

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

----- X

April 20, 2017
Start: 10:20 a.m.
Recess: 2:05 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.
16th Fl.

B E F O R E: STEPHEN T. LEVIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Annabel Palma
Fernando Cabrera
Ruben Wills
Vanessa L. Gibson
Corey D. Johnson
Ritchie J. Torres
Barry S. Grodenchik
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.

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

Steven Banks, Commissioner
Department of Social Services Human Resources
Administration & Department of Homeless Services

Gisselle Routhier, Policy Director
Coalition for the Homeless

Joshua Goldfein, Homeless Rights Project
Legal Aid Society

Stephanie Gendell, Associate Executive Director
Citizen's Committee for Children

Kathy Kim, Program Director
Vulnerable Populations Team
Enterprise Community Partners

Wendy O'Shields
Advocate for the Homeless

Craig Hughes, Policy Analyst
Coalition for the Homeless

Jason Cianciotto, Vice President
Policy, Advocacy and Communications
Harlem United

2 [sound check, pause]

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good morning

4 everybody. Thank you all for your patience. I'm
5 Council Member Stephen Levin Chair of the Council's
6 General Welfare Committee and I want to thank
7 everybody for being here today for this important
8 hearing. One year ago Mayor Bill de Blasio announced
9 and Commissioner Steven Banks announced the results
10 of the Comprehensive 90-day Review of New York City's
11 Homeless programs. This review resulted in new
12 procedural reforms and 46 substantive reforms broken
13 into four areas: Prevention, street homelessness,
14 shelter and rehousing. This review is intended to
15 build up—build upon the efforts that this
16 administration has undertaken since 2014 taking
17 office to tackle the homelessness crisis. According
18 to the administration, if it weren't for the efforts
19 that they had already—that they have already put into
20 place over the last three years, the shelters census
21 would exceed 71,000 individuals today rather than the
22 nearly 59,000 individuals in the shelter today. As a
23 result of the 90-day review process, the city created
24 an integrated management structure with both HRA and
25 DHS reporting to a single Commissioner of Social

2 Services. In addition to the structural changes at
3 DHS, this review, the review identified 46
4 substantive reforms and ended up preventing
5 homelessness, addressing street homelessness,
6 improving conditions and safety in shelter and
7 helping New Yorkers transition from shelter into
8 permanent housing. During this time last year, this
9 committee held a hearing to discuss and evaluate
10 these reforms. Today, we are here to examine the
11 progress of these reforms over the past year. We'll
12 be going one through—one by one through reforms. The
13 Administration has testified several times before
14 this committee, and has made announcements to the
15 public on the progress of some of these reforms
16 including Home-Stat, shelter security, shelter
17 inspection, the phasing out of cluster sites and
18 hotels and the plan to create 15,000 new units of
19 supportive housing. In February of this year, the
20 Administration once again updated the public on the
21 progress of some of these reforms in a press
22 conference, and released the publication titled
23 *Turning the Tide on Homelessness in New York City*
24 which includes a new plan to open 90 new shelters and
25 expand the city's 30 existing shelters over the next

2 five years to allow for the closing of all commercial
3 hotel going into 2023. Last month at the General
4 Welfare Committee Fiscal 18 Preliminary Budget,
5 Commissioner Banks stated that the Administration
6 implemented all 46 systemic and manage, and
7 management reforms to streamline how the city
8 addresses homelessness. I commend the Administration
9 for the work that it has done so far, but this a huge
10 undertaking, and we have not yet heard updates on
11 many of the other reforms. Today, the committee
12 looks forward to hearing more details on the 46
13 implemented reforms, how the city plans to achieve—
14 achieve these efforts and whether the city is on
15 track for meeting all of its goals. We're also
16 interested in knowing how Turning the—Turning the
17 Tide Report overlaps with the 90-day review reforms
18 and if there are any key differences between the two
19 initiatives besides creating new shelters. We would
20 also like to hear from those of you who are here
21 today to comment on these reforms and any suggestions
22 that you may have for how these reforms may be
23 [coughs] can be changed, improved or expanded upon.
24 The Committee will also hear five bills today:

2 Intro 622 by Council Member Liz Crowley
3 who's here, in relation to requiring the Department
4 of Homeless Services to educate homeless persons on
5 domestic violence and child abuse.

6 Intro 1066 by Council Member Rafael
7 Espinal in relation to requiring the Department of
8 Homeless Services to conduct quarterly point-in-time
9 counts on the unsheltered homeless population.

10 Intro 1433 by Council Member Ritchie
11 Torres who is here as well, in relation to requiring
12 that certain Department of Homeless Services
13 employees be trained in administering opioid
14 antagonists, and two bills that I am sponsoring:

15 Intro 1459 in relation to updating the
16 report on utilization of and applications for multi-
17 agency emergency housing assistance, and

18 Intro 1460 in relation to requiring the
19 formation of an interagency coordinating council to
20 combat homelessness.

21 I'd like to thank Commissioner Steve
22 Banks and his team for their dedication in improving
23 the system to ensure that the 59,000 individuals
24 including many thousand children living in the
25 shelter system receive high quality services. At

2 this time I'd like to acknowledge my colleagues who
3 are here today Ritchie Torres of the Bronx, Liz
4 Crowley of Queens, Barry Grodenchik of Queens, and
5 Fernando Cabrera of the Bronx. We expect more
6 members of the committee to—to join us. Lastly, I'd
7 like to thank the staff of the General Welfare
8 Committee Andrea Vazquez, Senior Counsel; Tonya
9 Cyrus, Senior Policy Analyst; Dohini Sompura, Unit
10 Head; Namara News(sic) Finance Analyst, and Stacey
11 Ward, Legal Fellow for putting together this hearing.
12 I would also like to thank my Chief of Staff Jonathan
13 Buchette; Legislative Director, Julie Barrow and
14 Budget Director Edward Paulino. Before we hear from
15 the Administration, I'd like to invite the sponsors
16 of the bills to give their opening remarks. Council
17 member Crowley.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you to the
19 Chair for having this important hearing today. The
20 city is facing a homeless crisis, a crisis that does
21 not appear to be improving. Nearly 60,000 New
22 Yorkers are in shelters, and more than 60% of those
23 are young parents and children. These are families
24 in difficult situations often feeling unsettled and
25 distressed. As the city tries to find permanent

2 housing for these families, we as a Council must do
3 our part to protect the most vulnerable, to protect
4 victims of child abuse and domestic violence. In the
5 most extreme situations of which there have been far
6 too many, people have been killed in our city's
7 homeless shelters at the hands of a family member or
8 a loved one. Throughout the country nearly 50% of
9 homeless women report that domestic violence was the
10 immediate cause of their homelessness. The
11 legislation I sponsored being heard today addresses
12 an opportunity for the Department of Homeless
13 Services to educate participants to identify what
14 abuse is. I believe this bill can certainly improve
15 and possibly save lives. If passed, this legislation
16 will enhance safety, security, and foster a path to
17 greater stability. This is why I've introduced this
18 bill that will require DHS to educate all new shelter
19 occupants on domestic violence and child abuse.
20 Specifically, the bill would require DHS to provide
21 education materials including a video and an
22 illustrative brochure explaining what these abuses
23 are. When it comes to domestic violence, it is often
24 the type of violence that thrives under the radar,
25 and so often goes unreported. Victims can be beaten

2 or children can simply be neglected. These are forms
3 of abuse that must be highlighted. It is important
4 we do what we can to ensure that the tens of thousand
5 of New Yorkers in the shelter system are safe and
6 have a fair shot at their prosperous life. Thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
9 Council Member Crowley, Council Member Torres. Do
10 you have an opening statement you want to read?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Nothing at
12 length, but I—I'd just say the virtue of my
13 legislation is so self-evident that it requires no
14 statement. But, we all know that opioid addiction
15 and fatalities are at historic highs and everyone
16 agrees that Naloxone is a proven means by which you
17 can prevent and reverse the impact of opioid
18 overdose, and so I cannot imagine any possible
19 justification for not training every employee. I
20 think the more employees who know how to administer a
21 Narcan, the more tragedies we will prevent in the
22 future. For me, the case is straightforward and
23 self-evident.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
25 Council Member Torres. Commissioner, I'll ask you to

2 raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the
3 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in
4 your testimony before this committee, and to respond
5 honestly to Council Member's questions?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I do.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
8 and I just want to note that we've also been joined
9 by Council Member Vanessa Gibson and with the
10 committee of the Bronx.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you. Good
12 morning Chairperson Levin and members of the General
13 Welfare Committee. I appreciate all of your focus
14 and support on these. We've had many discussions,
15 and I thank you for inviting me to testify today to
16 discuss the status of the 46 reforms adopted by the
17 Mayor last year following 90-day comprehensive
18 operational review of homeless services. My name is
19 Steven Banks, and I'm the Commissioner of the
20 Department of Social Services overseeing the Human
21 Resources Administration and the Department of
22 Homeless Services. Over the past three years, the
23 administration has implemented and expanded many key
24 initiatives in order to prevent and alleviate
25 homelessness, including reinstating rental assistance

2 programs and other permanent housing initiatives that
3 have enabled 55,480 individuals in 20,183 households
4 to avert entry into or move out of shelter. During
5 the same time-time period, the administration moved
6 forward with the most aggressive affordable housing
7 plan in decades. To day, under the Housing New York
8 Plan the city has financed 62,506 affordable homes
9 including enough affordable housing to serve more
10 than 160,000 low-income New Yorkers. This coincides
11 with the historic tenfold increased investment of \$62
12 million in civil legal services and we've seen a 24%
13 decline in evictions over the past three years
14 resulting in more than 40,000 New Yorkers being able
15 to stay in their homes in 2015 and 2016 and the
16 increased payment of rent arrears has enabled more
17 than 161,000 households to keep a roof over their
18 heads. As you did not—as you know, we do not wait
19 until the completion of the 90-day review to begin to
20 implement necessary reforms. For example, during the
21 review period from December 15 to April 2016 we took
22 the following actions: Committed to the largest
23 municipal program to build and expand supportive
24 housing funding by funding 15,000 new units of
25 supportive housing over the next 15 years with the

2 first 550 scattered site units coming on line this
3 year. Provided additional Tier II and emergency bed
4 for domestic violence shelter system doubling the
5 number of domestic violence cyber beds with the first
6 increase since 2010. This includes 300 emergency
7 beds and 400 Tier II units. To date, 150 of the
8 emergency beds have already been brought on line with
9 an additional 67 in the pipeline pending state
10 approval plus an additional 83 beds beginning the
11 approval process. We expanded the number of
12 dedicated youth beds for Runaway and Homeless Youth
13 operated by the Department of Youth and Community
14 Development, and we implemented a plan to double the
15 number of Drop-In Centers to provide services to
16 bring homeless individuals off the streets. These
17 initiatives and investments over the past several
18 years and during the review period were necessary
19 initiatives to stabilize the system and break the
20 trajectory of homelessness that has built up over
21 several decades increasing 115% since 1994. There
22 are also specific reforms we undertook during the
23 review period to directly address the conditions that
24 clients were experiencing while residing in shelter.
25 These specific reforms include creating the shelter

2 repair scorecard to track shelter conditions;
3 implementing enhanced shelter repair program;
4 increasing security in all commercial hotels that
5 house homeless families and individuals; providing
6 24/7 security coverage at mental health shelters;
7 overhauling and reporting on critical incidents;
8 restoring a program for domestic violence services at
9 shelters that was eliminated in 2010; initiating New
10 York City Police Department Shelter security review
11 and retraining our Department of Homeless Services
12 peace officers; announcing and beginning to implement
13 a plan to end the 17-year-old cluster shelter
14 program; and the use of commercial hotels. The
15 Comprehensive Review Process itself is guided by
16 three principles: Enhancing quality services for
17 clients; efficient use of city resources and cost-
18 effectiveness by avoiding duplication. The review of
19 the 20-year-old system included participation from a
20 variety of stakeholders. Individuals families
21 directed impacted—directly impacted who I spoke to in
22 shelters and on the streets, managers, staff and in
23 new leadership at DHS, HRA and other city agencies,
24 providers, homeless advocacy organizations, national
25 experts and researchers, former DHS commissioners and

2 elected officials. The 46 reforms developed as a
3 result of the view build on the significant
4 initiatives that this administration has put in place
5 to prevent and alleviate homelessness including
6 comprehensive rental assistance programs, historic
7 funding allocated for civil legal services for tenant
8 anti-harassment and anti-eviction programs and a
9 commitment to the preservation and creation of
10 200,000 units of affordable housing. The 46 reforms
11 can be characterized by under four broad categories,
12 and the chair mentioned: Prevention, addressing
13 street homelessness, sheltering and rehousing.

14 I'm going to first talk about management
15 reforms. As a result of the review and building on
16 reforms announced during the nine-day period, the
17 city's has implemented an integrated management
18 structure with both HRA and DHS reporting to a single
19 commissioner of Social Services. This allows the two
20 agencies to provide more seamless and effective
21 client services, and we are leveraging the shared
22 service function across two agencies resulting in
23 better day-to-day management and building a unified
24 mission across agencies. Prevention and rehousing
25 were moved out of DHS operations and integrated with

2 current HRA operations. Under this integrated
3 management structure under DSS, the following are now
4 shared services across both HRA and DHS: Counsel and
5 contracts, IT, Program Accountability and Audits,
6 Communications and External Affairs, Human Resources,
7 Info Line, Finance, Performance Management, Research
8 and Policy and Planning as well as IDNYC. I might
9 add that all of these functional transfers have been
10 accomplished effective now with collaboration with
11 the unions and in compliance with all of the Civil
12 Service Law requirements to move all of the staff
13 that were required to be moved to create this
14 integrated management structure within less than
15 year's time.

16 The DSS leadership team consist of the
17 General Counsel and Chief Contracting Officer, the
18 Chief Program, Planning and Financial Management
19 Officer including Finance Evaluation and Research and
20 Planning and Performance Management, the Chief
21 External Affairs Officer including community
22 engagement and access, Constituent Services, Office
23 of Advocacy and Outreach, Communications, Marketing,
24 Legislative Affairs, Public and Private Partnerships
25 and Citywide Health Insurance Access, the Chief

2 Operating Officer including staff resources,
3 Management, Information Services, General Support
4 Service, Police Operations and Business Process
5 Innovation and the Chief Program Accountability
6 Officer including Investigation, Revenue and
7 Enforcement Administration and Audit and Quality
8 Assurance Services. As a result of these reforms,
9 there were administrative and programmatic savings in
10 the budget of \$38 million from eliminating
11 duplicative operations and streamlining management.

12 And I will first talk about prevention in
13 terms of the co-areas of the reforms. We implemented
14 an aggressive prevention first strategy reinstating
15 tools the city had walked away from before this
16 administration and creating new rental assistance
17 programs to increase the number of families and
18 individuals leaving shelters. Preventing
19 homelessness before it occurs is critical to reducing
20 the number of families and individuals living in
21 shelter and is cost-effective and common sense
22 solution to addressing homelessness. This prevention
23 first reform refocuses the system to place greater
24 emphasis on the role of prevention services expanding
25 the tools and resources available to those in need,

2 and proactively identifying and serving those who are
3 most at risk of becoming homeless.

4 Reform No. 1. Move Homebase Program
5 Management from DHS to HRA. The management of a home
6 based program moved to HRA, which already runs a
7 number of homelessness prevention programs and
8 services. Integrating all prevention services under
9 one agency will reduce efficiency-inefficiencies and
10 allow for more seamless and effective client
11 services. The integration was completed in January
12 2017.

13 2. Expand Homebase staffing services.
14 HRA staff at Homebase offices will provide expanded
15 on-site processing and triage for HRA benefits
16 including public assistance, and rental assistance,
17 Homebase not-for-profit staff will also expand their
18 case management services to include landlord and
19 family mediation, educational advancement, employment
20 and financial literacy services. A request for
21 proposals was issued in February with contract awards
22 to be announced in the coming weeks and expanded
23 services in place by this summer. Since 2014, we
24 have expanded Homebase programs to 24 locations
25 across the five boroughs and more than doubled the

program's funding. As a result of these increases, Homebase reached 25,632 households in FY16, a 115% increase of households served compared to FY14.

3. Expand the scope of Homebase as the point of entry for those at risk of homelessness. The city developed an intake model that builds on Homebase to focus greater attention on the role of communities in supporting families at risk of homelessness. Families seeking homeless prevention or shelter services will be able to obtain these services within their borough rather than the city's centralized intake center in the Bronx. A Staten Island pilot launched in March 2017 for Staten Island families at risk of homelessness will provide evidence for how this program will be implemented in the other boroughs.

4. Use data analytics to proactively target prevention services for at-risk clients. HRA will use client data collected by the agencies to proactively identify and target prevention services for New Yorkers who are most at risk of becoming homeless such as families who are at risk of having their public assistance case closed administratively while reapplying for shelter. Eligibility research

2 for families reapplying for shelter at the PATH
3 Intake office was revamped in April 2016 and in
4 December 2106. This newly combined data was used to
5 develop new strategies for intervention. These
6 strategies were developed from our Neighborhood
7 Homelessness Prevention Outreach Phase 1 in which
8 staff made calls and home visits to offer prevention
9 services to a cohort of 2,000 clients identified as
10 high risk of becoming homeless. Between October and
11 December 2016, mailers were sent to 8,881 cash
12 assistance clients with a known history of
13 homelessness encouraging them to close-call the
14 neighborhood Homelessness Prevention Outreach Hotline
15 for assistance with housing related services. To
16 test the efficacy of behaviorally informed
17 communications half of the target group received the
18 mailer in a traditional agency format, and half
19 received a mailer designed in collaboration with IDS
20 42, and organization that uses behavioral science to
21 design scalable solutions to some of society's most
22 difficult problems. The evaluation of this effort,
23 which will occur this summer, will assess call-in
24 rates, referral rates, service receipt and ultimately
25 shelter applications. The research of PATH

2 Reapplications it will inform development of
3 additional interventions following this first
4 intervention with nearly 9,000 families.

5 5. Target outreach to double-up
6 families with school aged children. HRA will work
7 with the Department of Education to identify and
8 proactively target prevention services for families.
9 Students of families living doubled up situations
10 were reported as homeless under the McKinney-Vento
11 Act. Outreach was conducted in June 2016 to double
12 up families with school aged children who were
13 offered Homelessness Prevention Services. Planning
14 is underway to implement this outreach annually
15 beginning in June 2017 prior to the end of school
16 when typically applications for family shelter
17 increase.

18 6. Deploy additional HRA prevention
19 staff to single adult and adult family intake sites.
20 In May 2016, an intervention process was established
21 at the Borden Shelter for Veterans and at HRA's
22 Veterans Services Unit to help veterans avoid
23 entering shelter. As of April 2016-17, this month,
24 data is being analyzed to identify other populations
25 that would benefit most from additional prevention

2 services at intake. A similar initiative is being
3 implemented this month for adult families.

4 7. Target services and rental
5 assistance for youth in DYCD shelters. Rental
6 assistance programs will be expanded to include youth
7 living in DYCD youth shelters at risk of entering DHS
8 shelters. A work group between DHS and DYCD was
9 formed to facilitate expansion of rental assistance
10 programs. This expansion will occur with the
11 streamlining of the city's rental assistance
12 programs, which is expected to be finalized in the
13 summer of 2017 following the recent Theft settlement
14 in the Legal Aid Society's litigation against the
15 State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance,
16 which provides guidelines from the FEPS Rental
17 Assistance Program, which formed the basis for a
18 number of the city programs.

19 8. Target services and rental
20 assistance for clients with mental health needs
21 cycling between jail and homelessness. We are
22 currently finalizing plans for the implementation of
23 a 24-hour hotline to support at-risk clients
24 including clients being discharged from New York City
25 Health and Hospitals. The city has also recently

2 announced the provision of 97 units of supporting
3 housing targeted for such clients cycling between
4 jail and homelessness.

5 9. Create city and state taskforces to
6 increase homelessness prevention. In connection with
7 the recent FEPS settlement, the State Office of
8 Temporary and Disability Assistance and DSS worked
9 together to enhance the rental assistance tools to
10 prevent homeless including increasing the level of
11 rental assistance provided through the state FEPS
12 program, and expanding assistance for survivors of
13 domestic violence.

14 The second broad category that the Chair
15 described addressing street homelessness.
16 Implemented in March 2016, Home-Stat is the nation's
17 most comprehensive street outreach program that was
18 built from our street homelessness prevention
19 response initiatives. Additionally, we enhanced
20 funding for more Safe Havens, additional Drop-In
21 Centers, and the creation of 15,000 supportive
22 housing units to ensure that those living on the
23 streets have the opportunity to come inside and
24 connect to the services and supports they need.

2 10. Fully launched Home-Stat to address
3 street homelessness. Home-Stat was fully launched in
4 April 2016. In 2016, 690 individuals came off the
5 street and remained off in 2016 as a result of the
6 work of Home-Stat.

7 11. Enhance tools for outreach teams to
8 bring people in from the streets. The City will
9 increase Safe Haven faith-based and stabilization
10 beds, increase the number Drop-In Centers, and
11 develop 15,000 units of supportive housing to provide
12 essential tools to address street homelessness. DHS
13 is adding Safe Haven faith-based and stabilization
14 beds and funding to open up Drop-In Centers in
15 Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens was awarded at the end
16 of 2016. These locations are community based
17 programs that are located in close proximity to where
18 clients are. The programs are open 24 hours a day 7
19 days a week to provide homeless individuals access to
20 services such as meals, showers and clothing. They
21 can also provide case management services. The new
22 Queens Drop-In Center at 100-32 Atlantic Avenue,
23 opened yesterday. The Manhattan Drop-In Center at
24 14th Street and 7th Avenue were open before the end of
25 the year, and the Brooklyn Drop-In Center is in the

2 development stage. Safe Havens and stabilization beds
3 are flexible transitional housing options exclusively
4 for street homeless New Yorkers. They have lower
5 thresholds for entry than a traditional shelter and
6 are a key tool in building trust and relationships
7 with street homeless clients who are some of the most
8 difficult clients to transition to permanent housing.
9 The stabilization beds typically provide a short-term
10 spot for street homeless individuals prior to
11 outreach workers moving into a safe haven. The City
12 has already opened 284 additional Safe Havens or
13 stabilization beds and plans to open at least 220
14 more Safe Haven beds in 2017. The Administration and
15 Supportive Housing Taskforce co-chaired by DSS and
16 the Department of Housing Preservation and
17 Development and comprised of providers and other
18 experts issued comprehensive recommendations last
19 year for the implementation of the Administration's
20 unprecedented commitment to provide 15,000 units of
21 supportive housing. A supportive housing residence
22 for 108 households opened in June 2016. Ground was
23 broken in August 2016 on the construction site of
24 Melrose Commons Supportive Housing, which will
25 accommodate 58 homeless adults in the Bronx. In

2 December 2016, HRA awarded contracts for 550 units
3 for of scattered sets supportive housing will open
4 this year. Additional supportive housing is being
5 procured through pending RFPs.

6 Sheltering: New York City experienced an
7 exponential increase in the shelter population over
8 the past two decades. However, we are committed to
9 providing decent living conditions, and high quality
10 social services to every family and individuals
11 seeking shelter. These reforms address immediate
12 concerns around shelter security, and building
13 conditions including long-range strategies for
14 sustaining these reforms into the future. These
15 reforms also address pressing social service needs
16 targeting services to specific high-risk populations
17 and giving clients opportunities to enhance their
18 income building capacity by developing a career
19 pathway while in shelter.

