

Testimony of James Hendon
Commissioner for the New York City
Department of Veterans' Services (DVS)
New York City Council Committee on Veterans
Topic: Veterans Committee Oversight Hearing -
Art & Culture
December 18th, 2024, 1:00 PM

Introduction

Good morning, Chair Holden, committee members, and advocates. My name is James Hendon. I serve as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS). Thank you for allowing us to testify at today's hearing about Arts, Culture, and DVS efforts in support of Veteran artistic initiatives across the city. I am joined today by Ellen Greeley, Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Strategic Partnerships, and Curtis Dorval, Digital Communications Manager. In addition to discussing the Arts and Culture, we look forward to commenting on the following legislative proposals:

- Intro 686: Supporting Veteran Vendors;
- Intro 687: Waiving permit fees for mobile food unit commissaries that reserve space for Veteran Vendors;
- Intro 688: Cure periods for certain violations by Veterans Service Organizations; and
- Int. 959: Providing rental assistance to homeless Veterans.

Background

Since its inception in 2016, DVS has long recognized the benefits of creative expression in promoting recovery, rehabilitation, and wellness within the Military and Veteran community. We define the creative arts as all forms of visual and performance art, written and spoken word, dance and movement, music, and other emerging genres. The creative arts provide Veterans with a powerful platform to process their experiences, tell their stories, and connect with others in meaningful ways. DVS continues to champion initiatives that expand access to creative arts programs, ensuring that all members of the Military and Veteran community have the opportunity to experience the transformative power of art.

The 3 “Needs” for Culture and Arts

Need #1: Diverse Funding Sources

The US Department of Veterans Affairs has stated, "Creative arts therapy improves cognition, semi-motor functions, emotional resilience, and social and coping skills. Creative Arts therapy strives to facilitate Veterans' engagement in the community while providing a sense of achievement and channeling energies into productive forms of behavior."

In keeping with this spirit, DVS sponsors and amplifies arts-related programs for partner organizations and works with them to secure both private and public sources of funding to make these important causes a reality.

DVS has participated in the Public Artists in Residence Program, otherwise known as PAIR. Sponsored by the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, PAIR is a municipal residency program that embeds artists in city government to propose and implement creative solutions to pressing

public challenges. Through the PAIR program (and other philanthropic offerings), DVS has collaborated with artists in the following ways:

- DVS partnered with the Social Design Collective’s Women Veterans Portrait Project, which printed portraits of local women Veterans on paper made from military uniforms.
- Working with Theater of War Productions – an artistic company that uses leading actors to present dramatic readings of seminal plays, followed by guided discussions about the plays – DVS co-curated 65 Theater of War performances across the five boroughs. Productions were held in public libraries, parks, museums, correctional facilities, City Hall, and other locations. Along with PAIR, our partnership with Theater of War was amplified by generous support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.
- DVS collaborated with DE-CRUIT, a Veteran-led acting company, to recruit Veterans to learn Shakespearean verse, write monologue in said verse which addresses personal trauma, and perform in front of an audience of family, friends, community members, and other Veterans at the end of the program. DVS’ collaboration with DE-CRUIT was made possible through funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and later from the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund.

Additionally, DVS is leading efforts to establish a Post-9/11 Veterans Memorial in Queens, honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Global War on Terror. The memorial will be built on the waterfront in the Whitestone neighborhood of Queens, the borough home to the largest number of Post 9/11 Service Members who were killed in action – adjacent to Little Bay Park. DVS, in partnership with Department of Cultural Affairs’ Percent for Art program, is leading a public artist selection process to ensure that the memorial appropriately reflects the bravery and sacrifice of the fallen Service Members from this generation.

Need #2: Self-identification

As many of you know, DVS takes the issue of Veteran self-identification seriously. To reiterate: according to the US Department of Veterans' Affairs FY 2023 Gross Domestic Expenditure Report, 34.3% of Veterans self-identify nationwide, 29.8% self-identify in New York State, and 241.1% self-identify in New York City. It is critical to acknowledge (at this hearing) the nexus between arts and cultural activities and measures taken to motivate our brothers and sisters – and their loved ones – to come out of the shadows. Only when we identify Veterans can we connect them with the support and myriad of services that DVS and its city, state, federal, public, private, and nonprofit partners offer.

