



**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS**

**TESTIMONY OF JOCELYN E. STRAUBER
COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATION**

CONCERNING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2022

Good morning Chair Brewer and members of the Committee on Oversight and Investigations. My name is Jocelyn Strauber and I am the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”). I have been in this role just over two weeks, but in that short time I have been able to meet members of the staff, to familiarize myself with the structure of the agency and to begin to dig into the many ongoing investigations. I have much more to learn, but I am already inspired by the people that I have met and the important work that they are doing. I want to emphasize how honored and humbled I am to have an opportunity to lead this agency that has been serving New York City, protecting it from corruption and misconduct, and safeguarding public funds for nearly 150 years. That mission has never been more critical, as the City continues to grapple with the social and financial impact of the pandemic.

DOI’s investigations can result in various civil and criminal enforcement actions. DOI also makes policy and procedure recommendations to improve City operations and to address corruption vulnerabilities that we have identified through our investigations. The New York City Charter establishes DOI’s independence; and the dedicated DOI staff ensures that we act with independence, in the investigative work that we do every day. At DOI we follow the facts wherever they lead, without fear or favor and regardless of the nature or identity of the subjects involved, and we strive to maintain the highest standard of ethics and fairness in the conduct of our investigations.

We seek to be as transparent as possible with the public about our work without compromising our investigative mission. As a former federal prosecutor, like many of the DOI Commissioners before me, a commitment to DOI’s crucial independence and to doing the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons guides my leadership of this agency.

Today I’d like to speak with you about the reductions DOI has made to its budget, in Fiscal Year (“FY”) 2022 and for FY 2023, and the impact of those reductions. I will also highlight some of DOI’s high-priority work and I’ll share with you my preliminary plans for the agency, which include building our investigative ranks and strengthening our organizational structure to improve retention of our investigators – a key to our success. After consulting with my executive team, I believe these improvements are necessary for DOI to best accomplish its mission. I want to be up front with you that these improvements will require additional staff and a new promotional structure for investigators that will cost approximately \$1.3 million dollars. This additional funding would make a very significant contribution to DOI’s ability to do its work at an optimal level, both now and in the future.

Please know that I appreciate the tough financial times we are in and that virtually all agencies are being asked to cut back. But I believe it is important for this Committee to understand from DOI’s perspective what we feel is needed to best meet the City’s needs.

Costs for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023

I would like to start with a review of DOI’s budget numbers as they now stand, which provide essential context for the budget reductions we have made and our requests for additional funding – our “new needs” requests.

DOI’s current expense budget for FY 2022 is \$58.2 million dollars: \$29.4 million of that number is Personal Services – as you know that’s salaries for DOI staff. 517 employees report through DOI’s chain of command; about half of those positions are funded by DOI’s budget, and the remainder through financial arrangements with other City agencies or public authorities. The FY 2022 budget includes \$28.8 million dollars for Other Than Personal Services – essentially our expenditures other than salaries: \$3 million of that funds a mayoral initiative to conduct a comprehensive review of City-funded non-profit homeless service providers – the funds are used to hire two Integrity Monitors.

The FY 2022 budget numbers I just discussed include reductions to DOI’s budget of nearly \$1.2 million dollars, made in connection with the City’s most recent Program to Eliminate the Gap (“PEG”). That reduction is in addition to DOI’s previous reduction commitment in FY 2022 of \$490,000 dollars, for a total savings of approximately \$1.7 million dollars in FY 2022. DOI has no programs to cut, so to meet the bulk of our budget reductions over the years we had no other choice but to cut staff. In FY 2022, we therefore achieved savings by cutting our full-time staff positions from 385 to 352, eliminating 33 positions that were

March 15, 2022

vacant due to staff attrition but that we had otherwise planned to fill, and that is on top of the 20 additional positions we lost due to other reduction requests since FY 2020. That means in the past two years, DOI has lost a total of 53 positions. These cuts will result in reductions to our budget until at least 2026. Along with other surpluses realized in DOI's budget, these reductions will help us meet our savings goals in FY 2023 through FY 2026.

In FY 2023, DOI will reduce our budget by approximately \$1.97 million dollars. That reduction will come in part from the 33 positions we have eliminated already, and we will evaluate other discretionary spending that we can cut, such as re-negotiating some contracts. Our proposed budget for Fiscal Year ("FY") 2023 is \$49.2 million dollars: \$28 million for Personal Services and \$21.2 million for Other Than Personal Services. When the fiscal year starts in July, DOI anticipates receiving \$4 million dollars in forfeiture funds (principally federal forfeiture that resulted from the criminal investigations we conducted and which can be used for law enforcement purposes other than salaries) and \$1.8 million dollars in Intra-City funds that support staffing. These additional funds would supplement DOI's budget, bringing it to \$55 million dollars for FY 2023, and would maintain our staffing at about the same level as it was in FY 2022.

DOI worked hard to make these budget reductions and we are proud to do our part to help the City close the deficit. But I cannot emphasize enough the deep impact that the loss of staffing has on DOI's ability to fully meet its mission and mandate. It is my belief that the City receives an invaluable return from each investigator, namely in the identification and prevention of corruption, waste, fraud, and abuse.

DOI's Impact and Our Ongoing Work

DOI's investigations in the past year demonstrate the important role we play in ensuring that New Yorkers have the honest government they deserve. To give just a few examples, in 2021 we investigated construction-related misconduct, alleged attempts to bribe City employees in connection with procurement, and individuals who took advantage of vulnerable New Yorkers in need of housing. We also focused on schemes related to the Covid pandemic, including the submission of fake vaccination cards to City agencies. One matter that we worked with the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Labor resulted in charges against four individuals who falsely claimed to be healthcare workers and sold hotel rooms intended for Covid isolation to ineligible individuals, defrauding the government of approximately \$400,000 dollars. COVID-19-related fraud remains an active area of investigation for DOI.

Now let me turn to a few specific priority areas:

DOI's Ongoing Work Regarding the City's Jails

The flow of contraband into the City's jails has long been a DOI focus, an illegal trade facilitated by visitors, tainted mail and in some cases, employees and officers of the Department of Correction. This illegal activity not only damages the reputation of the Department and the vast majority of its employees who are honest public servants, it also makes their jobs even more dangerous and challenging. Most recently, in partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the FBI, our work led to arrests of nine current and former Correction employees and officers charged with taking cash bribes in exchange for smuggling scalpels, drugs, and cellphones to inmates.

DOI has sought to improve conditions in the City jails in other ways as well. When concerns were raised about correctional staff missing work without a legitimate reason, leaving their fellow officers in a dangerous situation due to under-staffing, DOI conducted more than 6,000 home visits to correctional staff to verify the reason for their absence. This examination, which included conducting surveillance and a review of relevant documents, uncovered hundreds of violations of Correction Department regulations and led to suspensions, resignations, and the return of more than 200 officers and staff to their posts.

DOI also monitors complaints relating to excessive force, sexual abuse and sexual harassment within the jails – well over 2,000 such complaints per year. These reviews have led to policy and procedural recommendations to rectify systemic shortcomings, administrative enforcement actions, and criminal referrals to prosecuting authorities. One such referral led to an unprecedented prosecution, handled with

the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, in which a uniformed Correction supervisor who allegedly issued orders that prevented officers from saving an inmate's life was charged with criminally negligent homicide and making a false filing.

Comprehensive Review of City-funded Homeless Service Providers

Let me take a moment to discuss tackling corruption in the public funding of nonprofits that provide essential services to New York City, which has long been part of DOI's core mission. In November 2021, DOI issued a comprehensive report proposing improvements to the City's budgeting, invoicing, and auditing of billions of dollars in nonprofit human service contracts that the City awards. And, just last month, the former CEO of the City-funded Bronx Parent Housing Network ("BPHN") pleaded guilty to conspiracy to enrich himself in a bribery and kickback scheme, in connection with an investigation we conducted with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York. Because the nonprofit provides critical services, and the City wanted to continue working with it, DOI recommended and secured an Integrity Monitor to oversee its operations, reporting to DOI.

In light of that criminal investigation, and ongoing concerns about City-funded homeless service providers, in February 2021 DOI embarked on a comprehensive review of these providers, a herculean and unprecedented task. The City Department of Social Services ("DSS") worked with DOI to identify almost 70 Department of Homeless Services ("DHS") shelter providers for review, and DOI procured two integrity monitors to provide forensic accounting as well as investigative support. DSS is leading a review of the providers' sexual harassment policies, also with the monitors' support. DOI's review is intended to identify any issues that may reflect on the provider's integrity or violate City contracts, such as conflicts, related party transactions, nepotism, or financial mismanagement. As DOI reviews the materials obtained from these providers, it will determine the appropriate next steps, driven as always by the facts we find.

The Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD

As this Committee is aware, DOI conducts investigations and makes recommendations related to the policies and practices of the New York City Police Department through DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD. In December 2020, as part of DOI's investigation of the NYPD's response to the George Floyd protests, we also examined the history and current state of affairs of police oversight in New York City. Among other things, we recommended that the Mayor and City Council consider consolidating existing police oversight functions into a single agency, headed by an independent board. I believe consolidating these currently overlapping functions has merit, and I continue to study the new structure that the report proposed, recognizing that change along these lines must have the support of the Mayor's Office and the City Council, and will take considerable time to thoughtfully implement.

In the meantime, I want to assure the Council and all New Yorkers that DOI will continue to provide robust oversight of the NYPD. To that end, I have already met with the Acting Inspector General for that Unit and am in the process of reviewing their ongoing matters. Prior to my arrival, DOI began taking steps to fill the Inspector General position, and I am committed to hiring a high-quality candidate with relevant law enforcement experience who understands the complexities of police oversight in New York City as well as how to advance investigations.