20 Reform 12: Increase safety in shelter
21 through an NYPD management review and retraining
22 program. In March 2016, NYPD began retraining all
23 DHS security staff and sent an NYPD Management Team
24 to the agency to develop an action plan for upgraded
25 security and a related retraining curriculum for all

shelter facilities. In January 2017, NYPD began to oversee security services in the DHS shelter system. The Administration has doubled the 2013 investment in DH-DHS security with a total annual security spending of 2017 million for fiscal year 2017-13 enhanced domestic violence services in DHS shelters. As of December 2016, trained staff from HRA go to designated Tier II shelters to provide access to domestic violence services. Existing social services in Tier II shelters participate in enhanced training to provide them with the tools to identify and refer families and individual to the HRA Nova team, the NYC Family Justice Center or other community-based domestic violence providers. By September 2016, DHS employees and contracted staff system wide had undergone intimate partner violence training. Additional Nova trainings are scheduled this month.

14. Implement a more extensive reporting system for critical incidents that occur in shelters. To ensure that problems are identified, violence is now defined much more broadly to include wide ranging definitions of domestic violence assault and both child abuse and neglect. In October 2016, the new reporting categories were finalized. The plan was

2 sent to OTDA for confirmation, and DHS is awaiting
3 response in order to proceed. Staff training and
4 implementation is planned for May 2017.

5 15. Expand Shelter Repair Squad 2.0
6 Operations. The inspection process has been enhanced
7 and inspections are being conducted twice a year at
8 all sites used to house homeless people. The shelter
9 report card is produced monthly to hold the city and
10 providers publicly accountable, and has been
11 available online every month since December 2015. To
12 reduce the initial backlog, a report called the
13 *Building Compliance Unit Daily Update* was developed
14 to monitor the status of all activities to address
15 violations. Shelter providers have also been engaged
16 in a work group to discuss the best means of
17 collaborating to improve shelter conditions. In
18 2016, the city and not-for-profit shelter providers
19 cleared nearly 14,000 violations in non-cluster
20 shelters. City agencies also conducted nearly 13,000
21 inspections, 50% increase from 2015 and the number of
22 outstanding violations in traditional shelters
23 dropped by 83% in 2016.

24 16. Increase coordination among
25 inspectors. By September 2016, the city had

2 coordinated all city agencies with inspection
3 responsibilities so that there are now semi-annual
4 multi-agency inspections, coordination with OTDA and
5 with the Coalition for Homeless and Callahan
6 inspections was completed as of January 2017.

7 17. Phasing out the clus—the use of
8 cluster shelters. At the high point, there were
9 3,658 cluster units in this 17-year-old program. As
10 part of the phase-out, we've already stopped using
11 more than 750 units, and we are continuing to
12 identify units that we will stop using. In May 2016,
13 the DHS open-ended RFP for proposals for new shelters
14 was revised to include a model with both transitional
15 and permanent housing. The city is also working with
16 contracted providers to close out or convert cluster
17 units to permanent housing, and last month DHS
18 leadership briefed the Bronx Council Delegation on
19 our progress and we look forward to more
20 opportunities to speak directly with members and
21 answer questions regarding the phase-out in their
22 districts.

23 18. Assessing the percent—potential
24 conversion of existing shelters to permanent housing.
25 Where feasible, the city will partially convert

2 current shelter sites to permanent housing using new
3 shelter models like Gateway Housing and Home Stretch,
4 which include affordable permanent housing, shelter
5 units and community space at the same time.

6 Potential conversion sites are currently being
7 assessed.

8 19. Phasing out commercial hotels. As
9 the cluster take down the cluster conversion process
10 and the enhance shelter move-out efforts proceed, the
11 city will prioritize any reliance on renting blocks
12 of rooms in commercial hotels or shelter. The
13 Turning the Tide Plan set forth the road map to get
14 out of 360 cluster and commercial hotel sites and
15 replace with a smaller number of 90 high quality
16 borough bed shelters. The first five replacement
17 shelters were announced in February, and three are
18 already open and operating.

19 20. Implement the domestic violence
20 shelter expansion. In FY16, HRA conducted an
21 emergency procurement for emergency shelter beds in
22 Tier II units, and 150 emergency beds were open. The
23 second phase of contracting and opening the remaining
24 150 emergency beds this year is underway. One
25 contract for 52 Tier II units was awarded in April

2 2017, and these units are expected to open in the
3 summer of 2017. Additional Tier II contracts are
4 expected to begin to be awarded by September 2017.

5 21. The Implementing of Capital Repair
6 Program. As of January 2017, the city has
7 implemented large scale new needs repair program for
8 city-owned capitally eligible shelter site, and new
9 news process for provider owned non-capitally
10 eligible sites has also been implemented to provide
11 funding for repairs in these buildings.

12 22. Rationalizing shelter provider
13 rates. DSS, DHS and HRA are evaluating shelter
14 provider rates to ensure they are sufficient to fund
15 maintenance and services. Funding was added in the
16 Executive 17 Budget. Focus groups were conducted and
17 providers and leadership of Homeless Services United
18 are part of a process to develop model shelter
19 budgets. Development of rate-of a rate template and
20 parameters for inclusions in the open-ended RFP is
21 being developed and contract adjustments will be
22 implemented during the coming fiscal year. The
23 department is also committed to addressing the
24 contract registration backlog that built up over a
25 number of years. Just over a year ago when DHS began

2 to reform the contract process, there were
3 outstanding contract issues getting back to FY14 and
4 FY15. We have resolved those, and we are completing
5 the process of 947 contract transactions for FY16,
6 FY17, and the associated amendments. Currently, 99%
7 of FY16 and 96% of FY17 contracts are registered.
8 This small number of unregistered contracts, three
9 for FY16 and 13 for FY17 consists of contracts with
10 pending outstanding items from nine providers, three
11 that are pending with the controller for registration
12 and 13 that are being prepared for-by DSS for
13 submission to the controller shortly after receiving
14 items from their providers. As of April 18, 87% of
15 the FY16 and FY17 contract amendments were registered
16 with seven pending submission of items by providers,
17 16 pending with the controller for registration, and
18 17 that are being prepared by DHS staff for
19 submission to the controller shortly after receiving
20 items from providers. This data does not include
21 amendments connected to new needs submitted to DHS
22 after March 1st, or the current COLA as those actions
23 are still in process in the normal course of
24 business. For FY18, contracts are already in process

2 so that they can be in place at the beginning of the
3 fiscal year for the first time in years.

4 23. Address ADA compliance in shelters.

5 The city will hire a consultant to evaluate ADA
6 accessibility in the DHS shelter system. A
7 consultant firm has been identified to conduct
8 surveys of selected shelters in assist in the
9 development of compliance plans. We are now
10 proceeding to take the necessary steps to bring the
11 firm on board. They are also concluding settlement
12 of the Butler litigation to address the longstanding
13 accessibility issues.

14 24. Expanding the scope of HRA's ADA

15 Coordinated to cover the shelter system. The DSS
16 Executive Director of Disability Affairs added a
17 Director or Disability Affairs for Homeless Services
18 and ADA Coordinator to her team in February 2017.
19 The Disability Affairs Unit has been assessing all
20 aspects of access to the shelter system, and since
21 the fall of 2016, has been identified as the contact
22 on the DHS website regarding disability
23 discrimination complaints and questions regarding
24 access. The Disability Affairs Unit is working with
25 DHS teams and responsible DHS apartment-departments

2 to assess and revise the reasonable accommodation
3 process for DHS. The unit is providing technical
4 assistance and support to DHS staff regarding serving
5 people with disabilities, identifying areas where
6 training is necessary, and working directly with
7 advocates and people with disabilities on issues that
8 arise regarding access within the shelter system as
9 the systemic reforms proceed.

10 25. Promote career pathways for shelter
11 residents. The city will implement new programs to
12 help shelter residents move forward on a career
13 pathway toward self-sufficiency. Shelter providers
14 submitted proposals for career pathway training to
15 DHS for approval and shelters have been provided
16 additional funding to run enhanced programming,
17 employment literacy and wellness. City operated
18 single adult and adult family shelters have also
19 enhanced their vocational and employment training.
20 Additionally, we are finalizing a program model to
21 offer shelter residents training and employment in
22 the landscaping field as part of the routine
23 maintenance of city shelters. Contracting for
24 landscaping training programs is planned to begin in
25 October 2017. Traditional literacy classes including

1 math, reading and writing classes designed and taught
2 by the Department of Education are slated to begin in
3 July 2017. DHS is partnering with CUNY to provide
4 financial literacy services to shelter clients and
5 the city will implement additional training
6 employment programs at select shelters in 2017.

8 26. Targeting services for emerging new
9 needs in the single adult population persons 50 or
10 older and 18 to 24. In June 2016, the concept paper
11 for 10,000 units of affordable senior housing was
12 released and we expect to expect to release requests
13 for proposals this spring. In February of this year
14 in partnership with Council Member Torres, we opened
15 an 81-bed shelter in the Bronx for LGBTQI young
16 homeless adults 21 to 30 and a shelter for seniors
17 age 62 and older has been developed in Crown Heights
18 for senior men from Brooklyn. Additionally, in earl
19 2017, HRA released a congregate and scatter sites
20 supportive housing concept paper targeting young
21 adults and the RP for congregate supportive housing
22 for young adults was released in April. An open-
23 ended RFP that includes scatter sites for single
24 young adults is expected to be released within the
25 month. Additional research is being done on the RFP

2 for scatter site housing for young adult families
3 following the review of responses to the concept
4 paper. A number of initiatives are underway to
5 better serve youth in partnership with DYCD. As part
6 of these reforms, namely Reform 7, which I referred
7 to early and Reform 30, which is coming.

8 27. Targeting services for families to
9 move away from one-size-fits-all approach. We are
10 working to develop initiatives that focus on the very
11 needs of homeless families. We are working with
12 providers to develop shelter models in which
13 placement may be differentiated based on the family's
14 readiness to be rapidly rehoused, families who are
15 assessed to likely have a shorter stay in shelter,
16 may be placed in different programs than families
17 with higher needs, and likely a longer stay. So far
18 three initiatives are underway. Improving DHS access
19 to HRA documents to reduce the need for clients to
20 bring documents that they already have provided to
21 HRA, improve coordination with NOVA Family intake
22 with implementation expected by June 2017, and
23 improving information on shelters available to staff
24 at PATH and provide it to clients with implemented-
25 with implementation expected this month.

2 28. Eliminate the requirement for school
3 age children to be present at PATH for multiple
4 appointments. By the end of 2016, this requirement
5 was eliminated for families who reapply within 30
6 days of PATH. A second phase eliminating this
7 requirement for families reunifying with children in
8 foster care was launched in March. And evalu—an
9 evaluation of these programs will occur during the
10 summer.

11 29. Allow access procedures for adult
12 families with procedures for families with children.
13 The city will modify the intake process and improve
14 capacity planning to avoid long waits or transporting
15 clients in the middle of the night as a result of
16 delays in identifying available shelter placements
17 for adult families. This month we are dedicating
18 additional shelter space to meet the needs of adult
19 families and to enhance intake services for such
20 families.

21 30. Streamline access to DYD—DYCD
22 shelter for homeless youth. Liaison staff are
23 identified for DHS intake centers and fact sheets for
24 distribution to staff and homeless youth have been
25 developed. The first staff training session occurred

2 in January, and second follow-up training will take
3 place this month.

4 31. Implement tripling the DYCD shelter
5 capacity for runaway and homeless youth. The city
6 has opened 205 runaway and homeless youth beds since
7 2014 and 295 additional beds are funded and planned
8 to open by 2019. This will bring the total system
9 capacity from 253 when Mayor de Blasio took office to
10 753 for FY19.

11 32. Provide increased notice prior to
12 non-emergency transfers. In non-emergency situations
13 clients will be given more notice that they are being
14 transferred to another shelter. DHS program areas
15 are finalizing update—updated procedure for this
16 policy.

17 33. Increasing transportation resources
18 to reduce placement waiting time. Currently, an
19 analysis of data to determine new transportation
20 models and needs is underway, and the plan—the
21 turning the tide plan, of course, specifies the
22 importance of adding additional capacity to meet the
23 needs of families and individuals who apply for
24 shelter and to make placements through the borough
25 based strategy.

2 34. Deploy social workers to accompany
3 families found ineligible who are returning to
4 community resource to provide on-the-spot assistance.
5 Social workers are currently being brought on board.
6 Social workers will follow up with families during
7 the conditional status and contact primary tenants to
8 offer such on-the-spot assistance.

9 35. Expand the shelter conditions
10 complaint process through HRA's info line. The 24/7
11 shelter hotline launched in February 2016 and takes
12 complaints from shelter residents as well as the
13 public on shelter services and additions. We
14 completed this expansion in December 2016.

15 36. Communicate more information to
16 clients through fliers, posters and other media. We
17 recognize that better information for clients will
18 enhance access to services including employment and
19 housing assistance. In March 2017, fliers and
20 posters were provided to shelter sites for
21 distribution and posting. We continue ongoing work
22 to ensure fliers and posters are updated and
23 replenished regularly as appropriate.

24 The area of rehousing. Finding safe and
25 affordable housing is essential to addressing

2 homelessness, coordinating rehousing services in the
3 city under one management structure making the renal
4 assistance programs easier to navigate, enhancing
5 aftercare services and enforcing housing
6 discrimination laws will improve shelter move-outs
7 and housing stability.

8 37. Move rehousing program management
9 from DHS to HRA. DSS, DHS and HRA are developing a
10 more coordinated program structure to promote move-
11 outs leveraging the expertise of each agency. The
12 DHS Supportive Housing Unit is on track to transfer
13 to HRA in May 2017.

14 38. Streamline HPD housing placement
15 process. The city will establish a streamlined
16 process to connect homeless clients to HPD financed
17 units that are available and appropriate toward their
18 needs. Planning is underway to identify and assist
19 shelter residents who are eligible to apply for HPD
20 lotteries for affordable housing.

21 39. Continue to utilize NYCHA placements
22 to address homelessness. We have continued to
23 replace 1,500 DHS families and 300 survivors of
24 domestic violence in HRA or DHS shelters last year
25 and this year.

40. Consolidate and streamline the LINC FEPS, and city FEPS rental assistance programs. The city will consolidate and streamline the operations of its rental assistance programs to enhance shelter move-outs. The Streamlining Plan is expected to be finalized this summer now that the FEPS lawsuit has been settled between the Legal Aid Society and OTD-State OTDA. As we reported last month, 20,183 households moved out-moved out or avoided shelter using rental assistance or our rehousing programs. As of the February 20-as of February 26, 2017, DHS shelter census there are 7,315 cases with active LINC certifications. This number captures both families and individuals. As of the Jam (sic) Plan for FY17, the total budget for the LINC programs is \$111.9 million gross, \$90.4 million city tax levy.

41. Increase enforcement of source of income discrimination law. The city will train and dedicated HRA staff to conduct testing to identify potential discriminatory practices, intake enforcement action to supplement the efforts of City Human Rights Commission enforcement. We reported previously that we have been involved in 35 cases including cases that we worked on with CCHR over the

2 past year most of which resulted in a favorable
3 outcome for the client. DHS has distributed a source
4 of income discrimination informational flyer with a
5 phone number to contact, and New Yorkers can also
6 call 311. Both HRA's info line central complaint
7 number and 311 are advertised on the flyer.

8 42. Implement a more effective aftercare
9 program. Using the critical time intervention as a
10 model, the city will enhance aftercare services for
11 rehoused clients. In October 2016, a concept paper
12 was released and a request for proposal for enhanced
13 community supports for persons exiting shelters with
14 subsidies was released in February. The news
15 services are expected to be in place in this summer.
16 In the interim, current homebased providers are
17 providing this assistance.

18 43. Provide assistance to obtain federal
19 disability benefits. Earlier this year, the city
20 dedicated services to focus on enrolling shelter
21 residents on SSI and SSD to increase income and
22 promote rehousing. This year SSI and SSD enrollment
23 assistance is planned for clients in shelter who
24 receive cash assistance, and are determined to need
25 home visits.

2 44. Incorporate continuum of care
3 strategic planning into homeless strategy development
4 and establish a leadership reporting structure.

5 Drawing on the model in other jurisdictions, the city
6 will enhance the role of the continuum of care in the
7 policy and planning process. As part of this
8 initiative, the city is exploring ways to further
9 coordinate access and assess need for those
10 experiencing homelessness following the HUD approach.
11 By September of 2016, a leadership reporting
12 structure had been created, and regular meetings were
13 scheduled between the continuum of care co-chairs and
14 DHS and HRA leadership .

15 45. Provide clear and concise
16 information and written materials to clients about
17 available assistance in programs. Materials
18 describing available assistance in programs have been
19 compiled and are ready for distribution. Materials
20 will be distributed throughout the spring. We
21 continue with ongoing work to provide updated
22 materials as appropriate and replenish supplies.

23 46. Call on the state to permit use of
24 Medicaid funds for apartment search and shelter,
25 relocation services for homeless clients with

2 disabilities and (b) approve HRA's requested FEPS
3 plan modifications. These policy changes will
4 enhance both rehousing and prevention efforts.
5 Through the FEPS settlement, the HRA FEPS plan was
6 approved, and will be implemented after settlement is
7 approved by the court. Medicaid waiver issues have
8 been affected by the change in administrations in
9 Washington.

10 Turn the Tide on Homelessness in New York
11 City. In February, the administration announced a
12 comprehensive borough based plan entitled *Turn the*
13 *Tide on Homelessness in New York City* to shrink the
14 footprint of city homeless shelter system by 45% and
15 reduce the shelter census over the next five years.
16 *Turn the Tide* builds on the reforms identified as
17 part of the 90-day review that began in December 2015
18 for which a comprehensive operational review of the
19 homeless programs was conducted. Our vision of Turn
20 the Tide relies on three approaches. First, in order
21 to keep people in their homes by stopping evictions.
22 Helping families and individuals remaining with
23 family members in the community, and making housing
24 more affordable. Second, continuing to enhance our
25 Home-Stat Program to bring people in from the

2 streets. Third, a reimagined approach to providing
3 shelter that ends use of the 17 or Cluster Apartment
4 Program by the end of 2021 and the decades old use of
5 commercial hotel facilities by the end of 2023. It
6 cuts the total number of shelter facilities by almost
7 45% by getting out of 360 cluster apartments and
8 commercial hotel locations, and replacing them with a
9 smaller number of 90 new high quality shelters in all
10 five boroughs, and provides homeless families and
11 individuals with an opportunity to be in a shelter as
12 close as possible to their own communities and the
13 anchors of life like schools, jobs, healthcare,
14 houses of worship and family to help get them back on
15 their feet and out of shelter more quickly. Keeping
16 people in their homes and moving them off the streets
17 to affordable housing. 200,000 affordable housing
18 apartments have been preserved in just three years.
19 This is its finest record since 2005 and '06
20 affordable residences.

21 Affordable Housing Update: The city has
22 committed \$1.9 billion to expand our housing programs
23 to include 10,000 apartments focused on seniors,
24 veterans and other low-income families. Added rental
25 assistance for seniors. We continue our work with

2 our colleagues in Albany to pass Dimension Tax that
3 would create a new elder rental assistance program to
4 help more than 25,000 seniors stay in their homes.

5 Rental Assistance and Rehousing Initiatives: Since
6 over—since 2014 over 55,000 people have secured
7 permanent housing through our Rental Assistance and
8 Rehousing initiatives.

9 Emergency Rental Assistance: We provide
10 emergency rental assistance to 161,000 households
11 helping rent burdened New Yorkers at risk of eviction
12 stay in their home.

13 Supportive Housing: 15,000 units of
14 supportive housing will be provided over the next 15
15 years representing the largest municipal commitment
16 to such supportive housing.

17 Legal Assistance: As the Administration
18 provided increased funding for such services, 40,000
19 New Yorkers were able to stay in their homes, and
20 eviction is down is 24%.

21 Earlier this year, the city made a
22 commitment to providing universal access to counsel
23 in Housing Court proceedings phased in over five
24 years. All people facing eviction in Housing Court
25 will have access to free legal assistance and all

2 people with low income will have full legal
3 representation. This is expected to benefit 400,000
4 New Yorkers when fully implemented.

5 Street Homeless: As we reported, we
6 moved 690 people off the street into traditional
7 housing and permanent housing last years. Making
8 long needed operational reforms. At the Mayor's
9 direction, we have implemented the 46 reforms as
10 described. Shelter conditions inspections are up
11 50%, and all violations are down 83%. We've gotten
12 out of 750 more cluster apartments. NYPD has taken
13 the lead in security and we've doubled our investment
14 in security. The Administration has placed 3,153
15 homeless veterans in permanent housing. In 2015, the
16 US Department of Housing and Urban Development
17 declared chronic veterans homelessness a thing of the
18 past, and at the core of the Turning the Tide Plan
19 and relevant to the 90-day review reforms that we
20 discussed is closing all cluster apartments and
21 commercial hotel facilities. Over the course of the
22 plan, we'll get out of all 360 cluster apartment
23 sites and commercial hotels and replace them with
24 that small number of 90 borough based shelters.
25 There are approximately 270 buildings in the 17-year

2 Cluster program with approximately 10,000 people in
3 roughly 2,900 units currently. Around 700–7,500
4 individuals are in hotel rooms. We will be creating
5 fewer new borough based replacement shelters. The
6 city will open approximately 20 shelters annually
7 over the next five years with a wide range of
8 services on site. The borough based approach will
9 allow families and individuals to be placed in
10 proximity to schools, jobs, healthcare, houses of
11 worship, family and neighbors. As we shrink the
12 footprint of shelters citywide by 45%, we will reform
13 how we notify communities about our plans to open
14 shelter when they are needed to meet multiple court
15 order right to shelter mandates, and we welcome the
16 support of this committee in bringing our providers
17 suitable locations to open these needed facilities.

18 Finally, let me talk about the
19 legislation before the committee today, the five
20 bills. As the committee considers the package of
21 legislation before it today, we want to provide some
22 initial feedback on the bills. In each instance we
23 support the intent of the bill, and in many cases we
24 are already doing the work required by the proposed
25 legislation, and we look forward to working with the

2 Council to address potential gaps as well as how the
3 proposed legislation aligns with the work currently
4 underway so as not to duplicate resources and ensure
5 appropriate outcomes for our clients. I will now
6 just summarize the work under each of the—the piece
7 of legislation to help in your consideration of the
8 actual language. Intro 622 amending the
9 Administrative Code to educate homeless persons in
10 domestic violence and child abuse, we agree with the
11 intent of Intro 622, recognizing that over 34% of
12 families entering shelter have a history of domestic
13 violence and we need to target our efforts to engage
14 those families and connect them with needed services.
15 The city is also committed to a broad prevention
16 strategy to avert violence before it takes place, and
17 engage survivors sooner, issues that are front and
18 center in the current work of the Mayor's Taskforce
19 on Domestic Violence. After the 90-day review
20 several recommendations were made to address the
21 prevalence of intimate partner violence in the
22 homeless population and improved client services for
23 survivors of intimate partner violence. One of those
24 recommendations was to enhance domestic violence
25 services at DHS shelter—DHS shelters by provide

2 Intimate Partner Violence specific training for
3 shelter staff, contracted staff, DHS peace officers
4 and contracted security. As a result the Mayor's
5 Office to Combat Domestic Violence and DHS created a
6 work plan for providing these trainings, and OCDV
7 created a comprehensive training of Intimate Partner
8 Violence facilitated by SCDV policy and training
9 coordinators, but they also equip shelter staff with
10 the knowledge, skills and tools that need—they need
11 to effectively identify and engage with survivors.
12 OCDV began the enhanced trainings for DHS in June
13 2016, and has since facilitated 87 trainings reaching
14 approximately 2,200 staff members. The following is
15 a breakdown of OCDV/DHS trainings to date:

16 DHS Family Shelter—Services staff, 31
17 trainings and four presentations have been provided
18 and approximately 680 people attended the trainings,
19 and 74 attended the presentations.

20 Adult Family Services staff: 7 trainings
21 attended by 121 staff members.

22 DHS single adult staff: 6 training
23 courses were provided and 89 people attended.

24 DHS prevention Homepage: 7 trainings
25 were provided and 133 staff attended.

2 DHS Peace Officers: 32 trainings were
3 provided, and a total of 1,047 staff attended
4 consisting of DHS peace officers, DHS cadets,
5 sergeants, lieutenants and captains.

