam had daily meltdowns at school and at home. What does that mean? It's when he cries, hits himself and overpowers his Dad and myself with his strength when we tried to calm him down. This was happening for most of the time at District 75 because he was very unhappy at the school and couldn't explain what he was feeling. An example of one of Adams meltdowns was when Adam smiled a lot. Students at his school thought he was laughing at them and they would hit him constantly. Even when they were assaulting Adam he would smile and that would make the child assaulting him more angry. Adam didn't know why he was being assaulted and the school administration would tell me Adam was teasing a student and that's why he was being assaulted. My question was where was Adam's para? I was told she was assisting another student. District 75 didn't have enough para's to assist all the kids who needed one. When I was informed of the assault on my son I spoke to the teacher and told the teacher that Adam wasn't laughing at the student he was nervous about something that occurred around him and that makes him smile or laugh. There were at least 15 different incidents that happened to Adam at this school that I couldn't take any longer. I knew District 75 was NOT a good fit for Adam.

My family was so overwhelmed with what Adam was going through that we had no choice but to hire a lawyer. Our lives were turned around in May of 2019 when Adam won his case against the DOE. The DOE failed to give Adam a free appropriate public education. This right is guaranteed by the individuals with Disabilities Education Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. He was placed in St. Dominic School which is an 853 school. Since June 2019 Adam has been attending St. Dominic in Blauvelt, NY. It has been a dream come true! The faculty at St. Dominic's are amazing! Adam has an annual IEP and he gets all his services at St. Dominic including a para which he so desperately needs. Adam rarely has meltdowns because St. Dominic taught Adam how to express himself verbally not physically. I see Adam's future as a promising one because of St. Dominic. He will be an individual getting a job and giving back to his community but only because of St. Dominic and their amazing teachers.

I just recently found out that the NYS budget doesn't include our school in them! Why! Our 853 students are part of the DOE. They are in a 853 school because the DOE failed them. Whose

fault is that? They are public school children that the public schools cannot service. New York State should be proud of 853 schools because they provide all the services that our special needs children need. They are helping our special needs children in becoming independent individuals who can give back to their communities. PLEASE INCLUDE OUR 853 children in your budget. Please believe in our children! Investing in our children is believing in our children!

I became aware of the proposal to remove cops from schools because I am on a email list of the Teachers Unite organization, which is strongly advocating for their removal. However, I am not united with them in their misguided efforts to remove the police from schools. Instead, I urge you to do the opposite - keep them there!

I'm a retired NYC public school teacher who taught in this system for 30 years. I have lived and taught in areas and periods of high crime in this city (the S Bronx, Harlem, during the 1980s - 1990s), and I know what it is like when there is lawfulness and when there is not. I taught in elementary schools, so we didn't need to have police officers on site. However, where cops are present, in middle or high schools, I can imagine there are very good reasons for putting them there - like enhancing everyone's safety and the likelihood learning can take place instead of disruptions to learning. And I bet there are many kids in those schools who are really glad cops are there, even if they wouldn't dare to say so out loud.

I think it would be extremely dangerous to defund and/or remove cops from schools, and the timing couldn't be worse. To remove police at this time would be utter foolishness and a dereliction of duty to our children: Violent crime has been rising for over a year, while teenagers have gone through a disruption to stabilizing routines due to COVID school closures, where the structure of school was replaced with more free time, which, unfortunately, makes some of them more vulnerable to negative influences and bad habits. Their return to school will be at a time when security is needed the most.

I am a member of the Democratic party, although I did not sign up for where it is going these days. I have been very disheartened by the decisions of Democrats in power, in our city government, over the past year or so. Laws related to crime and policing have been changed to favor lawlessness. The streets are returning to the days of filth, homelessness and crime. Last summer there were riots - arson, looting, vandalism, and violence - during seemingly endless, out of control days and nights of "protest" (I have attended many protests over the years, but none where such leeway was given to do so much damage). As I have watched the city unravel I have seen, much to my chagrin, that Democratic politicians have created many of the problems we are now experiencing by over-correcting in criminal justice and police reforms and setting an indulgent tone toward criminality, which I, and many others, believe has encouraged the subsequent breakdown of city life. When is enough going to be enough?

Please be sensible and compassionate to the residents you represent: vote to keep cops in schools. This vote is one piece of a whole that needs to be put back together to get back on the right track if our aim is a quality of life that makes people want to visit, work, and live in this city.

NANCY SIMON

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Thank you for your consideration.

newblack@panix.com

144 Bedford Ave Apt 2

BROOKLYN, New York 11249

Hello,

My name is Nic Adams and I live in NY City Council district 6. I am writing to provide public online testimony about the city budget. Since 2014, police reform has been a very important issue to me and those close to me. From Sandra Bland to Eric Garner to Tony McDade to George Floyd, it seems each time the nation is reminded of the brutal, inequitable treatment of Black people at the hands of the state, the only recourse ever taken is to stir up fear about crime, increase police budgets, and hope that the anger will pass and people will forget.

This time last year, I committed to a weekly phone-banking group called Amplifying Activists Together to sustain my own practice of fighting for economic, racial, and social justice. We began our work by calling you, the city council, to defund the police. And while we were not successful in that first campaign, we went on to help activist campaigns repeal 50a, end the Walking While Trans Ban, create a fund for excluded workers, and more. Our current campaigns are focused on parole reform and electing defund candidates to the city council.

My opinions about Defunding the Police are summarized well by the NYC-DSA. I share them here as you deliberate the city budget. I encourage you to dream up a budget that invests in marginalized people by diminishing the role of the police in NYC, as a first step towards abolition.

- We believe in a city where we respond to crimes of poverty, mental health and drug issues, and other challenges with care and compassion, not cuffs and cages.
- Policing isn't about safety, it's about control. The police protect the rich and their property. Police do not actually prevent violent crime from occurring, nor do they effectively mitigate the effects of its aftermath. They maintain inequality through racist harassment, surveillance, and outright brutality. Police make us less safe, not more.
- Real safety and justice comes from investing in services and infrastructure that improve the quality of people's lives: good jobs, dignified housing, healthcare, childcare, elder care, mental healthcare, education, transit, food security, and free time for culture and community.
- We are calling for an immediate, dramatic reversal of New York City's priorities, but in the long term, we are fighting for a society where working people have everything we need to keep *ourselves* safe, and we can abolish all systems of policing and punishment.

A budget is simply a list of values. Thank you for taking my values into consideration as you deliberate this city budget.

-Nic Adams

Good morning

I'm an parent of an special Education student..

I would like to see more money put in the school system..

Hire more experience teachers to deal with special needed children

Thank you.

Nicole James



May 25, 2021

My name is Nilka Martell. I am the Founder and Director of Loving The Bronx, a not for profit dedicated to community building and development by organizing around social and environmental injustices issues through the use of parks, open spaces and waterways in the Bronx. We are the stewards of Virginia Park, Hugh Grant Circle, and Chief Dennis Devlin Park.

I am the new Chair of the Bronx River Alliance's Board of Directors. We serve as a coordinated voice for the Bronx River and work with partnerships to protect, improve, and restore the Bronx River Corridor and the Bronx River Greenway. Within the corridor we help maintain over half a dozen parks.

I am also the President of the Friends of Pelham Bay Park, where we care for NYC's largest City park, over 2700 acres. Large parts of our park are natural areas that require different attention than regular parks and playgrounds.

The pandemic amplified issues and inequalities that have existed in NYC for very many years. One in particular is the need for a permanently increased budget for the Parks Department who maintains 14% of NYC's land.