Successfully Tackling the Background Investigation Backlog

You are aware of DOI's background investigations backlog, and our efforts to address that in recent years. I am proud to report on the success of those efforts. DOI began tackling these backlogged investigations in the summer of 2019. We hired additional investigators with extra funding provided by the City and supported by City Council. DOI re-structured the background unit and in just over 2 and ½ years, we have cut the backlog by 75%, from 6,500 open backgrounds in the summer of 2019 to approximately just under 1,600 currently open. We expect to complete the remainder in the next 18 months. With respect to new background applications, in FY 2022, our average time to completion is 73 days.

DOI's Eyes and Ears

Let me speak for a moment about DOI's use of monitors. Our Integrity Monitorship Program has been used in dozens of oversight matters, and allows DOI to expand its oversight of critical contracts and large infrastructure projects and thereby help prevent and deter wrongdoing. This program also enables companies with integrity issues to continue to do business with the City if they fund an independent monitor to oversee their projects, reporting to DOI.

Currently, there are 11 integrity monitorships that report to DOI: seven paid for by the vendors and four paid by the City. DOI maintains regular contact with the monitors to stay informed of any issues identified, to plan next steps and to ensure the monitors' work aligns with DOI's expectations.

Strengthening DOI's Structure and Related New Need Requests

Let me now address our "New Need" Requests. Over the last two weeks I have worked with my executive team to better understand the challenges that DOI is currently facing, and the improvements we need if we are to maintain and strengthen our ability to pursue our core investigative mission. Simply put, to do this work as well and as thoroughly as possible, we need to hire and train more people, and we need to retain those people. That's the basis for the majority of our funding requests, which I'll walk through now.

Establishing a Salary Structure for Investigator Titles and the Need for Investigators

While all of DOI's staff is critical to our success, investigators are foundational to our mandate. While we recognize the need for budget cuts in the current environment, City-wide, it is important to note that these cuts impact our agency differently. They have left many of our squads seriously understaffed, limiting our investigative capabilities. DOI can and will continue to adapt to our current staffing, to the best of our ability – but we will need to make very hard choices without additional personnel.

As I said at the outset, we request an additional \$1.3 million dollars to make certain improvements to both staffing and structure. We will use these funds to hire 12 additional investigators at the entry level, six other investigative staff – 3 auditors, 2 attorneys and an engineering auditor – and to fund the promotion of certain existing staff.

1: Investigative Staffing and Structure

First, DOI seeks funding to implement a title structure and path to promotion within the agency that we believe will reduce the current rate of attrition. Over the last 20 months, due to attrition and hiring restrictions our Staff was reduced by approximately 16%. The attrition is due in part to the lack of a transparent and consistent title structure for investigators across the agency and thus an absence of clear opportunities for advancement. Furthermore, with respect to some of our investigators, their experience does not currently align with their title and salary. Therefore, we plan to create a consistent three-tier title structure and to bring experience, title and salary into alignment. This plan will require that we promote – and give raises to – certain members of our staff and will require approximately \$200,000 dollars in additional funding. We anticipate that this shift will directly and positively impact retention and recruitment.

Second, we seek funding to hire additional investigators.

To meet these needs we are seeking approximately \$1.1 million dollars for an additional 18 investigative lines:

- Twelve entry-level investigative hires who will be trained together as part of a new program that aims to provide a common understanding of investigative best practices and prepare these new investigators for assignment to any squad within DOI.
- Six additional investigators to join one of our recently established squads that focuses on the large, infrastructure agencies within the City, including the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Design and Construction.

2. Requirements that DOI Must Meet

We note that DOI also seeks funding to meet the City's requirements and best practices concerning confidential and sensitive data storage, as well as to comply with the newly enacted Executive Order 86 concerning the retention of an outside auditor to review DOI's compliance with certain data access procedures. To meet these requirements, we are asking for an additional approximately \$709,000 dollars.

DOI's mission and investigations transcend any one administration or Commissioner, and over the last two weeks, I have seen the importance of DOI's legacy and its day-to-day impact on New York City. I am committed to continuing its vital work and I am grateful for this Committee's support

Thank you for your time and I am happy to take any questions you may have.



**Testimony of Marquis Jenkins
to the New York City Council Committee on Oversight
Preliminary Budget Hearing for FY 2023
March 15, 2022**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Marquis Jenkins; I am the deputy director of campaigns at Freedom Agenda. Freedom Agenda is a member-led project, dedicated to organizing people and communities directly impacted by incarceration to achieve decarceration and system transformation.

I am here today to call attention to the need to overhaul the Department of Correction, and the important role of the Department of Investigation in that effort. NYC runs the most richly funded (and richly staffed) jail system in the country yet delivers the worst results. In 2021, [New York City spent almost 3 times \(290%\) more](#) per incarcerated person than the second most expensive jail system in the country, more than \$556,000 per incarcerated person per year, yet people in DOC custody are subjected to [some of the worst jail conditions in the nation](#). Those resources would be far better used outside of the jail system to meet people's needs and prevent interaction with the justice system and correcting that misallocation of funds is urgent. The Department of Investigation should have the capacity to expose the waste and fraud that has fueled this out-of-control spending.

While the Mayor's preliminary budget maintains wasteful staffing levels at the Department of Correction, it alarmingly **proposes substantial cuts to the Department of Investigations' staff assigned to investigate DOC – reducing headcount from 20 to 16**. The Council cannot allow this. Everything we know about the Department of Correction indicates a need for more oversight not, less. Some examples of the need for expanded oversight include:

- During the months when the Covid-19 transmission rate was at its peak, visitors were not allowed in NYC jails, yet the correction department authorities seized banned drugs inside city jails more than 2,600 times, between April of 2020 and May of 2021 according to [data obtained by THE CITY](#).
- [Data obtained by NBC News](#) showed that hundreds of officers abused sick leave or failed to report to work without reason (AWOL) and [a Daily News investigation](#) found officers throwing parties while faking sick.
- In 2021, sixteen people died in the custody of the Department of Correction

We urge this Committee and Council to push to restore funding in the FY2023 budget for DOI investigators assigned to the Department of Correction. In addition to exposing staff misconduct that puts incarcerated people at risk, the investigations that DOI carries out can also provide crucial insight to clarify that staffing issues in the jails exist because of fraud and lack of accountability, not because of insufficient staff. With that knowledge, the Council must also be prepared to eliminate DOC jobs that are both unnecessary and harmful, while creating opportunities for all New Yorkers to have meaningful work that advances the values of equality, fairness, and respect. We cannot keep people in jobs where they are causing harm, and themselves exposed to a terrible work environment, because elected officials aren't willing to change old patterns.

For further information, contact:

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<http://www.CloseRosies.org>

March 15, 2022

via Email: NYC Oversight & Investigations Committee:

To: Councilmember Gale Brewer, Oversight & Investigations Committee

cc: NYC Council staff

Ref: NYC Department of Investigations Budget hearing March 15, 2022

Dear Chair Brewer and members of the Committee:

Councilmember Brewer it is always a great pleasure to sit through any hearing you steward: you turn even the most mundane hearings into a master class in City Government.

Close Rosies welcomes the chance to testify today about:

- I. Close Rosies' decade long attempt to engage the NYC DOI in reigning-in sexual violence in our City Jails and;**
- II. Close Rosie's work to prod the DOI to engage in meaningful investigations into the way our police and district attorneys mistreat complaintants of sexual violence.**

- III. **The DOI could consider adding an additional squad to specifically investigate claims of Sexual Violence within City Agencies and;**
- IV. **lastly, the DOI could consider adding another squad to investigate campaign finance fraud and grift among local elected officials.**

I Close Rosies' attempts to engage the NYC DOI in reigning-in sexual violence in our City Jails

In 2017 to much fanfare the BX DA announced an indictment against a Rikers physician's assistant named Sidney Wilson.¹ We called him "Dr Handsey." His game was to single out weak and fragile women on Rosie's and target us for rape by over prescribing medications to us we could use to barter for our safety. When it came time to re-up those prescriptions he would rape us. He did it to dozens and dozens of us. He also removed the uteruses of hundreds of women on Rosie's or performed unnecessary kolposcopies. He was a sick predator. Despite our best efforts DOC was not doing anything about him. Mark Peters DOI stepped in and stood up an investigation of 42 counts of sexual assault against some of us. We weren't thrilled but it was something.

After years of tracking the case and working directly with former Bronx ADA Jeffrey Pruzan the BX DA quietly dumped the case in the summer of 2020² and didn't inform anyone. Darcel Clark's office didn't even bother to inform even the complainants in the case! They found out when the City law department replied to a filing their civil right attorney, Phillip Hines, made in a the SDNY regarding their Section 1983 class action lawsuit. The City law dept informed the court that the criminal prosecution had been dropped. How does the City Law dept know (over a year before the complaintants do) that the criminal complaint has been dropped against Wilson? It's outrageous, really.

The Bronx DA claims it could not make its discovery obligations. Those discovery mandates did not kick in until 2020 and the BX DA had been punting the case in a "not ready" status for over two and a half years before that. I have email proof. Here is just one exchange with ADA Strohmeyer from the BX DAs office (who btw was in charge of implementing Discovery reforms in the BX DAs office):

¹

<https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/doctor-assistant-charged-raping-rikers-island-inmates-article-1.3095975>

²

<https://www.nydailynews.com/news/ny-bronx-da-dropped-rape-charges-rikers-physician-assistant-20220117-pmyqaoyz3fakfkj4hs3cztddb4-story.html>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Grace <gorgeous212@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Jan 29, 2020, 3:36 PM

Subject: Re: Cecily Mcmillan

To: Strohmeyer, Nancy H. (BronxDA) <Strohmeyern@bronxda.nyc.gov>

Dear Ms Strohmeyer. I am completely dismayed to learn that neither you nor the defense attorney bothered to show up in court today and let Hon. Judge McCathy's clerk know what is going on. Please could I trouble you for an update??

Da Clark came to the downstate coalition vs Sexual Violence at the AG's office TWO FULL YEARS AGO and promised us she would prosecute this creep. We expect her to follow through on her promise considering all the other rapists on Rikers that she has looked the other way about. If I seem mad its BECAUSE I AM VERY ANGRY. Prosecute this abuser please!