6 The Administration is ready to
7 collaborate with the Council to further improve our
8 response to domestic violence particularly as it
9 affects the homeless population, and we look forward
10 to discussing the best practices and addressing this
11 public health epidemic. DHS currently has
12 information pertaining to the identification and
13 recording of instance of child abuse, including
14 written materials at intake and in shelter.

15 Intro 2-1066 relating to quarterly point
16 in time counts. As part of Home-Stat being fully
17 implemented, the agency already conducts such counts
18 in addition to their HUD required homelessness
19 population estimate count.

20 Intro 1443 to amend the code with respect
21 to administering opioid antagonists. Prior to the
22 introduction of this bill, we had just begun an
23 initiative to train DHS and provider staff on the
24 administration of opioid antagonists. Naloxone
25 training for DHS staff has been completed. Likewise,

2 all providers participated in the training except for
3 one provider, which will be addressed for the
4 contract oversight process. In a separate effort
5 within HRA we are training staff at HASA Emergency
6 Housing.

7 Intro 1460 requiring the formation of an
8 interagency coordination council to combat
9 homelessness, following the 90-day review an agency
10 coordinating council to combat homelessness was
11 convened. The Deputy Mayor of Health and Human
12 Services leads the council, which includes other
13 deputy mayors, and the senior leadership appoints
14 city agencies. The council meets quarter, and small
15 working groups meet as well.

16 Intro 1448 regarding utilization of and
17 applications for multi-agency emergency assistance,
18 emergency housing assistance. DHS supports the
19 change to the report that is contemplated within this
20 bill, which adds information to an existing report on
21 the number of total of duplicated persons utilizing
22 all city administered facilities and disaggregated.
23 As we continue to develop and update a transparent
24 accounting for our shelter population, this bill is
25 line with that effort. Thank you again for this

2 opportunity to testify and discuss the agency's
3 progress in implementing the 46 reforms that the
4 Mayor adopted following last year's review of
5 homeless services, and to providing information with
6 respect to the five pieces of legislation. Again, we
7 support the intent of those five bills, and I welcome
8 your questions.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
10 Commissioner. So, because I'm going to mostly focus
11 my time on going back and drilling down on some of
12 the specific reforms, I am going to turn it over to
13 my colleagues first because I do have to run across
14 the street and take a vote. So, in—in the interest
15 of continuity for hearing, I'm going to turn it over
16 to—to Council Member Crowley first for questions, and
17 then Council Member Wills, and then Council Member
18 Salamanca, and then Council Member Grodenchik, and
19 then while I'm across the street, Council Member
20 Grodenchik will—will chair the hearing.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you, Chair
22 Levine. Before I ask my question, I want to have
23 Council Member Salamanca have an opportunity just
24 because he's running across the street with you so—

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --we'll let
3 move--and I'll quickly.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] And I
5 want to acknowledge Council Member Rafael Salamanca
6 from the Bronx.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm sorry it took so
8 long to get you the 46 reforms. I'm glad we only have
9 46.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you.
11 Thank you all. Thank you, Mr. Chair. How are you?
12 Good morning, Commissioner.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good to see you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Commissioner,
15 I--I have couple of questions. My--my first question I
16 want to go back. I know we've had many conversations
17 about the Safe Haven sites. This new Safe Haven site
18 that you want to open up in my Council district,
19 which I have concerns. If you can bear with me, I
20 just have some data here that I would like to share.
21 In my--in my council district I have 484 units of
22 cluster sites. About 1,700 people live in these
23 cluster sites. I have two Safe Havens, five of those
24 shelters, three commercial hotels, one late arrival,
25 seven family Tier II shelters, five family hotels,

2 one of those family hotels and one of the Tier II
3 shelters. So in total that equals to 26 shelter in
4 my council district. This is an overburdened
5 community with shelters. So, can you explain to me
6 why is that this Administration is adamant about
7 opening up a new Safe Haven in council district?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Let me first
9 acknowledge I appreciate the work that we've done
10 together on many issues, and I understand your
11 concern about this particular facility. The--all of
12 the cluster sites and all of the commercial hotel
13 sites will be closed, and we've made that public
14 commitment. We will be doing that. I know
15 additional information was provided when agency
16 leadership met with--met with the Bronx Delegation,
17 and again we'll be happy to sit down with you and go
18 through the--the timeframe for closing all of those
19 facilities. But Safe Haven--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: [interposing]
21 I'm sorry, Commissioner, there's no timeline in terms
22 of closing these cluster sites because I--I asked
23 what's the timeline in terms of closing cluster sites
24 for example, in Hunts point, and yet, you know, I'm
25 getting calls from providers that they're looking

2 into opening up new shelters as part of this Mayor's
3 plan of 90 new shelters in Hunts Point. But yet, I
4 have not gotten any feedback as to when these cluster
5 sites are going to be closed.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: All of the cluster
7 sites will be closed within the five-year period of
8 time. That's the public commitment that we have
9 made. We've already gotten out of 750 of the
10 individual cluster units, and we can certainly look
11 at the units that are in your particular district.
12 As we site new shelters in boroughs, we're looking to
13 implement the values that we expressed about six
14 weeks ago or two-two months ago, I'm sorry, in the
15 Turn the Tide plan to have a smaller number of 90
16 shelter replace the 360 locations that we're closing.
17 Safe Havens on the hand, I just want to emphasize are
18 an important tool for us to bring people off the
19 streets, and the siting of them as part of the effort
20 of brining people off the streets. In terms of other
21 providers coming to a potential over-siting of our
22 district, I'd be happy to talk to you about that, but
23 I think it's important publicly for me to say the
24 process of siting shelters is one in which providers
25 respond to us through our open ended RFP process, and

2 we evaluate whether or not it's a shelter we—we want
3 to open, and we will certainly work with you if there
4 are particular concerns about any provider that's
5 approached you with respect to proposing open
6 shelters.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Again,
8 Commissioner, you know, the—the concern is there's no
9 time left for closing these cluster sites, but yet
10 there's a—a plan to open up 9 new—90 new shelters,
11 and my concern is you're going to open up another
12 shelter in Hunts Point that's not a Safe Haven, and
13 yet, we don't know when these cluster sites are going
14 to close. That's the first thing. The second thing
15 is my district is an overburdened district as it is,
16 and you want—your—this Administration wants to open
17 up another Safe Haven, and I—you're going to get
18 resistance from me from day one you've had
19 resistance, and you're going to continue to get
20 resistance. My other—my other question has to do
21 with the violations. In 2016, there were 14,000
22 violations of non-cluster sites that were cleared.
23 How many outstanding violations in cluster sites was
24 there outstanding violations in the Bronx Cluster
25 where the two children were killed in Hunts Point.

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm going to have to
3 get you that information.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright. Now,
5 do you have any data in terms of how many violations
6 that particular building had?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I don't—I don't know
8 that that particular building off the top of my head.
9 I want to be sure—I'm under oath—I want to be sure
10 and get you the correct information.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright. So,
12 you know, that incident happened back in December.
13 Is there—where's the follow-up in terms of the
14 reporting mechanism, the investigation? Is this—is
15 this incident along their investigation?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, there's an in
17 investigation that's ongoing from the District
18 Attorney's Office, and we're awaiting the results of
19 that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, and
21 now is there an internal investigation in terms of
22 oversight inspections of the provider BEDCO because
23 it is my understanding that the city is—has
24 terminated the contracts on BEDCO. Has there been
25

2 any oversight investigation that you can share with
3 the public?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: At this point, we've
5 made the determination to stop using BEDCO as a
6 provider in cluster sites and in commercial hotels,
7 and we have put in place a procurement process to put
8 other providers in their place and that process will
9 be complete very quickly, and we're reviewing their
10 remaining four shelters. We've closed other shelters
11 that they operated, and in the process of moving
12 another shelter to another provider. So, that
13 investigation is continuing.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: And is BEDCO
15 still providing services at this particular building
16 in Hunts Point?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There are no
18 families in that particular building.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay, alright,
20 thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council
22 Member.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Just
24 to clarify for the record, Council Member, we removed
25 families from that building at the—in December, and

2 the investigation of the provisional services by
3 BEDCO and by other providers is something that we
4 undertook as part of the 90-day review. So, we've
5 eliminated a number of providers already: We Always
6 Care, Housing Bridge, and BEDCO is the next provider
7 that we've been checking just the ways that they had
8 been operating and providing it to other providers.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council
10 Member Salamanca. Council Member Crowley.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you again
12 to the Chair. I want to follow up with some of
13 Council Member Salamanca's questions. First, yes in
14 your report you did say that there were 14,000
15 violations in non-cluster sites that were cleared up,
16 but as of your latest shelter scorecard, which is
17 just March 31, 2007 to most recent, you have 13,017
18 violations on cluster sites. Why is it that you
19 agency can work towards resolving violations? These
20 are dangerous building violations that you know the
21 new violations are open and putting families in
22 danger why is it that you're able to resolve those
23 violations in non cluster sites and able to do that
24 within the cluster sites?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, the non-
3 cluster sites are either directly run by the city, or
4 in city buildings or are run by not-for-profit
5 partners in buildings that they are either own
6 themselves or run directly. So, we've had a
7 partnership with not-for-profit providers to address
8 the conditions in the non-clusters.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]
10 Sorry. I don't want to interrupt you commissioner,
11 but we need to know the percentages. From my
12 understanding the vast majority of the non-cluster
13 sites are not owned by the City either, that they're
14 under private developers hands, and there are a lot
15 of violations in those sites as well. There is
16 nothing to say that the conditions are good in those
17 buildings either except that your agency has been
18 able to get those property owners to resolve those
19 violations whereas you're not able to do that in the
20 cluster sites, and you have partnerships with non-
21 profits that are working with these cluster-cluster
22 sites as well.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, I-I would
24 like to actually give you a full answer. I

2 appreciate that you had a follow-up question before I
3 was able to complete my answer, but-

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing] I
5 want real numbers like how many of these sites that
6 you're referring to that are clearing up their
7 violations are actually owned by the city versus
8 owned by private developers?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Council Member, the
10 program that cluster sites are in it's a 17-year-old
11 program. It began under Mayor Giuliani. I can
12 remember testifying before you and others about
13 problems in this program for many, many years. The
14 steps that we have tried to take with respect to
15 clusters have followed one route, and the steps that
16 we've tried to take with respect more traditional
17 shelters have followed a different route. Let me
18 give you information on both of those approaches.
19 With respect to the shelters that either operated by
20 not-for-profit providers or by the city, the city has
21 either made the repairs directly in their own
22 buildings, and I can get you a breakdown of those
23 buildings. I don't want to give you information off
24 the top of my head. I will give you that information
25 separately. The city has either made repairs in its

2 own buildings or worked with the not-for-profit
3 providers to make repairs in building that the not-
4 for-profit providers either own or lease or in city
5 buildings. And do, we've been able to clear 14,000
6 violations, and there are now less than 2,000
7 violations many of which are capital violations, the
8 capital problems that have built up for many years,
9 and we've allocated funding to make those capital
10 repairs. In the cluster sites, we have sued
11 landlords. We have made emergency repairs to address
12 immediate conditions. The problem with this
13 seventeen-year-old program is revealed by actually
14 what you're asking about. They're buildings run by
15 private landlords that include homeless families and
16 tenants, and the reason why we want to get out of
17 these buildings and have prioritized getting out of
18 them and, in fact, stopped using 750 units out of the
19 3,600 units that are there is just for the very
20 questions you're asking about. These—this is a
21 program that has been in place for 17 years that has
22 not worked, and we want to end it as quickly as
23 possible, and so we're prioritizing taking people out
24 of them. Where we can, we have sued landlords to
25 improve conditions. Where we have identified

2 opportunities, we have made repairs directly, but
3 these are privately owned buildings with tenants in
4 them and with homeless families in them, and we think
5 the best course of action is to continue to
6 prioritize getting out of them.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Can you speak in
8 more detail to the examples where you've taken these
9 landlords to court, and do you feel that your agency
10 or agencies that you work with in order to do these
11 repairs have enough ability to hold these landlords
12 accountability? We as the city of New York need to
13 hold scrupulous-unscrupulous landlords and take them
14 to task, and-and hold them accountable when they're
15 putting our kids, our most vulnerable New Yorkers in
16 dangerous situations. I don't think we're doing
17 enough, and from the scorecards it looks like the
18 focus has just been on the non-cluster sites, and it
19 seems as if you are getting violations resolved
20 there, and you're not getting any violations resolved
21 in the cluster sites.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, I-I know you
23 had disagreed with me before about prioritizing
24 getting out of the cluster sites, but this is exactly
25 why we prioritized getting out of the cluster sites

2 because we don't think that these are appropriate
3 ways to house children, and so we put resources into
4 closing those units down, and getting out of them
5 more quickly, which is the reason why we're going
6 from a high of more than \$3,600 placements to
7 approximately 2,900 placements and we're going to
8 continue to prioritize getting out of them. The
9 actions that we took against the landlords resulted
10 in fines and we can provide you with the exact
11 information.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]
13 Have you ever taken property? Have you ever been in
14 a position where there have been substantial fines on
15 landlords where the fines are higher than the
16 property or they're not paying their fines so you can
17 take them to court?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The funds that were
19 levied on these particular landlords I believe are in
20 excess of \$30,000, but I can get you the exact
21 amount.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: It doesn't seem
23 like a lot of money.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There also—there are
25 fines that are consistent with what is provided for

2 under local law. The fines that HPD can get in a
3 Housing Court proceeding are specified in law. Your
4 and I might wish that they were higher, but they
5 always have--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing] We
7 can work to make them higher. We could work together
8 to hold these landlords more accountable. I don't
9 want to continue in that line of questioning. I just
10 want to ask you a few more questions--

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] I'd be
12 happy to work with you on that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --before some of
14 my colleagues get their chance. If you could tell me
15 how long a family is staying. What's the average an
16 individual stays within your shelter system, the
17 average length of time, an average length of time a
18 family stays.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, the average
20 length of stays in the system are in excess of a
21 year, and we can get you the exact breakdown for each
22 group within our shelter system. The length of stay
23 in a shelter-

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing] Is
25 that for a family or an individual?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's-it's-for-for a-

3 -

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing] Is
5 it close to two years or is it closer to year?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's in between.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So, it's--

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] And
9 I'll get the--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --a year or a
11 year and a half?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: If I could get you
13 the exact information, I'd be happy to do that, but
14 it's excess of a year, and it reflects a situation
15 that basically has developed in which there's a gap
16 between rents and income, and the shelter system
17 increased 114%--150% over a 20-year period of time.
18 So the lengths of stay are reflective of the kinds of
19 problems--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Sure, no--

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --you and I see.
22 You and I know.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --I agree, I
24 agree. I think the length of stay is closer to two
25 years from the--the statistics that I've seen, and I'm

2 curious to know where your families are moving to.
3 Where did they go? Who houses them after being
4 homeless? Are they going into any of these new
5 constructed units that the Mayor and you mentioned in
6 your third paragraph? I think there's over 60,000.
7 Do you know—can you tell us where they're going?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We've moved out or
9 avoided entry into the shelter system of more than
10 20,000 households. At the hearing in March I gave
11 specific breakdown of where the kind of housing that
12 we were providing for people. Some of the housing is
13 in New York City Housing Authority apartments. Some
14 of the housing is in Section 8. Some of the housing
15 is through the LINC Program that we're funding. Some
16 of its through SEPS Program that we're funding. Some
17 of it is just city FEPS, and—and all of that
18 information is provided. It was provided in the
19 March testimony, which we'd be happy to provide you
20 with.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: In your third
22 paragraph you mention the success under Housing New
23 York Plan that the city has financed 62,500 new
24 affordable homes or preserves that many. So, I guess
25 the—the breakdown from the numbers I have are

2 actually 20,800 new units and over 40,600 preserved
3 units. So, now are your families going into any of
4 those units?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We can certainly get
6 you a breakdown of that as well.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But the truth is
8 probably they are not because--

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] I
10 don't think that--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --those units
12 require that families have a good credit score in
13 order to get into those.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Actually, HPD issued
15 a guidance at the end of last year to the developers
16 with respect to placing limitations on--on the
17 application and the credit score, and in terms of
18 placing limitations on the ability to decline to
19 accept tenants if they had prior experience in
20 Housing Court. So, HPD took steps to address that I--
21 that I think you're--you're focused on, which I--I
22 understand why we focus on it.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Right, right.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: HPD took steps to
25 address that.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So, now anyone
3 participating in—where these programs with HPD cannot
4 discriminate based on bad credit?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'd be happy to
6 provide you with a copy of HPD's Guidance but they
7 did address credit issues, and they did address prior
8 experience in Housing Court.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay, and so are
10 you working with HPD to identify communities that
11 need more affordable housing. Just because—I know
12 it's not your job, but you mentioned it a number of
13 times in your testimony how this Administration is
14 doing so much more than any other administration to
15 build more affordable units. I mean that is the
16 answer I believe to this homelessness crisis,
17 building more permanent affordable housing. So, how
18 closely are you identifying communities? I bring
19 that up because I have a breakdown for every single
20 community board, and—and I'm just coming to an end
21 here. In my community board, which is in Queens, I
22 represented Community Board 5, and if you look at the
23 20,000 units of new construction, not one was in my
24 community board. Now, we were looking at fair share
25 of that, I would have had nearly 500. I would have

2 had over 400 new units of affordable housing in my
3 community board district, and if you look at of the
4 41,652 that were preserved, just five were in my
5 community board district. That is not even one
6 percent, not even a tenth of a percent. So, please
7 work with the administration more closely to identify
8 communities that need affordable housing so that they
9 can get the services for permanent affordable housing
10 that they deserve. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're happy to work
12 with you, council member. [background comments,
13 pause]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm going to turn it
15 over to Council Member Grodenchik to chair as I run
16 across the street for a vote.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm going to be
19 taking Council Members Wills and Salamanca with me
20 and we'll come back so. [

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: [off mic] We'll be
22 back.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, right, now it's
24 just going to be

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: [interposing]
3 We'll be back.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --just Barry and Liz.
5 I'm going to have Queens take over the hearing.
6 [pause]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay, good
8 morning. It's still morning, right? Good morning
9 everybody. Good morning, Commissioner. It's good to
10 see you as always.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good to see you, too.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Just to
13 change things up a little, and then I'll get into it
14 a little more. The new State Budget, and know that I
15 have been pushing along with Assemblyman Hennessey
16 obviously the Chair of Social Services. Can you--have
17 your--has your staff done an analysis yet of how this
18 budget will affect us, and the good, the bad and the--
19 the ugly.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I--I think that's
21 still in process.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
23 A little premature.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean as--as--I know
25 that when I testified in March, you and I spoke

2 about, you know, the potential benefit of Assembly
3 Hennessey's legislation, and the Mayor supported it
4 in his budget testimony. The city supported it, and
5 it wasn't included in the budget.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Well, we'll
7 keep going. We'll keep looking for it. It's always
8 next year, right. It's like your hope springs
9 eternal.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Although I would
11 say, and I hope I can take the liberty because you
12 and I have known each other for awhile of answering
13 an unasked question. It's one of the reasons why we
14 need to make the plans to ensure we've got shelter
15 because some of the plans for permanent housing that
16 are offered up don't come to fruition. Yet, on every
17 night we have a constitutional mandate to provide
18 shelter for people. We want to bring people in off
19 the street. So, as larger discussions go on about
20 long range solutions, we still have the night-night
21 needs to provide shelter for people.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I understand
23 that, and I certainly appreciate it. Recently, the-
24 the city experienced a drop of about 2,000 people. I
25 look at your census everyday, and I greatly

2 appreciate that you do have it on, so to speak, on
3 the front page, and I think that's important for all
4 of us to—to be looking at those because those are
5 real people and they're experiencing real
6 difficulties. Do you have an explanation why it
7 suddenly dropped a couple thousand from like 60,700
8 or so to 58,800?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, you—you and I
10 have spoken about this before and I appreciate the
11 question. I also appreciate you look at every day,
12 and we could each other because I look at it every
13 day, too. The—there are a number of factors that go
14 into—the census. One factor the seasonality.
15 Another factor is the numbers of people we're able to
16 move out, and another factor is the numbers of people
17 we're able to prevent from coming—from coming into
18 shelter and, you know, we're about to come upon the
19 summer, which is the peak period demand for homeless
20 families. And, you know, the number will—the number
21 fluctuates revenue depending on—on seasonality. The
22 current census reflects the efforts that we're making
23 to prevent homelessness, and it reflects the efforts
24 that we're making to reconnect people to their family
25 and communities, and our efforts to move people out

2 of shelter with rental assistance. So, it's
3 reflecting—it's a reflection of the programs that
4 we've had in place that impact--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
6 Is it—is it—I don't mean to interrupt you--

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: --but I just
9 did, but is it—is it more seasonality do you think or
10 is it more a result of—I can't count that high—46
11 separate detailed things that you've talked about
12 this morning because that would be encouraging to
13 myself and the other members of the Council and
14 certainly to the people of this city if you could
15 pinpoint something that was working maybe better than
16 we thought it would. Because under the new plan, the
17 Mayor has set a goal of a reduction of 2,500 persons
18 in the system, and to me that's really almost a
19 rounding era in—in [coughing]—bless you—in this city.
20 And we dropped almost 80% of what the Mayor's goal
21 was in just a couple of months. So, is it perhaps
22 we're not being bold enough in our hopes because to
23 me, you know, a drop of 2500% is just 4%, and would
24 still leave the families that—that need shelter with
25 a tremendous need. It would increase the burden on

2 our--on our community. So, I'm wondering if maybe
3 there's more going on here, and that--not that you
4 don't want to say, but is there something that I'm
5 missing that--or is it just seasonality?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, the [pause]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [off mic]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I don't know--
9 I don't have it, no.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean your--I'm
11 sorry. I didn't hear Council Member Crowley.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Well, she is--
13 --Councilwoman Crowley had asked what--what the census
14 was a year ago but I--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: What was it last
16 April? I remember like you said seasonality, it was--
17 it dipped 2,000 around this time last year, and
18 wonder if that--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
20 So maybe it is, maybe it is. I mean, I--I'm always
21 hopeful.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Let me--let me again
23 put it--let me put this in context, which is the 46
24 reforms and the prior steps that we took have had an
25 impact. That's why we don't have 71,000 people in

2 the shelter system today, and they will continue to
3 have an impact as we—as we continue to drive the
4 system down. As Council Member Crowley says that
5 there is seasonality to the impact. So, we are kind
6 of continuing to work on making sure that all the
7 programs are as effective as possible, and we
8 continue to reform them on a regular basis—

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
10 It's a very—

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --so it has the
12 impact that we need.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: There's about
14 a thousand less there, too. So, I guess we'll—we'll
15 continue to watch the census everyday. I'd like to
16 go to No. 39--

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: On page 13
19 for those of you keeping score out there. The—who
20 decides? Do you decide, does—does DHS decide who
21 gets into NYCHA or who makes those decisions? Is it
22 NYCHA? Is it a combination of NYCHA and DHS?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The families that we
24 refer, survivors of domestic violence or families
25 from the DHS shelter system are all eligible for

2 NYCHA and they're determined, their eligibility and
3 entrance into NYCHA is determined by NYCHA. We make
4 referrals, but they determine eligibility.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Do we check,
6 does NYCHA check? Do you know if these people had
7 previously applied for public housing or--?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, that's actually
9 one of the--the important criteria that these are--
10 these people that are applicants for public housing
11 who are in the public housing system.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And is there
13 any income criteria along with--when you--when NYCHA or
14 when DH--when you do the referrals, do you have a
15 specific goal for people that--that--I know we have
16 upwards of 40% of the people in the system are
17 working people?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're prioritizing a
19 lot of people who are working people and survivors of
20 domestic violence.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those are out
23 priorities, and NYCHA evaluates their applications
24 based upon those grounds.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay. The 90
3 new shelters, if I may, you had said a little—I—I
4 didn't get a chance to follow up on it the last time
5 you appeared before this committee that it really
6 isn't 90 new shelters or maybe I misheard you or is
7 it going to be 90 new sites? I know 90 new shelters
8 like it's going to be 90 new shelters, but I just
9 want to make—make sure I have that right in mind.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, let's—let's—
11 let's work through the math here together.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, when we
14 announced the plan, we were in 647 locations.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And that
16 includes cluster sites? COMMISSIONER BANKS: It
17 includes cluster sites, and it includes commercial
18 hotels, it includes everything.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And could the
20 cluster site just be one apartment or a few
21 apartments or do you--?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It could be only a
23 few apartments--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay, so--
25