For most New Yorkers, parks serve as our backyards. During the shut down, parks became the only place of refuge from the concrete jungle. While baby showers, birthday parties, and different celebrations are historically common in our local parks, last year, as funeral homes followed COVID restrictions, our parks also served as gathering spaces where families and friends came together to mourn loved ones. As gyms closed, parks became outdoor fitness areas. For many who needed to get out of their four walls, parks became havens for personal well being, and an opportunity to connect with nature. Our parks are essential, they are an important and intricate part of New York City's infrastructure.

Last year we saw the worst park conditions. With less maintenance, volunteers took to tending to parks. While quite admirable, this is not a sustainable model. The 14% budget cut in the last fiscal year caused an already under-resourced, underfunded and understaffed department to suffer even more. We cannot expect more with less.

We lost seasonal employees, enforcement officers, gardeners, and while seasonal workers are being restored, there is still a hiring freeze for permanent employment. There is no way our parks can be

properly maintained without these basic services, as well as professional expertise of experienced parkies.

The proposed budget does not return to pre-pandemic levels, and it does not address programs like the Parks Equity Initiative, which many small grassroot groups rely on, or the basic maintenance of tree pruning, tree stump removal, and invasive species control.

On behalf of Loving The Bronx, the Bronx River Alliance, and the Friends of Pelham Bay Park, we join NY4P in urging our Mayor and City Council representatives to recognize just how essential NYC parks are, and to **increase the Parks Dept budget to 1% of the City's overall budget**. It is the only way to ensure that these vitally important spaces are properly maintained for all New Yorkers to enjoy.

We simply ask you to **#PlayFair!**

Thank you.

Loving The Bronx,


Nilka Martell

City Council Finance Committee,

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Thank you for your consideration.

Nydia Leaf

nyleaf13@gmail.com

46 West 95 Street, #3B

NY, New York 10025

My name is Olympia Kazi, I'm a founding member of the NYC Artist Coalition and the Music Workers Alliance, a group of mostly independent musicians and DJs who got organized to fight against unfair treatment.

Last year's budget cuts on services, the exclusion of vulnerable people from relief, and the lack of real action on the issue of residential and commercial rent, have left thousands of New Yorkers (including many artists) facing homelessness and crushing debt.

New York's economy was roaring before the pandemic, but just for the very few, and this was directly connected to the hardships and exploitation faced by the majority of working New Yorkers.

So my first comment to you is make sure that THIS year's budget puts people first on EVERY issue.

Arts and Culture are very important for New Yorkers' joy and wellbeing as well as for NYC's economy. We cannot talk about Arts and Culture recovery without talking about artists' proper pay, fair treatment, and access to benefits. In this year's budget we need to restore funding to all cultural organizations and the Department of Cultural Affairs. But we also need to focus on equity by creating a dedicated funding stream that meaningfully supports and protects artists, especially those from historically marginalized communities.

The performing arts sector was completely shut for more than a year. A great number of indie performing arts' workers won't regain full employment for many more months. Hundreds of them joined rallies led by the Music Workers Alliance in the past year to demand a real WPA-style works program. The \$25 million recently dedicated to the [NYC Artists Corps](#) by the Mayor is a positive sign, but it needs to be extended and expanded in this year's budget. It also needs to be revised so that it becomes a real workforce program informed by the impacted workers' needs.

As a mother of an incoming pre-ker and a rising 1st grader I've been following the Alliance for Quality Education work and I support the agenda they developed in coalition with Class Size Matters, New York Immigration Coalition and others for this year's budget. You can read their demands [here](#).

You heard from many great education advocates today. We need to fully fund: Social & Emotional learning; Culturally Responsive Curriculum, Meaningful Citywide Restorative Justice with the elimination of school policing & we need universal broadband.

Last but not least, please make sure that funding stops to be funneled in programs and policies that are proven to exacerbate inequities and segregation.

THANK YOU

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Orin Kotula

orinkotula@verizon.net

46 West 95th Street #3C

New York, New York 10025

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Oxsana Mikler

omikler@acmhny.org

254 West 31 Street

New Your, New York 10001

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Thank you for your consideration.

Patrice Miller

patrice.miller.1@gmail.com

280 Stuyvesant Ave, Apt 1

Brooklyn, New York 11221-6390

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Patrick Molloy
pbc251122@aol.com
324 powers street
brooklyn, New York 11211

Hello,

You are probably very busy - let me keep this short. You know, I know, everyone knows that the current system of policing is not working for all New Yorkers. It is perpetuating white supremacy, enabling murders and discrimination of Black and brown people, and leaving the public furious. There is another way.s I want this city council to take responsibility by defunding the police and funding the life services that are rotting with tiny budgets. I want cuts because I want our government to believe in our communities - and support those communities when things become difficult, not shoot them and lock them up. That means housing, health, disability rights - active budgeting to counter poverty. Not funding a police structure that no one—even those within the police force—believes is working.

Thank you for reading.

Sincerely,
Paz Petersson
56 South 11 St
Apt 2D
Brooklyn, NY
11249

+1 917 912 0810

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I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
- 24/7 operating hours;
- calls routed to a number other than 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

pedro lopez
bedthrowlopez@gmail.com
359 lewis ave, 4R
Brooklyn, New York 11233

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Hello.

I am writing today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

I urge the City to institute the crisis response plan put forward by Correct Crisis Intervention Today - NYC (CCIT-NYC) which eliminates the police as responders to mental health crises, substitutes a health care response, modeled on a program with a nearly 40-year track record of a non-police crisis response that resulted in zero serious injuries to those experiencing a crisis or to the healthcare responders.

The Mayor and the City Council must shift funds away from law enforcement and fund a health care response now. Stop murdering people of color when we should be helping those in crisis!

Please fund a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Peg Byron

pegbyron@gmail.com

10 Plaza St. E.

Brooklyn, New York 11238

City Council Finance Committee,

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Thank you for your consideration.

Peter Huelster

peter.huelster@gmail.com

242 Cumberland Street

Brooklyn, New York 11205

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

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Thank you for your consideration.

Pilar Jones
pilar.jones@ahrcnyc.org
83Maiden Lane
New York , New York 10038

My name is Priya Amin and I'm a resident of Jamaica, Queens. I grew up in Queens, went to high school in Flushing, and now live here again since finishing graduate school. In my decades living in Queens, I have witnessed the inefficiencies and carelessness of the NYPD. The NYPD doesn't make me feel safe. They are useless and unnecessary. When I was only 14, I was subject to stop and frisk for carrying groceries. Last week, I received a speeding ticket on Queens Blvd and the officer admitted I probably wasn't going as fast as he thought as he ticketed me. Two days ago, I went to a rally where out of around 30 cops present, I only saw two wearing a mask properly. This was at a crowded event during a pandemic.

If the NYPD is defunded, we could use that money to instead have traffic marshalls, provide mental health services, fund homeless shelters, fund our public schools, and so much more. I see terrible things happen in NYC all the time and have no one to call because everything defaults to the police. I don't want to get funneled to the police because I report teenage boys kicking a homeless person on the street or because I told an MTA employee that someone touched me inappropriately on the train. I'd rather report the former to a homeless shelter that can take in the individual. I'd rather perpetrators get proper punishment rather than being funneled into echo chambers. I'd rather they learn the error of their ways through restorative justice programs than be thrown endlessly in juvenile detention and prison.

I could go on and on about how useless the NYPD is in keeping New York City safe. Their budget should be reduced immediately by at least half. NYC should move towards a complete elimination of police within the next few years and redirect officers and funds to specific training and departments. Having the NYPD deal with mental health calls, homeless people, sexual assault allegations, stop and frisk, traffic violations, and so on is too much for them to handle. There need to be distinct, community led programs and services for people dealing with these problems.