On Mon, Oct 21, 2019, 11:43 AM Strohmeyer, Nancy H. (BronxDA) <Strohmeyern@bronxda.nyc.gov> wrote:

Dear Ms. Price,

As you know, Sidney Wilson's case was on in court on October 18, 2019. His defense attorney is currently on trial with another criminal case in the Bronx so this case was adjourned until December 13, 2019. As I have explained in prior communications, the circumstances regarding being sent our for trial remain the same.

Best regards,

Nancy Strohmeyer

From: Grace <gorgeous212@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, October 18, 2019 12:24 PM

To: Strohmeyer, Nancy H. (BronxDA) <Strohmeyern@Bronxda.nyc.gov>

Subject: Re: Cecily Mcmillan

Hi Ms. Strohmeyer:

Do you mind if I ask you if the trial is going to start or was pushed back again?

Hope you are well.

Best,

On Mon, Aug 12, 2019, 9:58 AM Strohmeyer, Nancy H. (BronxDA)
<Strohmeyern@bronxda.nyc.gov> wrot

There is much much more I could share. But I heard the DOI tell Chair Brewer that it considers the borough DAs as partners in law enforcement. The sandbagging of DOI cases doesn't not feel like a partnership. Please can I beg of the DOI to demand a full explanation of the outcome of the Sidney Wilson case!? He is free to work in any facility he pleases still and is roaming free today!

II. DOI should engaging in meaningful investigations into the way our police and district attorneys mistreat complaintants of sexual violence.

In 2014 I began engaging the NYC DOI regarding my own re-abuse at the hands of police and DANY staffers who ignore and eschew complaintants of sexual violence and in my case and those of many others revictimized me by charging me with false criminal complaints. The scheme was meant to protect my abuser who was a confidential informant. I postulated to the DOI that if this was happening to me it was happening to countless others who were suffering abuses by people in law enforcement or in the law enforcement community who were protected from prosecutions and arrests. I postulated that an entire class of people in this town knew they could operate their pimping and other crime schemes with impunity because they knew they were protected and victims and survivors like me were being ground to salt.

I worked extensively with Investigator John Kim and his superior Investigator Carinha c 2014. In interviews, affidavits and in extensive briefs I told them about the NYPD's and Borough DA's common practice of letting abusers off the hook if they have valuable intel or evidence that benefit other, unrelated, investigations and I urged them to address this issue. I was foreshadowing the #metoo movement to the DOI as early as 2013-2014.

I provided evidence of the DANY's and NYPD's practice including an affidavit from a retired NYPD lieutenant who stated that the NYPD had been ordered by the DANY to check with 1 Hogan place before responding to my 911 calls!!!!

DECEMBER 18, 2015

My name is Mark Christopher LaRocca. I worked as a Lieutenant in the New York City Police Department from 1997 to 2013 assigned to the 028 Precinct in Manhattan. Circa 2010 and 2011, I had several conversations with Mrs. Kelly Luce in which she claimed to be a crime victim, specifically a victim of domestic violence.

During my interviews of Mrs. Luce, I found her allegations of abuse to be credible and with merit. I felt there was sufficient evidence to prepare Complaint Reports to document these allegations which would then be further investigated by the Precinct Domestic Violence Officers and/or the Precinct Detective Squad.

After speaking with the Detectives regarding Mrs. Luce's allegations, I was informed that prior to a report being further investigated, a phone call to someone in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office who was familiar with Mrs. Luce's history of reporting crimes needed to be consulted.

Mrs. Luce informed me that she felt this hindered her ability to receive fair treatment regarding the investigation of her complaints. I informed her that as a victim, she should speak with the supervisor of the person at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office handling her complaints if she felt her complaints were being stonewalled and not acted upon in a fair manner.

MARK C. LaRocca
Mark P. LaRocca

Investigators Kim and Carinha agreed with me that these kinds of bizarrely brazen unconstitutional practices arise from a tempting Hobsonian choice that police and prosecutors are taking advantage of all too often: when given the opportunity to gather

other intel from an abusive pimp or batterer or trafficker is it ok to leave the survivor of this person's violence and abuse without protections, justice and due process? The Ninth Amendment to the Constitution is a murky place and the caselaw is complicated but the answer is NO. Also the SDNY has firmly established State Created Danger caselaw that the NYPD and Borough DAs should be mindful of.

DOI Investigators Kim and Carinha were also interested in my allegations regarding a "do not service" list created by the NYPD and prosecutors that bans people from receiving police help. Specifically the NYPD and DANY implemented an algorithm based on bad data into their databases that alleged to be able to sort out who was a true victim of sexual violence and who was a 'fabricator.' I've been told this algorithm that was the brainchild of Linda Fairstein when she worked at K2 as a consultant to the DANY on Palantir modules for SVU practices. I can provide you much more evidence on this topic and in fact much had already been shared with the DOI. I've introduced much of this discussion into previous city council testimonials before including as recently as February of 2022 and October of 2021.³

The DOI wrote back and told me I had to prove other people had experienced the same for them to open an investigation. I kept writing back and calling with names- dozens of them- but the DOI has never to my knowledge taken this investigation seriously and closed it out in 2015. In the ensuing years not even the tidal wave of survivors of Dr Hadden, Jeffrey Epstein, Harvey Weinstein and others has been enough to convince the DOI to take this issue seriously. Even if some of the practices have ceased (like the use of the algorithm in Palantir bc Palantir has been replaced by Cobalt and the Domain Alert Awareness System) what is to keep them from popping up in other agency workflows?

For true survivors like myself who have forever been falsely labeled as "fabricators" in law enforcement databases the consequences follow us throughout our lives and have very negative ramifications for every single future law enforcement encounter we have and will ever have. I have written and testified about this process many times in front of the NYC Council and still it remains unaddressed. ⁴ Here is my testimony from a February 22, 2022 NYC Council Committee on Gender Equity Hearing on Victims Services on this topic:

Law Enforcement Databases label survivors as 'fabricators' creating barriers to services and criminal legal system responses:

For a few years NYPD and borough DAs ran a software algorithm that alleged to be able to discern who was a 'true' survivor of sexual violence and who was 'fabricating' SVU crimes. The offshoot? Survivors have had these unfortunate status classifications written into our NYPD COBALT and Domain Alert Awareness System database records--no one is talking

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about this and how it affects our ability to have positive criminal legal system interactions.⁵

Folder	NYSID	Def Last	Def First	Alias	PublicNote	Contact(s)	Alert Start
Precincts - Manhattan\05th Precinct\FIO Alerts	04513906M	DAVIS	OSBORNE		This defendant has committed multiple violent crimes in the confines of the 5th Pct, including Robbery/Grand Larceny/Assault/CPCS, and he is a known recidivist shoplifter on Canal Street. (July 2014)	RobertsK	2011-11-30
Precincts - Manhattan\05th Precinct\FIO Alerts	045951M				Defendant is known to commit property crimes	RobertsK	2010-06-28
Precincts - Manhattan\05th Precinct\FIO Alerts	052618M					RobertsK	2010-05-20
Precincts - Manhattan\05th Precinct\FIO Alerts	062623M					RobertsK	2011-11-30
Precincts - Manhattan\05th Precinct\FIO Alerts	08299874R	NUNEZ	ELBE		This defendant is known to be arrested for AL violations for drinking in public. However he is very violent and has multiple violent crimes against police officers, particularly in and around the 5th Pct. (July 2014)	RobertsK	2011-11-30
Precincts - Manhattan\05th Precinct\FIO Alerts	08444155P	ZHU	WOLUN		This defendant has committed numerous property-related crimes and is a larceny recidivist. Please check with ICE Deportation Officer Brian Figueroa at (212) 264-4105. (July 2014)	RobertsK	2010-05-20

Since there is /was zero oversight about the intersection of tech and SVU I hope this committee will start to probe the implications for things like how being falsely marked as a "fabricator" of SVU crimes in the law enforcement databases follows us through life and has ramifications for every future NYPD/DA interaction [ask Jane Manning at WeJustice about this—she knows of clients demarcated as such as well]. These algorithms inform which cases are taken and who gets services but there is ZERO oversight over who is

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<https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/manhattan/ny-metro-vance-contract-conflict-weinstein-20180604-story.html>

<https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/manhattan/firm-linked-cy-vance-big-contract-manhattan-da-office-article-1.3340073>

demarcated as a 'survivor' vs a 'fabricator' and gets the golden ticket to the FJCs and who is shut out.

The tech tool/algorithm was created under the stewardship of Linda Fairstein when she worked at K2 Intelligence's "Sexual Misconduct Working Group" as a consultant for the MDAO/NYPD (c 2010-2017) to build-out a "sexual violence" module for Palantir, the tool the NYPD/Borough DA's used to determine who was a 'true' survivor of sexual violence and whom was a 'fabricator.'" There are literally thousands of survivors of sexual violence like me who were cast aside by the borough DA's offices and the NYPD and erroneously labeled as "fabricators" because of this technology tool that was the brain child of Linda Fairstein working under Mr. Kroll. I even managed to get a retired NYPD Lieutenant to write me an affidavit about this practice for my SDNY lawsuit.

You can chart the rise of the #MeToo movement in NYC directly against the implementation of this technology "tool" into the workflow of the NYC Borough DA's offices/NYPD's SVU. Fairstein's involvement with k2 Integrity [nee "K2 Intelligence"] ended when it was discovered that the tool was fed faulty/erroneous data of true survivors wrongly labeled as fabricators to model what the behavior of a false-complainer of sexual violence looks like but there is yet to be a public reckoning regarding who is labeled a fabricator, how long this lingers in the NYPD Domain Alert Awareness System and other systems.