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --but nonetheless,
3 it has an impact on the families, and--and there are
4 community issues as well. One of the impacts on the
5 families is the difficulty of serving people in those
6 kinds of--that kind of environment.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Right, it's
8 four or five on each scale. (sic)

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And so, we're going
10 to get out of 360 locations, and replace those 360--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
12 But most--but most of those will be cluster sites I
13 would think and hotels.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct, and replace
17 those 360 locations with a small number of 90
18 shelters spread across the five boroughs as part of
19 the borough based approach. And, then I--I think
20 you're referring to I said we're going to look at
21 approximately 30 of our existing shelters to renovate
22 and make better use of the space to add additional
23 capacity and have that capacity obviously within the
24 limits of--of the cap on how--how large you can have a
25 shelter to be.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: So, in theory
3 it's possible we'll see 60 new shelters?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, that's why I
5 want to be careful with the math. We're-we're
6 replacing 360 sites with 90 and then also adding
7 additional capacity by-by--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
9 Okay, there really is 90 new shelters?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: That's the--
12 that's the plan.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's the plan.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I think, and
15 you'll let me know if I mis-categorize this, but
16 sense-my memory when the mayor talked about this was
17 that he is looking to, you know, put shelters were
18 people come from. So, if Community Board A had an
19 excess number of people let's say 100, they would
20 look to right size? Is that a fair way of saying
21 that?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, I want to just
23 be careful, though. It's not a mechanistic
24 application. Yes, we're looking to see people who
25 come from a borough or areas of boroughs to have-to

2 have, as you say, a match between the numbers of
3 people coming from a particular area and the capacity
4 in that area. But here's why I want to just be
5 careful about the one-to-one match. We've been very
6 clear in order to run the system differently you need
7 a vacancy rate. The system run at less than one
8 percent vacancy rate. So, therefore, people are
9 placed--what--where something is available, and to be
10 able to place somebody who's from, you know, Crown
11 Heights or from Staten Island in an area where they
12 used to be before they lost the roof over their head,
13 you need to have some--some vacancy rate. So, there's
14 that factor in not having a mechanistic one-to-one
15 analysis. There are also survivors of domestic
16 violence who we have to make allowances for safe
17 housing of survivors, and--and Council Member
18 Crowley's--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
20 It is in my rights.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --bill recognizes
22 the importance of that, which I appreciate.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Included in
24 the 90 new shelters, there will be domestic violence
25 shelters as well?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, that's a
3 separate-separate matter, but there's two things
4 going on here, and I appreciate you giving me the
5 opportunity to explain it.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I appreciate
7 hearing it.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The-the domestic
9 violence shelter beds that we're adding are four
10 families or individuals who meet the state standard
11 for being placed in a domestic violence shelter,
12 which is that, you know, eminent danger.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But there are others
15 and again, Council Member Crowley's bill I think she
16 focused on this, and I appreciate it. There are
17 others that are-that have a history of domestic
18 violence but don't meet the state standard, the state
19 statutory standard for eligibility for domestic
20 violence shelter and we want to even within the DHS
21 shelter system make sure we preclude addresses or
22 locations and boroughs where they could potentially
23 come in contact with an abuser, who although the
24 abuser isn't stalking them currently, we don't want
25 them to come in contact. So, therefore, we have to

2 allow for providing shelter to domestic violence
3 survivors, both who meet the state standard for
4 domestic violence shelter through the HRA system and
5 those who have a history, but not are—and not in
6 immediate danger. We want to make appropriate
7 placements for them as well in the DHS system.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay,
9 Councilwoman Crowley has a follow-up to that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Just two follow-
11 ups to what Council Member Grodenchik was speaking
12 to. First, when we look at April 2017, we're—we're
13 currently housing 58,900 homeless people. If we look
14 at that number last year, last April, that was
15 57,900. So, we've gone up a thousand in a year.
16 That's what I mean by seasonal when I said to the
17 Council Member we have to look at the month--

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I agree with you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --last year.
20 So, things, the situation is no better today than it
21 was a year ago. So, it's hard to believe that policy
22 changes are making a difference. I understand you
23 say there could be 71,000, but I don't see it that
24 way. I see it as the number we're serving, the
25 individuals are going up. They're not going down.

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, if I could
3 answer your question.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: With due
5 respect, Commissioner, I—I just wanted to make that
6 point for clarification.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I was just
9 pointing out numbers that's all.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] I
11 just-

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Numbers—numbers
13 that I don't believe that.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. I just would
15 point to—for the record, though that if you're one of
16 the 40,000 people who didn't get evicted because we
17 spent a little services, the reform is working for
18 you. If you're one of the 161,000 people that got
19 rental assistance and didn't get evicted, the reform
20 is working for you. If you're one of the 55,000 who
21 moved out of shelter because of the rental assistance
22 or rehousing programs or didn't go in a shelter, the
23 reform is working for you. So, I think if you look
24 at a multi-decade problem that hasn't had a
25 comprehensive approach, it's—it didn't really get

2 here overnight. It's not going to be solved
3 overnight, and there are tens of thousand of people
4 who are benefitting from significant policy changes
5 and significant changes in the provisional services.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Well, let me
7 compliment you.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Having said that--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Well, let me
10 compliment you--let me compliment the administration
11 on keeping people in their homes. It's--it's what we
12 need to do more of, and it is certainly less
13 expensive. So, it's more fiscally responsible for us
14 to work towards doing that. So, I'm glad that fewer
15 people are getting evicted today, and I--and I do
16 believe that that is money well spent. Now, just in--
17 in line with the council member's one-to-one match
18 question before where you have said in the past, and
19 the Mayor has said in the past that that you've been
20 looking at targeting my community board, one of my
21 community boards. I have--I have three different
22 community boards that I represent. One of them is
23 Community Board 2 in Queens, which happens to have
24 twice as many shelter beds than the actual people in
25 the census that go homeless. It neighbors Community

2 Board 4, which is primarily Council Member Dromm's
3 district. That district, too, has twice as many beds
4 than it has people going homeless, and then you look
5 at the district that Community Board 5 is in, and
6 that doesn't have any beds. However, it is adjacent
7 to those community districts as well as two community
8 districts in Brooklyn that both have twice as many
9 beds than they have people going homeless. I have
10 homeless shelters in my district. It just doesn't
11 happen to be in that Community Board 5. I represent
12 the same communities regardless of whether they're in
13 one community board or not. My district is impacted.
14 My schools have served over—we serve currently over a
15 thousand kids who are homeless because of the way
16 that the shelter system is aligned is that you don't
17 have to target one community board and know that
18 there's services being provided in a community.
19 Because you move less than five-five blocks away and
20 you're—you may be in a different community board, but
21 you're in the same neighborhood, and—and so I think
22 that's short-sighted. And I mentioned earlier about
23 Fair Share, and in my Community Board I'm not even
24 getting one-tenth, not even one hundredth of a
25 percent of the affordable housing, and that's not my

2 fault. The minute the Mayor became the Mayor I met
3 with him and I met with Alicia Glen who's his
4 Commissioner, his Deputy Mayor that does planning for
5 affordable housing. I said my community is ripe for
6 affordable housing, but that fell on deaf ears, and
7 since then not one plan has been put in place, but
8 you want to target my community for homeless
9 shelters.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, we're going—I'm
11 going to try to answer your as I appreciate you
12 saying earlier that I'm a Social Services
13 Commissioner. Clearly housing is relevant to the
14 services we try to provide. There are a lot of
15 dynamics in terms of where affordable housing could
16 be developed. It has to do with land. It has to do
17 with density. It has to do with a number of things.
18 But we can certainly follow up with you further after
19 this hearing on those issues. But let me come back
20 to the Turn the Tide plan. The districts that you
21 talked about, for example Council Member, who is not
22 here, his district it's got hotels in his district.
23 We're going to be closing hotels, but the idea that
24 we want to place people close to where they had
25 resided is fundamentally to address the issue of if I

2 live in a particular area and my children are in that
3 school, whether I'm homeless or not, my children will
4 continue to be in that school, and so we would—we
5 want people to have the ability to keep their
6 children in that school rather than have to be in
7 another borough commuting to that school or—or having
8 to move their children to a different school. The
9 system that's built up over multiple decades is
10 haphazard. So that the placements aren't aligned
11 with where people need to be--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]

13 No, but the kids--

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --to keep their kids
15 their kids in school.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing] A
17 point of clarity is--

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Commissioner--

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --can I just finish,
21 Council Member?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But—but it's
23 not—those hotels that happen to—on happens to be in
24 my district in Community Board 2. One happens to be
25 in Dromm's district two blocks from my district, but

2 kids in the Pan Am Hotel go to my schools. The kids
3 in the hotel in my district go to my schools in my
4 district. That's where the thousand kids come from,
5 and so, you're—you're not looking at the numbers in
6 an accurate type of way, and are you also saying—are
7 you planning to close the Pan Am Hotel, which houses
8 200 families—250 families. It's a hotel once, but it
9 has been changed into shelter.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Right,
11 but we're not--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Is that not
13 considered a permanent shelter?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, the plan is
15 to be—put us in a position so that people who become
16 homeless from that area of Queens can be housed in
17 the Pan Am, and keep their children in the local
18 schools.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]
20 Right, right, but—but I said earlier the families go—
21 we're serving more than twice as many families in
22 that part of Queens, the number of families going
23 homeless based on Community Boar 2, Community Board 4
24 and Community Board 5, all touching, adjacent. They
25 are serving twice as many families than the actual

2 number of families going homeless. The numbers don't
3 lie.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Council Member, when
5 the plan is complete and the facilities that we are
6 closing are closed including commercial hotels in
7 your area of Queens, and we have new shelters in
8 place, we will have an alignment between where people
9 came from, and what's available to shelter them
10 because experience tells us that sheltering people
11 close to their communities, you know, their anchors of
12 life, schools, jobs, healthcare, families, houses of
13 worship give people a better chance of getting back
14 on their feet. If you look at the system today, you-
15 you are looking at it at the same way that we are
16 looking at it, which it's a haphazard system that
17 needs to be reformed that's built up over multiple
18 decades with the kinds of results that you're talking
19 about. But at the end, when we get to the end of the
20 plan, we will have the opportunity if you become, if
21 you lose your home in your area of Queens to be able
22 to sheltered in your area of Queens. For some people
23 we don't have that ability now, and for other people,
24 we placed them there when they came from other parts
25 of the city. So, we need to have a different system

2 and that's what the Turning the Tide Plan is about.
3 It's about ending several decades of haphazard
4 placements of shelters and haphazard placements more
5 importantly of human beings.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]
7 Right, and so--

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And the children and
9 adults who are going to get placed--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing] I
11 agree with you. I am going to wrap up and finish,
12 Council Member.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Go ahead.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So, I agree with
15 that approach, but I just want to reiterate the fact
16 that a community board is not that section of Queens.
17 You need to look at the neighboring two or three
18 community boards and consider that, that section of
19 Queens because the board lines are not the lines
20 schools and the lines for other services, and I'm
21 going leave that--that, and just encourage you and
22 your plan to build these shelters, which I don't
23 think are the answer. I think you need to work
24 closely with Alicia Glen and the Mayor to build

2 affordable long-term permanent housing, which is the
3 real solution.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We agree that
5 housing is an important solution. That's why we've
6 invested in 15,000 supportive housing units and the
7 rental assistance we invested in, in all of the
8 housing programs. But I would urge you as you look
9 at the Shelter Reduction Plan, we're reducing the
10 footprint by 45%. That as we open new things, the
11 misalignment won't go away overnight. We have to
12 have new things up and running before can close
13 things that we all want to close. So, at the end of
14 the day we'll have an appropriately laid out shelter
15 system so that if somebody loses their home, and all
16 our prevention efforts don't keep them in their home,
17 they can be connected to their community rather than
18 place them in another borough far away community.
19 But the process of closing and opening things is
20 going to result in during the life of the plan, in
21 somebody saying well, wait a minute, I've already got
22 too much of this and too much of that. But, in order
23 to close, we have to start opening, and then we'll be
24 able to proceed to eliminate commercial hotels, which
25 have been used back to the of Lindsay, and we'll be

2 able to eliminate the cluster program, which is a 17-
3 year-old program that is not doing well by people.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Councilwoman.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Yes, please.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: It's not lost
7 on me, and I'm sure it's not lost on you that the
8 plan that the Mayor has developed, and I'm sure you
9 and your staff had a very large role in that, exceeds
10 the timeline when we expect that he might be in
11 office. I'm not going to comment on his political
12 prospects for this year, but he is term limited, and
13 this plan goes out well beyond where we might expect
14 that the Mayor is going to be in office as the Mayor
15 of the city of New York, and that you, well you or
16 whatever would-would-would be in office as well. So,
17 that's something that--that persons like myself and
18 Council Member Crowley have to be concerned about
19 because administrations do change and--and their
20 policies change with them. Many of my colleagues,
21 myself included, represent very low density
22 communities. My community is probably 80% covered by
23 single-family homes. I do not have open space, and I
24 am concerned that the plan put forth to put 90
25 shelters in would average almost two per community

2 board. My Community Board 11 doesn't have, it has
3 maybe a handful of people who their last address was
4 that community board. Community Board 8, which I
5 represent the eastern sliver along with Council
6 Member Lancman, has almost a perfect match for the
7 number of beds available to the number of people
8 whose last know address was CB8 and Board 13 is
9 actually over-bedded. And so, I-I do want your
10 reassurance here that we are going to look to keep
11 people in the communities where they came from at
12 least from my perspective. Not that we don't want to
13 work to create affordable housing, but in some
14 communities there is simply no place to put people
15 without changing the zoning laws, which the last
16 administration spent a dozen years to-to down zone.
17 The other problem that many communities have is that
18 there is simply no room in our public schools. Most
19 of my public-almost all of them, in fact, are at
20 anywhere from 100% to I think one school in my
21 district is 180% of capacity. My high schools are
22 crammed. So, these are things that I hope that you
23 will, and the Mayor will take into account as you're
24 moving forward. Ninety is a very large number in the
25 city as I-you and I have talked about before.

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, let me—let me
3 reassure you of a couple things. I appreciate your
4 question. First, again, it's not a mechanistic how
5 many community boards do we have and how many
6 shelters do we site and let's just— The shelter
7 system it's built up since the early 1980s, has
8 lacked an organizing principle, and this plan has an
9 organizing principle. It puts people first, and it
10 says where did people have a roof over their heads
11 last, and connecting them to their boroughs to their
12 communities is part of the strategy of helping people
13 get back on their feet more quickly, connecting them
14 back to schools, jobs, houses of worship, families
15 and friends. And so, the other fact is that people
16 in our shelter system come from literally every
17 Community Board, and so--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Well, they
19 do.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --an approach that
21 we're taking it says we're going to have a people
22 first approach, and we're going to be focused on
23 community and keep people connected to communities,
24 and that's how the shelters—shelters are going to

2 proceed. We welcome input from elected officials
3 about—

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
5 Well, you'll get it.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: About what—no, but
7 where we think we can place—place shelters. Look,
8 we—we just—we did an event with Council Member
9 Torres. He's not here. I—I think it's important to
10 continue to acknowledge him in his district about a
11 shelter that we just opened there. We announced the
12 middle of February we're going to open five shelters.
13 Three are already up and running, and we're on our
14 way to the other two—the other two.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Well, we'll
16 be watching from this side for sure, and we welcome
17 the ability to have as much input as is possible as
18 this plan goes forward. I want to go back to page 7,
19 No. 12. You are now working very closely with the
20 Police Department, which I think is a good thing
21 because of the experts in security in the city. Have
22 we seen a—a drop in crime in the shelter system, and
23 if so how much?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Let me—I appreciate
25 the compliment and—and the plan that we have. Let me

2 walk through what's actually happened, and then make
3 sure that-that everybody's got the right expectations
4 here. First, the Police Department's first order of
5 business was to come in and retrain all of the DHS
6 peace officers.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Right,

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That was sort of
9 phase 1, and then analyze what would be necessary for
10 an action plan for address security in shelters.
11 That was-that phase was completed and in January the
12 Police Department took over oversight directly with
13 me of security in shelters. So, I want to again
14 answer your question, but very clearly going through
15 what's been done--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
17 Okay, I appreciate that.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --and then as a
19 result of what's been done, we will start to see
20 impact, but the first impact was training. The
21 second impact was taking over the management, and
22 they only took over the management a couple of months
23 ago. They are an excellent agency. They have
24 provided great results, but they're only in this role
25 about-about three months now.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: So, we
3 haven't seen a statistically significant impact at
4 this time.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think we'll—we'll—
6 we'll see when we have enough reporting, and that
7 will tell us. We're very transparent. We make our
8 reports public, and when we have that information
9 we'll make it available

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay, and do
11 you keep—does DHS keep the statistics on—on
12 incidents—crime—criminal incidents in the shelter
13 system or is it done with the Police Department? How
14 is that done?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As I testified, our
16 system for collecting the information, reporting on
17 the information is again presented to OTDA for
18 confirmation when it's appropriate. We will—we
19 expect to have it confirmed and in place, but it is
20 a—a system that's governed by state regulation.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay. Thank
22 you, Commissioner. I'm exercising my rare
23 prerogative as chair. I will now ask Councilman
24 Wills—I wanted to stretch this out. Councilman
25 Wills, do you have questions for Commissioner Banks?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Thank you, Interim
3 Chairman. [coughs] [laughter] Commissioner Banks,
4 thank you for coming here.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good to see you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: As you know, I am
7 a fan of the work that you have done, and when you
8 got appointed over both of the agencies, I called you
9 to commend you and also give you my grievances.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Condolences or
11 grievances.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Yes, we worked—we
13 worked really well together, but there are some
14 serious questions that need answering, and some of
15 them actually I apologize because we had another
16 committee hearing, if--

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing]
18 Understood.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: --some of them are
20 redundant because I was already asking them.

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: So the one thing
23 and the first thing I want to talk about is the Drop-
24 In Centers. What are your measurements or your
25 rubrics that figure out where a Drop-In Center should

2 be placed in which community or which geographic
3 area? How do you figure out where a Drop-In Center
4 should be placed?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean one of the
6 important criteria is can we site a Drop-In Center in
7 a place where we can bring people in off the streets
8 effectively. Because unlike the shelters, which are
9 sited according to the principle that I talked about
10 at the beginning of the hearing, and then in response
11 to Council Member Crowley and Council Member
12 Grodenchik's questions, for siting shelters we're
13 looking to—for siting shelters we're looking to be
14 very focused on where people lost a roof over their
15 head, and connecting them back to their—to their
16 boroughs and their communities to keep them close to
17 schools and jobs and-and healthcare and houses of
18 worship. In terms of street homeless, we're looking
19 to site Drop-In Centers where we can have the most
20 impact in bringing people in off the streets.
21 Because a Drop-In Center is a place where if a person
22 is not ready to come in off the street, we can't get
23 them to come into a stabilization bed or a safe haven
24 yet, but they're willing to at least come in outside,
25 and we can start to work with that person to bring

2 them into a Safe Haven bed. It's a way station off
3 the street for many people, and so we want to site
4 them where we can be effective in delivering that
5 service to address street homelessness.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: So, with the site
7 that you just opened up, and I'm not going to go into
8 the litigation that we have trying to stop this Drop-
9 In Center off of Atlantic Avenue. [coughs] Could you
10 please tell me what stats you had to say that there,
11 there was an optimum place to bring street homeless
12 off of the street, being that I live in that
13 community and everybody else around that community
14 are all testifying that there is not that level of
15 street homelessness there? I believe your agency at
16 one time told us it was something like five or ten
17 people, but the Safe Haven and the Drop-In sites the
18 capacity is far beyond that. So, why would you pick
19 a place like that to put a Drop-In Center, when it
20 seems like you're inviting street homelessness to
21 that area by doing so?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. As I said,
23 this is a facility and strategy the helps us bring
24 people in off the streets, and we think that that

2 location of that particular facility is most
3 effective for us doing that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Right, but that's
5 what I'm asking you. What is the basis for you to
6 say that that area is the most effective to do it?
7 If not, I mean can you site how many bus routes come
8 to that area? What mass transit comes to that area?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those aren't--those
10 aren't all factors that make--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: But there are some
12 factors?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those factors with
14 respect to a fair share analysis in terms of is there
15 adequate transportation, and I think we--we did
16 address that in our--in our Fair Share. I think the
17 real focus that we have is how can we most effective
18 at bringing in people off the streets, and that's why
19 we're reinstating Drop-In Centers. A number of them
20 were closed a number of years ago, and we think it's
21 important to increase the number of Drop-In Centers
22 that exist, and have them be in each borough where
23 there is street homelessness.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: See, but that's
25 where I have the largest problem is the contradiction

2 in the language that we're using. We're saying Fair
3 Share. I don't know Fair Share means something to
4 the administration than it does to the minority
5 communities that have shouldered the burden of
6 shelters. Before you got here, this is way before
7 you got here, and our definition of Fair Share as
8 Elizabeth Crowley, the Councilwoman spoke, she didn't
9 get a fair share of affordable housing, right, but we
10 have a fair—you want to speak about fair share when
11 we deal with this, and then I want to drill down on
12 it with the Administration they then tell me well the
13 community board doesn't have a lot of shelters. Bu
14 that's fair because the Council District does, and
15 there's nothing that you guys are doing to mitigate
16 those issues. In my Council District we have 135th
17 Avenue and the Conduit, which has the majority of
18 hotels in Southeast Queens, and with that being said,
19 you're using something like 45 or 60—45 to 60%.
20 That's a large gap I understand, but they're using
21 that many hotels as centers for homeless people. So,
22 if you have that type of car situation along with the
23 family—family shelter system, and now you're putting
24 Drop-In centers in places where there are no street

2 homelessness, I don't get how we can speak about Fair
3 Share.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, first of all,
5 the plan calls for closing all of the commercial
6 hotel facilities, which we will do. Second, that
7 will help--that will do something that I--that I know
8 is something you spoke about that would be--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: [interposing] Yes,
10 you have.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --a helpful--a
12 helpful development, and in terms of Drop-In Centers,
13 again we want to make sure we've got them in place to
14 enhance our ability to bring people off the streets.
15 I think the issue with Fair Share is that it's a--it's
16 a legal provision that relates to disclosing
17 information, and we disclose information. We issue
18 fair shares, and in this particular instance we know
19 we have an overall plan to close commercial hotels.
20 We also know we have an important need to bring in
21 off the streets.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: So, then Fair
23 Share is not what the Commission brought about when
24 they had the hearing here and it's been--they
25 testified to the fact that three things that actually

2 started the Commission was it being an Manhattan
3 centric city, there being a disproportionate amount
4 of undesirable land uses in minority communities and
5 there was one other thing. So, that is not the same
6 definition as the Fair Shares we're talking about.
7 You're just talking about Fair Shares for our
8 information dissemination?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Again, I think—I
10 think the statute speaks for itself in terms of what
11 we're required to do, but here I also want to come
12 back to what the overall shelter plan is. Shelter
13 plans are about human beings, and it's about saying
14 if I came from Queens, it doesn't make any sense to
15 make me go to Bronx.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Or, if I came from
18 Staten Island, it doesn't make any sense to shelter
19 me in Brooklyn.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: So, then, there
21 again is a contradiction because for the Mayor to
22 speak about making sure that other communities that
23 never had shelters are now using shelters, and
24 they're going to show them that burden of this thing
25 that we have going on in the city, and it's a crisis,

2 and we understand that everybody has a right to
3 shelter. We commend the work that you've done on
4 that, but for him to say that, then in the next
5 instance say that these people should be sheltered in
6 the community they come from, which in most of these
7 low-income and minority communities, then that's a
8 contradiction. It's hypocrisy.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, there's people
10 in our shelter system from every part of the city.
11 So, we're opening--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: [interposing] But
13 what is it--where are the--where are the majority of
14 the people from?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, we're opening a
16 Drop-In Center, for example, on 14th Street and 7th
17 Avenue in Chelsea, which was announced. It's in the
18 testimony because we think that will increase our
19 ability to bring people off the streets by opening
20 one there

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: The centers that
22 you have sited right now, the majority of those
23 centers that you have sited right now, the shelters
24 and the Drop-Ins and Safe Haven Centers are located
25 in what neighborhoods?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, remember that
3 70% of the cluster sites are in the Bronx in a
4 program that was started 17 years ago by Mayor
5 Giuliani, and our plan proposes to or will close all
6 of them.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Uh-huh.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, looking at the
9 shelter system as it exists today is the reason why
10 we released a plan less than two months ago to
11 address the fact that the system is built up in
12 haphazard way, which doesn't serve communities for
13 homeless people themselves, and so the plan will
14 close 360 locations including the locations in your
15 district and other districts, and replace them with a
16 smaller number of 90 shelters. As I said, we
17 announce five shelter who we were going to open in
18 the middle of February. Three are already up and
19 running.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Well, does that
21 count the one in Brooklyn that the judge just--

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] No.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: --stopped you
24 guys? So, it doesn't count that one?