DVS' weekly newsletter – which all are encouraged to view and sign up to receive at nyc.gov/vetnewsletter – maintains a portion dedicated specifically to Veterans in the Arts. Through the newsletter, we showcase Veteran artwork and help support and amplify about our artistic community. We create space for Veteran artists to express themselves authentically. We believe that actions as seemingly small as newsletter outreach – with an arts angle – can have an outsized impact on encouraging our Veterans to self-identify.

We have witnessed time and time again that one of the ways to make a crucial first connection in inspiring Veterans to self-identify is through the use of arts and culture. The September 2024 Greater New York City Veteran and Military Family Summit held at Yankee Stadium exists at the intersection between the services that our department provides to the Veteran community and our support for wider cultural activities. We successfully completed the largest standalone event in the history of our agency in the form of the summit (details about this and prior DVS summits can be found at nyc.gov/vetsummit). Fueled by the lure of the New York Yankees – a local cultural and athletic institution – DVS estimates that approximately 460

Veteran community members physically entered Yankee Stadium with roughly 350 of those attendees being individuals who came to receive the benefits, programming and services offered; the remainder were service-delivering personnel from DVS, the New York State Department of Veterans' Services, the VA, Veteran Service Organizations and other Community Based Organizations. The recent Summit did not just help our Veterans; it created a footprint. This footprint drew local, state, and national attention, proving to also be one of our most successful outreach operations to date. All those involved rose awareness about the need for Veterans' services through this gathering. We delivered great benefit to the community, proving just how effective pairing services with a cultural entity such as the New York Yankees can be.

Need #3: Current and continuing programs

In July of 2024, DVS Digital Communications Manager Curtis Dorval, an Air Force Veteran and noted documentary filmmaker (seated with me now), helped to coordinate a national Veterans Art Exhibition at the Salmagundi Club in Manhattan.

In September of 2023, our agency proudly facilitated the visit of The Wall That Heals, a traveling three-quarter-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Hosted in Flushing, Queens, this powerful exhibit provided an opportunity for visitors to honor the sacrifices of Vietnam Veterans (and their loved ones) and reflect on their legacy. The exhibit also included a mobile education center, sharing stories and history to foster understanding and connection within the community.

Lastly, our Evaluation Team is reviewing our Private First Class Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Program proposals. We plan to enter contract negotiations with art-related providers tied to the Dwyer funding opportunity shortly. DVS received 29 proposals, of which

five are categorized as being within the creative arts. We are certain that this funding opportunity will advance the creative arts as a recognized modality for increasing connectivity, building camaraderie, and reducing loneliness among our Veteran and Military family community. With its focus on creative arts, the Dwyer program leverages expressive therapies—such as art, music, writing, and dance—as powerful tools for reducing isolation, catalyzing companionship, and promoting healing. Since its establishment during the 2012-2013 New York State legislative Session, the program has expanded to more than 25 counties throughout New York State, of which New York City is now one. New York localities receiving funds through the program offer a diverse range of intervention offerings aimed at empowering the armed forces-connected community. As we review proposals for the Dwyer Peer Support Program, including several art-related submissions, it is clear that expanding these opportunities will help further validate the creative arts as an essential mode of therapy and community building. By continuing to invest in these programs and exploring innovative approaches, we can ensure that New York City Veterans and their loved ones have access to the resources that they need to thrive.

Legislative Proposals

Regarding the City of New York’s positions on the legislation referenced earlier, we have the following comments:

- **Intro 686 - Supporting Veteran Vendors:** The City supports an additional seat specific to the Veteran Community on the Street Vendor Advisory Board.
- **Intro 687 - Waiving permit fees for mobile food unit commissaries that reserve space for Veteran Vendors:** At this time, we are still receiving feedback from the Street Vendor Community on the impact of this legislation. For that reason, we would like to

engage with the Veteran Street Vending community to further deliberate the legislative impact of this bill.

- **Intro 688 – Cure periods for certain violations by Veterans Service Organizations:**

We appreciate and understand the intent of this legislation and its hope to provide much needed relief to our Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) in New York City. At this time, no such cure periods exist for nonprofit buildings, but we are working closely with the Department of Buildings to ensure that any such violations that occur are handled with care and attention to the conditions the VSOs are managing.