K2's "Sexual Misconduct Working Group" has since been dis-banded and the tool has allegedly been removed from NYPD workflows with the creation of COBALT and the NYPD's dropping of Palantir; but there is still a public reckoning awaiting the thousands of survivors denied services and justice because of Mr. Kroll, Ms. Fairstein, K2 & Palantir for their role in demarcating thousands of survivors of domestic abuse, intimate partner violence, rape, sexual abuse, assault, harrasment as 'fabricators.' Also, the tool was likely used in other jurisdictions outside of NYC who purchased the Palantir "gotham" product it was attached to in part.

The Center for Court Innovation produced a report that describes in detail how the NYPD and Borough DA's offices do still use facets of the Domain Alert Awareness System and other database to track sex workers and other "Community Crime Drivers:

"Bureau-Based Project teams (BBPs) consist of approximately three to six dedicated prosecutors from the trial division. These ADAs become experts on a select crime concern or hot spot, identify offenders believed to be the crime drivers in a particular geographic location (the location does not have to encompass an entire "area"), and devise a plan to target, prosecute, and eventually incapacitate these individuals through incarceration or supervision (i.e., parole or probation). DANY primarily formed BBPs to address violent crime, but developed additional teams to address other issues, including scammers, **prostitution**, and larceny-related crimes. BBPs also require prosecutors to work closely with NYPD specialized units (i.e. gangs, narcotics, and/ or grand larceny units). BBPs are not permanent fixtures. DANY may dismantle a team once

successful prosecutions substantially decrease the targeted criminal behavior-if the crime issue re-emerges at a later date, DANY creates a new BBP team. In the fall of 2014, DANY had 13 operational BBPs."⁶

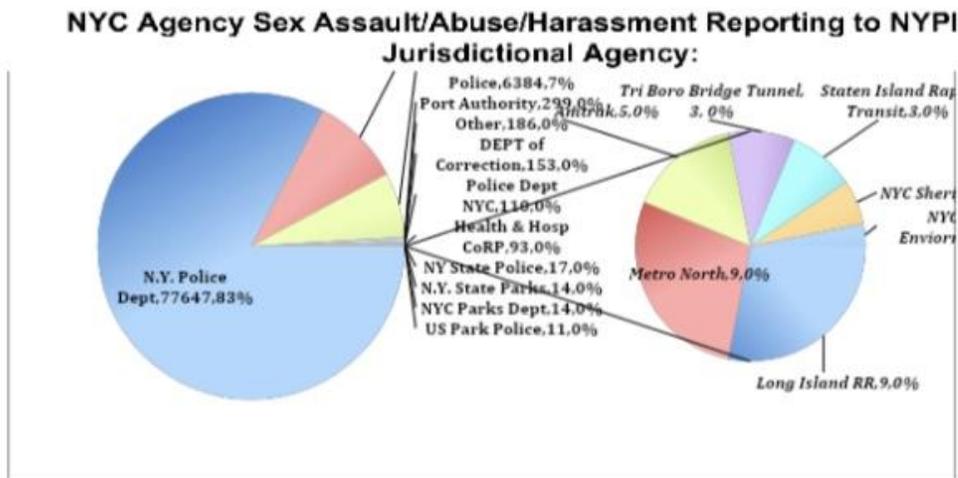
Recently my landlord submitted forged requests to DHCR for a rent reduction on my behalf. The scheme was simple: he submitted a request and only asked DHCR to investigate a broken toilet in the shared bathroom on the floor of my SRO building. He omitted the other blatant violations of the Warranty of Habitability such as no heat or hot water in the building for two years, black mold, illegal lockouts, rodents etc. He did so to try to circumnavigate a HPD Housing case I had initiated against him in housing court. Had I not discovered the fraudulent investigation the landlord would have gotten DHCR to codify a rent reduction for only the broken toilet—a modicum reduction—and that would have prevented the housing court from assessing rent reductions and monetary penalties to me for harassment for lack of adherence to the warranty of habitability. When I reported this fraud and these illegal forgeries to the NYPD they refused to investigate because in my NYPD database record are all sorts of denotations that I am not to receive police services and that I am a fabricator. I have reported this to the DOI as well and heard zero back. Survivors need the DOI's help to unwind ourselves from these predatory practices and systems law enforcement has implemented with zero oversight or testing. People realize that we are not protected by the NYPD and they double-down on their abuse of us.

III. The DOI could consider adding an additional squad to specifically investigate claims of Sexual Violence within City Agencies:

This issue of NYC Agencies NOT doing a great job at investigating inter-agency complaints of sexual assault needs to be flagged for the DOI and I urge this committee and the Agency to consider adding budget for another squad to investigate sexual abuses within City Agencies. There are a total of 71 NYC Agencies and according to NYC Open Data of those only 20 reported complaints of criminal sex abuse/sexual harassment to the NYPD from 2006 to 2018. As per each Agency's independent Charter code each is responsible for investigating inter-agency crimes. The Charter⁵ requires all criminal conduct to be reported to the NYPD but there appears to be nary any oversight structure established in any capacity within NYC government to enforce this reporting. We know from news report that there have been harrowing cases of sexual assault within the FDNY for example, but they are among the agencies that has reported ZERO instances of sex abuse, assault et al to the NYPD. From 2006 to 2019 here is what NYC

⁶ https://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/IDPM_Research_Report_FINAL.PDF

Open Data reveals are the agency reported complaints of sexual violence against staff:



NYC AGENCY	Total Reported to NYPD
N.Y. Police Dept./Public	77647
NY Housing Police	8856
NYC Transit Police	6384
Port Authority	299
Other	186
DEPT of Correction	153
Police Dept. NYC	110
Health & Hosp Corps	93
NY State Police	17
N.Y. State Parks	14
NYC Parks Dept.	14
US Park Police	11
Long Island RR	9
Metro North	9
Amtrak	5
Tri Boro Bridge Tunnel	3
Staten Island Rapid Transit	3
NYC Sheriff's Dept.	2
NYC Dept. of Environment	1
TOTAL	93816

This is especially worrisome when data reveals that agencies reporting data are under-cutting the sex abuse crimes that they are reporting!

IV lastly, the DOI could consider adding another squad to investigate campaign finance fraud and grift among local elected officials.

As Village Independent Democrats Campaign Finance Committee chair I spend a generous amount of time pouring over campaign finance reports submitted by both State and New York City candidates. I have noted there are many obstacles to accessing campaign finance data from candidates. While there have been improvements recently at the state and city level regarding output of candidate mandatory disclosure filings there appears to be little oversight of rampant personal use of funds by candidates; much of the data provided is still virtually inaccessible, rife with bugs, and; there are several openings for candidates to mask disclosure by entering data inaccurately into the electronic management system(s) provided by the NYS Board of Elections and the NYC Board of Elections.

The NYC BOE is a biased and partisan entity that provides little enforcement or oversight of campaign funds. Often that oversight is biased and gives advantage to party favorites. No one is paying attention to this and the DOI needs to be supported to create a campaign finance fraud and corruption unit within its ranks.

The NYC BOE doesn't appear to be enforcing the return of campaign contribution overpayments in a timely manner. Some NYC candidates have kept over-the-limit contributions for over one year before returning them. Who is allowed to keep these monies in their coffers for extended amounts of time? and who is penalized by the NYC BOE? Both appear to still be partisan processes.

A. For example: there was at least one \$5100 donation to Brad Lander's Comptroller campaign that hasn't been refunded. The 5100 USD contribution in late July of 2018 to Lander that was never refunded was from George Soros. There has been nary a refund to Soros ever by any NYC candidate he has donated to (link below). Lander did refund everybody else who donated \$5100 after Jan 1, 2018 but not Soros:

The BOE KNOWS this money shouldn't be in Lander's account because in their own analysis they state that there were 58 MAX (*Column V) contributions of 2000 (*Column X) totalling 118250 (*Column W). *columns refer to EC2021_FinancialAnalyssis_2021_stmt5.xls (attached)

BUT

58 x 2000 = 116000, not 118250.

So why didn't BOE flag the extra 3100 (plus another 150 and why did Lander keep these funds?

no refunds have ever been made to Soros:

<https://www.nycctfb.info/FTMSearch/Candidates/Contributions?ec=2021%2C2018%2C2017%2C2013%2C2009%2C2005%2C2003%2C2001%2C1997%2C1993%2C1991%2C1989%2C2020A%2C2020B%2C2019%2C2016%2C2015%2C2011%2C2010%2C2008%2C2007%2C1999%2C1996%2C1994%2C2021C%2C2021B%2C2021A%2C2020C%2C2019B%2C2019A%2C2017A%2C2016A%2C2015A%2C2013A%2C2012A%2C2010B%2C2010A%2C2009B%2C2009A%2C2008A%2C2007B%2C2007A%2C2005A%2C2003A%2C2002A%2C2001A%2C1999A%2C1997A%2C1996A%2C1994A%2C1993A%2C1991B%2C1991A%2C1990A%2C2017T%2C2013T%2C2010V%2C2010U%2C2009T%2C2009V%2C2009U%2C2005T%2C2003T%2C2003U%2C2001T%2C2019T&rt=can&ir=Soros%2C%20George&trans=M>

B. When examining a quick snapshot of all LANDER's OTL contributions--all but ONE he waited over a year to return--and some of them he matched on--doesn't the match have to be returned too if the person is on the Doing Business With City list? For example: Valerie Berlin owns more than 10% of Berlin/Rosen so her refund should have not only been refunded 2100- but that payment shouldn't have been matched.