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, just three.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay, what I'm
3 going back to is the same thing. You want to shutter
4 the hotels, which I'm all for because I don't believe
5 people should be put in hotels, which then goes into
6 a whole myriad of other issues. But, when you open
7 these shelters up, these shelters are going to be in
8 the same neighborhoods that you're closing hotels and
9 cluster sites down from.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In some cases yes
11 and in some cases not.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: In mostly.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, for example the
14 shelter you're mentioning, and you're asking about in
15 Brooklyn, the first three of the five shelters that
16 were announced in February are up and running. The
17 shelter that you're referring to, which would be the
18 fourth one to open, right now there's 104 senior
19 citizen men from that area of Brooklyn who would like
20 to be back in their community, and instead, we're
21 having to rent hotel rooms we otherwise wouldn't have
22 to rent while that shelter is not opened. Across the
23 city, we're going to be shrinking the shelter
24 system's footprint by 45% in closing 360 sites and

2 replacing those 360 sites with a small number of 90
3 shelters.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: What are the
5 average beds in these 90 shelters? How many beds
6 will be in these shelters?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You know, there are
8 different sizes depending upon the numbers of people
9 that are in the community that might be appropriate.
10 There's a local law limitation on the numbers of bed
11 you could have in a single adult shelter of 200. We
12 have--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: [interposing] But
14 even when we have that, right, you can place them on
15 the floor?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Hang on a second.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The shelter that we
19 opened in Prospect Heights recently sheltering 90
20 women, the shelter that we'd like to open for senior
21 citizens in--in Crown Heights for 100, and we're going
22 to continue to site shelters based upon the propels
23 we received from not-of-profit providers that address
24 the needs of--of clients, and helps reconnect people
25 to the communities from which they came. You know,

2 the fifth shelter in Rogers Avenue in Brooklyn is a
3 shelter that will enable us to provide housing or
4 provide shelter for families from that area who now
5 can't be housed there. It's 133 families in the
6 shelter system in other boroughs that are commuting
7 back to that neighborhood with their kids because
8 they can't be housed there. They--and the shelter
9 we're going to open is going to give them that
10 opportunity to do so.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: So, I'm working on
12 140 something units. They're all affordable. We've
13 spoken about these units--

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Yep.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: --and you and
16 Matthew have been great with that and HPD. So, I
17 don't want it to be something where it's--it seems
18 like I'm trying to trap you into saying something
19 because I want to do my fair share with our
20 community. Nothing is--there are things that I do not
21 believe are transparent or being entirely truthful in
22 spirit when we're talking to this. I would rather
23 the administration just say these 90 shelters, the
24 majority of them are going to be placed because these
25 are the clients in communities of color or low-income

2 communities so that then we can come to the table and
3 say these are our mitigation to this. This is what
4 we want to work with you on. Like you have houses of
5 worship is one of the things you want to place these
6 people back towards. Now, I presented a plan where
7 we got together with clergy, local clergy to do not-
8 for-profits to manage these shelters. That plan has
9 gone nowhere. So, you can't in one hand say hey
10 we're going to put this--these people close because
11 the houses of worship are important, but the people
12 who are running these houses of worship are not
13 experiencing development housing have no feet or have
14 no way to--to have any progress into these shelters.
15 They should be running these shelters. People in our
16 communities should be doing security. If you are
17 going to place these things that are undesirable in
18 these communities, we should be benefitting from
19 them. There's hundreds of millions of dollars a year
20 that these communities are getting placed at. We're
21 not getting the additional after school programming
22 to have it. The principals are only getting a few
23 thousand dollars a year for every child that comes
24 from the shelters. There are a lot of other things
25 that we should be doing as mitigation. So, I'm not

2 trying to get you to say something that is against
3 what is going to happen, I'm just trying to say this
4 is what is going to happen. Let's begin working on
5 it now so that we don't have the stigma to these
6 people that are in need of shelter going forward.
7 But with that being said, the hotels that are being
8 used we're getting ready to go over to the Economic
9 Development Committee hearing, and it's going to
10 Trump and travel and how the travel bans are going to
11 affect tourism in New York City. The hotels in my
12 area have a 35% occupancy rate sometimes, and that's
13 how you have been able to put these—the hotel—the
14 homeless clients into the hotels, which is not a
15 problem because the for the most part have done the
16 right thing. But now they have become dependent on
17 this revenue. Wo what are we going to do when we're
18 talking about now taking these people out of the
19 hotels, and we're saying that once we take them out,
20 you will never use these hotels again, or we're
21 saying that we are going to bring it down slowly as
22 we open up the other spot, and then pass some type of
23 legislation saying that we have to cap how many hotel
24 usages you can use, and not have legislation into
25 where it gives you an in-run like the emergency

2 declaration of the annex of shelter sites, because
3 that's just a way to get around things.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But the plan—the
5 plan calls for ending the use of all commercial hotel
6 placements, but, you know, to your earlier point,
7 you've been a good partner to work with, and we're
8 certainly happy to sit down with you and identify
9 [coughs] places that you think would make sense to
10 open as replacement shelter sites with local houses
11 of worship as we close down hotels--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Mr. Char--

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --and we're happy to
14 do that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: I'm sorry. Mr.
16 Chair, I have three more questions. Okay, great.
17 Thank you, Commissioner for being so patient. So,
18 with this commitment to shut down the hotel sites
19 being—the hotels being used. We have three hotels in
20 my district right now where the—the developers are
21 rushing to build hotels, and there's no reason.
22 There's nothing that says they will have occupancy.
23 One is on 115th Avenue and Garrett (sic) and he came
24 he spoke to me and he said he has three other hotels,
25 which I won't name now. I'll speak to you about them

2 in person, and he has no desire to have DSS clients
3 there. He blatantly lied because with the next week
4 his hotels was filled with it. So, we know that this
5 hotel is going to be that because he expressed it to
6 other people. Warfam (sic) Avenue and 97th Avenue.
7 Warfam Street and 97th Avenue, and another one who
8 actually has gone up and down to all of the owners
9 saying he's building a hotel just for a shelter,
10 which is on 95th Avenue between Warfam and Sutphin
11 Boulevard. Can we get a commitment from the
12 Administration that says they will not use these
13 hotels for DSS placement?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I don't know the
15 facts of those particular hotels. The plan is to get
16 out of all hotels, but have also been very
17 transparent to say on the road to getting out of all
18 facilities, we still have to provide shelter every
19 night. So, we're closing 360 locations. We're
20 replacing them with a small number of 90 shelters.
21 In the meantime, we have to make sure we can shelter
22 people at night.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Okay, my questions
24 would be when you took over you found that the
25 shelters for a large part were in horrible condition,

2 and you moved incredibly to fix a lot of these
3 things. I know what the Council Member Crowley was
4 saying, and I hold true to what she was saying also.
5 So, I want to commend you for that, but what I want
6 to ask you is does HPD or how-how-how come HPD
7 doesn't have a role in fixing this? Because if they
8 have violations found just because they're city run
9 buildings doesn't HPD have the capacity to come in
10 and do emergency repairs and just back charge you the
11 same way they would do a regular person?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right. HPD has been
13 a great partner. I also want to make clear for the
14 record the-the facts, which is that the numbers of
15 violations in the traditional shelters we cleared
16 14,000 violations. HPD was part of the effort to do
17 that, and now less than 2,000, many of which are
18 capital, and so there's a capital plan to address
19 those remaining violations. A lot of discussion with
20 Council Member Crowley was about the clusters.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Right.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And-and the cluster
23 facilities would sue the landlords. We've levied
24 fines against landlords. HPD has been a terrific
25 partner in that effort, and-but I know they would

2 prioritize getting out of the clusters, and, you
3 know, at the high point there were 3,600 units in use
4 in this 17-year-old program started by Mayor
5 Giuliani, and we've been able to get out of 750 units
6 already, and we're going to continue to prioritize
7 getting out of clusters as we move forward with the
8 plan.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Thank you, Mr.
10 Chair. Thank you, Commissioner.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
12 Council Member Wills. Okay, Commissioner, we want to
13 get you out of here by-by 1 o'clock at the latest I'm
14 going to—we're going to -we're going to go quick,
15 okay. So, I want to go back through the reforms not
16 necessarily one by one, but-but ones that where we've
17 noted that I want to kind of delve in a little bit--

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --within some of your
20 testimony you spoke to. Okay, we'll start with-with
21 number 3, right. That's the one that expands the-the
22 scope of Homebase as the first point of entry for
23 those at risk of homelessness. So, I just want to be
24 clear that—because my understanding of this had
25 always been that there would be borough based points

2 of entry into the system. So, it--so in other--in
3 other words so, you know, you go to Homebase and they
4 divert you from--from shelter or you're able to get
5 some type of alternative assistance that helps you
6 not have to go into shelter. That's great, but there
7 are still going to be people that have to go into
8 shelter, and would--is it--is it still the plan to
9 have--when we say point of entry that's like point of
10 entry into the shelter system. Is that still the
11 plan to have those in a borough based setting and not
12 have to go all the way to PATH in the Bronx?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's what we're
14 piloting in Staten Island, Homebase expansion.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I can remember a
17 time when the city did have borough based. They were
18 called the Emergency Assistance Units at that time,
19 and

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-huh,
21 they were not good.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Their operation of
23 multiple entry points led to the endless problems for
24 individual families. It's just simply replicating an
25 emergency assistance unit or PATH type of approach

2 and into the boroughs. We have experience to show
3 that that doesn't work.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But we think the
6 model that as as the provider.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In Staten Island we
9 think the model that we are working with them on will
10 assure great promise in terms of an entry point
11 approach to give both the tools for prevention and
12 the ability to get placements into the shelter system
13 if that—if that—if preventing does not work. But, I
14 also want to emphasize look of all people I'm going
15 to just say the right to shelter is obviously
16 something that we think is very important. But we
17 also want to make sure that the way the system was
18 built up over the years that the default isn't simply
19 providing shelter rather than looking for other
20 mechanisms to keep people in the community through
21 rental assistances. Those are things that we're
22 providing to—to enable people to remain in the
23 community. We think they're very important, but we
24 want to see—see how the new tools work in the Staten
25 Island context before we move to the other boroughs.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but there--and
3 so in terms of the--a timeline you will, are you going
4 to be doing that you've enrolled in that borough by
5 borough or--

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We want to see how
7 the first one goes.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, and--and when
9 are you going to be able to do an assessment of how
10 the first one is going?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: They just literally
12 started at the beginning of April.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, so that be
14 within a year or--?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I--I--I think as you
16 can tell, when I first started at HRA we came in with
17 dozens of reforms to implement--

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --and we had just
20 implemented 46 reforms in--in a year. We want to move
21 very quickly, but we want to move very deliberately
22 and make sure that what we would be replicating
23 actually works.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but as it
25 stands right now, unless we look--unless you're

2 coming from Staten Island, you—if you have to go into
3 the shelter if everything else doesn't work, and
4 you're—you're in a family, and you have to go to the
5 shelter system, you still have to go to PATH.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's correct.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: For the foreseeable
8 future you still have to go to PATH.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Currently, that's
10 correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: If you live in Staten
12 Island, you don't have to go to PATH?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You could go to PATH
14 or you could go to—

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] CAMBA.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You go to CAMBA.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I should say just to
19 add a little more content to it, I was just at the
20 CAMBA site last week during the City Hall and—and
21 Staten Island Week, and they're running a great
22 program at the very beginning stages giving workshops
23 for people about ways in which they use rental
24 assistance to stay out of the shelter system, and I
25 think there is great promise.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. So, for
3 Reform No. 4, which is use data analytics for
4 actually part of prevention services that are at-risk
5 clients. So, you mentioned in your testimony that
6 there was a cohort of about 2,000 clients that were
7 identified as high risk for being homeless, and which
8 staff made calls to and home visits to offer
9 preventive-prevention services. How-what was the
10 result of that out of those 2,000? Of that cohort of
11 2,000, how many responded? How many received
12 services? What type of events and services did they
13 receive?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There were
15 challenges in responsiveness, and we-we specifically
16 did this to see whether we could make a difference
17 in-in methodologies of reaching out to people. You
18 might otherwise not connect--

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --to services that
21 were available, and that's based upon that experience
22 with the first 2,000. That's why we-we are taking a
23 different approach with this next cohort of nearly
24 9,000--

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] And
3 that's with the collaboration with IDS-42.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yep.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And-and those-those
6 are different types of mailers-they're mailers?
7 Those are going to be mailers?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Mailers but we have
9 the ability for follow-up by telephone.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We have-we-we-we
12 used that technique for the first 2,000, and found
13 that it wasn't as effective as we were hoping, direct
14 contacts. So, we're going to combine direct contact
15 with a different kind of approach.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I'd be
17 interested to see what those results are.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I see this, you know,
20 and straight mailers I-I imagine a lot of them go
21 directly into the-the trash can, and so, you know,
22 we-we obviously need to be innovative and-and
23 continue to find ways to reach people with the
24 programs that are available to them, and make sure

2 that people know that those resources are available,
3 and so that's an ongoing-ongoing challenge.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We agree. That's
5 why we think this technique of continuing to look at
6 data that might show risk factors holds promise, and
7 we're going to keep reaching out to people in those
8 cohorts, and even a success at a low level is better--
9 is better than simply letting people at risk lose
10 their homes and end up in shelter.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, speaking of--
12 Okay, so moving onto number 5, things at risk that
13 are firstly going into the shelter system for
14 families that are doubled up with school-age
15 children--

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yep.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --self-identified
18 homeless according to McKinney-Vento. If they self-
19 identify, did they receive a phone call?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Everybody that self-
22 identified received a phone call, is that right?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In 20--in--in June of
25 2015 and 16. That's a lot of--of families right.

2 That's—you have thousands and thousands of families
3 that are self-identified as doubled-up right.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But from the
5 instability of their housing contacting them, there
6 are many obstacles. So we reached a much smaller
7 subset of the numbers of people that were in a
8 potential subset. We're going to continue to re-tool
9 this and see how it works this June. We think it's
10 an important thing to keep doing.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, what's the whole
12 universe I mean in looking off like the top of your
13 head like being roughly?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean the universe
15 changes during the course over the years. So, that
16 the—if you look at the numbers that are put out for
17 students in temporary housing it includes people in
18 shelter.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It includes people--

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You take that out.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --who are doubled
23 up.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, right. So at
3 the end--those that are in shelter out, what is--
4 what's the remainder?

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, at the end of
6 the day, the question is in June how many people are
7 still doubled up?

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And that's in the--in
10 the thousands not the--the large number that
11 frequently reported of almost 100,000.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It reflects 100,000
14 at any point in time during the school year.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But I think we'll
17 know more when we try this again in June--

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] But
19 obviously that--if there's--if there's--so there's tens--
20 I mean it's safe to say that there's tens of
21 thousands at the end of June?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: That's--it's three
24 more thousand? (sic)

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think we're going
3 to know more when we do it again this year because
4 one of the limitations that we found last year is
5 exactly what you're asking me about--

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --which is the total
8 universe of reporting under the McKinney Act--

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --is not point in
11 time. It's throughout the whole program.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Oh, I see
13 cumulatively.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's cumulatively.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alright.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, we need to focus
17 on June--

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] June.

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --before the summer.
20 So, for example, someone that is reflective as being
21 in unstable housing in September, in June may not be.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, and--and that's
23 a managed--whatever that number is, say that number
24 is, you know, 9,000. That's a manageable number to

2 be able to contact everyone of those families in some
3 way?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, they're being--
5 first of all, they're being contacted through
6 information sent to them in the traditional way that
7 people get information from schools through the
8 backpack.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah, that's good.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We've been very
11 focused not on everybody, but on the communities with
12 the highest shelter entry rates.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, we think that
15 was the place to start, and we're going to know more
16 this year whether or not we can have a greater impact
17 than--than--

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] That's
19 a collaboration then with the Department of Education
20 in making sure that--

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Yep.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --how do you then--so
23 how do you interface with the Department of Education
24 on that?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We are getting the
3 information, and then we're creating the outreach
4 mechanisms through our public engagement staff.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then--and then the
6 materials are going to teachers and teachers are
7 putting it in the backpacks?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's what our plan
9 is for this year.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So, then there
11 is going to be a--somebody from--from DSS--

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] They
13 will--

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --that's like going
15 to each school and saying this kid gets this--this
16 information to take home?

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's a--it would have
18 to have a better interface between DOE and--and DSS
19 rather than that, but what we're also doing is Days
20 of Action in front of schools. I know the Deputy
21 Mayor and de Blasio and I did this in Crown Heights,
22 actually and which we're at least leading in front of
23 schools and giving out information to the--to the
24 community.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But that's hitting
3 every kid in the school as opposed to the 13%--

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] That's
5 true.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --that might be in
7 temporary housing.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's true.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alright.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's true.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, okay, number 6
12 Deploy additional HRA prevention staff to single
13 adults and family intake sites. Is that the
14 budgeted--is that the FY18--the--the--the prevention step
15 that's reflected in the FY18--

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] I
17 apologize I didn't hear the--

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: -- Preliminary
19 Budget?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I apologize. I
21 didn't hear the first half of your question.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In No. 6: Deploying
23 additional HRA prevention staff, is that--is that--is
24 that the prevention staff that's reflected in that--in
25 the FY18 Prelim Budget?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, it's within our
3 staffing.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, and it's been-
5 been reflected as a new need, right in the Mayor's
6 Executive Budget?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think that's a-you
8 asked me this question at the hearing.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Some of that-this is
11 not a new need. There are other things that are-are
12 new needs.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But it will have a-
15 soon I think we'll have an opportunity to go into
16 the-the actual budget.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, No. 7: Target
18 services and rental assistance for youth in DYCD
19 shelters.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yep.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: When is that-when is-
22 when is-when is a youth in a DV-in a-in a DYCD
23 shelter going to be able to access rental assistance
24 through DSS? Like when do you expect that that first
25 young person will have a voucher in hand?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those are two
3 different questions. [laughs] So, let me—let me try
4 to answer the question with a—with—with the sort of
5 timeline. So, we think it's important to make sure
6 that the changes we're making our local programs are
7 lined up with the changes that are ultimately going
8 to be court approved by—by a court in the—in—for the
9 state's program. So, when that is completed, we will
10 be in a position to promulgate a rule, because we're
11 doing this by rulemaking, and when that rule is
12 final, we will be able to have people in our system
13 and people DYCD—DYCD's system have access to the
14 benefits.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You know, that—that—
16 the terms of that settlement are not within your
17 control. I mean that the timeline for that is not
18 within the city's control. COMMISSIONER BANKS:

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, but the
20 testimony I think reflects what we think is the best
21 expectation that we would be able to complete the
22 streamlining by the summer.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So, then that—
24 so then rules could be promulgated by the summer.

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah, that's what
3 our projection is based upon when things are at.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then there's like
5 a 90-day or-

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yep.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --whatever that is.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, then by--so you
10 anticipate that by the fall the rule will be in place
11 and that those programs could be implemented so that
12 youth in DYCD shelters can access housing assistance.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Let me just--

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --in the years out?

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In looking at the
16 timeline of the court approval and the promulgation
17 of rule, I think you'd be better off to say in the
18 fall--

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: In the fall

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --rather than by the
21 fall.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: By the fall. Okay.