A deeper point: a root issue to DVS is the fact that younger Veterans are not joining Veteran Service Organizations to the extent needed to ensure that those VSOs which own, manage, and maintain their own properties have the bandwidth needed to mitigate challenges when they surface. We are actively working to address this problem.

- **Intro 959 - Providing rental assistance to homeless Veterans:** While we agree with the intent of this bill, it is important to note that the housing subsidy proposed is already available to Veterans experiencing housing insecurity in the form of the City Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement, otherwise known as CityFHEPS. We advise policymakers to align Intro 959 and any legislative proposal on Veterans' housing assistance with the current workflows and existing programs to best serve Veterans experiencing housing insecurity. The goal of this administration is to ensure that Veterans who have fallen on hard times have the tools and support they need, such as CityFHEPS, to secure and maintain permanent housing. To that end, the City continues to work collaboratively to forge a future where no Veteran community member experiences homelessness.

An aside: We ask policymakers to join in our efforts to inspire and motivate Veterans to self-identify as well. We have learned that the Veteran self-identification issue permeates through all sectors of our community, including those experiencing housing insecurity. One tangible step that all City Council Members can take today: please, on the intake forms that you use in you district offices, ask the questions tied to Local Law 37 of 2024. These are questions that the Council, through its leadership, ensure that all New York City client-facing agencies now ask. Those questions are (reading from the Local Law):

- 1. A question about whether such person or any member of their household has served in the armed forces, national guard, or reserves of the United States, provided that responding to such question shall be voluntary; and*
- 2. An option for any person who responds affirmatively to the question to indicate whether such person consents to the Department of Veterans' Services contacting them regarding services and resources for veterans.*

Conclusion

We are grateful for the opportunity afforded to our agency to testify on Arts and Culture within the Veteran Community. We are happy to answer any questions that the Committee may have. Information on the art and community programs spoken about today can be found at nyc.gov/vets under the community tab.

Separately, we encourage all who listen to and read this testimony to learn more about the Department of Veterans' Services' offerings by visiting nyc.gov/vets, calling us at (212) 416-5250, emailing us at connect@veterans.nyc.gov, and following us on social media using the hashtag [@nycveterans](https://twitter.com/nycveterans).

Two final things:

- 1- Organizations that are interested in applying for discretionary funding from the New York City Council – specifically to help Veteran and Military families – are encouraged to visit nyc.gov/vetcouncilfunding. We have materials from the prior fiscal year (and other information) posted on our website – nyc.gov/vetcouncilfunding. As soon as FY 26 materials (and the FY 26 timeline) are made available, we will update what appears. The information that appears now (at nyc.gov/vetcouncilfunding) is instructive for all who are seek funding through the Council discretionary funding process. The deadline to apply for discretionary funding from the Council will occur in mid-February 2025. DVS—through its partnership with the LaGuardia Community College Apex Accelerator Program—is happy to provide technical assistance to applicants. No Veteran-serving organization can say that they lacked the information or assistance to apply for these funds. To all in the foxhole with us on Veteran and Military family issues: please apply.
- 2- Veterans interested in applying to their local community board (community boards are the foundational governing bodies of this city) are encouraged to visit nyc.gov/vetcommunityboard. The deadline to apply to join one’s community board -- in all boroughs except for Staten Island, where there is no deadline (application submissions in Staten Island are rolling) – is mid-February through early March. Countless New York City leaders at the city, state, and federal levels (including many officials in this room) began their journeys by joining their local community boards. Please visit [nyc.gov/vetcommunity board](https://nyc.gov/vetcommunityboard) and apply. Help ensure that our people have a seat at the table.

Thank you.

**TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH BELLO
NY METROVETS**

BEFORE

**THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS COMMITTEE**

Oversight - Connecting Veterans with Arts and Cultural Opportunities

December 18, 2024

Chairman Holden, members of the Veterans Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing on connecting veterans with arts and cultural opportunities.