DATE	FNAME	CITY	BO	QTY	STATE	ZIP	OCCUPATION	EMPNAME	EMPST	EMPSTR	EMPC	EM	AMNT	MATCH	AMN	PREVA	PAY_METHO	REFUND	REFUND DATE	IN	
7/10/18	Braner, Michael	INE	M	New	Yor	NY	10007 Self-Employed	Self-Employed	270	Broadw	New	Y	5100	250	0	2		-3100	7/10/19		
6/25/18	Geballe, Benjamin	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11215 administrator	nyc doe		26	Broadw	New	Y	5100	250	0	4		-3100	7/2/19		
6/27/18	Hindy, Stephen	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11215 Founder, Chairman	Brooklyn Brewer		79	North 1	Brook	NY	5100	250	0	4		-3100	7/2/19		
5/7/18	Jones, Benjamin	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11215 Chief Operating Officer	CTRL-Ians Corpo		25	West 34	New	Y	5100	0	0	4		-4700	6/25/18		
4/11/18	Lander, Carole	FA	Z	St. Louis	MO	63141 school counselor	Parkway School		405	Country St. Lu	MO	5100	0	0	2		-3100	7/11/19			
4/11/18	Lander, David	FA	Z	St. Louis	MO	63141 attorney	Thompson Cobu		1	First Sta St. Lu	MO	5100	0	0	2		-3100	7/11/19			
3/5/18	Mollenkopf, John	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11215 Professor	City University o		365	5th Ave New	Y	NY	5100	250	0	4		-3100	7/2/19		
7/27/18	Schippers, Allison	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11201 Producer	Self-Employed		275	Warren Brook	NY	5000	0	0	2		-5000	7/11/19			
7/27/18	Schippers, Jonathan	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11201 Real Estate/Construct	Steering House		68	3rd Str	Brook	NY	5000	0	0	2		-5000	7/11/19		
3/3/18	Sloman, Eric	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11215 Lawyer	Gibson Dunn and		200	Park Av	New	Y	5000	0	0	4		-3000	7/5/19		
7/31/18	Soros, George	INE	M	New	Yor	NY	10019 Founder	Soros Fund Man	250	West 55	New	Y	NY	5000	0	0	2		#N/A	#N/A	
7/11/18	Cohen, Hillary	INE	K	New	Yor	NY	11215 Landscape Architect	Hollander Desig	200	Park Av	New	Y	NY	4000	0	1000	4		#N/A	#N/A	
6/14/18	Finer, Hampton	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11215 Economist	Federal Reserve		33	Maiden New	Y	NY	3500	250	0	4		-1500	7/11/19		
6/13/18	Vilnits, Ilya	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11201 Architect	Self-Employed		495a	Henry 5	Brook	NY	3000	250	0	4		-1000	8/17/19		
4/13/18	Barnette, C. Joseph	INE	Z	Sarasota	FL	34236 retired b	self-employed		1045	Tacobag Saras	FL	2550	0	0	2		#N/A	#N/A			
7/4/18	Barnette, C. Joseph	INE	Z	Sarasota	FL	34236 retired b	self-employed		1045	Tacobag Saras	FL	2550	0	2550	4		#N/A	#N/A			
4/26/18	Berlin, Valerie	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11215 Communications	BerlinRosen		15	Maiden New	Y	NY	2500	250	0	4		#N/A	#N/A		
5/29/18	Golden, Megan	INE	M	New	Yor	NY	10025 Social entrepreneur	Self-Employed	245	West 11	New	Y	NY	2500	250	0	4		-500	7/11/19	
10/22/18	Gutman, Henry B	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11201 Retired							2500	250	0	4		-500	7/10/19		
7/12/18	Linker, Kate	INE	M	New	Yor	NY	10011 Art Critic	Self-Employed	227	West 17	New	Y	NY	2500	250	0	4		-500	7/5/19	
6/19/18	Ochs, Thomas	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11215 Consultant	Self		252	Garfield Brook	NY	2500	175	0	2		-1000	7/9/19			
6/4/18	rifkin, susan	INE	K	Brooklyn	NY	11201 general counsel	Covington Fabric		470	7th Ave New	Y	NY	2500	250	0	4		-500	7/10/19		

These are just a few of the examples of how BOE oversight seems to be biased and could have implications for who gets elected. I strongly urge this committee to take up this issue. I have much more to say about it and have been working with the NYS Comptroller's office to push them to develop more robust oversight over the NYS and NYC Boards of Elections as well.

Thank you for considering my testimony carefully. It's outrageous the DOI is being asked to curb its budget and staff. It should be expanding to respond to the needs of our community.

Kelly [Grace] Price

Ft. George, Manhattan

March 15, 2022

Founder,

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Lazar Treschan
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Testimony Submitted to the New York City Council
Committees on Economic Development and Oversight & Investigations
March 21, 2022

Oversight Topic: ***The City's Evolving Workforce Development Plans in the Wake of the Pandemic***

Recommendation: ***Focus Economic Development Efforts on the Development of Local Talent to Create an Inclusive NYC Economy***

I want to thank the New York City Council Committee on Economic Development and the Committee on Oversight and Investigation for inviting me to testify. My testimony will focus on the critical importance of rethinking how we better support local talent development, by making it the center of our economic development efforts. My comments will focus on:

1. ***The problem: Too many New Yorkers are not being supported to compete in our own labor market.*** Labor market data I will present today make it clear that the existing NYC talent pipeline is not working for too many New Yorkers, who are currently at a disadvantage compared to US-born jobseekers from other states. Blacks and Latinxs - those also disproportionately impacted by the pandemic - born in NY suffer the most from this dynamic. They show even deeper disparities compared to those from other states, particularly in relation to landing in good-paying occupations.
2. ***The solution: We need a new public agenda that connects economic and workforce development: Our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity we cannot pass up to position local talent as NYC's competitive economic advantage. Our entire city would gain from a new system of "braided pathways", where we integrate employment into all aspects of education and training for New Yorkers of all ages.***
3. ***We are not starting from scratch and have many local assets upon which to build:***
 - *Leadership and tested models at postsecondary institutions such as NYU and CUNY that supports the expansion of applied degree programs and greater integration of paid work*

¹ [HERE to HERE](#) brings together business, education, and community leaders to build equitable avenues to lifelong career success. We mobilize the collective expertise of students, business leaders, and educators, and to bridge the gap between education and meaningful, family-sustaining careers for all young people. Our efforts in economic and workforce development include funding and leading a [community of practice around braided pathways](#) efforts to connect education and employment, and policy advocacy based on in-depth [labor market research and analysis](#) and [NYC's CareerReady framework](#).

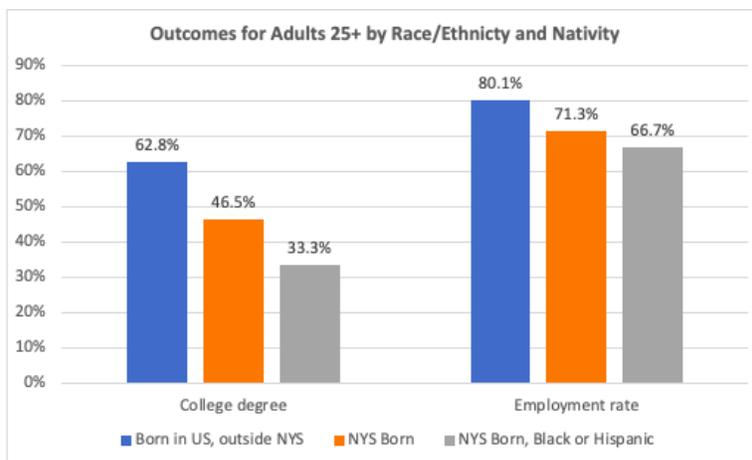
- *New leadership in the Mayor’s Office, highlighted by the recent [Blueprint for Economic Recovery](#) and NYC Dept of Education, whose Chancellor has called career pathways the “North Star” of his administration*
- *Existing networks of practitioners such as those in the [Key Distinguishers: Braided Pathways Community of Practice](#)*

1. The Problem: New Yorkers are Not Being Supported to Compete for Our Best Jobs

As we reopen our economy, many New Yorkers are eager for a return to a pre-pandemic normal. But the crisis caused by COVID-19 has shown us that the gains made by the City since the end of the Great Recession were tenuous for many and virtually nonexistent for others. Even in the best of economic times, countless New Yorkers—predominately Black and Latinx residents living in neighborhoods of The Bronx, Central Brooklyn, Upper Manhattan, Eastern Queens, and Northern Staten Island—were barely scraping by, while more affluent communities were fortifying their advantages. And an analysis of labor market data offers convincing evidence that stories we tell ourselves about who succeeds and why simply do not hold up to scrutiny, nor do the workforce development and education policies that support these narratives.

The data show that the existing NYC talent pipeline simply does not work for too many New Yorkers, especially when we disaggregate the data. We see too many New Yorkers at a disadvantage compared to US-born jobseekers from out of state. New York City prides itself as a place of opportunity for everyone, but we must ensure that is especially true for New Yorkers who are raised in our communities, attend our schools, and families who make our City run as well as pay our taxes have a fair chance to compete for and thrive in high quality, family-sustaining jobs.

College attainment, which is often used as a proxy for career success in our system, does not, in fact, neatly predict positive employment outcomes for New Yorkers, particularly for Black and Latinx students. Much of this is due to the fact that too many students major in programs that neither include work experience, nor otherwise equip students with skills for careers.



Native New Yorkers, and Blacks and Latinxs in particular, are far less likely to land in mid- to high-wage occupations than US-born workers from other states, or White and Asian workers born in New York. The make-up of workers in mid- to high-wage occupations includes far fewer in-state born Black and Latinx residents, and more US-born individuals from other states. Black and Latinx workers born in New York are a much greater share of workers in low-wage occupations.²

Native New Yorkers, and Black and Latinx in particular, are less likely to attain college degrees or gain employment than US-born workers from other states. This finding alone should raise an alarm about how we are developing our local talent. Yes, New York should be open to everyone, but if native New Yorkers cannot compete with US-born individuals coming here from other states, then we need to do more to ensure that our workforce development and education systems are performing as well as they can—and these data suggest otherwise. New York benefits tremendously by attracting highly qualified talent from throughout the US and the world, which we hope continues. It also challenges us to create a talent development system locally that enables those educated in NYC institutions to compete. Otherwise, inequality in this city will continue to grow, solidify, and become more difficult to address.