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

Good Afternoon.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Racquel Pinnock Edwards
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975 E 37th Street
brooklyn, New York 11210

City Council Hearing Testimony,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

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Thank you for your consideration.

Ray Schwartz

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309 W. 104 St., 9D

New York City, New York 10025

City Council Finance Committee,

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Committee on Finance

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Thank you for your consideration.

Rebecca Sauer

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247 West 37th Street, 18th Floor

New York, New York 10018

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

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Reisy Veloz
rveloz8@gmail.com
326 Roebling St
Brooklyn, New York 11211

City Council Finance Committee,
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Committee on Finance
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May 25, 2021

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Thank you for your consideration.

Rhama Medina
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1760 Watson avenue #5h
Bronx, New York 10472

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

Our failure in this field is notorious, with the police using violence where de-escalation techniques are clearly more appropriate

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Richenda Kramer

chendakramer@yahoo.com

350 Richmond Ter Apt 4R, #4R

Staten Island, New York 10301

Robert Jacklosky

32-- Cambridge Avenue (5B)

Bronx, New York 10463

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rjacklos@yahoo.com

Dear City Council,

This is testimony for increased funding in Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, New York.

Please considering increasing funding for PEP officers in Van Cortlandt Park in order to address the excessive partying and littering that has been occurring there over the last two years.

Yours,

Rob Jacklosky

**New York City Council FY2022 Executive Budget Hearing
Testimony Submitted by Student Leadership Network
May 25, 2021**

Good morning. My name is Robert Robinson, and I am the Senior Managing Director of CollegeBound Initiative (CBI) at Student Leadership Network, formerly known as Young Women's Leadership Network. As a Brooklyn native and proud New York City public school alumnus, I began my career as the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions at my alma mater, New York University (NYU). I worked specifically with their Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) in an effort to increase enrollment for students from underserved communities. Following my time at NYU, I joined CBI as a Director of College Counseling at Middle College High School at Medgar Evers College. I also served as a Director of College Counseling at Juan Morel Campos Secondary School before joining Student Leadership Network's central office team in 2008. On behalf of Student Leadership Network, thank you to Council Finance for this opportunity to testify about the Fiscal Year 2022 Executive Budget on Student Leadership Network's **FY22 funding requests, which include: the Speaker's Initiative (\$250,000), the Young Women's Leadership Development Initiative (\$75,000), the College and Career Readiness Initiative (\$75,000), and the Social and Emotional Supports for Students Initiative (\$75,000).**

Student Leadership Network operates two programs in New York City that support young people from diverse, underserved communities to access educational opportunities that prepare them to lead successful lives: The Young Women's Leadership Schools (TYWLS), a high-performing network of single-gender, traditional district public schools, and CollegeBound Initiative (CBI), a comprehensive college access, persistence, and success program for young people of any gender.

In 1996, Ann and Andrew Tisch partnered with the Center for Educational Innovation and the New York City Department of Education to launch The Young Women's Leadership School (TYWLS) of East Harlem, the first public all-girls school to open in the United States in 30 years. Their vision was to provide girls growing up in underserved communities with a high-quality college preparatory education modeled after the finest private schools. Today, Student Leadership Network impacts more than 2,500 students through our five TYWLS public schools in New York City and nearly 8,000 through 16 partner schools nationwide modeled after TYWLS.

In 2001, with a vision for making the dream of college a reality for students from underserved communities and first generation college students, Student Leadership Network launched the co-educational CollegeBound Initiative (CBI), first to support TYWLS of East Harlem's inaugural graduating class. Today, more than 13,000 students in 25 New York City public schools are impacted by CBI, which places full-time college counselors in schools who, just as in the best private schools, do it all. CBI's Directors of College Counseling support *all* students with college selection, financial aid, scholarship resources, applications, essays, interviews, and so much more. CBI's Director of College Counseling cultivate a college-going culture across their schools, working with students and their families as early as the sixth grade. Our average student-to-counselor caseload is 100:1, compared to the national average of 500:1. Since 2001, CBI has helped more than 19,000 students enroll in college. Cumulative college enrollment rate for students who graduate from a CBI partner school is a stunning 87%, with 74% enrolling in four-year colleges. This is well above the City's average college enrollment rate, which was 63% for the graduating class of 2019.

The impact of institutionalized racism in the United States in conjunction with COVID-19's disproportionate impact on communities of color in New York City creates and exacerbates disparities in educational outcomes for students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). This chronic, on-going disparity is linked to systemic, institutional

barriers that disproportionately impact students from underserved communities, particularly BIPOC students, including unequal access to rigorous academic preparation and enrichment opportunities, shortages of qualified college counselors, a lack of opportunities to visit college campuses, and an overall unfamiliarity with the increasingly complex college admissions and financial aid processes among students and their families. While college is one of the most important economic mobility engines in this country, far too many BIPOC students and students from underserved communities are underrepresented in higher education and do not receive a college degree. The critical support provided by CBI's Directors of College Counseling ensures that students from these communities (95% of CBI students identify as BIPOC) earn college degrees, leading to better career and economic prospects for themselves, their families, and their communities. Many of our students, along with several of our partner schools, reside in communities that were among the hardest hit by COVID 19 in New York City and must maintain their comprehensive college access support provided by CBI to ensure students stay on track in achieving their dreams of higher education. As such, we are requesting the New York City Council's support and advocacy to restore critical College Access for All (CA4A) funds to pre-pandemic levels to ensure students' complete educational recovery and future success amid the aftermath of the global health crisis.

In addition to our proven college access programming, SL Network continues to support students after their high school graduation through our Alumni Engagement Team, which supports students' persistence through their postsecondary plans via college and career events (now virtual) and targeted programming to see them through to their college graduation day. This critical task has become increasingly urgent as COVID-19 has created new obstacles and disrupted many of our students' future plans. Many students continue to struggle with food and housing insecurity throughout the pandemic in addition to lack of access to the internet and transportation options amid sudden college campus closings. Additionally, even more students faced economic uncertainty and were forced by necessity to pause their studies to take on jobs to help support their families who experienced job loss amid the city shutdown. Our Alumni Engagement Team works hard to help combat these challenges by deepening collaborations with external organizations, leveraging college connections, and tapping into innovative technology platforms that help develop skills and provide opportunities for students to succeed in college and beyond, focusing on the critical transition between students' first and second year in college.

COVID-19's drastic impact on the college application and admissions process cannot be understated. Despite CBI's ability to maintain our strong college-going outcomes for the class of 2020, we anticipate a deeper impact on the class of 2021, many of whom did not get to sit for a standardized test, visit a college campus in their senior year, or apply to as many schools due to new competing priorities and virtual learning fatigue. Our work is now more important than ever, and Student Leadership Network is committed to meeting our students' and partner schools' needs during this incredibly challenging time. Our CBI team has codified their learnings and virtual college counseling best practices to best support students across our 25 partner schools, and we have expanded our reach to support students citywide through our [suite of virtual resources](#).

Our successful programming would not be possible without our strong and exemplary partnerships with the New York City Department of Education and the New York City Council. We sincerely appreciate the New York City Council's investment in Student Leadership Network's CollegeBound Initiative program and look forward to continuing to partner with both the Council and the Department of Education to ensure that *all* students have the resources that will propel them to achieve their dreams.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.



City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

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Thank you for your consideration.

Robert Schwab

robertschwablcsw@yahoo.com

4022 Hillman Avenue, Apt. A-2

Bronx, NY, New York 10463

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Thank you for your consideration.

Robin Graham

rgraham_100@msn.com

9602 Glenwood Road

Brooklyn, NY, New York 11236

Funding for the NYPD should be reallocated to social services and ensuring that all people are having their basic needs met, not just those with socioeconomic privilege. This will do more to prevent crime than increasing or even sustaining the NYPD budget as is. We need to pour more money into prevention as opposed to reaction when it comes to harm. The NYPD perpetuates state violence and white supremacy! Defund!!