Over the years, this committee has focused extensively on mental health services for veterans and their families. While I'm disappointed that today's hearing is not a joint hearing with the Cultural Affairs Committee, and that much of the discussion may center on the proposed Intro and Resolutions, I am happy that we are discussing what I consider to be an essential service for veterans.

Life in the military is inherently stressful. This stress isn't always related to combat — it often stems from uncertainty about the future, extended separations from loved ones, the physical demands of service, and the emotional toll of military life. Transitioning back to civilian life presents additional challenges, especially for those coping with PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI), or other mental health issues. Veterans are often conditioned to project strength and conceal vulnerability, making their struggles invisible to those around them.

The arts offer veterans a powerful way to express emotions and experiences that may be difficult to articulate. Each veteran's story is unique, and art provides a medium for sharing those narratives in ways that resonate deeply. Engaging in the arts can reduce PTSD symptoms, improve overall mental health, and enhance cognitive functions like memory and concentration.

For veterans who create or experience art — whether attending a Broadway show, watching or participating in an *Exit 12*, or *Theater of War* performance or even painting, photography, or drawing — art provides veterans an opportunity to reflect on their experiences, gain new perspectives, and envision new possibilities. These programs also allow the public to better understand the realities of military service, fostering empathy and community support. Through these experiences, veterans can find healing, self-discovery, and connection.

Art exhibitions, festivals, and competitions across the country also give veterans platforms to share their stories and connect with others. The *National Veterans Creative Arts Festival*, held annually, exemplifies this by offering a national stage for veterans' artistic expression and community engagement. It is my hope that funding for the Council's FY26's Veterans Initiative will increase for those who provide these services.

Finally, Regarding the proposed Intro's and Resolutions under consideration today, after reviewing and speaking with others, I echo an overall sentiment that they need refinement and in some cases are too vague. Therefore, I personally cannot support these Intro's as they are currently written.

Thank you, councilmembers, for your time and attention. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON VETERANS,
GENERAL WELFARE, AND MENTAL HEALTH, DISABILITIES**

Chair Holden and to honorable members of the committees, thank you for the opportunity to provide testify today. Submitting this testimony is Makedah Salmond, Project Director of the Veterans Assistance Project at the City Bar Justice Center, which is a nonprofit, civil legal aid affiliate of the New York City Bar Association. The Veterans Assistance Project (VAP) provides veterans and their survivors living at or below the poverty line in New York City with pro bono legal assistance on a variety of issues, principally those related to disability benefits claims before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). In recent years, VAP has provided legal assistance to more than 3,000 veterans in New York City.

We applaud the City Council for taking this step to ensure that Veterans are afforded additional benefits they so rightly deserve – which is an investment both in veterans and in our larger community, which veterans have defended and served.

Today, we discuss the proposed bills and the potential positive effects they could have for veterans, as well as point out some shortcomings in the proposed bills. Our experience in assisting veterans at VAP has given us insight into some of their struggles that may be overlooked.

Publishing information about resources and support for veteran Vendor Licenses only online can limit the number of veterans reached and informed about this program, including older veterans and those who may not have consistent access to the internet.

Initiative No. 686 would have a positive impact aiding veterans to secure their vendor licenses. While there are currently over 1000 veterans with vendor licenses, most have been in business for more than 15 years.¹ Because relatively few veterans pursue a vending license every year, more veterans should be encouraged to launch such businesses. However, a shortcoming is that the bill only states that information to aid veterans in becoming licensed and properly running their business will be posted online. While that is helpful, a considerable number of New Yorkers have limited or no access to the internet at all. According to a recent report by the State Comptroller, as of 2023 5.7% of households had no internet access; 14.8% could only access the internet with a cellular phone.²

Because some of the people this proposal is meant to serve lack stable internet access, the proposal should include alternative methods for informing veterans about the opportunity. This could include, for example, posting a public notice of the program in places frequented by veterans. For example, public notice should be placed in local VA facilities. According to the

¹ [Shamier Settle and David Kallick, Immigration Research Initiative, "Street Vendors of New York" , last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

² [Office of the State Deputy Comptroller for the City of New York, "Broadband Availability, Access and Affordability in New York City", December, 11, 2024.](#)