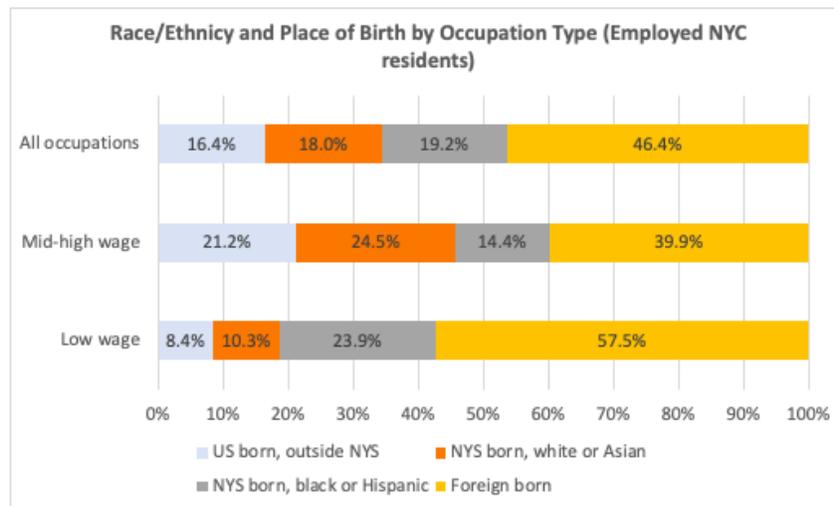
A deeper look at the types of employment across subgroups of New Yorkers raises even more alarms. Native New Yorkers, and Blacks and Latinxs in particular, are far less likely to land in mid- to high-wage occupations than US-born workers from other states, or White and Asian workers born in New York.³ Much of the conversation around employment revolves around industry or sector. In some cases, this can be useful. We know, for example, that industries such as retail trade and leisure and hospitality (which includes food services) predominantly provide low-wage jobs, and that employees in these industries are more likely to be Black or Latinx. However, for most industries, such as healthcare, which employs high numbers of Black and Latinx individuals, there are a range of both low- and mid-high wage jobs: e.g., a hospital employs doctors, IT workers, and cleaning staff, who perform widely different tasks. Thus, to get a better understanding of how employment is or isn't contributing to economic security, it can be more instructive to look at the occupations in which workers are employed. Occupations also offer a more efficient lens in which to create policies and programs that can match talent to

² Two notes on race/ethnicity and nativity: First, we use the term Latinx to describe individuals who self-identify in survey responses as “Hispanic.” The United States Census Bureau first asks respondents their race (White, Black, etc.), then, separately, whether they identify as Hispanic or not. In our analysis, we include individuals who identify as Hispanic, regardless of their response to the race questions, and we refer to this group as “Latinx” throughout this report. Second, in analyzing data on different racial/ethnic groups, we use the four categories that are typically found in this kind of analysis (White, non-Latinx; Black, non-Latinx, Asian, and Latinx). We recognize that this hides important differences in outcomes between subgroups within each category. This is particularly relevant for the Asian population, whose positive outcomes overall mask the existence of subgroups that face a variety of challenges and have outcomes in line with the low-income black and Latinx populations that are the focus of this work. Related, while this paper focuses on data for native New Yorkers (those born in-state) as a way to show the need for a new talent development system, it is important to mention that our vision and strategies are designed to improve outcomes for all students in New York City’s public education institutions - particularly those in low-income communities - and this, of course, includes foreign-born New Yorkers. Data shows that the vast majority of young people - even in immigrant families and communities - were born in New York.

³ HERE to HERE’s own analysis of microdata from a combined five year sample of the 2015-2019 ACS.

opportunity, since they are based on the actual tasks of a job, regardless of the field in which it sits, and thus share a set of required skills, in ways that jobs within an industry or sector do not.

In the 50 most prevalent occupations among New York City residents (which represent nearly 60 percent of New York City resident employment), New York State-born Black and Latinx residents represent a much smaller share of workers in mid-high wage occupations, compared to those born outside the state and in-state born White and Asian residents. Only 14% of residents employed in mid-high wage occupations are Black or Latinx and were born in-state. By contrast, Black and Latinx workers born in-state make up 24 percent of the low-wage workforce, a far higher share than those born out of state (8%) or in-state born White and Asian residents (10%).⁴



The data make clear that—even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic—native New Yorkers, particularly those of color, were being left behind in the city’s economy. The pandemic further exacerbated these differences, since Black and Latinx students had lower attendance rates during the pandemic, were more likely to suffer the loss of a parent or caregiver, etc.

2. A New Public Agenda that Truly Connects Economic and Workforce Development

The data tell a clear story: the existing NYC talent pipeline simply does not position many, and especially Black and Latinx, New Yorkers well for good-paying jobs in New York. Our informal, ad hoc process of matching talent to opportunity has increased disparities between those that grow up and are educated in New York versus those that aspire to succeed here from other parts of the country. New York can tackle this disparity head on by intentionally connecting its students and jobseekers to the world of careers, beginning in high school. Braided pathways can be a “market maker” that provides individuals with professional connections, deeper knowledge of their own skills and interests, and a better understanding of what careers in the

⁴HERE to HERE analysis of the 2015-2019 American Community Survey, 5-year sample. Mid-high wage occupations include the 26 of the city’s 50 most prevalent occupations that have a median income of at least \$50,000 a year. Low wage occupations include the 24 of the city’s 50 most prevalent occupations with a median income of less than \$50,000 per year.

real world align with them and employers with specific ways to engage with the educational system to contribute to developing talent, while creating a more efficient process of matching New Yorkers to promising career opportunities in the regional labor market. This approach will also shape and stimulate employer demand, as they will have a more prepared local talent pool, with distinct advantages in terms of local markets and diversity, that jobseekers from elsewhere cannot offer.

Labor market projections show that we have a chance to steer our policies in a new direction. Projections show substantial growth through 2028 in a wide range of mid-high wage occupations. The table below presents the five high-paying occupations with the greatest projected job growth in New York State (the same five occupations have the greatest projected job growth in New York City).

NYS occupations with greatest projected growth (2018-2028), with median salary of at least \$50,000 per year⁵

Occupation	Projected Employment (2028)	Net Growth from 2018	Percent growth from 2018	Median salary
Registered nurses	249,100	49,230	24.6%	\$86,780
General and operations managers	184,880	16,230	9.6%	\$132,200
Software developers, applications	73,130	16,120	28.3%	\$113,910
Accountants and auditors	136,510	15,400	12.7%	\$84,860
Market research analysts and marketing specialists	80,590	14,870	22.6%	\$72,840

These opportunities have already begun to reemerge after being somewhat dormant during the height of the pandemic. There have been tens of thousands of new postings for jobs in these areas in the last year alone.

Employers need talent for a set of clearly growing, high-paying occupations, and we have an opportunity to ensure that all New Yorkers have the chance to develop their skills, networks, and

⁵ New York State Department of Labor, Occupational Projections

pathways in a way that will allow them to fill these roles. Our challenge is to overcome the laissez-faire approach and institutional inertia that limits how we develop talent systemically despite many strong specific programs and well-intended but disconnected policies. We have the opportunity to use both the findings from the data and the wide range of strong program practices to make best practice common practice to better connect talent to opportunity. This work will also help local employers in their search for talent to grow their businesses. If we can do both of these, we will create the conditions for the inclusive economy that New York City has found elusive.

The most straightforward way for this to happen is for us to abandon our current “hit and hope” approach: that providing students and jobseekers with largely classroom-based education and training will, somehow, help them land a good job in the future. A better approach would be to reorient our workforce development and education systems so they build clear pathways for students to launch and thrive their careers of choice and in-demand positions with promising career trajectories. For students in high school and postsecondary, this means embedding accredited, paid work into all programming, so students have a deeper understanding of their own skills and interests, and how the labor market can help them achieve their dreams. The same is true for adult jobseekers, who rarely have the chance to pursue supported employment and training programs that intentionally connect their own skills and interests to jobs in growing occupations. For them, we need programs that build in paid, subsidized work so that participants can land and succeed in a career, not just rapidly attach to a job.

We have the opportunity to create a new talent development system that allows us to get our children, friends, and neighbors into the jobs of the future. A ***braided pathways*** approach to talent development places the focus on empowering individuals with the information, experiences, and connections they need as part of their standard high school, post-secondary, and adult training programming. This includes policies such as:

- ***In high school: Ensuring that students graduate high school making an informed postsecondary choice***, supported by a set of experiences that give them greater understanding of (a) who they are—their skills and interests—and; (b) the range of careers available to them, and the postsecondary pathways to pursue their goals; and (c) professional mentors in their fields of interest to help advise them. This can only happen when high school education features real work, such as accredited internships, summer jobs, and longer-term apprenticeships, and that schools have the resources to provide staffing to create them. Less emphasis on high stakes tests, in favor of rigorous, real-world work experiences can ensure that students do not continue to complain about graduating high school knowing the Pythagorean theorem, but not how taxes or interest rates work.
- ***In postsecondary: At the college level, all majors should include applied work experiences***, such as internships and apprenticeships. And since most students work, at least part-time, while they attend, colleges should offer credit

for all the learning that happens at work so that a student can structure and reflect on the many essential and transferable skills they gain in the workplace.

- ***Bridging gaps: Alongside traditional K-12 or higher education policy, New York should invest in more apprenticeships and adult job training programs that lean on paid work during programming.*** The workforce development system should focus less on getting individuals jobs, but putting them on the paths to meaningful careers. This means deep training in specific, growing occupations and subsidized employment to de-risk the involvement of employers, who must be much more intentional and engaged partners in our training system.
- ***Working closely with employers:*** All of the above needs to be supported by systemic engagement of employers to meet their hiring needs and to provide paid work experiences to adult job seekers and New York high school and college students, as well as hiring practices that provide a level playing field for local talent, with citywide infrastructure to make it clear and easy for companies to do so.