Robin Mele

budget for real school safety

I am an educational psychologist, retired from the faculty of the Hunter College School of Education. I support Teachers Unite.

I am writing to urge council members to pass a budget that fully divests from school policing and funds restorative justice, mental health, and students' futures.

School safety officers do not have training in child development or learning and instruction or counseling. They often take a punitive approach which alienates children from the school's mission of personal academic and emotional growth. School safety officers should remain in the police department and be assigned to police work outside the school system.

Instead of a police presence take positive measures to create a safe environment for learning and instruction. Within the school budget allocate \$118.5 million for restorative justice, \$162 million for social workers and guidance counselors, and \$15 for a mental health continuum.

Sincerely yours,

Rosalie Friend, Ph.D.

440 Fifth Street

Brooklyn, New York 11215

Education budget should reduce class size

I am an educational psychologist, retired from the faculty of the Hunter College School of Education. In budgeting for our city's schools, I urge you to prioritize reducing class size. My specialty is research in learning and instruction. Small class sizes enable teachers to understand children's individual differences and adapt their teaching to reach all children.

Countless studies have shown that children in smaller classes achieve better outcomes, both academic and otherwise, and that class size reduction can be an effective strategy for closing racially or socioeconomically based achievement gaps. Although it is possible that other uses of the same money might be equally or even more effective, there is little evidence to support this. Smaller class sizes and reduced total student loads are a relevant working condition simultaneously influencing teacher recruitment and retention; that is, providing smaller classes may partly offset the need for higher wages for recruiting or retaining teachers.

Increased achievement due to smaller class size has been demonstrated in improved graduation rates, improved cognitive achievement and improved social and emotional functioning of children. Smaller class sizes are especially effective in improving outcomes for low income and minority students.

Please assure reduced class size in budgeting for New York City's public schools.

Sincerely yours,

Rosalie Friend, Ph.D.

440 Fifth Street

Brooklyn, NY 11215

Good afternoon Chair Dromm and fellow councilmembers, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Rui Li, I am the Women & BIPOC Small Business Empowerment Organizer of the Street Vendor Project. With a staff of 8, SVP is the only organization that focuses on street vendors in New York City, through direct legal representation, small business development and training, organizing support, leadership development, and strategic legislative advocacy. We have connected nearly 3,000 street vendors to resources and information about housing, food access, and loan and grant opportunities in the past year alone.

With New York City Council's support, we hope to launch the later phases of a vital new program, the Small Business Consultation Program. With this small business consultation program, SVP aims to provide our members with the tools, resources, and skills to grow their business, so they feel empowered to make business decisions that will help them succeed down the road.

Through this program, we are intentionally making an investment in the development of financial empowerment and literacy by creating year-long empowerment program designed to provide a holistic approach to establishing financial independence, self-sufficiency, and small business growth.

The program will roll out in three phases, beginning with Phase one, which launched earlier this year, will focus on business compliance, e-payment, and social media. Phase two will expand our services to cover finance for small business and personal finance. There is a wide range of financial literacy within our membership, and many operate relatively informally and do not have access to technology like Excel and QuickBooks. We want to offer tangible tools to those who need it and make sure folks have the proper documents needed to be loan ready. Phase three will cover marketing. For those who want to take that step to actively market their business, we can offer advice and strategies, create a business card or even a logo, and help them make your business uniquely theirs.

Through the small business consultation program, SVP will conduct outreach to vendors on the street throughout the five boroughs and provide them with information on available services that we and our partners provide in relation to small business development, small business legal services, financial literacy, and microloans.

Providing small business assistance to street vendors benefits the community by providing primarily low-income immigrants who work as street vendors with the skills and support necessary to thrive and grow. By educating vendors to improve their financial literacy, we help them integrate into the formal economy - allowing them to open bank accounts, access credit, regularly pay and file taxes, even eventually in some cases buy homes. When a vendor grows their business, that creates jobs, expanding the economy. Furthermore, by providing tax filing assistance to vendors, we are helping to increase tax compliance, thereby growing revenues to the city and state. As the city reopens, we want to make sure our street vendors, who were disproportionately devastated by the pandemic, are a part the just economic recovery of the city.

Thank you in consideration of this proposal in advancing the business development and financial empowerment of New York's smallest business owners.

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

Good morning.

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The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color. The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

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- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ruth Enriquez
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268 Metropolitan Ave, APT 3B
Brooklyn, New York 11211

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Committee on Finance

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Thank you for your consideration.

Ruth Laurent

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PEP

Simply put, there needs to be a significant increase of PEP officers in Bronx parks. More funding is needed.

Samantha stone

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
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Jackson Heights, New York 11372

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New York, New York 10001

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Thank you for your consideration.

Sarita Daftary

daftarysarita@gmail.com

225 Norwood Avenue

Brooklyn, New York 11208

Testimony to the City Council

May 25, 2021 – Executive Budget Hearing

Chair Dromm, and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I want to focus my comments on the urgent responsibility of this Council to reject the Mayor's proposal to further grow the wasteful and abusive ranks of the New York City Department of Correction, and rather, commit to divesting resources from this failed agency to invest in 1) urgently needed independent jail oversight and 2) resources to address root causes of incarceration.

Freedom Agenda staff and members have been advocating to end NYC's overreliance on incarceration for years. While we've had success in reducing the number of people in jails, the Department of Correction budget has not budged. New York City is now wasting about \$1.17B per year, including fringe benefits and pension fund contributions, to keep thousands of excess officers on staff, and the cost per incarcerated person is more than \$447,000 per year. A report we issued last week - [#DeflateDOC: New York City Department of Correction by the Numbers](#), along with [a report from the Vera Institute](#) last week, outline the plain truth the **New York City runs the most expensive jail system in the nation with the worst results**. The Council cannot continue to tolerate this.

While the lavish spending on this failed agency is offensive, the cost is not the only problem. This month a Federal Monitor issued their [eleventh report](#) outlining systematic failures in the jails. For at least the second time, the Monitor explained that **overstaffing is enabling guards to use violence against people in their custody more and more often**. Some specific quotes from the monitor's report are below:

"Notwithstanding the abnormally high absenteeism, the Department still has an extraordinarily large number of Staff to operate the jails."

"Across the thousands of incidents that the Monitoring Team has reviewed, all too often, problems are precipitated, exacerbated, and catalyzed by the number of Staff who are present at the scene."

"Even as Facility leadership and Staff claim that there is an insufficient number of Staff in the Facilities, time and again, the Monitoring Team observes more Staff than reasonably necessary responding to incidents."

“The Monitoring Team has found that the dominant staffing models within the Facilities appear to promote the idea that the addition of more Staff will solve all problems. This creates a dynamic in which Facility leadership believes more Staff are always needed, when, in fact, it appears that Staff simply need to be deployed more effectively and need to apply a different skill set to resolve tensions. More often than not, Staff and Supervisors default to requests for additional Staff to address issues that can and should be addressed by the Staff on the unit and their Supervisors. In most cases, it appears the Staff and Supervisors on the unit are simply unwilling or unable to accept and execute their core responsibilities, such as to provide basic services and resolve interpersonal conflict, and instead seek more Staff to address the problem.”

“The staffing issue seems to be one of roster management and deployment versus insufficient numbers of Staff.”