23 Okay, we're going to ask you in the fall.

24

25

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Probably you'll have
3 me here on December 22nd to see if we accomplished
4 this. It would be the second day of winter.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes. No. 9, the
6 city/state taskforces. Has--has that--has--has--have
7 they--have they actually been created at this point?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, remember where
9 we were when we announced this in April of last year.
10 I think you asked me questions about this--

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Right.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --this very thing
13 last year.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It's a very
15 circumspect answer.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes, I gave you a
17 circumspect answer, and--and the answer that I gave
18 you was that we were going to be working together to
19 address the issues, and, in fact we did work together
20 to address this issue and our plan has--has been
21 approved.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: SO the purpose that
24 we were seeking in the--in this approach has been
25 achieved.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are there been—are
3 these been taskforces created?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The—the whole
5 process that we were looking for is to make sure that
6 we had a partnership and a dialogue and we have a
7 partnership and a dialogue and we got this done.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but not yet?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think we're done
10 with what we—we accomplished what we wanted to do.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But it's-okay but
12 then does that mean that there will not be then be an
13 ongoing standing taskforce?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There's ongoing
15 standing dialogue and partnership, which produced
16 something that I think many people when I testified
17 last year thought wasn't going to happen, which is we
18 reached a resolution on the issue around changing the
19 FEPS program and it's going to be implemented, and
20 that is a good thing for eminently homeless or
21 homeless people.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, changing the—the,
23 you said changing the—which program?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: FEPS. That was our
25 goal.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, but well
3 there's also this issue of diverting prison to
4 shelter pipeline. So, that's—that's a separate
5 issue.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, we—we thought
7 the approach we took with FEPS ended up with a good
8 result, and we're going to continue dialogue with
9 state on a whole range of issues including the one
10 that you mentioned.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It's not a formal
12 city-state taskforce capital T, capital S-F,
13 taskforce.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think we're very
15 result-oriented.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And the result is
18 what we're looking for.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: With regard to Home-
20 Stat, what's the methodology for those quarterly
21 counted DHS—I'm sorry, that—that DHS is conducting
22 right now, and how is it—is it—how does it compare to
23 the methodology for the HOPE count?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Two different
25 purposes. So, therefore, different methodologies.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

3 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The HOPE Count is a
4 HUD approved methodology to attempt to identify
5 everyone who is on the streets without shelter at a
6 particular point in time night.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: The quarterly counts
9 are intended to help us determine where people are so
10 we can ensure we're providing services to them. It's
11 not counting that's like accounting. It's counting
12 to ensure that we are providing services. So, if we
13 see people in a particular location we want to make
14 sure that that's the location we're serving, and if
15 it's new location we haven't seen, we want to get
16 people out there to serve. So, the count is
17 necessarily reflected based upon observation, which
18 is different.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: No. 12 with
20 increased state in shelters an NYPD Management review
21 and retraining program, one thing actually that—that
22 came up, and this is, you know, a newly relevant
23 issue is DHS peace officers have the letters DHS on
24 their uniforms, right. And people that are—may not
25 be documented immigrants here that are able to access

2 New York City's shelter system under the Right to
3 Shelter, might confuse DHS, Department of Homeless
4 Services with the DHS, Department of Homeland
5 Security. Is that something that is, you know, you--
6 you guys have thought about or have given any, you
7 know, is it possible that maybe somehow
8 differentiating Department of Homeless Services from
9 Department of Homeland Security in terms of uniform
10 and how those letters are interpreted?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think we had the
12 name first.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah, I know, it's
14 true. [laughter] I hear you. I'm not saying we
15 have to change it like to like--like WWE changed it's--
16 but maybe it's easier if--

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Look,
18 it's a serious issue. I could say it's a challenge.
19 (sic)

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: No, no, you can say,
21 no, but you can Homeless Services or something like
22 that where it's not--I mean it's--it's really a fear.
23 I mean people feel that if you're undocumented--

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] I'm
25 sure this is something--

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --and you see DHS,
3 that gives you pause as to whether you want to
4 continue to participate in the program.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [off mic] You can
6 say NYC DHS.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah, it's-it's-it's
8 something that, you now, maybe is worth considering
9 just how, you now, it's-it's really just a uniform
10 question. I'm not saying that you have to change the
11 name of the agency.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean I-I have to
13 say this has been raised recently.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think it's broader
16 than simply the DHS Police, however, because those
17 initials are on virtually everything that the agency
18 does and has.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, it's worth-

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] It's a
22 lot--

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --this issue is
24 worth considering. I mean I-I--

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] So, if
3 it's on a navy blue uniform, you now, with people
4 with badges, it has a--it conveys a different, you
5 know--

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, of course, if
7 you were coming into a building that says DHS
8 Shelter--

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --I raises-- So, I'm
11 just saying it raises broader issues that--that we're--
12 that we're sensitive to than the one that you're
13 asking and, you know, when I said we were named at
14 first, that doesn't mean that it's something we
15 shouldn't look at because I think they probably won't
16 change their name.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right. Not even if
18 you asked nicely. [laughter]

19 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I know--I know I'm be
20 advised not to answer that question. [laughter]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: On to No. 13, Enhance
22 domestic violence Services in DHS shelters. How--I
23 just--if you can just provide us with a little more
24 detail of how many clients were served through that
25 HRA Nova outstation DV services in the DHS churches?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean I have to get
3 you that information, but I want to just say that the
4 first task of these issues is to make sure that
5 everybody—all staff are trained.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, I think the—
8 towards the end of the testimony, there some specific
9 information about the—the breadth of the trainings
10 that have been done to make sure that all staff are
11 able to appropriately recognize and respond to and
12 provide services in cases involving partner violence
13 particularly in our adult family shelters and our—as
14 well as our family, those little children shelters.
15 So, we can get you information on clients, but to us
16 the first task in resetting this number there—there
17 had been a program that did this sort of thing. It
18 was eliminated in 2010. So, our reset over the last
19 year is really to make sure that we are ensuring that
20 we're training all staff to recognize, respond to and
21 provide services, but we can get you some
22 information.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Great. No. 15,
24 Implementing a more extensive reporting system for
25 critical incidents that occur in shelters. So, the—

2 the MMR refers to those numbers in the--that's number
3 per thousand. It's like a rate that's reflected.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Uh-huh.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We don't have an-an
6 indication of the hard number of incidents of
7 critical incidents. I don't necessarily expect that
8 you would have that on hand right now, but it's
9 something that we would request that you provide us
10 with.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I will certainly
12 take a look. One of the things that is important I
13 know a question was asked when you were voting.
14 Let's also remember that NYPD just took over
15 management of the shelter system in security shelter
16 system in January.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, impact is
19 something that we expect to see, but we should be--

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] But
21 this is just a reporting--

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] I
23 understand.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --trying to get the
25 number of the-

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing]
3 Understood.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --the--the hard number
5 of incidents not the--not the rate.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Understood.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, okay, so No. 15
8 Shelter repairs obviously this has been discussed
9 extensively. The issue that we've identified. So,
10 in--we're going to be in--in clusters for the next few
11 years. We can't--right now, DSS, DHS can't use capital
12 dollars for cluster sites, is that correct? So, if
13 something big has to be fixed in a--in a--say a
14 building where it's all cluster sites or there's, you
15 know, there's major repairs, boiler needs to be
16 replaced and stuff like that, right now we rely on
17 expense funding, is that right? Or--and also if--if--it
18 the building is not owned, not just a cluster site,
19 but if the building isn't owned by the city, and it's
20 a privately owned building, but it is operating as a
21 stand-alone shelter, large ticket items like--like
22 boilers, and these are big, you know, hundreds of
23 thousands of dollars. Those can't be--those repairs
24 can't be done by capital dollars, is that--is that
25 right? It has to be expense dollars?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct and with—and
3 we're addressing that in our budgeting for the
4 shelter providers to address as an expense budget
5 issue.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Say the answer?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And we're addressing
8 that in our model budgeting that we're developing.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But that requires OMB
10 to—I mean there's got to—is that happening where
11 there's a conversation between DSS and OMB about how
12 we can—because that's—that's, you know, then they
13 continue to be a need because even if—even if we're
14 phased out of clusters, there's still going to be
15 buildings that are not owned by the city that
16 operate, you know, in a long-term contract with the
17 city, and there are going to be capital needs that
18 are not currently capitally eligible. So, does that—
19 is that something that DHS is, you know, that is
20 making clear to OMB that there needs to be some kind
21 of reckoning there?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But OMB and—and DHS
23 have—are—are on the same page with us. We're working
24 very closely. Nobody wants to invested—to have

2 invested the effort that we invested over the last
3 year--

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Uh-huh.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --in clearing 14,000
6 violations, and have--have that be repeated. I think
7 the fact that the violations have continued to remain
8 low despite the fact that we have increased
9 inspections is indicative of the partnership between
10 the providers, DSS and OMB in addressing conditions
11 in the--in the traditional shelters.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, just to be
13 clear, expense funding is--is--is not the best way to
14 be addressing those needs because expense funding is
15 coming out of our annual budget. It's not part of a
16 long-term capital plan. These are--these are things
17 that, you know, we at the City Council, you know, we
18 give--we can give non-city capital funds out through a
19 process that OMB has approved, and it's very
20 rigorous, but we--if a not-for-profit in our district
21 needs a new boiler and they put in an application
22 that is approved by OMB to the Council and goes
23 through this process, we can provide that funding or
24 capital funds that has been in the city's Capital

2 Budget and not in our annual expense budget. It's a
3 much better way to—to do it.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We want to address
5 these kinds of issues in our model budgets with the
6 providers, which will ultimately be state approved,
7 and provide reimbursement through the TEN (sic), a
8 funding stream for shelter operations for families.
9 For singles it's a different story. So, there are a
10 number of factors in determining how to fund this.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. No. 16, the
12 Semi-Annual Multi-Agency. I know we're—we're getting
13 you out of here by 1:00. The Semi-Annual Multi-
14 Agency Inspection process that includes all city
15 agencies that have inspection responsibilities. That
16 doesn't include clusters. Why does that not include
17 clusters?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Why do you think it
19 doesn't cluster?

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The clusters are not
21 re—they're not—according to the Administration, the
22 family shelters excluding clusters currently have an
23 average of—they have a violation per apartment. This
24 is, but that—that report--

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But we're inspecting
3 cluster all—I'm not—I wasn't—I didn't--

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: If your question is
6 are we inspecting only the traditional shelters and
7 not the clusters with the—with the inspectors, the
8 answer no. We're inspecting the clusters as well.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And that's, in fact,
11 why you see additional violations. If you—if you—if
12 you wanted to follow the monthly postings, you see
13 increased violations in the clusters because we're
14 inspecting the clusters on the—in the same way.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, alright. I
16 know that Council Member Cohen has a question, too,
17 so, we'll—we'll keep it moving here. Let's see.
18 The—No. 20, continuing the implement the initiative
19 to increase DV services by adding 300 emergency beds
20 and 400 Tier IIs. I know--

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: 20? 20? No. 20?

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: No. 20, yeah. We're
23 are—we've—we've added 52 Tier II units in this—and
24 more expected by '17. When do we expect that all 400
25 will be achieved?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, let's break it
3 down. We expect the 300 will be achieved very
4 shortly. As I said, 150 are online and-and the
5 remaining 150 are in different stages of-of oversight
6 approval. They require state licensing or state-or
7 state approval to open.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And the-of the 400,
10 there's one contract that's been awarded, and we're
11 expecting additional awards in September. They
12 require responses to RFPs, and we've re-issued the
13 RFP in order to generate additional responses, and so
14 we're expecting to make awards in September.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Jumping ahead
16 to 28. Eliminating the requirement for school-age
17 children to be present at PATH for multiple
18 appointments in the shelter application process. So,
19 you spoke about families that have been there
20 multiple times in 30 days, and families reunifying
21 with children in foster care. That accounts for a
22 relatively small percentage of families at PATH I
23 imagine, and there are certainly less than half of
24 families that are reunifying with children in foster
25 care or have been there in the last 30 days, right?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, no, I think we
3 can—we can provide you data on that.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but there are—
5 there's definitely a large cohort of families that
6 are either there for the first time or it's the first
7 time in—in, you know, more than a month, right?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think we can—
9 we'll—we can work with you on looking at that data,
10 but I think what you're—I think what you want to—what
11 you're asking me is so why not eliminated it for
12 people who are applying the first time. [bell]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah, exactly.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Look, we are
17 providing shelter to the families.

18 MALE SPEAKER: [interposing] [Announcing
19 fire drill over loud speaker]

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It's just a drill.
21 It's just a drill.

22 MALE VOICE: [interposing] [Announcing
23 fire drill over loud speaker]

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, that's—that's how
25 we'll know when to let you go is when the—is when the

2 bell goes off today. [laughter] The Commissioner
3 has got to get out of here.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I don't want to—I
5 know that I'm not to be the first one to have the
6 building in a situation like that. It should be I'd
7 be last.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Yes, that is
9 my point is that--

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --it should—it
12 should, you know--

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] But
14 there's a--

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It's a requirement
16 for children to, you know, I mean so we—right now if—
17 if somebody goes to pass it they—they have to go back
18 a few times for the multiple, you know, they've got
19 to return not because, you know, for the second,
20 third and fourth time they're not required to bring
21 the kids in?

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, but the first
24 time they still are?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct, and—and
3 here's the reason.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're assuming
6 responsibility for sheltering children, and we want
7 an opportunity to evaluate the family before making a
8 placement in order to determine the best kind of
9 placements to make. There's that. That was the
10 rationale for many years for why people should have to
11 come back the second, third and fourth times, but we
12 think it's an important rationale the first time.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, now the kids
14 can stay in school. They don't have to come back for
15 that second, third or fourth visit?

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Let's see.
18 Jumping ahead to number 34. We're making progress.
19 Employ social workers to accompany families found
20 ineligible for returning to community resources to
21 provide on-the-spot assistance. Is that—is that
22 happening now?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, as I said, we're
24 bringing social workers online, as indicated in the
25 testimony, and they'll intervene, you know, whether

2 they should accompany them or there are other ways
3 for them to intervene to provide on-the-spot
4 assistance. We think it's important to—that we're
5 adding social workers to fulfill this function.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: When do you expect
7 that that will be up and running?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: During the summer.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: No. 35, Expanding the
10 shelter conditions complaint process through HRA's
11 Info Line. How do people find the Info Line?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: If you've looked at
13 the data in the MMR, a lot of people find the HRA
14 Info Line. So, it's a number that people can call
15 and make complaints.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Is it
17 on your website?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, but we also
19 provide that information to people as they're
20 entering the shelter system and there are different—
21 there's—there's a posting about what the number is.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, is it easy to
23 find if I were—if I—if I me Steven Levin after this
24 hearing wants to go find the HRA Info Line, I should
25 be able to find it in under five minutes?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: If you call 311
3 they'd connect you to the Info line also.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I'm going to
5 try it.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay. I think if it
7 doesn't work you'll tell me about it.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I will. Okay. No,
9 38 streamlining the HPD housing placement process.
10 So, [coughs] lucky you. We're going to skip this
11 because we're going to have a whole hearing about
12 this in the coming months.

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well, probably not
14 just with my agency.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Not, just with your
16 agency with HPD as well. So, we're going to skip
17 over this one, but this is a big-a big issue. I
18 want-I'm saying it now that HPD is a tremendous, you
19 know, we have over the last 35 years developed a
20 significant affordable housing stock. When we talk
21 about build-we need to build more affordable housing,
22 we need to build more affordable housing, we also
23 have an amazing affordable housing stock already in
24 existence here in New York City. It needs to be
25 preserved and it needs to be made available to

2 families exiting the shelter system. I'm curious how
3 many affordable housing units under a regulatory
4 agreement with HPD now are taking clients receiving
5 LINC and FEPS and city FEPS vouchers today, and I'm
6 going to ask Commissioner Torres Springer that very
7 question, and—and we're going to expect an answer at
8 that—at that hearing because it's—because it
9 absolutely need to be fully utilized and that—that
10 requires coordination between the agencies.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We look forward to
12 the hearing.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. No. 40
14 consolidating and streamlining the—all the rental
15 assistance programs. So, we are going to have to
16 have an ongoing conversation based on the settlement?
17 That's what you're saying?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It's the—it's the
19 same—the same outcome of the conversation we have at
20 DYCD. We just—we want to—we want to streamline once,
21 and we want to streamline consistent with what was
22 agreed to in the—in the other litigation involving
23 against the state.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I'm sorry.
25 Tanking one step back here, No. 29. What

2 modifications have been made to the intake process
3 for individuals and families to alleviate long wait
4 times and transfers in the middle of the night? So,
5 this is the transportation--

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: It really is. We--as
7 we delve into this, the family system had developed a
8 placement facility where--where people could be placed
9 later in the evening rather than waiting.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: There hadn't been
12 such a system a developed for adult families and
13 we're--we're implementing that with a facility where
14 we can make such placements.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So, right now are
16 families still being transferred in the middle of the
17 night, adult families with children?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We--we--we expect the--
19 the new facility capacity available this month in
20 that role eliminating the bond. (sic)

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As we delve into
23 this it really, it really was a problem of in the
24 family shelter system for years this overnight
25 placement facility system had developed and there was

2 not a parallel system that had developed for adult
3 families.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, I'm going to
5 turn it over to Council Member Andy Cohen for
6 questions, and then--and then Council Member Espinal
7 is going to--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: So, thank you,
9 Chair, and I will be brief because for good or for
10 bad unfortunately DHS has been very proactive in
11 reaching out to me. So, we have an ongoing dialogue.
12 [laughter] But there were just a couple of specific
13 questions as long as I was sitting here, and one of
14 them I have not been able to get an answer, and I
15 think that either in one of your hats or one of your
16 past hats you'll be able to answer. I'm--I'm
17 concerned with cluster sites returning to the rent
18 stabilization, and I'm not really sure, and no one
19 has been able to explain to me the impact of the rent
20 stabilized apartments being used as a cluster site in
21 terms of rent history and--and the rent going up and
22 making sure that that apartment is ultimately
23 returned to rent stabilization. Do you have any
24 feelings on how that's taking place, if it takes
25 place?

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Sure. The units
3 that were covered by rent stabilization to revert to
4 rent stabilization.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: And were the
6 providers paying the rent stabilized rate or--

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] No.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: --you were? They
9 were not?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, the--except the
11 exemption, the exception or exemption to the Rent
12 Stabilization Law is when an not-for-profit rents the
13 units for a charitable purpose, and--but when the not-
14 for-profit is no longer renting the unit, the units
15 rent--revert to rent stabilization.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I this this is not
17 your job, but it is--maybe it's our job, but somebody
18 should be diligently looking to see that those--that
19 those units are ultimately returned to rent
20 stabilization if the law is being followed. So,
21 maybe that is something that we should look into.
22 You know, and I'm just curious if--if you keep track
23 of 911 calls. When I--the--the first time that I had
24 gotten involved in the--you know, after I was elected,
25 was really around an inordinate number of 911 calls

2 generated by a shelter. That shelter has gotten that
3 problem under control. Do you keep track of that,
4 though, and mostly it was residents call 911 about a
5 complaint about another resident. So, is there any
6 way to track that? Do you keep track of that?

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean it's always
8 something that we--it's always something that is
9 related to the NYPD oversight of the shelters to be
10 able to address those kinds of situations. So, I--I
11 know you're asking me a question of like do we keep
12 track of literally for calls. What we're looking at
13 with the NYPD is if--is there a way to be more
14 proactive in addressing these kinds of issues. And
15 so, the training that they do and so forth is--is
16 aimed at trying to reduce the kind of thing where a
17 resident feels they need to call 911 about another
18 resident.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I will--and this is
20 again the information is a little dated because I
21 think there's been an evolutionary--

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] Yep.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: --significant
24 changes in the way security is provided, but like my
25 precinct was able to tell me and my commanding

2 officer was able to say that, you know, I had a
3 1,000-a 1,000 911 calls generated from the address,
4 and so he knew. So, I don't know and it would be
5 helpful probably to make sure that there was agency
6 communication, and make sure that you know.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] It's-
8 it's a point well taken, but again I think this is
9 one of the benefits of having the collaboration with
10 NYPD, but they have access to the information in a
11 very direct and immediate way.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I appreciate that,
13 and look, I have more questions, but I'll ask them
14 off line. Thank you very much.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you Council
16 Member Cohen. Council Member Espinal.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you,
18 Chairman Levin. Again, I'll be very brief. It's a
19 pleasure, Commissioner. I just want to talk about
20 the bill I've introduced and it's to pretty much
21 codify the work that you're already doing, which is
22 to do a quarterly count of homeless in our streets.
23 and correct me if I'm wrong. I think the two stark
24 distances between my bill and what the city is
25 already doing is that what the city is doing is an

2 initiative, and the bill will codify it into law to
3 make sure that future administrations continue doing
4 the work that this administration is doing, and two,
5 my bill requires for homeless individuals who are
6 living—who are in within vestibules are not actually
7 out on the streets to be counted as part of the
8 count. Dose DHS currently count those individuals or
9 how does the process currently work?

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So, let me—let me
11 say this. In the testimony we talked about the
12 bills, and we certainly support the intent of your
13 bill, and with so many of—of pieces of legislation,
14 we—you know, we want to work with the council to
15 address issues that you're raising to make sure that
16 there aren't any unintended consequences. So, let me
17 describe to you some facts, and then I think that
18 will inform the conversations that we'll—we'll have
19 with you. So, the HOPE Count that we do once a year
20 is a HUD approved methodology and it's done in a
21 particular way. For example, I was out during the
22 HOPE Count, and we saw people that were sort of in—
23 underneath sort of the stoop area outside. That
24 person under the HUD Approved Methodology would be
25 counted. Somebody who was inside a building is not

2 counted under the HUD approved methodology. The
3 quarterly count we're trying to accomplish something
4 else, which is massively counting. We're trying to
5 make sure that for serving clients we know where
6 people are. And so there may be variations between
7 how those counts go. And so, it would make—it would
8 make a big difference to us the kind of count you're
9 looking for because full blown-- You know, HUD
10 approved count is one thing versus the reason why
11 we're doing the quarterly counts, which is to make
12 sure we're—we know that there are areas where there
13 are homeless people we can serve. So, for the
14 quarterly count whether someone is in a vestibule or
15 not, they're not—it's not that they're not—that that
16 they're not counted, but we know that there may be
17 homeless activity in that area. So, we're going to
18 make sure we're serving people there. So, they're
19 being done for two different—two different purposes
20 and I would think in that conversation with you and
21 others about the bill that—that these are the kinds
22 of things that we need to talk about, about what
23 exactly you're looking to—to—to achieve.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Okay, so when
25 you usually—when you count—when you do the count, you

2 usually get a general sense of what the number of
3 homeless people are?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: [interposing] In the
5 quarterly—in the quarterly count yeah, and again,
6 the—the counts are being done by our outreach
7 providers with our—our oversight, and it's—it's
8 almost a quarterly check-in to see, you know, are
9 there people under that overpass? Are there people
10 in that particular subway station? Yeah, it's—it's
11 more focused on how we can make sure we're delivering
12 services as opposed to the purpose of the HUD
13 approved—HUD—HOPE Count, which is very much, you
14 know, an encounter with—an effort to encounter all
15 people who are out on that particular night on the
16 streets.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Uh-huh, yeah, so
18 I—I think it's important that we—we find a way where
19 we can find common ground on this bill, and be able
20 to push it forward to codify the efforts that you're
21 already doing only because of seeing on the federal
22 level that the new measures can come in pretty much
23 and dismantle any work that previous administration
24 had been doing. So, you know, I would love to see
25 this become law at some point, and—and that's it. I

2 just really want to thank you also for the work
3 you're doing.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: And High-
6 there's--there's a park in my neighborhood called
7 Highland Park. There was a gentleman there living
8 under a tarp for a few days, and your team just--just
9 jump right in and were able to get him the help he
10 needed, and--and--and deserves. So, thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Great. Thank

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Council
13 Member Espinal Now Commissioner, one more quick
14 question. Back to the issue of the--having to go to
15 PATH in Staten Island. If you are in Staten Island,
16 and you're going through the process, and you end up
17 in shelter at any point do you have to go to PATH if
18 you're a family? Like if you're going through the
19 whole thing, you go to CAMBA, you're back at CAMBA,
20 you're back at CAMBA, do you ever have to actually go
21 up to the Bronx to PATH to get into the shelter
22 system.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: If--if CAMBA is
24 unable to find a place to shelter you, you will go to
25 PATH, but I want to get--

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] They're
3 expected to be able to shelter, right?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: If-if they're able
5 to find a place, but--

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Not just in a CAMBA
7 shelter, but in any shelter, right. I mean there
8 are--

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, the point of
10 having the CAMBA point of contacts is to use the
11 ability to connect people to community resources, and
12 avoid shelter entry. If that fails--

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --they will be
15 connected to PATH, and will be connected to PATH as a
16 known family not just walking the door saying who's
17 this person. But I want to also--

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] They
19 still have to--they still have to go PATH, though?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I want to also to
21 come back to something I said before. It's just
22 started. This is a brand new approach to something
23 that's gone on for decades in New York City. Let's
24 give it some time and see if it works, and if works

2 we'll replicate it in other boroughs. Literally just
3 starting it even as you're asking the questions.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, because--because
5 they, you know, they've got the resource there, they
6 should like--it should be soup to nuts. You know,
7 like never have to go PATH. It's a borough based
8 thing and particularly in Staten Island with a
9 smaller volume and reputable rider who can handle
10 that volume, they should be able to--the process
11 should allow that they can go straight from CAMBA to
12 shelter, if need be because there are people that are
13 not going to be able for whatever reason to avoid
14 going into the shelter system, and--and if they're in
15 Staten Island right now, they should not have to go
16 to the Bronx.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But let's let an
18 approach that hasn't been tried in 40 years of doing
19 the modern mass homelessness. Let's see if it will
20 work and not--and I want to--I want to be purposely,
21 not mechanistic about it--

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: --and see if they
24 can succeed in--in--in what we're asking them to do. If
25 all else fails, the person will be sheltered. No

2 question about it, but let's see if a new approach
3 works.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Alright, thank
5 you, Commissioner.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Okay, any time.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes. [pause] Well,
8 I want to thank—he's not here—but Council Member
9 Grodenchik for chairing the hearing, Barry G. Who are
10 hearing for? The first panel I want to ask Stephanie
11 Gendell, Citizen's Committee for Children; Kathy Kim
12 from Enterprise Community Partners. Gisselle
13 Routhier, and Joshua Goldfein from College for the
14 Homeless and Legal Aid, and Jill Orrock from
15 Partnership for the Homeless [background comments,
16 pause]

17 Can I--

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes, go ahead.