3. We are not starting from scratch and have many local assets upon which to build.

The good news is that there is much underway in the city already off of which we can base this new approach. Leadership at postsecondary institutions such as NYU’s School for Professional Studies and CUNY’s Office of Industry and Talent Partnerships that has expressed support for the expansion of applied degree programs and greater integration of paid work in their universities. These institutions are modeling employer partnerships that focus on occupations and competencies necessary for the future of work. We should look to these leaders to help plan, inform, and support the cross-sector partnerships between education, workforce development, and employers that will be required for a new approach.

And we have seen very promising signals from the Mayor’s office, including the naming of a Deputy Mayor for Economic AND Workforce Development, finally making an intentional effort to view these two topics as intrinsically connected. The Mayor’s recently published [Blueprint for Economic Recovery](#) aligns with this approach, but we will need to ensure investments and RFPs do so as well. The new NYCDOE Schools Chancellor has called career pathways the “North Star” of his administration, and appointed a new position of Chief of Student Pathways, an exciting development, which we should support and work to ensure has the resources and capacity to give all students a jumpstart on their careers of choice.

New York City is also home to a range of existing networks of practitioners such as those in the [Key Distinguishers: Braided Pathways Community of Practice](#) who can help inform and implement plans to recenter workforce development into economic development plans and investments. Employer driven efforts such as [OneTen](#) and the [New York Jobs CEO Council](#) show there is plenty of demand-side interest in these approaches, and a readiness from the private sector to become more involved—but only if the public efforts are real and meaningful.



Private industry is increasingly interested in deeper partnership with the public sector around talent development, and we must not squander the opportunity.

I want to thank the Council again for the opportunity to testify about this issue. The COVID-19 pandemic put the city's disparities front and center, with too many vulnerable New Yorkers having worked in the industries suffering the greatest job losses. We must use this time as an opportunity to create more opportunities for our students, friends, and neighbors to succeed. This approach will level the playing field for young New Yorkers seeking to gain work experience, and build their transferable skills critical to their future career success; will strengthen our talent pipeline for our local businesses to grow and thrive; and will contribute to creating a robust and more inclusive economy.

HERE to HERE and our partners are happy to be a resource to the Council and the administration in your efforts moving forward.

Lazar Treschan
Vice President, Policy and Impact, HERE to HERE
ltreschan@heretohere.org

Dianna Prashad's testimony for Committee on Oversight & Investigations Hearing
dated 03/15/2022

Good morning Committee members and Chair. I finally have the opportunity to address this committee for the first time. My name is Dianna Prashad. I am a private citizen, taxpayer and homeowner who has been dealing with dangerous situation. My wife and I are being discriminated and retaliated against by HPD/DSS while being blackballed by DOI from reporting corruption and fraud as perpetuated by these agencies.

In 2007 I purchased my home through a HPD's first time homeowners program. Homeowners in my development are bound by a 25 year owner occupancy contract which means that we are contractually and legally obligated to remain in these homes as our primary residence until 2032. Per our contract HPD is supposed to monitor and enforce these covenants however they have not done so since January 2010. Moreover due to this failure a number of homes on my block that are part of this housing initiative have been illegally converted into rental properties in violation of the owner occupancy clauses in our contracts as well as the grant funding we received. From March of 2020, to present my wife and I have been dealing with safety and quality of life issues stemming from one of these illegal conversions where this first time homeowner home is being illegally rented to DSS via CityFHEPS program. This means that HPD---the very agency that we are in contact with---is party to this breach since they illegally registered the home despite its active 25 year owner occupancy contract into the CITYFHEPS rental program discriminately allowing that homeowner to profiteer by receiving rental voucher while simultaneously breaching her contract after receiving over one hundred thousand dollars in Housing Grants as well as a being subject to a tax abatement predicated on these owner-occupancy provisions. We as contractees in compliance whose home is attached to this illegal conversion are left to deal with not only the consequences of this illicit scheme that affects our safety since we are being harassed and threatened by DSS clients, we are also dealing with quality of life issues from the displacement of DSS clients into a home precluded from renting and whose

lifestyle and agenda of targeting my family continues to impact my livelihood. On yet another level given that there are over 195 homeowners in identical contract in this development, these NYC agencies calculated participation in the breach next door coupled by their turning a blind eye on the other breaches on my block for a twelve year period amounts to disparate treatment, selective enforcement, outright discrimination and public corruption.

All of this was reported to DOI twice in March 2020 and again in May 2021 but duly dismissed by Jessica Heegan. We only became privy that DOI had taken a hands-off stance in December 2021 and for the latter contact on January 6, 2022. What we have seen is that homeowners who are breaching these contracts and allowed to breach them all have special relationships to NYC some of these homeowners are active NYC employees ...employees of HPD developer who built our development and are potentially still doing business with the city as well as individuals such as my former neighbor who forged a connection to NYC by illegally renting out her home to DSS. This all speaks of public corruption yet DOI has taken the stance of a loyalist blocking complaints against these agencies rather than holding them to a standard.

Our initial complaint was referred to DOI by the Comptroller Scott Stringer's office and despite this referral was quickly shelved by Jessica Heegan whose agenda it seems was covering up agency fault and liability and for this reason twelve years after many of these homeowners have received over one hundred thousand in housing grants they are still in breach of contract and still illegally renting out these first time homes and perpetuating fraud with the consent of all NYC agencies involved which includes HPD...DOI and yet other NYC agencies such as DSS, HRA and DHS that are participating in these breaches and placing contractees in compliance at risk of losing everything including our lives in our very homes due to the displacement of their problematic clients into illegal housing.

The DSS clients that are illegally occupying the home next door has been a blight to our community and from their arrival have been dealing drugs out of the home, operating an illegal car rental scheme and an illegal daycare all while juxtaposed in a townhouse setting where they are literally affecting the day to day survival of working class New

Yorkers. My wife and I have been actively targeted by these DSS clients who have not only repeatedly threatened our safety, damaged our property but have also harassed us and subjected us to homophobic threats for over two years but because we are black homeowners residing in a black community we are being robbed of relief yet are expected to uphold our contract even with our safety being at stake!

This issue is being brought to the Committee's attention because not only have we contacted DOI to report these issues including Deputy Commissioner Dominic Zarella. Our complaints continued to be thrashed. In yet other cases, our complaints are being discarded without being logged as was the complaint against DSS' Commissioner Steven Banks and Deputy Legislative director Erin Drinkwater for the continued participation in this breach using the excuse that our home because they were acquired via HPD are "affordable housing" and within DSS purview to rent irrespective of these contracts. What this amounts to is classism wherein those communities such as West 79 Street that is extraneous of "affordable housing" will be proffered relief while black and brown communities such as ours will continue to be disrespected and bullied by these NYC agencies and all of this is seconded by DOI. From our experience, DOI is mitigating NYC agency accountability and acting as a shield when complaints of impropriety and unethical dealings are highlighted. These complaints are quietly disposed or arrogantly ignored creating a real life crisis for New York taxpayers and residents who are in dire straits and seeking accountability based on contractual relationship to NYC. Given that DOI is unwilling to act against these NYC agencies, then we the public need a new agency that is willing to stand to its mission statement in rooting out fraud and corruption but clearly this is not DOI unanimous agenda since this fraud in my development has been ongoing for over 12 years and is being duly ignored by all involved who have knowledge of it. Needless to say, this sets an incredible precedent for 195 other homeowners who are being held to every letter of this very contract while NYC agencies continue to make exceptions, excuses and allowances for the fraud that continues to be committed by homeowners in breach solely based on their relationships to NYC. In the interim, select homeowners are being allowed the privilege of hundreds of thousands of dollars of rental income for these illegal

conversions, are living out of state or other affluent areas in state leaving us homeowners in compliance to deal with their problematic tenants, the decimation of our property values, the implosion of crime into our community by their illicit rental schemes and myopic profiteering and we have no recourse from NYC or any of its agencies inclusive of HPD the agency that we are in contract with who is selectively allowing these breaches.

I have included my story as an addendum to my testimony which was published by The City online newspaper in December 2021. Today, March 15, 2022 marks the beginning of the third year of my ordeal where we continue to be targeted and harassed in our home by DSS' illegally displaced client and I know that my issue is continuing simply because I am black and reside in a black community on Rockaway Eastern Peninsula. In many respects my story is identical to those of the residents of West 79th Street who decried DSS' insurgence of its homeless population into their community but since I am neither Caucasian nor affluent, three years later I am still in dire straits dealing with these selfsame issues. I can tell you all that I feel the weight of my oppression and of my race in this situation as I have been proffered no resolution or relief for now going on three years while yet others who do not share my socio-economic circumstance or my racial identity were given a resolution in seven short months with a single complaint. It is very disheartening to be black and working class in present day New York where we continue to be devalued and deprecated.

I will also bring to this Committee's attention that as of January 15, 2022, DSS is now using "Homebase" to circumvent their illegally placed clientele removal from the house next door irrespective of the safety issues involved. Given that Homebase is used to protect tenants in legal rentals against landlord abuses and DSS clients opted to reside in illegal housing based on their illicit arrangement with the errant homeowner, we are being sent the base message that our safety as homeowners, tax payers, lawful occupants and contractees in business with NYC do not matter. All that matters is that these DSS clients wish to occupy a home that is precluded from renting and they are being allowed this and to protract their stay post moratorium using every gray area in social service laws. This speaks to the level of assistance and support that they are

receiving from DSS, HRA and DHS to keep them rooted in illegal housing in black communities where they continue to pose a threat to our safety, property and lives and where they continue to adversely affect our quality of life and decimate our neighbor with illicit activities. No one should have to suffer this inhumanity of being forced by way of a contract to risk their lives and livelihood so that these corrupt NYC agencies can remain insulated from public reproach. My family should not be in this precarious and dangerous position in our own home for the third year where an illicit rental arrangement is being illegally protected and seconded by numerous NYC agencies over our lives as lawful occupants and taxpayers simply because this breach is occurring in a poor, disenfranchised black community. We should not still be in this situation had we not been black people and our complaints would not fallen on deaf ears had it not been for these NYC agencies partaking in racial politics inclusive of DOI, the very agency charged with oversight of NYC agencies.