The Monitor further points out the excessive and violent responses of the Emergency Response teams, including Probe Team, Emergency Services Unit, and Special Search Teams. **Based on last week’s budget hearing, there seem to be at least 250 staff employed in the ESU and SST teams. These are hyper-militarized teams that work across the whole island rather than in a specific facility. They would not exist if NYC did not run a penal colony.** If the Department were truly struggling to cover necessary posts in facilities, these units could be immediately disbanded, which would free up staff to work in facilities, and would be much better use of resources than starting a new academy class this fall, who would begin their work in facilities in Spring 2022, by which time many more units should be closed as social distancing guidelines are eased, and more importantly, our City recommits to decarceration after allowing an unconscionable rise in pretrial detention in response to consistent fear-mongering from the NYPD.

To co-sign the Mayor’s plan to hire a new class of 400 correction officers, when DOC already has twice as many officers per incarcerated person as they did when the Mayor took office, would be the wrong decision morally and financially, and would send the exact wrong message to the Department - that a perceived staffing shortage created by their failed or absent management will be rewarded by more resources.

While the Council ponders the Mayor’s request to add \$32M to the DOC’s expense budget and another \$128M in related costs, consider that **the Board of Correction, an agency of just a few dozen employees tasked with providing oversight to NYC’s massive and dysfunctional jail system, lost 8 of their 34 staff last year.** These cuts have meant that the Board, whose staff was already too small to fulfill their role, is now lacking adequate staff to monitor the borough jails transition; provide PREA oversight and TGNCNBI taskforce staffing; conduct independent death investigations for each death in custody at a time when deaths are increasing; provide health and mental health oversight; monitor violence in the jails; and prepare to oversee implementation of the new restrictive housing rule. A mere \$830,000 dollars will restore the BOC budget to FY 2020 levels. In truth, much greater investment is needed. compared to the Civilian Complaint Review Board, whose budget is now set at 1% of the NYPD’s personnel budget. If the Board’s budget were at least 1% of DOC’s personnel budget (the same ratio allocated to CCRB to oversee NYPD) it would be roughly \$11M. With a further budget increase, BOC could take over the role of investigating and disciplining staff accused of misconduct, which the Department has objectively failed to do.

Increased investment in the Board would need to be combined with efforts from the Council to increase its independence. In March, we learned that the Board had prepared a report about Covid-related deaths in DOC custody, but since December, it has remained hidden, and when FOIAed, the Board released a version which redacted all its recommendations. Who is telling the Board to keep that information from the public, and how will the Council intervene?

The lives of people in the jails depend on the Council's partnership to rejecting the Mayor's attempt to add more officers into the jails, which we know from experience, will only mean more abuse. We call on you to reject any DOC budget increases, to fully fund the Board of Corrections, and to finally begin the essential work of divesting from this bloated Department and redirecting those resources to addressing root causes of incarceration.

Thank you,

Sarita Daftary

Co-Director, Freedom Agenda

Sdaftary@urbanjustice.org

Good afternoon,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about the preschool special education proposal in the proposed budget. My name is Shaina Ramos and I live in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. I am the parent of Oliver Leon, a preschool student with Autism.

My testimony is about the need to address the shortage of preschool special education classes and provide salary parity to teachers of these classes.

At Oliver's IEP meeting in August 2019, the DOE determined that he needed a small preschool special education class to meet his needs. However, the DOE didn't have a seat available for my son anywhere in Brooklyn. I called every preschool the DOE recommended, but they all told me they had no seats available. Since the DOE failed to find a seat, I started calling programs in other boroughs. The closest seat I could find was in Woodhaven, Queens. With no other option, I enrolled Oliver.

The class has helped Oliver. However, before schools closed, the long trip to Queens took a toll. It took two hours for the school bus to bring Oliver to school. That meant that every day, my three-year-old preschooler with Autism had to sit on a bus for four hours. Oliver had to wake up extra early to catch the bus, was too tired to play with his classmates, and had terrible nightmares during naptime because his sleep pattern was disrupted.

I am speaking to you not only as a mother, but also as a special education teacher. For four years I worked as a teaching assistant in a preschool special education program at a community-based organization. I saw what a difference these programs made for young children. However, my co-workers and I were severely underpaid, which led to a high turnover rate. Even though I loved this job, I decided to leave to work for a DOE school that offered a higher salary. A couple of years ago, the Mayor announced well-deserved salary increases for preschool general education teachers at community-based organizations, but not for preschool special education teachers. Leaving out preschool special education teachers is unfair to teachers and to children. It will cause even more teachers to leave preschool special education programs, resulting in even more children waiting for seats.

I would like to thank the City Council for recommending \$85 million in your response to the budget to address the shortage of preschool special education classes and pay their teachers the same as Pre-K teachers. I was glad to hear that the Mayor included funding for preschool special education in the budget proposal.

But there's only \$22 million for this coming year, and none of that funding will go to help the preschoolers with the most intensive needs, like my child. There's \$88 million proposed for the following year, but still no commitment to pay teachers at preschool special education programs run by community-based organizations the same salary as other early childhood teachers at CBOs.

3-K and Pre-K are not for all unless there is a seat for every child who needs one. There is no early childhood salary parity unless preschool special education teachers are included. Please ensure that the final budget includes \$85 million for Fiscal Year 22 to ensure a preschool special education class seat for every child who needs one and pay preschool special education teachers the same salaries as other early childhood teachers.

Thank you,

Shaina L Ramos

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

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Thank you for your consideration.

Shanti McGhee

shantimcg2004@yahoo.com

787 E. 46th St.,

Brooklyn, New York 11203

My name is Sharmin Hossain, born and raised New Yorker living in Sunnyside, Queens. I'm a long time supporter of Desis Rising Up and Moving, a working class organization in Queens.

I demand that the NYC City Council #DefundNYPD. The city did not defund the NYPD budget last year. This year we need to make sure you commit to making significant cuts to the NYPD budget and reinvest that money in community resources.

It's time to defund the NYPD and refund the people! The New York City Government should immediately: Cut NYPD budget & police force by 50%, Divest from the Prison Industrial Complex and Invest in Community Care and End Stop & Frisk, Close Rikers, No New Jails, Free Them All.

The global pandemic has wrought tremendous pain upon our city, exposing and exacerbating longstanding injustices against essential workers, low-income families, and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) communities. Mayor de Blasio has consistently refused to invest in our communities, choosing instead to enable the [NYPD's continuing and escalating violence](#) in support of white supremacist fascism. The Governor has repeatedly [hedged demands to tax the rich](#), while threatening to cut budgets for local governments and schools to make up for the massive deficit. The path forward is indisputable. In the words of Angela Davis, we cannot “rely on governments, regardless of who is in power, to do the work that only mass movements can do.”

Here's what we know, often through personal experience: Slashing public services like housing, education, transportation, and medical care—underfunded and deprioritized long before the pandemic—will subject more New Yorkers to the violence of poverty. We know the city workers who keep us safe—EMS clinicians fighting COVID-19, social workers, sanitation workers, educators, and more—are at greater risk of [losing their lives](#) to the pandemic. We stand in solidarity with them, even as our [Mayor proposes a budget](#) that will decimate the services that keep them safe and healthy. At a time of global reckoning with racial injustice, we also recognize that our public health crisis is [disproportionately affecting Black and brown people](#)—and devastating the economic stability of Black New Yorkers (20% of whom are employed in the public sector).

New Yorkers need our teachers and counselors; our nurses and emergency medical workers; our housing lawyers, homeless outreach workers, and countless others to ensure our safety and wellbeing. We are safe when we have affordable housing, and policies that [safeguard us against eviction](#). We are safe when our jobs and livelihoods are no longer considered “nice-to-haves” in an immoral municipal budget. We are safe when all of our children have access to quality public education, with practices that mitigate the spread of COVID-19 amongst our loved ones. We are safe when our community health programs are strengthened, with non-police mental health and drug crisis responses and adequately-funded hospitals. We keep us safe.