19 GISELLE ROUTHIER: Thanks so much for
20 having me. I'm Gisselle Routhier, the Policy
21 Director of the Coalition for the Homeless. I want
22 to touch on a few things relating to a lot of the
23 topics that we talked about today. So, as we all
24 know, New York City remains in the midst of one of
25 the worst homelessness crises that—since modern

2 homelessness began. In February a new record of
3 62,435 men, women and children slept in shelters each
4 night. About 2,000 more than last year, and we want
5 to commend the administration for the progress that
6 they have made, but there are many issues that remain
7 unresolved since the 90-day review, and since the
8 release of the new Mayor's Plan as well. So, we
9 wanted to highlight a few particular things that are
10 of concern to us. The first one being the housing
11 placements. So, the provision of actual affordable
12 housing within the Mayor's new plan. We believe that
13 a far more robust effort is needed to provide enough
14 affordable housing for homeless individuals and
15 families to actually meet the tremendous scale of
16 need, and we don't think that they can turn the tide
17 and substantially reduce homelessness without fully
18 utilizing its existing resources. As you mentioned,
19 increasing the amount of units that they allocate,
20 NYCHA units that they allocated to homeless families
21 doubled from 1,500 to 3,000 and creating a new
22 aggressive capital development program to actually
23 build housing for homeless households, and we very
24 much look forward to the hearing that the Council may
25 have on that. The second thing we want to talk about

2 is intake and eligibility. So, we've been very
3 concerned lately about a recent dramatic decline in
4 the percentage of families that are found eligible
5 after applying for shelter. So as of February the
6 eligibility rate was just 37% and that's down from
7 46% a month before and 50% in February of last year.
8 So, a pretty dramatic decrease, and that's combined
9 with recent what we've been seeing in our office
10 families coming in after, you know, being-applying
11 and not being found eligible and having to apply
12 multiple times, and we think that's related to the
13 recent changes in the ADM, and we're concerned that
14 those reductions are actually not doing anything to
15 solve homelessness, but putting-placing more burden
16 on families and increasing the trauma that-that-that
17 some kids are experiencing. And finally, talk a
18 little bit about mental health and medical needs in
19 the shelter system. A significant number of homeless
20 single adults have serious mental-mental health needs
21 and medical issues, and often times homeless adults
22 are-are assigned to either general pop shelter or
23 specialized shelter depending on their circumstances,
24 but we've been seeing that specialized shelters for
25 those with mental health and medical needs are

2 struggling to adequately address such needs in
3 addition to seeing some issues with improper
4 discharger from hospitals. So, we want to make sure
5 that the system can properly meet those needs, and
6 that there are other resources in place for those
7 people. And lastly, we just wanted to talk a little
8 bit about Intro 1443 that Council Member Ritchie
9 Torres put forward. We want to say that we support
10 it, and we believe that addressing the increasing
11 problem of opioid abuse across the city is—is
12 something that is very commendable, and we recommend
13 adding language that would allow training of
14 residential shelters to be trained in Naloxone
15 because often times the first person to respond to a
16 new need is another resident. So that a lot more
17 lives can be saved. So, those are the main things.
18 I'll Josh—we submitted joint testimony—say a few more
19 words.

20 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: Thank you. I'm Joshua
21 Goldfein. I'm from the Legal Aid Society and the
22 Homeless Rights Project. I just want to add that the
23 city, and Gisselle mentioned, the city has within its
24 power the ability to devote more housing resources,
25 affordable housing resources to bring the shelter

2 population down. They have chosen not to use all of
3 the Housing Authority apartments that they could be
4 using. They can be using more HPD resources. We
5 think this is very important to make up for the lost
6 decade of time in which the Bloomberg Administration
7 declined to use those subsidies, and as a result we
8 have the shelter population that we have now, and the
9 only real way to solve it, the problem is to go back
10 and replace those units that were taken away by the
11 Bloomberg Administration, and this Administration has
12 not fully committed to using all the resources that
13 it could use. Another issue that we've been
14 concerned about lately is that we have seen warrant
15 sweeps taking place in shelter. We think this is a
16 terrible idea. It discourages people from coming
17 into shelter. It wastes a lot of people's time when
18 they're brought in to answer for open warrants that
19 might be ten years old that involve what used to be
20 called quality of life offenses such as having an
21 open container. You're woken in your bed in the
22 middle of the night, you're taken to Central booking
23 to answer for something that—that is basically
24 meaningless in the eyes of the criminal justice
25 system, and that disrupts your—your day or maybe even

2 two or three days depending on when they--when they
3 get you, and during that time you can't work. You
4 can't go to your program, you can't help--you can't
5 get back on your feet, and move on with your life,
6 and it's a huge waste of everyone's resources. We're
7 particularly concerned about it because anecdotally
8 we've seen warrant sweeps taking place on nights when
9 the shelter system is at the highest levels of
10 capacity, and that makes us very concerned that this
11 is a--a technique being used to manage the census,
12 and--and we're going to be asking a lot more questions
13 about that. In addressing the--the families and the--
14 the family shelter system, first I just want to
15 respond to something that Commissioner Banks said
16 about in response to your question about whether
17 children have to be present for the first application
18 and he said well, we think it's important to have a
19 look at the child, and assess what kind of shelter
20 they need. That's nonsense and he knows it. Kids
21 should be in school period. There's--there's--if a
22 child can go to school, the child should go to
23 school. It's better for the child. It's better for
24 the school, and if there's a city official who is
25 best able to determine what a child needs, it's that

2 child's classroom teacher who sees them everyday, and
3 having a child sit at PATH for 12, 14, 16, 20 hours,
4 there is no information I promise you that DHS is
5 gaining about that child in that process. It in now
6 way informs any decisions that they make. It's just
7 nonsense, and they—they know better, and they should
8 expand the—the—the policy to strongly encourage
9 children to be in school whenever children can be in
10 school. On the adult family side, the Commissioner
11 mentioned that they were adding overnight capacity
12 that we're hopefully resolving soon, a lawsuit about
13 people with disabilities in the shelter system, but
14 the fact remains that the adult family intake center
15 in particular is a complete disaster that families
16 are routinely denied shelter there who are eligible,
17 that this—the system is set up to churn those
18 families as we say to prevent them from getting
19 benefits so that they just keep coming back to apply
20 in hope that they'll go away. That is the neediest
21 population probably in the shelter system. Those are
22 people who have sort of the highest levels of—where—
23 where the most people have disabilities. They're the
24 people who have the greatest difficulty getting
25 through the application process, and they're treated

2 very badly, and that's something that we're also
3 going to be looking at very closely in the coming
4 months.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, two questions,
6 Josh. One is why do they still—do you believe that
7 they're still requiring children to go to that—to
8 that first half? I mean what's the, you know, what's
9 the—the meaning behind that?

10 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: We've been asking that
11 question for several years. We've never gotten I
12 think a reasonable answer to it. It's my belief that
13 it's some combination of kind of institutional
14 inertia that staff at the kind of entry level of the
15 agency are very invested in that, and—and have
16 resisted doing away with that requirement. I think
17 there's a certain—I think that there is a deterrent
18 effect inherent in the process, and also there would
19 be—there would be administrative difficulties for
20 them in doing it—if they're having just the parents
21 come in and a reports how many children there are.
22 That's not the way their system is set up and I—I can
23 see that they would have to change the way they
24 operate, and I think that they just don't have the
25 bandwidth to change that many things. They're

2 afraid. We have seen marginal progress in the way
3 that PATH operates. We've seen no progress in the
4 way the adult family side operates, but I think that
5 demonstrates that it's just been--it's just been very--
6 --the changes have come very slowly in--on the DHS
7 side. We've seen great transformation in HRA, but
8 for whatever reason DHS has proven extremely
9 resistant to change.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I mean couldn't they--
11 I mean like couldn't--couldn't the--the intake official
12 at PATH pick up the phone, call the front desk at the
13 school and say, can you confirm that so and so goes
14 to your school and so and so is their parent?

15 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: I many years ago in the
16 days of housing subsidies, we were told that the
17 reason was, and going back to the Giuliani
18 Administration that they were afraid that people
19 would come in and claim to have children that they
20 didn't in order to get--

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] Right.

22 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: --a larger unit, but
23 that's--

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, but then you
3 could say like—they call up and say does Timmy, you
4 know, this—this person said that Timmy is their son.

5 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: [interposing] The
6 answer is yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Does Timmy go to this
8 school?

9 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: The answer is yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alright.

11 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: And I think there is
12 still an opening for the position of DHS Commissioner
13 if you would like to go over there and take it.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah. There's a—I
15 still need—I still need—we didn't—we didn't get to
16 that—that—that reform.

17 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: I don't think there's a
18 good answer.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah, I'm sorry, and
20 then the sweeps. Do you believe that the sweeps are
21 happening as a matter of DHS policy, or a matter of
22 NYPD policy? Because I have—so I have an adult
23 family shelter in my neighborhood and they did a
24 warrant sweep, and I think that it was NYPD initiated
25 event as, you know, in response to concerns that

2 neighbors had raised about conditions that, you know,
3 the—the people hanging out on the corner and stuff
4 like that, and so it was like the next meeting they
5 came out and said hey we did a warrant sweep, which
6 is like nobody asked them to do a warrant sweep.

7 GISELLE ROUTHIER: We—I can answer that,
8 too, because we've been in several meetings with DHS
9 also in bringing up this issue. We've not gotten
10 consistent answers on that question. It's unclear to
11 us who is making that first request for the suite,
12 but we know that there is some collaboration between
13 NYPD and DHS, but we have gotten basically
14 conflicting answers every time we ask that question.
15 So, I would encourage you to maybe follow up with the
16 Administration on that.

17 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: And I—I just want to
18 add just I was being a little modest here. The
19 Coalition staff is out in the shelters at night all
20 the time, and they've observed these sweeps, and
21 they've seen the coordination between the DHS police
22 and the NYPD. So it's clear that—that, you know,
23 this isn't—it's not—it's not random. It's not just
24 happening, and that the—and while DHS, as you know,
25 we don't want to have anything to do with. We want

2 people to come into shelter. You know, again as I
3 said, it's extremely counter—it's counter to the
4 agency's efforts to bring people off the street if
5 people believe that if they come in of the street
6 they're then going to have to spend, you know, the
7 weekend answering for something that happened a long
8 time ago that—that maybe is even incorrectly
9 recorded. I mean so many of these warrants are—are
10 just bogus and people know that and they are—don't—
11 won't come in if they're afraid they're going to have
12 to deal with, and people who are—are concerned about
13 their immigration status don't want to encounter
14 police officers. They don't want to take the risk
15 that they're going to be held for something and then,
16 you know, potentially deported. I mean putting aside
17 what the—what the Mayor says is happening everybody I
18 think there's general panic out there. People read
19 the papers. They see what's happening other places.
20 Even if they say that New York was a perfectly, you
21 know, was—was taking an aggressive stance to resist,
22 the other DHS' policies. You know, people don't want
23 to see people in uniform when they come into shelter
24 and it keeps people out of the shelter system. So
25 DHS has a vested—has a—has a stated interest in

2 having people come in. They—they say to us, you
3 know, we don't want to have warrant sweeps but, you
4 know, we do see them coordinating with NYPD and as I
5 said, this is purely anecdotal, but we have enough
6 evidence to want to ask them if this is, in fact,
7 taking place as a way to reduce the census because of
8 the fact that it seems to be occurring on nights when
9 the census is the highest. And maybe the answer is
10 no and it's just a coincidence, and they're going to
11 disabuse us of that notion, but we're concerned
12 enough about it based on what the coalition has
13 observed.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And the last question
15 is all about you mentioned the—the—the rate of
16 families being qualified has gone down significantly.
17 Can you elucidate a little bit why you think that is?

18 GISELLE ROUTHIER: Sure. Yeah, we think
19 it's related to the changes in the ADM that happen
20 from late 2016 at the request of the city, which
21 basically rolled back some of the protections that
22 were put in place in the revised ADM from the year
23 before, and basically muddies the waters a bit in
24 terms of who's responsible for providing what
25 information, and what information needs to be

2 provided for a family to able to—be able to be found
3 eligible for shelters. So, it's being interpreted as
4 we've been seeing it in our offices more and more
5 frequently as a way to doing a people shelter. It's
6 just specific language that's been changed in the ADM
7 and we can share that with you, but it's—it's
8 manifested in a way that more people are being denied
9 shelter.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And more people
11 denied shelter means more people living in unsafe
12 conditions, doubled up.

13 GISELLE ROUTHIER: All of the above going
14 back to unsafe conditions, doubled up, areas I where
15 there's crime, where it's unsafe for kids, where
16 there's discrimination between the head of household
17 and the applicant family.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: It's a violent
19 situation?

20 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: Right.

21 GISELLE ROUTHIER: Yes, going down—

22 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: Going down to
23 batterers.

24 GISELLE ROUTHIER: Yep. So, all of the
25 above.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alright, we're going
3 to follow up on that one. Thank you very much.

4 KATHY KIM: So, good morning. My name is
5 Kathy Kim and I lead the Vulnerable Populations Team
6 for Enterprise Community Partners. We're a non-
7 profit Attorney General organization that has worked
8 to create and preserve affordable housing here and
9 nationwide for about 30 years. Thank you, Chair
10 Levin, and the members of the City Council's
11 Committee on General Warfare-Welfare for the
12 opportunity to comment on the progress made on the
13 recommendations in the DHS 90-day review. On behalf
14 of Enterprise I'd like to applaud the state for
15 completing this 90-day review last year with many
16 stakeholders and the progress that has been made thus
17 far. We believe that these recommendations if fully
18 implemented will lead to meaningful changes that will
19 help families and individuals struggling with housing
20 challenges to find the help that they need. But we
21 would also like to offer the following suggestions to
22 advance the progress achieved thus far.

23 First, the focus on prevention in the
24 report is critical. From a cost perspective, as well
25 as protecting individuals from the long lasting

2 trauma of homelessness, prevention is a smart
3 investment. However, what qualifies households to
4 access homelessness prevention services is often an
5 open eviction case, and this can be too late for many
6 families. We should work to help to families
7 identify housing instability further upstream, and
8 connect to the most appropriate resources that will
9 not only prevent instability, but promote upward
10 mobility. Through Enterprises Come Home NYC Program
11 in which we connect homeless families with income to
12 existing affordable housing units, with connection to
13 light touch services, we've learned that eviction
14 prevention is needed as soon as a household
15 demonstrates the inability to pay rent on time or at
16 all. So, we urge the city to consider this kind of
17 targeting. Second, in the long term we must continue
18 to increase the supply of affordable housing. In the
19 current tight housing market there just simply aren't
20 enough units especially those affordable to the
21 lowest-income New Yorkers. So, in the meantime we—we
22 must ensure that homeless households are able to
23 compete for existing units, and services that help
24 build and repair credit scores and Housing Court
25 records will remove some barriers to homeless

2 families seeking housing, and third, while we try to
3 increase the supply of affordable housing for the
4 most vulnerable New Yorkers, it's equally critical
5 that we put forth every effort to keep households in
6 their homes. The city is steadily losing rent
7 stabilized units with a net loss of 150,000 between
8 1994 and 2012. The city cannot sustain this loss in
9 the face of such an acute housing affordability
10 crisis. So, we urge the city to work with the state
11 to revisit its rent stabilization regulations in
12 order preserve the supply of rent stabilized units.

13 I'd like to also take this opportunity to
14 highlight three other programmatic issues that should
15 be carefully considered as planned or implemented.

16 Coordinated Assessment and Placement System.

17 Otherwise known, as CAPS. We know housing is the
18 solution to homelessness, but with limited resources
19 and a spectrum of needs, there is obviously no one-
20 three is no one-size-fits-all solution. CAPS
21 consists of a universal assessment tool to accurately
22 determine the needs of all homeless households, a
23 complete inventory of available housing for homeless
24 households, and a matching tool to ensure that needs
25 and resources are appropriately and quickly matched.

2 It will also help to identify where resources are
3 lacking, and we commend everything the city has done
4 thus far to implement to CAPS highlight and begin the
5 plans for its expansion. [coughs] This will help
6 ensure that the right households get matched to the
7 right housing [bell] resources. [pause]

8 MALE SPEAKER: [interposing] [Announcing
9 fire drill over loud speaker]

10 KATHY KIM: But they were an exemption?

11 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: [off mic]

12 KATHY KIM: Okay. [laughs] Violation of
13 Local Law, right.

14 JOSHUA GOLDFEIN: We should pass another
15 local—if we could pass another local law very quickly
16 then we could have. [laughter] [siren] [pause]

17 KATHY KIM: Keep going? Okay, I'm going
18 to keep going. Okay. [laughs] We commend
19 everything that the city has done thus far to
20 implement a CAPS pilot and begin the plans for its
21 expansion. We think that this is going to help
22 ensure that the right households get matched to the
23 right resources, but also that New York City complies
24 with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
25 Development's mandate for a coordinated entry system

2 safeguarding a critical source of homelessness
3 assistance funding. Secondly, services for
4 households. We know that supportive housing is a
5 proven model and it effectively ends homelessness for
6 those who need deep long-term support, which includes
7 those who are chronically homeless and typically are
8 severely mentally ill and/or suffering from
9 addiction. But all households even those who don't
10 require supportive housing need some level of
11 services, and so developing a thoughtful after care
12 program for all populations—populations exiting
13 homelessness will go a long way in keeping people
14 stably housed and preventing shelter re-entry. And
15 furthermore, investing in a system that connects all
16 low-income residents with affordable housing to
17 already existing quality and critical services can
18 help ensure that vulner-vulnerable families, who are
19 often at risk of homelessness are able to build
20 assets and put themselves in a position to avoid
21 shelter entry altogether, and family homelessness.
22 While the picture that may come to mind when we think
23 about homelessness is often a single person on the
24 street, the vast majority of individuals in the
25 shelter system are a part of a family. And as we

2 think about investments and solutions to
3 homelessness, we really feel like we have to lift up
4 families especially children as a priority population
5 preventing homelessness, ensuring their quality of
6 life while they're in shelter and providing speedy
7 connections to quality affordable-affordable housing
8 and services. So, I just want to thank you for the
9 opportunity to testify today, and thank you to the
10 committee for all of your efforts to ensure that all
11 New Yorkers have access to a stable home and
12 connection to opportunities.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much,
14 Kathy. A quick question or follow up, you mentioned
15 Enterprise's Come Home NYC Program. Can you tell us
16 a little bit about how that's been going?

17 KATHY KIM: Sure.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: How it's and the--and
19 the structure of it and kind of, you know--

20 KATHY KIM: [interposing] Sure

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --the--the kind of
22 long-term view of how it's going to be working.

23 KATHY KIM: Sure. So right now, our--our
24 ultimate goal with Come Home NYC is to connect up to
25 300 families to permanent affordable housing. We're

2 at approximately 140, and I would say about 20% of
3 those families probably struggle with some sort of
4 housing instability issue once they're—once they're
5 placed, and it's usually connected to loss of income
6 from a loss of hours at work or loss of employment
7 altogether, and there are very, very few cases where
8 landlords come to us with some sort of—for lack of a
9 better word, behavioral issue.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Uh-huh.

11 KATHY KIM: So, those are some of the—the
12 major causes of housing instability that we're
13 seeing. In terms of long-term planning, I—we're—
14 we're definitely in that place right now where we're
15 implementing a impact evaluation to see if the way
16 Come Home NYC is structured helps facilitate a
17 speedier process to access affordable housing, and
18 whether or not Come Home NYC's programmatic
19 infrastructure helps to ensure greater housing
20 stability. In the—in the short and long term, so
21 we're—we're implementing that impact evaluation now.
22 We're excited to see what comes of it, and depending
23 on what comes of it, I think would help determine how
24 Come Home NYC—what—what will happen to the program in
25 the long term.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And your funding
3 structure is coordinated with the district—the
4 Attorney General of the state?

5 KATHY KIM: That's right. Through—
6 through the Robin Hood Foundation.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good.

8 KATHY KIM: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And I do want to ask
10 Enterprise and you and your colleagues at Enterprise
11 to think about as we're looking forward to that
12 hearing about coordination between DHS and HPD.
13 Enterprise plays an important role in our affordable
14 housing stock in New York City, and one thing that I
15 was talking to some affordable housing providers
16 about this idea they mentioned challenges around
17 regulatory agreements with—with funders, and so
18 that's one thing that they flag that--

19 KATHY KIM: Sure, I understand.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --that since recently
21 I know that Enterprise is involved in that process
22 often with, you know, affordable housing funding
23 agreements and—and-

24 KATHY KIM: [interposing] Yep.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --request this for
3 syndication or application but--

4 KATHY KIM: I'm—I'm also very much
5 looking forward to that hearing. Come Home NYC
6 actually is working with HPD's Homelessness Placement
7 Division, and we're trying to help inform how to make
8 that process a little bit more streamlined with us.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And we're looking
10 forward to it. Thank you.

11 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Good afternoon.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon.

13 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Good afternoon. My
14 name is Stephanie Gendell. I'm the Associate
15 Executive Director at Citizen's Committee for
16 Children. We are a multi-issue independent child
17 advocacy organization, and so testimony focuses on
18 families with children in the shelter system, but on
19 the prevention and post-shelter side as opposed to
20 the full system. That said, that part of the system
21 represents the largest portion, about 70% of the
22 system. There are currently 24,000 children in
23 shelter. We really appreciate all of the efforts
24 that the Administration has been making, and they
25 made 46 recommendations. They've implemented some of

2 them partially, some of them fully and some of them
3 it seemed not at all, but will be implemented maybe.
4 They issued another plan. We appreciate all of the
5 efforts that the City Council has made. We are
6 clearly in a housing crisis, in a homelessness
7 crisis, and we appreciate that that the city is
8 trying to figure out how to best address this crisis,
9 and some of the things that have been tried haven't
10 worked. Some of them have made a dent in the system,
11 and that we really have a long way to go. In the
12 testimony, which I'm not going to go through all of
13 our recommendations, I do include some of the areas
14 where we were disappointed in terms of where we stand
15 with regard to the recommendations in the 90-day
16 review. One of those is the timeline to eliminate
17 the cluster sites in the hotels. The original
18 timelines for the cluster sites was sooner, was 2018,
19 and it's been moved out to 2021 and 2023 for the
20 hotels. We appreciate the need to build more
21 shelters so that we can get families out of clusters,
22 and out of hotels, but we're really concerned about
23 the length of time that it's going to take to get
24 families out of hotels and cluster sites. We think
25 they are really inappropriate places for children to

2 be, and that 2023 is a really long time from now, and
3 regardless of what happens in politics, well, I guess
4 there is on slight exception, but I was going to say
5 there's no way Mayor de Blasio can still be the Mayor
6 in 2023, but I thought—

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] That
8 would actually require a referendum.

9 STEPHANIE GENDELL: [laughs] Yes and the
10 policeman. (sic)

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [interposing] We
12 cannot get you to City Council again.