DOI is failing NYC residents whose reports of corruption are valid and falls under their purview. If they are an “independent enforcement” branch of this city then they need to be inclusive not selective in what individuals, communities or organizations they will assist. It is because of DOI refusal to intervene in the very obvious case of program mismanagement and fraud that twelve years later, my community of black and brown homeowners continue to experience discriminatory conduct and selective treatment by HPD and are rendered powerless in our fight for equity. I have attached Jessica Heegan’s response to my inquires which documents DOI’s unwillingness to act against NYC agencies as well as homeowner fraud.

< Results for heegan

RE: [EXTERNAL] Update on my case

From: Jessica Heegan <JHeegan@doi.nyc.gov>

To:

Cc: Emily Caswell <ECaswell@doi.nyc.gov>; Michael Morris <MMORRIS@doi.nyc.gov>

Date: Fri, Jan 7, 2022 5:20 pm

Dear Ms. Prashad:

We are writing in response to your recent email and acknowledging your complaint concerning alleged misconduct by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development ("HPD") and Gail McMillan.

DOI has reviewed your email, as well as your past complaints alleging such misconduct. After careful review, we decided not to open an investigation regarding these allegations, but previously referred relevant information to HPD.

Sincerely,
Jessica Heegan

Jessica Heegan
Senior Inspector General
180 Maiden Lane
New York, NY 10038
Office: 212-~~438-1000~~
Mobile: 347-~~438-1000~~

From:

Sent: Thursday, January 6, 2022 4:52 PM

To: Emily Caswell <ECaswell@doi.nyc.gov>; Dominick Zarrella <DZarrella@doi.nyc.gov>; Jessica Heegan <JHeegan@doi.nyc.gov>

Cc: ~~Joseph Edwards~~ <Joseph.Edwards@doi.nyc.gov>; Brooks-Powers, Selvena

RTaylor <RTaylor@doi.nyc.gov>; Hunter, Alex <AHunter@doi.nyc.gov>; schultzm <schultzm@doi.nyc.gov>; kmorris@

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Update on my case

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Good afternoon,

I am contacting you today, January 6, 2022 to ascertain the status of my case. I would like to know definitively if my case been closed? Is the investigation still ongoing but still being deferred to HPD? It will be almost 2 years since my case was submitted to DOI to be investigated. In just one week it will be 2 years since Gail McMillan breached her contract and illegally rented out her house to DSS and their social service recipients and all of this information your office is privy to yet we are still living alongside DSS' clientele that were illegally placed in the home and we are still dealing with ongoing safety and quality of life issues yet are expected to remain in adherence of our contract with HPD even with ongoing acts taken against us for the second year. I am at a loss that your office has received an abundance of documents and evidence throughout this 22 month and counting investigation and yet nothing has come of it. The homeowners on my block who have breached their contracts and are using their homes as rental property have yet to return or held accountable and that includes Gail McMillan. Moreover, the ~~caswell~~ are still residing here. So kindly advise what DOI is doing with all the evidence at your disposal? And why is this disparate treatment being allowed by your agency with clear documentation of HPD's decade long failure with do their job not to mention the ~~gore~~ consequences my household is still dealing with due to their lapses and your office's unwillingness to "check" a NYC agency under your purview. It appears that DOI does not intercede when substantiated reports are made by the public to save face for these city agencies that have not only categorically failed in honoring contractual obligations but continue to act maliciously to negate complaints. This adds to the ongoing ineptitude of these agencies and now perverts your agency's role as participant in undermining public trust. Please advise.

Best,

Dianna Prashad.

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

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REPORTING FOR NEW YORKERS

QUEENS

Queens Couple's Dream Home Turns to Catch-22 Nightmare Over 'Neighbors From Hell'

BY KATIE HONAN | KHONAN@THECITY.NYC | DEC 2, 2021, 8:10PM EST



Rockaways resident Dianna Prashad says she and her wife have been harassed and threatened by neighbors, Nov. 22, 2021. | Ben Fractenberg/THE CITY

A Far Rockaway couple say they're being harassed by their next-door neighbors who are accused of illegally renting a home purchased through a city program that requires the owners to live there for 25 years.

Dianna and Pam Prashad, who are in the same program, say that means they're now stuck with "neighbors from hell" — and unable to move elsewhere.

"This home was our happy place," Dianna Prashad, 45, said of the two-story, blue-and-white semi-attached home in Edgemere that she bought in 2007.

But since March 2020, just as the pandemic lockdown went into effect, the Prashads say they've faced harassment — including anti-gay slurs — from tenants next door. The neighbors moved in after the owner relocated to Delaware despite the requirement that she stay in the home for 25 years, the Prashads say.

The couple said they are receiving "constant threats" from the next-door neighbors, who they believe are targeting them because of their sexuality.

The alleged harassment began soon after the new tenants moved in, according to the Prashads. The couple say they called the police on April 22, 2020 after their next-door neighbors allegedly threatened to assault Pam while she was outside her home, they said.



The Prashads' home. | Ben Fractenberg/THE CITY

“Come and get this ass-whooping, d---,” one neighbor allegedly yelled at Pam Prashad.

Another time, the same tenant said of Pam, “that b---- needs a good ass-whupping,” the couple said.

In April, the tenants began yelling at the couple for no apparent reason as they planted flowers in front of their home, according to footage captured on the Prashads' security camera and reviewed by THE CITY.

“We've been directly targeted,” Pam Prashad, 50, said.

Police a Frequent Presence

They say they've also called the police multiple times to break up loud parties that often go into the early morning, even on weekdays, according to the Prashads.

Those calls haven't helped.

“The police come every other day,” said one neighbor, Armando Cruz, who lives on the other side of the Prashads, although the home isn’t attached.

But he said he hadn’t heard loud music and wasn’t bothered by the people living two-doors down.



Security camera footage the Dianna Prashad says shows her neighbors harassing her and her wife, Nov. 22, 2021. | Ben Fractenberg/THE CITY

Another neighbor, Angel, who declined to give his last name, has lived across the street for more than a decade and said he sometimes hears parties and motorcycle engines revving outside in the summer.

“I don’t feel it, because they’re not next to me,” he said.

Other neighbors both on the block and around the corner said they weren’t aware of any loud parties, but knew about the dispute between the two households.

Since January, there have been seven complaint reports filed for harassment at the location, according to an NYPD spokesperson. A police source said residents of both homes have called the cops on each other.

A woman who answered the door at the home the Prashads call problematic declined to comment after speaking to her lawyer.

Couple Faults City

The tenants in that home are renting through a CityFHEPS voucher, officials confirmed. The Prashads said that points to a left-hand-right-hand failure on the part of City Hall for failing to check if the home was legally allowed to be rented.

Dianna Prashad purchased her house through a first-time home buyer program administered by the city's Department of Housing, Preservation and Development, which teamed with private developers to build on city-owned land.

Those who bought homes through the program had to meet income requirements and then received a grant from the city to help them put a down payment. But it came with a clause that required them to remain in the home for at least 25 years — with the grant reduced each year they stayed.

A spokesperson for HPD noted that the majority of homeowners who have bought homes through these types of programs are in compliance, and the programs have been important in helping people afford a piece of real estate in an increasingly expensive city.

“Homeownership is a powerful tool to stabilize neighborhoods and help New Yorkers build equity and intergenerational wealth,” the spokesperson, Anthony Proia, said.

When owners don't comply, “the city will pursue legal action to ensure compliance,” he said.

COVID-19 and the statewide eviction moratorium has also further complicated the tenants' situation, an official said, but the Prashads believe the city should find comparable housing for the tenants so they can be left alone.

And the larger issue is the city's own lack of enforcement on its own covenant of home ownership, the couple said.

The Prashads said they've only been asked once to verify they lived in the home, back in 2010. This lack of enforcement has allowed some people to take advantage of the program, while they and others have suffered, Dianna Prashad said.

"Given the primary residence clauses in our contracts, I should not have had to report the breaches on my block as it was HPD's responsibility to monitor these contracts for compliance," she added.

'I No Longer Feel Safe'

She feels stuck in the home, she said. To move, she would have to first find a buyer willing to take on the 11 years left on her deed, and then pay off her mortgage and the money remaining on the city-issued grant to first buy the home — totaling close to \$200,000, she said.

Dianna Prashad said she spent close to \$100,000 after the home was severely damaged due to Hurricane Sandy, and current real estate prices around New York City make it nearly impossible for her to buy elsewhere.

HPD investigates complaints about homeowners violating the owner-occupancy agreements and also when there are changes to the mortgage, Proia said.

HPD says it's currently pursuing legal action against the next-door neighbor in question, Gail McMillan, who paid off her existing mortgage but is still required to live in the house if she owns it.



The block in Edgemere, Queens, Nov. 22, 2021. | Ben Fractenberg/THE CITY

City property records show she took out a second mortgage on the home in March, where she listed her primary residence as Delaware — and that the Queens property is an investment to receive rental income.

McMillan declined to comment when reached by phone.

The Prashads sued the city over the situation in September 2020. The couple filed an appeal in the case this past August after a judge ruled in favor of the city’s motion to dismiss the claim, according to court documents.

“This has affected my job, the city is aware of this but they don’t care,” Dianna Prashad, who works from home in a government job, said.

The couple has received the support of local elected officials, including Councilmember Selvena Brooks-Powers (D-Queens) and Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-Queens, Long Island), who sent a letter to the mayor in October on behalf of the Prashads.

“This ongoing situation has not only been extremely disruptive to the lives of Ms.

Prashad and her partner, but it is unacceptable that the city has allowed it to continue,” they wrote, demanding the city find a new home for the tenants.

“I no longer feel safe in my own home,” Dianna Prashad said.

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