When Mayor de Blasio and Governor Cuomo refuse repeated calls by our communities to defund the NYPD and [tax the rich](#)—two transformative changes that will improve community safety, support our overall quality of life, and prevent mass layoffs—they are proclaiming that our lives are expendable pawns in a game of budgetary chess. Millions of people in New York City are [unemployed](#) or [food insecure](#). Hundreds of thousands [face evictions and potential](#)

homelessness. Thousands of children have [lost a parent to the virus](#). Thousands more undocumented New Yorkers have gone an entire year without unemployment insurance—and [will continue to be excluded](#) from proposed federal stimulus packages. We need strong communities and social services now more than ever, yet our Mayor refuses—and instead chooses to pad the NYPD's billion dollar budget to help them assault protesters and stifle labor strikes. He and our Governor have folded to pressure from NYPD brass and the wealthiest echelons of our city, content to see the working class ravaged while the most powerful continue to wreak havoc on our people in the name of profit.

To claim that our safety solely depends on an extravagantly over-funded NYPD is to deny all [evidence and logic that tells us otherwise](#). The NYPD's budget is the largest police budget in the country, more than the sum allotted to New York's Department of Health, Homeless Services, Housing Preservation and Development, and Youth & Community Development combined. Yet the NYPD, in the face of citywide austerity measures, is not expected to make any cuts to their excessive \$6 billion budget in the next fiscal year—a figure that balloons to [\\$10.6 billion](#) when accounting for pensions, settlements, and fringe benefits.

The NYPD claims to protect us, but they [only protect the interests of the handful of billionaires in our city](#) who have used this moment to [fill up their coffers](#) and exploit the poor and underserved until their dying moments. Even in our time of incalculable loss, the police continue to brutalize Black and brown people in service of White supremacy, enforcing [development-directed policing](#) to shore up the gentrification of our communities. The Mayor continues to allow the NYPD to [criminalize poverty](#)—while New York's 117 billionaires have increased their wealth [from \\$521.5 billion to \\$600.7 billion](#) through the [ongoing exploitation](#) of immigrants, people of color, and working class people. This is part of a broader political machine that has worked for decades to turn our city into a playground for the rich—and has prioritized the interests of wealthy visitors over building a thriving New York City for the people who keep it.

The road ahead is clear: We must defund the police and tax the rich—and reinvest those direly needed funds back into our communities. Our Mayor may paint "[Black Lives Matter](#)" on our roads, but until he and our elected leaders do what is necessary to protect Black lives, we must continue to agitate for change, through mass movements and sustained political action. Our collective future depends on a meaningful defunding of the NYPD, legislation that compels the wealthiest figures of our city to pay their fair share, and protection against mass layoffs.

DEFUND THE NYPD NOW.

Testimony of Shino Tanikawa
before the New York City Council Committee on Finance
on the Fiscal 2022 Executive Budget for the New York City Department of Education

May 25, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on the fiscal year 2022 Executive Budget. My name is Shino Tanikawa and I serve on the Community Education Council District 2 as a Manhattan Borough President's appointee. I also co-chair the [Education Council Consortium](#), a citywide organization comprised of Community Education and Citywide Council members and am a member of the Steering Committee of the [New Yorkers for Racially Just Public Schools](#). Although my perspectives are informed by the positions I serve, the opinions shared in this testimony are my own. *My comments only pertain to the budget for the New York City Department of Education (DOE).*

I want to start by expressing my gratitude to Senator Robert Jackson, Alliance for Quality Education and numerous other parents and advocates who have tenaciously advocated for the Campaign for Fiscal Equity funding for so many years. Their perseverance will be an inspiration for many generations of advocates in the future.

It has been said that a governmental budget is a moral document. As such, we must ask ourselves whether the Executive Budget for the DOE represents our values and principles and whether the budget prioritizes the needs of our most marginalized students. The pandemic has been a wake up call to right this ship that has left so many vulnerable New Yorkers struggling to stay afloat. It is time to rethink our education system at the fundamental level, dismantle systems of oppression inherent in the structure and create a truly equitable public school system. To this end, I endorse the [budget demands](#) compiled by the New Yorkers for Racially Just Public Schools.

There are some elements of the budget that appear rooted in values of equity. Funding all schools at 100% of the Fair Student Funding is certainly equitable, as well as infusion of funds for students with disabilities, social workers, mental health services and community schools expansions. However, I believe the budget as it stands falls short. I will highlight just a few of the issues below.

Small class size

First and foremost, we need to take class size reduction seriously. Now with the increase in Foundation Aid long promised to our students, there is no more excuse for not reducing class sizes so that our students receive a sound basic education guaranteed under the State's constitution.

Small class sizes are even more important today not only for adequate social distancing but also for trauma-informed teaching, social emotional learning and culturally responsive and sustaining education. Class sizes must be small enough for teachers to form meaningful relationships with students.

The Education Council Consortium passed a [resolution](#) in support of allocating \$250 million specifically for class size reduction and developing a class size reduction plan. Community Education Council District 2 has also passed a [similar resolution](#).

I have heard some Council members express concern for lack of space to reduce class size. We must be creative in finding space. 3K and PK can be sited at privately owned leased spaces. Doing so will free up space within school buildings. In overcrowded schools, thorough walk throughs should be conducted with space planners to identify potential spaces. We cannot give up on reducing class size before we assess what can be done.

Some have argued that by bringing Fair Student Funding to 100% schools will be able to reduce class size. I have not seen data to corroborate this claim. A very crude and quick analysis of class size data and FSF data, conducted by me, indicate that many schools with full FSF funding still have unacceptably large class sizes. Furthermore, there is anecdotal evidence for FSF resulting in overcrowding schools and classrooms because schools receive more funding with more students.

While we are on the subject of Fair Student Funding, I urge the City Council to create a funded Commission to review the formula. The Task Force created by Local Law 17 of 2019 ceased to exist before it released its recommendations publicly for reasons that are unclear even to me as a member of the Task Force. We were never able to conduct a thorough analysis of the formula itself and I believe this is an important undertaking.

Multilingual learners

It is not clear what is being proposed to assist our multilingual learners (MLLs) and their families, who have suffered disproportionately from the pandemic. I do not know if the MLLs have been receiving all the services to which they are entitled since March 2020. Considering how so many students with disabilities have not been receiving all the services, I am afraid the MLLs have also been short changed. The DOE is already under a Corrective Action Plan for failing MLLs. We must prioritize meeting their needs in this budget.

If ever changing school schedules and policies such as grading were confusing to parents with English language proficiency, I cannot imagine how difficult it must have been to navigate the school system for those with limited English proficiency. Funding Fair Student Funding at 100% is not sufficient to meet the needs of MLLs and their families.

Evidence based literacy instruction

There is consensus among scientists on the literacy instruction approach that maximizes the number of children who learn to read as competent readers. Yet, for reasons that mystify both parents and many educators alike, a certain literacy curriculum, with an approach different from the scientific community's consensus, dominates the market and our schools.

For the next school year and beyond, effective literacy instruction based on scientific research must be mandatory, particularly when literacy instruction - and instruction in all content areas for that

matter - was made extremely challenging because of the remote learning platform for the last 15 months. We must allocate adequate funding for professional development and supports for both teachers and students for evidence based literacy instruction.

Standardized assessment

It was unfortunate the Panel for Educational Policy approved the contract for Pearson at \$28 million for an assessment “platform.” We could have hired 280 more teachers for that expenditure instead.

Assessments are critical in education and should be conducted on a regular basis. However, I have no faith that a standardized or off-the-shelf assessment can give us information we need to better educate our children. Instead, we should support our teachers in developing their own assessment.