13 STEPHANIE GENDELL: [laughs] And so,
14 we're concerned about that, and we're concerned about
15 the sort of move to say we're going to build new
16 shelters doesn't give us the opportunity to really
17 think about what we need to address, these children
18 now and their families and their wellbeing, and we're
19 really concerned about their wellbeing now. We
20 actually believe that the system is making their
21 wellbeing worse rather than better. In the interim
22 while they're trying to find housing, which at this
23 point is an average of 431 days. So that's a really
24 long time for a family to be in shelter, particularly
25 if they're in a shelter—in a hotel far from where

2 they live not near their school, not near public
3 transportation. They have to change rooms every 29
4 days. They may or may not have access to laundry,
5 edible food, et cetera, et cetera. We urge the
6 Administration to think about a shorter term plan to
7 well ideally decrease the timelines, but in the
8 interim think about how we can better serve the
9 children and families that are in these inappropriate
10 placements until we can get them out. In our
11 original feedback a year ago at this hearing, we
12 suggested that the administration do more to address
13 trauma for children and—and their parents in shelters
14 and they do more to ensure children are in childcare,
15 and they be more transparent about their
16 implementation. We want to reiterate all three of
17 those points. We appreciated having this hearing
18 today so we could hear where they were on all 46
19 recommendations. Perhaps there's a way that that
20 could be more regularly reported so that not everyone
21 has to sit all day to hear where we are. In
22 addition, we just wanted to make a couple other
23 recommendations related to the needs of homeless
24 children and their families as we enter into the
25 budget cycle. There was a recent letter sent to the

2 Administration that was reported in the Daily News
3 about the \$10.3 million of one-year funding that the
4 Administration put in to help homeless students in
5 schools. That included money for social workers, 33
6 of them in the schools with the highest numbers of
7 homeless elementary school children. Things have not
8 gotten any better. So, homeless children are still
9 struggling in school. They're paced far. They still
10 have high rates of absenteeism. We're not really
11 sure why we wouldn't extend this one-year funding to
12 continue to help the homeless children in school. In
13 an ideal world we would baseline that funding anyway
14 because it's going to take a very long time to ensure
15 that there are no homeless children. And so, we
16 would look forward to the day where we can do that as
17 a peg because we don't have homeless children any
18 more, but we think that we should based on that
19 funding. In general, we think that the system
20 related to children and their education needs to be
21 more proactive about helping homeless families,
22 displaced children rather than only being responsive
23 after there's a problem, but really be more proactive
24 about ensuring parents know their rights to keep
25 their children in their school of origin, and how to

2 arrange for transportation. And I also wanted to
3 mention the Staten Island pilot. I appreciate you
4 asking for more details about the Staten Island
5 pilot. I think that it is great that you can
6 determine eligibility in a Staten Island Office if
7 you're from Staten Island, and that if you don't
8 have—if you don't end up being eligible or don't need
9 shelter then you'll never have to go to PATH. But
10 after, at the end of all of that, you're found
11 eligible and you need a placement, in an ideal world
12 since we're doing borough based placement, there's no
13 reason to go up to the Bronx to get placed in Staten
14 Island. I'm not sure what the problems were when we
15 used to have a borough based intake, but I do know
16 that the computer systems that we have now are much
17 better, and maybe that could be one way to help with
18 the administration if there's an issue about which—
19 where the vacancies are or how to do borough based
20 placements. But it seems like it will be best to
21 prevent people from ever having to go to PATH if they
22 don't have to. And finally, I just wanted to agree
23 with my colleagues with regard to not requiring the
24 children to come to PATH. We appreciate that
25 children are no longer reunifying from foster care at

2 PATH. That was incredibly traumatic, and problematic
3 on a number of levels. We do think that as we think
4 about not having children at PATH, which should be
5 our ultimate goal that the city should be thinking
6 about how we implement the logistics behind that.
7 So, if the parent comes from Brooklyn, and their
8 child goes to school in Brooklyn, which is definitely
9 where they should be, but they're at PATH past the
10 end of the school day, we just need to make sure
11 there is someone to pick up the kids, and that's
12 something that could certainly be arranged. Thank
13 you for the opportunity to testify.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Thank
15 you, Stephanie. You mentioned services, day care
16 services and other—and other types of, you know,
17 trauma informed care in the shelter system. What do
18 you—if you were to design a system to—to work within
19 the structures that we have now. So, clusters,
20 hotels, you name it, what would that—what would an
21 appropriate of effective kind of social services
22 system for children look like in that setting?

23 STEPHANIE GENDELL: I mean thanking about
24 the hotels for a second I think that there needs to
25 be space in the hotel for staff who are assigned to

2 be at that site not just for security, but for social
3 services reasons. So, like Tier II shelter will have
4 an educational specialist. We should have an
5 educational specialist who sits at the hotel in a
6 room, you know, in an office space, and perhaps
7 there's a way to convert some hotel rooms into office
8 spaces. Those spaces should have a place for kids to
9 interact with each other, and be able to play and
10 there—and there should be some cooking and laundry
11 facilities. And I guess it's just thinking about,
12 you know, where we want to—to live and then sort of
13 arranging that. For young children the best place
14 they can be during the day especially if they're
15 growing up in a hotel is would be to get a childcare
16 center, not a Drop-In but a real childcare program
17 that—at a curriculum that they can attend. They just
18 changed the regulations so it should be easier for
19 homeless children to get into Early Learn seats.
20 They can be eligible for being homeless. And so,
21 there should be ideally an outreach to—in the same
22 way we got 4-year-olds in shelter into Pre-K to get
23 the younger children into Early Learn regardless of
24 what type of shelter. Then the other piece of that
25 is early intervention for kids under three. Any

2 child is entitled to be assessed for EI, and then if
3 they're found in-to be eligible, they're entitled to
4 services, and it's all free. And so, children in
5 foster care are routinely screened for whether or not
6 they need early intervention services, and we're
7 proudly eager to do things--these sort of things for
8 kids in shelter.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, and by the
10 way, you mentioned pegs, that--that we don't have
11 pegs.

12 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Sorry. You're right.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I just wanted to wait
14 on OST, right.

15 STEPHANIE GENDELL: [laughs] You're
16 right.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The--the churning of
18 acronyms for the city I'll admit it so--

19 STEPHANIE GENDELL: Agency efficiencies.
20 [laughs]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I want to thank this
22 panel very much for the keen work that you do
23 everyday in--in making sure that these important
24 issues are, you know, at the forefront, and even when
25 we agree, 92% of the time with this administration,

2 we feel we still need to, you know, ensure
3 accountability and that they're going through with
4 the--the things that they say they're going to go
5 through. So, we really, really appreciate it, and
6 look forward to working with you guys and by the way,
7 thanks. Okay. This will be the next and last panel.
8 I want to thank everybody for their--Oh, I'm sorry,
9 or--well, maybe one or two counts. Louie Robles from
10 Green House. Robert Sauer--Torres--Robert Torres from
11 Bubble (sic), Hector Maura from Bubble. Jason
12 Cianciotto from Home United. Steven Wellsac (sp?).
13 Okay, keep going. Wendy O'Shields, Craig Hughes and
14 Towaki Komatsu. Okay, and if anybody is also looking
15 to testify, you can fill out a form. [background
16 comments, pause] Okay. Okay, then, whoever wants to
17 begin. [pause]

18 WENDY O'SHIELDS: Hello, Councilman
19 Levin. [coughs] My name is Wendy O'Shields and I'm
20 testifying as an advocate for the homeless. I
21 support Intro Bill 622. Suggestion: Screen for
22 domestic violence survivors at the DHS homeless
23 service assessment [coughs] shelters during intake
24 process. Immediately refer to New York City Family
25 Justice Centers, and the Mayor's Office to Combat

2 Domestic Violence if DV is reported. Permanent
3 housing for survivors should include themselves and
4 their minor children regardless of the type of
5 shelter they reside. I support also Intro 1443 and
6 there's a law—I mean there's a part of the Callahan
7 Consent Decree that states that every shelter has to
8 have a staff on each shift that's trained in first
9 aid. That doesn't happen. I actually saw one of the
10 staff at Health U.S.A. die because there was nobody
11 on staff, and she had a heart attack and she didn't
12 make it, you know. Intro—I support also Intro Bill
13 1460 [coughs]. The New York Agency Council on
14 Homelessness should include city of New York homeless
15 advocates and DHS Shelter Homes residents. The
16 interagency Council should liaise with DHS shelter
17 homeless residents and affordable housing agencies
18 such as HUD, HPD, HDFC and the like to assist in
19 rapid rehousing. [coughs] Permanent affordable
20 housing is the primary solution to reduce the backlog
21 of shelter homeless residents. Additionally, create
22 a city of New York department for—of homeless
23 services, homeless shelter resident high priority
24 code, possibly H-0 for rehousing—rapid rehousing.
25 Pose it in DHS shelter, homeless resident selection

2 process as high priority for independent living in
3 permanent housing when eligible. H-0 is a high
4 priority code coming before an applicant not residing
5 in an DHS homeless shelter. DHS referrals using the
6 H-0 code for HUD Housing Choice Vouchers, New York
7 Housing Connect, NYCHA, HPD Affordable Housing,
8 Mitchell Lama and the other permanent housing
9 programs shall supersede all applicants. Thank you
10 for hearing my concerns.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
12 for my testimony.

13 WENDY O'SHIELDS: Okay.

14 MALE SPEAKER: Hi. I'm a U.S. Navy
15 Veteran. I also have a binding judgment decision
16 against HRA dated September 15 of 2015--sorry 16, that
17 as issued by OTDA. HRA remains in violation,
18 flagrant violation of that decision. They have
19 repeatedly committed both mail and wire fraud. I
20 can--I can read to you a key part of that decision.
21 Paragraph No. 4 that's on page 3 of that decision
22 reads: "In the even that appellant is found to be
23 eligible for a shortage of possession expensive, the
24 agency is directed to make payments retroactive to
25 the date of request. That was issued by a judge

2 named Joe O'Kello (sp?). Since then, I've had
3 numerous fair hearings, redundant fair hearings that
4 have been entirely pointless because that judge's
5 decision is binding. I talked to Steven Banks face
6 to face on April 11th in Staten Island. There's also
7 with regards to the Office of Civil Justice the bill
8 that was enacted to provide low-income people
9 attorneys or legal counseling. HRA has also be in
10 violation---if you take a look at the express-
11 explicit wording of paragraph number 5. In that
12 bill, it uses the word *ensure*. So, if I just beat a
13 slumlord in Queens in a \$20 million defamation
14 lawsuit, and the first time I asked Steven Banks face
15 to face for legal assistance was on March 1st of last
16 year at the Elk Club. If he told me on April 11th
17 face to face that the legal providers--my request was
18 referred to--expressed to him that there was no merit
19 to provide such assistance. I actually have
20 documents from those same providers stating otherwise
21 that they just didn't have resources. It wasn't an
22 issue of merit. So, the question I guess for you is
23 in your capacity as a lawmaker, as a Council member,
24 is there anything that you can do to intercede on my
25 behalf to essentially compel HRA to comply with this

2 judge's order and to comply with that bill that I was
3 just talking about? And thirdly, to have HRA stop
4 doing business with a company that stole my pay five
5 years ago, and for which I'm still looking to be
6 paid?

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So we can talk, you
8 know, and communicate after the hearing, but we'll—
9 I'm happy to—to have further conversation with you.

10 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you.

11 CRAIG HUGHES: [coughs] Hello, Craig
12 Hughes from the Coalition for Homeless Youth. Thank
13 you Chair Levin for having the hearing today. I'm
14 submitting written testimony. I'm not going to read
15 it word by word, and put you through that or anyone
16 else through that. I'm just going to give some
17 highlights. So, the Coalition for Homeless Youth
18 represents dozens of homeless youth service
19 providers. We've been around for about 40 years.
20 I'm the Policy Analyst over there. While the city
21 has done—done some work on homeless youth issues, I
22 want to hesitate to give the city the pat on its
23 back, which I think the city is very quick to give
24 itself on homeless youth issues. We live in a city
25 that continues to not acknowledge that there is a

2 crisis of youth homelessness, and because it does not
3 acknowledge that crisis does not give the resources
4 that are necessary to help with our- From the last
5 reasonable count we have thousands of homeless youth
6 are on our streets on a given night. So, I'll
7 through a few of the recommendations from the 90-day
8 review, and some responses, but just to start by
9 saying that we have to focus on housing when it comes
10 to youth homelessness just like any other
11 homelessness issue. That seems common sense.

12 Unfortunately, when it comes to homeless youth, it is
13 not. The commissioner's response today, and I very
14 much appreciate your questioning him regarding
15 timeline for youth subsidies. To be frank, it's at
16 best insufficient. At worst it's kicking the can
17 down the road as has happened now for years. We are
18 now almost a full mayoral administration through
19 where youth have had virtually no access out of the
20 shelters, out of the youth shelters. That's just
21 not acceptable. There are, you know, like any
22 program when it comes into play there are going to be
23 kinks that happen, and there's going to be troubles
24 that have to be worked out. To keep pushing the can
25 down the road, and come up with a reason why the

2 subsidy shouldn't be given to youth in DYCD shelters
3 is going to create another problem, which his that
4 some of the kinks that could be worked out if we
5 implemented them right now, are to be—then have to be
6 implemented—going to have to be dealt with in the
7 future. Because any new system engagement between
8 HRA and DYCD is going to have some problems.
9 Additionally, there was a comment by a DYCD official
10 recently that talks between HRA and DYCD on the LINC
11 matter and the subsidy matter have, in fact, stalled
12 because of open pause, because of the—of waiting on
13 other issues to come into fruition around the FEPS
14 settlement and whatnot. Youth need a way out of
15 shelter period, and any way to evade that question is
16 simply that. We just need to help them get out of
17 shelter and into home.

18 Recommendation No. 26 or actually let me—
19 on the youth shelter side with housing, just an
20 important note the youth shelters do not—there's no
21 funding provider for housing specialists in youth
22 shelter. So, this isn't a minor issue, it's a major
23 issue. You've made this issue in past hearings—
24 you've made this point in past hearings of the
25 difference between a case manager and a housing

2 specialist is a wide one. I've worked both
3 positions. I feel very clear the skill set is very-
4 that the skillset is very different. We are going to
5 need and we need now, and we're definitely going to
6 need housing specialists when these subsidies come on
7 line. The City has no plans to put housing
8 specialists in the youth facilities. To be frank,
9 what that means there are hundreds of homeless youth
10 on a given day in shelter that have no specialized
11 access to someone who is an expert in getting them
12 into housing, and there is no city plan to do that.

13 Recommendation No. 26: The 90-day review
14 had to do with streamlining access to DYCD shelter.
15 There are concerns—there have been some concerns
16 about whether or not putting people in DHS to
17 essentially divert youth to youth shelter was going
18 to work. As of now, it seems that the youth—the DHS
19 staff had been trained in DYCD's system. Okay, we're
20 going to—but that's got to be monitored.

21 Unfortunately, DHS' tendency is to divert people from
22 shelter rather than welcome them with open arms, and
23 any diversion effort has to be monitored. We're not
24 clear what a monitoring for that looks like right
25 now. There are a couple of things that DHS can do or

2 the city can do for Recommendation No. 26. Number 1
3 is add more beds for youth in the DHS system. These
4 beds that are in the DHS system of which there's a
5 marginal number work out quite well. The AD one-bed
6 shelter that the City Council—Council Member Torres
7 helped catalyze has so far gotten rave
8 recommendations, and that is an exemplar amongst
9 other exemplars of other shelters—shelter beds that
10 DHS could open with a youth specific focus.
11 Secondly--I'm not going to keep going on too long,
12 but secondly it is expected that when the state
13 budget comes through the city will be given the
14 option to expand youth shelter to age 24 through age
15 24. DYCD has informed us that they do not support
16 that. We hope that the Council does support
17 providing youth specific shelter to young people, and
18 that would mean that the city would have to opt into
19 the state's new position, which is that youth--that a
20 city--the city could opt in to allow the person (sic)
21 to provide youth specific shelter. As of right now,
22 the city does not have plans to do that.

23 Recommendation No. 30: In terms of
24 crisis beds, the city needs to forthrightly be able
25 to deal with the fact that it has not been adequately

2 equipped to open the crisis beds at crisis and
3 transitional beds at the rate at which the Mayor
4 declared that they would be opened. In a FOIL
5 request from December, which I provided the Council
6 in the past we found that the city was really
7 struggling to open crisis beds, and what that means
8 very practically is that you can't—it's very hard to
9 get a young person from the street into a bed. There
10 is no formal mechanism to get a young person into a
11 transitional bed from the street. Transitional beds
12 tend to have higher—higher eligibility criteria, are
13 often population specific and so on. So, the need
14 for crisis beds is significant. Echoing what Josh
15 and Giselle had mentioned from Coalition Legal Aid,
16 we had seen at the youth end that the tech—the city's
17 request to tighten the front door into PATH has had
18 significant impacts. Young families, which make up a
19 significant percentage of the people going into the
20 family shelter system faced this head on, and the
21 city requested to tighten the front door arguably as
22 a way to decrease the DHS census. Probably not the
23 best way to decrease the homeless census by denying
24 people who enter at your front door.

2 In regards to the Home-Stat
3 recommendation, which is Recommendation No. 10,
4 without being too critical, it's worth mentioning
5 that the city did not significantly talk about the
6 hope effort. The city's response when hope comes up
7 is that we're less focused on counting homeless
8 people than we are in serving them. That's a nice
9 way to get around answering a very core question,
10 which is that HOPE is a methodology that is widely
11 discredited. It produces systematic undercounts and
12 for homeless youth it particularly impacts young
13 people who are more likely to be missed in that
14 count. The HOPE methodology needs to be changed.
15 The city's refusal to do that is simply a refusal,
16 Citing that it's a HUD approved methodology doesn't
17 actually say much. It's just a size mechanism. The
18 city could produce a different methodology. As a
19 quick example on that, HUD does accept the youth
20 count numbers each year where young people—where
21 youth providers go into say Taco Bell at 1:00 in the
22 morning, and ask a young person if they are homeless.
23 That number is not included in the public number that
24 the city puts out around HOPE for media reasons, but
25 it is included in the number given to the federal

2 government. The City could change its methodology.
3 It simply chooses not to and, therefore, we have a
4 systematic undercount of homeless people on the
5 street. The final point just around Recommendation
6 11, the Drop-In and Safe Haven beds, there is only
7 one 24-hour youth focuses Drop-In center in New York
8 City. It is a decisive resource, and it is run by
9 the Alley Forney Center. It is an incredible
10 program. It is also LGBTQ specific, and there are
11 many perhaps thousands of young people living on the
12 street who cannot access that Drop-In Center. We are
13 in desperate need of more youth Drop-In Centers that
14 are 24 hours.

15 Finally, on Safe Haven beds, there's not
16 a--there's no coordination between adult outreach
17 teams youth specific homeless outreach teams. What
18 that means very practically is that young people have
19 no access to Safe Haven beds unless they're engaged
20 by an adult outreach team, which is not that likely
21 to happen. So, I've submitted the written testimony.
22 You'll get it--all the details in there, but there are
23 significant concerns, and just that you could be
24 doing a lot more if you chose to for homeless young
25 people in the city. I appreciate your attention and

2 your office's attention to the matters of homeless
3 youth and the chance to testify today. Thanks.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Next,
5 please.

6 JASON CIANCIOFFO: Mr. Chairman,
7 Committee Members in spirit, thank you for the chance
8 to—to have a have a conversation with you today. My
9 name is Jason Cianciotto. I'm the Vice President of
10 Policy, Advocacy and Communications at Harlem United.
11 I also want to thank you for the important lesson
12 that if I am ever under questioning by Council Member
13 Crowley that I need that I need to wear a suit of
14 armor. That is something that I will take to heart.
15 On a more serious and personal note I want to thank
16 you for this focus on homelessness. When I was a
17 teenager I was kicked out by my parents because of my
18 sexual orientation, and couched it for a while until
19 I got on my feet. So, this is an issue that's very
20 important to me as it is to many people. Before
21 jumping to just a quick couple of points in my
22 testimony, I just want to address a couple of things
23 that I had heard for the first time in Commissioner
24 Banks' testimony. He mentioned sort of an effective
25 end to veterans' homelessness. Harlem United just a

2 couple of days ago celebrated their one-year
3 anniversary of our Veterans Housing Initiative on
4 West 95th Street where we house 92 veterans. One of
5 the things—formerly homeless veterans —one of the
6 things that we've learned that I—I want to offer for
7 consideration is that this housing was deemed
8 supportive housing right, but it turns out that the
9 case management and medical needs of many of the
10 veterans that are sent to us are much higher than I
11 think what the city had initially thought. There's a
12 particularly strong need for long-term mental health
13 care as well as concurrent substance use treatment.
14 So one of the things that we have included in our
15 Council discretionary—I'm sorry, not discretionary,
16 Veterans Housing Initiative Funding is to be able to
17 have a nurse on staff, to be able to provide better
18 case management on site. I also appreciated
19 Commissioner Banks echoing what was in the Council's
20 response to the Mayor's Executive Budget around right
21 sizing contracts. Harlem United provides—housed
22 about 750 people in 2016. We have a variety of
23 congregate and scatter site facilities, and like many
24 similar non-profits we're in a position where very
25 often the contracts that we have don't cover all of

2 the expenses it actually takes to administer those
3 contracts. Additionally, even though we have been
4 happy and active to be a part of working with the
5 city to expand the number of congregate facilities
6 that we have, often times we're being asked to front
7 load the full cost of those facilities from anywhere
8 from 6 to 12 months until a contract is executed.
9 Most non-profits don't have a large source of general
10 operating support, and do not have the ability to do
11 that or can't do it as often as it's needed. So, we
12 appreciate anything the Council can do to help to
13 address that. Also, on February 2nd, I was part of a
14 meeting with OMB, DOHMH and HRA regarding a very
15 striking problem that they shared about the city
16 budget, which is a \$14 million projected budget
17 deficit in housing opportunities for people with AIDS
18 funding in the coming fiscal year. This is a result
19 of two things. First, the federal government and the
20 last the legislative cycle updated the HOPWA(sic)
21 Formula so that it no longer is based on commuted
22 AIDS cases, but rather the number of new infections.
23 So, in this case, New York City is in a sense a
24 victim of its own success. We've been fighting and
25 very success in reducing the number of new

2 infections, and as a result, funding is going down,
3 and at that time, the city didn't have an answer for
4 how that \$14 million gap would be filled. Many
5 people who are on HOPWA Housing Assistance are new
6 immigrants, and it is the only form of housing
7 assistance that they can actually get, and given the
8 Federal Administration's war on immigrants, we're
9 really concerned that these immigrants could be left
10 out on the streets. One of the things that came out
11 of that meeting and that we have suggested since then
12 is that there be a whole scale analysis of all HOPWA
13 residents to see how many of them might be eligible
14 for receiving their housing assistance from the
15 recent HASA expansion, and that maybe their-their
16 housing assistance be moved to that. So, that the
17 reduced funding is available for HOPWA could remain
18 in place for those new immigrants who can't get it
19 anywhere else. Regarding my testimony, I know-
20 forgive the scratch out. I have the Intro 1443
21 correct. Then on page 16 if today's agenda it said
22 1433, but I have since confirmed it is 1443. You
23 know, Harlem United is-is very engaged in both the
24 use and training for Naloxone in 2016. We trained
25 over 200 individuals in the use of Naloxone for

2 overdose prevention, and we also heard the same year
3 that over 25 lives were saved directly as a result of
4 people that we have trained. In particular, we're
5 really concerned about the increasing trend of
6 Fentanyl being included in street purchased heroin,
7 which is leading to people overdosing at an even
8 higher rate. So, we have modified our Naloxone
9 intervention training to in particular help people
10 who are active users better understand the potential
11 effects of Fentanyl, that they should inject a small
12 amount first and see how it affects them, and that
13 they should always use it with someone who has a
14 Naloxone kit. So, we are very supportive of DHS
15 further training staff to use Naloxone and are happy
16 to offer more feedback to the Council or DHS on our
17 experience training people.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I think Fentanyl is
19 not consistent through the-throughout like a, you
20 know, a-a single purchase--I heard this on this radio
21 that like a single purchase would--one hit could not
22 contain as much Fentanyl as the next hit. So, you
23 can--even with the testing on a small does, the, you
24 know, people should be aware that it--it--the next one
25 could be a lot stronger.

2 JASON CIANCOTTO: That's a good point.
3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Well, thank you very
5 much for—for all the work that you're doing. I want
6 to thank this panel, and I look forward to continuing
7 to work with all of you on these vitally important
8 issues, and I think again as-as the previous panel,
9 you know, while we're very supportive of what this
10 administration has been doing and, you know, it's a
11 big change from—from the previous administration, and
12 we can all agree on that, I think that there is
13 still, you know, room—always room for improvement
14 and—and role for providers and advocates and those in
15 the field to identify areas that are in need of
16 improvement and—and hold the Administration and the
17 Council accountable for that to happen. I want to
18 thank this panel very much, and seeing no other
19 testimony, I want to thank everybody for your
20 patience here, for your testimony and thoughtful
21 responses, and I want to thank the Administration and
22 my colleagues and with that at 1:00—I'm sorry at 2:05
23 p.m. this hearing is adjourned. [gavel]

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

215

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date June 25, 2017