Please be critical of DOE expenditures for standardized assessments and gauge such expenditures through the lens of equity: how will this help our students with disability, English language learners, students in temporary housing and foster care? What data will be generated through such assessments and what will they tell us? Rethinking standardized assessments is one way to begin dismantling the system that is failing the majority of our students.

Police free schools

There should be resources to transform school safety. This is not about administrative transfer of school safety agents from NYPD to the DOE. This is about transforming how we create a safe learning environment for our students without the culture of criminalizing students. The transformation does not mean people will not be held accountable. It means understanding root causes of harmful behavior and addressing them. The current law enforcement approach is neither designed nor intended to address students’ lived experiences. Robust funding for restorative justice and social emotional supports will be a good start to this process.

Supplement rather than supplant

It is incredibly difficult to understand the details of the city’s budgeting process. While there are many documents available publicly, making sense of these documents is not easy. I ask the City Council to compare the amount of the Tax Levy money allocated to the DOE for the Executive Budget FY22 with past year’s budgets to ensure that the city is not supplanting the DOE budget using the state and federal funding. Although there is no prohibition against supplantation of local funding, I believe doing so is in contradiction to the spirit of legislation that authorized the state and federal funds.

We are at a crossroad. The pandemic has made me rethink our schools, health care, jobs, infrastructure and every facet of our city. We have a school system that does not serve the majority of our students. We have structures that marginalize fellow New Yorkers based on race, class, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. We should not be returning to “normal”

because “normal” was not right. It is disappointing that the Executive Budget FY2022 is not rooted in a different vision of our city. I hope the City Council can be more visionary.

Respectfully submitted,
Shino Tanikawa

Good morning, my name is Shyionna Medley.

I'm 15 years old.

I live in Staten Island New York

My agency is Seamans Society For children and Families.

Times before joining fair futures I felt as though my point of views were inaudible during the time I felt as though being a role model and leader youth voices should be witnessed with open minds and clear paths.

I struggle with financial management and schoolwork.

My fair futures mentor is Lukas Simmons having him be around for 3 months is so fundamental to me through all the good and struggling times, although him being my mentor was an eye opener to see how much of a voice and rights I have open me up to me be more optimistic and outspoken to what I need. During the COVID 19 Lukas Simmons was very engaging and accessible to me needs and a lot and how I was feeling about the pandemic. I feel as though New York City baseline funding for fair futures is very important for all youth to have voices and to grow into young people towards someone with a bright future and clear paths with college and high school scholarships etc.

Stephen Melnick
112-20 72 Drive, Apt A29
Forest Hills, NY 11375
917-558-3802

To Whom it may concern;

As a longtime NYC Park steward and head of the Friends of MacDonald volunteer group, I wish to convey with strongest urgency the need to reinstate the NYC Parks budget that was cut last year. Our group has tried very hard under extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances to help Parks Dept keep our beautiful sitting park in order. We were hoping the regular park staffing would keep things in order, but with those budget cuts, that wasn't to be.

Seasonal park staffing cuts, including cleaners and gardeners, has caused trash to pile up daily, weeds to overgrow and choke and kill our shrubs, plants, and several trees and graffiti on park property has increased. We also now have an out of control rat infestation throughout the park.

The lack of staff to regularly water our park has made matters worse. Unfortunately our park's drip irrigation system has not worked for nearly 10 years. We are still waiting for the city to address this...along with all of our broken sidewalks.

We have spent literally hundreds of hours volunteering in the park and up until the pandemic and the budget cuts, our park was in great shape and enjoyed by many visitors. Sadly, it's a totally different story now.

Please Play Fair Now and reinstate park funding so that our communities can enjoy their parks once again.

Now more than ever before, our city parks have become a vital part of keeping both physically and mentally healthy.

We need to get our parks and our city up and running again before it's too late.

Thanks for your time and look forward to seeing immediate action taken on behalf of our City Council and Mayor.

Sincerely,
Stephen Melnick
Friends of MacDonald Park, Forest Hills Queens

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

Executive Budget Hearing

May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

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The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
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- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steve Elworth

Steven.elworth@gmail.com

101 Ocean Parkway, 2-f

Brooklyn, New York 11218

To: Members of the City Council Finance Committee
Re: Funding for Struggling and Dyslexic Readers in NYC Schools
Date of Hearing: May 25, 2021

I was not able to join you on Zoom for your hearing on this matter. By now you will have heard and read testimony from many members of the ARISE Coalition on the inadequate funding and practices for addressing the needs of students with IEP's.

My particular area of concern is also, in many ways, the easiest to address. If struggling and dyslexic readers are identified early, and given instruction and interventions that align with the Science of Reading, they can be remediated and join their peers with little follow-up needed beyond accommodations such as extended time on testing.

This was certainly the case for my own two dyslexic sons. However, help had to be gotten outside of the system, and at considerable personal expense. The experience prompted me to write this article in 2011:

<https://www.gothamgazette.com/index.php/education/842-to-help-all-children-read-first-do-the-math>

Sadly, little has changed in terms of the numbers of still-struggling readers or the help that is not available to them in the NYC public schools. Since that time, more students have been able to sue for private school placement

<https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2019/1/7/21106489/new-york-city-now-spends-325-million-a-year-to-send-students-with-disabilities-to-private-schools>

But that is an expensive option on an individual basis, and confers help only to the most engaged and persistent parents.

<https://www.empirecenter.org/publications/perverse-incentives-high-costs-and-poor-outcomes/#:~:text=New%20York%20City%20now%20spends,with%20disabilities%20to%20private%20schools>.

If the City Council would work with the Department of Education, plus advocacy groups, on implementing the best instructional practices for instructing and remediating struggling and dyslexic readers, a great deal of time, money, and grief could be avoided. Instead, those students would be able to thrive academically along with their peers.

*Susan Crawford, Director
The Right to Read Project
www.righttoreadproject.org
Author of "Help! My Child Isn't
Reading Yet - What Should I Do?"*

City Council Finance Committee,

Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance

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My own 2019 call to 911 for an adult son in mental health crisis resulted in 7 police cars, riot gear and multiple cops wresting my calm, suicidal son to the ground, putting him in a state of total panic with multiple "I can't breathe" cries for help, forcing him down three flights of stairs with and ending in handcuffs--marks that still scar his wrists. He will be forever traumatized and it could have been 100 percent avoided with mental health experts -- NOT cops.

The City Council must stop the killings and the abuse and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

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- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Susan Grundberg

susan.grundberg@gmail.com

539 Throop Ave Apt 4

Brooklyn , New York 11221

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

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Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

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Thank you for your consideration.

Syreeta Jackson
syreeta.jackson26@outlook.com
1314 Virginia Ave, Apt 5E
Bronx, New York 10462

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

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Thank you for your consideration.

T. Elzora Cleveland
Elzoradst@gmail.com
421 8th Avenue #7320
New York, New York 10001

From: Tara Donahue <info@email.actionnetwork.org>

Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 12:02 PM

To: Finance Testimony

Subject: Testimony Before the Council of the City of New York, Finance Committee

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

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Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tara Donahue

tara.n.donahue@gmail.com

335 West 38th Street, 4th Fl

New York, New York 10018

City Council Finance Committee,
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Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

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Thank you for your consideration.

Tara Gerst
tara.schwitzman@gmail.com
511 W 151st St., Apt. C5
New York, New York 10031

Tatiana Ramos

5/24/21

In New York Foundling, they have a program called Fair Futures which provides Mentors to children in the foster care system. My experience with my mentor has been amazing. I feel like I have another big brother. He texts me every morning to check up on me, he plans outings and meetings for his mentees, he gives the best advice, he's willing to help with anything I need, he's supportive and most importantly he shows me that he cares and he respects me. To me, that's very important because there has been many times where I felt like I didn't have anyone by my side. Being a foster child isn't easy and if I didn't have my mentor, I would be very sad because i feel like that's one of the only people who understands me and that's one of the only people that I trust. I've been through so much in this system. However, the person that I am today isn't the same person that I was when I first got into the system. He has been apart of my growth and i truly appreciate him for everything he has done for me.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Tempia Lee-Jefferson

TLee-Jefferson@acmhny.org

90-26 171 Street

New York, New York 11415

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Teri-Ann Carryl

terianncarryl@gmail.com

536 Clinton Ave #2

Brooklyn, New York 11238

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Thalia Foulis
thaliafoulis@gmail.com
990 bushwick Ave apt 2c
Brooklyn, New York 11221

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Thank you for your consideration.

Thomas Rowan

t.rowan@mail.com

Apt. 635

Bronx, New York 10462

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Thank you for your consideration.

Tierra Labrada
tlabrada@shnny.org
247 W/ 37th Street
New York , New York 10018

Our District, 22, does not have a seat at this budget vote – but rest assured, our community ties run deep across this city, and we will make sure that our voice is heard. New York has protected the elite, the privileged, the wealthy and the powerful for too long, put its heel on the necks of our communities for too long, and insisted on environmental harm, policing, and austerity budgeting for our communities for too long.

The past year has been one of the most trying in our city's history. Between the pandemic and ongoing brutal police violence against Black and brown people, we have been pushed to the breaking point of our capacity for polite discourse. We hear from city politicians that the movement to defund police is one lacking in solutions, but the solutions are abundant, if only you would listen to directly impacted Black and brown folks leading it.

More than 5,000 people have been killed by police in the past half decade, half of them had been living with disability or mental illness. 88% of people on Rikers Island are Black or brown. It is the largest provider of treatment for mental illness in our city, and that is an abject failure of our political leadership. Incarceration is not mental health support. Policing and jails do not solve the root problems that lead to crime. They respond to violence with violence, and make everything worse for our communities.

Enough is enough. Last year the Council claimed to have defunded the police, but it was nothing more than an illusion – a budgetary trick. No more tricks. No more dead Black and brown kids, futures taken because of political cowardice. We must confront the policing and prison industrial complex in our city. Now more than ever, as our communities struggle through the pandemic and experience increased gun and hate violence, we must confront our city's infatuation with violence and rage, hate and death – rooted in our

insistence on addressing every problem with the violence that is policing.

Police cannot solve the fundamental issue that forces people to sleep or use substances on a subway, nor can they address the root issues that lead someone to resort to gun violence.

Our communities know what solves these issues. Public health infrastructure prevents the need for police or jails in the first place. We need community-based solutions; peer support; therapy resources; wraparound services; individualized support for young people; non-police community-based emergency responders who are healthcare providers and social workers; violence interrupters; and accountability mechanisms that reckon with and repair gender, race or hate-based violence without resorting to perpetuating violence through policing or jails. We need to empower our communities when they demonstrate through giving them the tools to de-escalate, as Black Lives Matter has repeatedly shown it can do. We need to remove police from the myriad roles they occupy but are not equipped to handle – we need police out of our schools, parks, public transit systems, and out of our neighborhoods most impacted by year after year of this City Council's insistence on austerity budgeting. The same decisions providing police with resources deprive our communities of fundamental public health infrastructure every neighborhood needs to be stable.

We need this infrastructure and these programs now.

Look at what other City Councils are doing. Austin cut its police budget by a third and is spending that money on buying vacant hotel rooms to house people experiencing homelessness. Denver and Los Angeles are, along with multiple other cities, launching non-police emergency responder services that can be scaled to meet the needs of well over 90% of 911 callers. And our city could be the

first to actually follow the rhetoric made so urgently obvious by the pandemic – that public health approaches are fundamental to public safety, that comprehensive healthcare infrastructure is a prerequisite to the stability of individuals and families, that we are all in this together and a harm in one part of our city is a harm to us all.

For as long as there have been police and cages, there have been calls for liberation through abolition. The experiment of jails and prisons has failed – incarceration does not address our social needs, it has only perpetuated generational, racist harm. Police do not address our social needs; they arrest us based on racist quotas and pretextual laws, they cage us, and they kill us. This City Council is complicit – it can vote to spend money on batons and bullets, or it can vote to spend that money community-led solutions evidence shows can reduce violence, can reduce poverty, and can improve public health.

Council, you can make a statement that the 33rd largest military in the world is too big for our city. You can choose to be on the right side of history by defunding the NYPD – really defunding it, not playing with the budget – by billions of dollars and investing each and every one of those dollars into housing, healthcare, education and more. You have enabled the unmitigated growth that polices our lives. Enough. Our communities need, deserve and demand the resources to build ourselves a future on a foundation of stability, trust and love.

Do your job. Give us a People’s Budget that demilitarizes our city and provides every New Yorker with dignity and care.

Tiffany Cabán

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
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- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

Please approve the Mayor's request for \$112 million and please make sure the \$112 million funds a non-police crisis response system of the sort proposed by CCIT-NYC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tony Guarino
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222 Bedford Park Boulevard, Ste. 1G
Bronx, New York 10458

City Council Finance Committee,
Testimony before the Council of the City of New York

Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 25, 2021

Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today about New York City's failure to properly serve its citizens with mental disabilities.

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to respond are peers (those with lived mental health experience) and health care providers. Police are trained to uphold law and order and are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises. In the last five years, the NYPD has killed 18 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises, 15 of whom were people of color. The City Council must stop the killings and authorize the Mayor's allocation of \$112 million for a non-police response to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

I support the proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC (CCIT-NYC), which will make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises. The proposal calls for:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians;
- teams run by culturally competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
- 24/7 operating hours;
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Torey W
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621 East 80th Street
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Trang Dang

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2005 MULINER AVENUE

BRONX, New York 10462

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Thank you for your consideration.

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1711 TOWNSEND AVE

Bronx, New York 10453

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Victoria Toro and I'm concerned about my fellow New Yorkers, especially those who are disproportionately and unjustly targeted by police violence. Last year the Council and Mayor di Blasio did not truly commit to defunding the NYPD by \$1 billion dollars.

I'm concerned about the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget which includes a \$200 million dollar increase for the NYPD. This is the most expensive NYPD budget ever proposed.

The NYPD already has a \$6 billion budget and I don't believe an increase in police and police activity is what keeps communities safe and healthy. I want to see more investment in community services, by and for communities, included in the budget that the City Council passes this year. I want to see the NYPD removed from social service-related roles.

Every year, NYC spends millions of dollars to keep cops who have killed and brutalized us on the city payroll. That's millions of dollars that are going towards the continued criminalization of Black, Latinx and other communities of color and NOT towards health care, schools and youth programs, jobs and housing.

We need solutions to the issues our communities face, solutions that are developed, built, implemented, and maintained by the people from the communities.

We need to completely remove police from mental health responses. We need an NYPD hiring freeze and the elimination of dangerous units like the SRG and end initiatives like Youth Coordinating Officers that are systematizing the racial profiling and surveilling of our Black, Latinx, and other POC young people and police free schools.

Instead, investments should be made to equip the local community groups who are working day in and day out on the ground with the resources to be the first line of response. Our local community groups are the ones building the supportive ongoing relationships with the people in our communities. We need to invest more resources in developing these community-led infrastructures for safety and support.

We don't need new or more police officers—in fact, I call for a freeze on new NYPD hires and a full investment in community-led efforts that do not rely on police.

- We need the immediate expansion and full funding for citywide Summer Youth Employment.
- We need investments in violence intervention programs that don't rely on police.
- We need health and mental health care, education, housing and jobs.