CITY BAR
JUSTICE
CENTER

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, of the 663,437 veterans in the State of New York, 315,425 were enrolled in the VA medical system as of 2023, with 197,007 receiving care at VA facilities.³ State and City funded entities that specifically serve veterans should also be asked to carry the information. Other locations for posting notice could include public libraries and public transportation. Public libraries are likely to be visited in person by those who lack access to reliable internet at home⁴, increasing the likelihood they would learn of the program regardless of their age. Public transportation is relied on by lower income New Yorkers, with 39.7% of New Yorkers below the federal poverty line primarily being subway users and 16.2% being bus users. According to the same 2024 study, which analyzed data from 2019, bus users are more likely to be members of minority groups or work in low-wage service jobs. Currently, over 900,000 New Yorkers are eligible for reduced transit fares under the Fair Fares program due to being below 120% of the federal poverty level.⁵ On average, most street vendors have annual profits just below the annual median income in New York at \$50,000.⁶ Because this program will be most useful to veterans who earn below the median income and are therefore more likely to not have stable internet access, creating more information methods will help a greater number of interested veterans learn about the program than only posting it on the website.

Creating more methods to access the information is also important for veterans who are older. As of 2023, 332,116 veterans in New York state are 65 or older, representing the majority of veterans in the state.⁷ According to Pew Research, older Americans are less likely to regularly use the internet, with only 61% of Americans over the age of 65 owning a smart phone.⁸ Of the New York City vendor population, a significant number are older, with 60% of merchandise vendors and 25% of food vendors being over the age of 55, according to the Immigration Research Initiative.⁹ Additionally, of vendors who are veterans, most are merchandise vendors. Expanding to other communication methods will improve reach with older veterans, who are a significant portion of the veteran population, and will likely have interest in the program.

The Department of Veterans Services should increase the required veteran gross income to 400% of the federal poverty level to be eligible for rental assistance.

At present, to be eligible for New York's rental assistance program, a veteran must not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level. Because housing-insecure veterans may also have disabilities, vulnerable veterans earning more than that level but with still-modest resources – especially accounting for New York's higher cost of living relative to the federal poverty level – could be

³ [National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, State Summary NY FY2023, last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

⁴ [John Horrigan, Pew Research Center, "Libraries 2016", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

⁵ [Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, "Expanding Fair Fares to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level: Mapping equitable access to affordable transit for all", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

⁶ [Shamier Settle and David Kallick, Immigration Research Initiative, "Street Vendors of New York", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

⁷ [National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, State Summary NY FY2023, last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

⁸ [Michelle Faviero, "Share of those 65 and older who are tech users has grown in the past decade", Pew Research Center, January 13, 2022.](#)

⁹ [Shamier Settle and David Kallick, Immigration Research Initiative, "Street Vendors of New York", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)



CITY BAR
JUSTICE
CENTER

locked out of the program. Currently, a 100% disabled veteran with one dependent receives \$45,972 per year, according to Veterans Affairs.¹⁰ This is higher than 200% of the current federal poverty level.¹¹ Approximately 29% of New York City veterans have a disability.¹² Nationally, about 44% of disabled veterans have disability ratings between 70-100%, with 100% being the most common rating of veterans designated as disabled in 2022.¹³ Furthermore, of veterans being newly designated as disabled, there has been a trend towards higher disability classifications in recent years, with nearly 40% of disabled veterans designated in 2018 being rated 70-100% disabled.¹⁴ In recent years, the VA has noted that veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness are also receiving compensation for service-connected disabilities.¹⁵ Due to this trend, disabled veterans may have a source of income that places them above the proposed threshold amount but still face significant difficulties because of their disability that justify them receiving additional assistance.

Additionally, because of the cost of living in the New York Metropolitan Area, the City sets their poverty level approximately 30% higher than the federal level. In 2020, NYC set their baseline poverty rate as \$17,768 while the federal HHS set their rate at \$12,760.¹⁶ Because homeless and housing insecure veterans may still have some income, and because that income does not go as far in the City, the income cut-off should be increased to 400% of the federal poverty rate, which would allow a 100% disabled veteran to be eligible for the program.

Another method for protecting disabled veterans would be to exclude VA benefits from being considered income for the eligibility purposes of the bill. This is not unprecedented, as the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development recently excluded service-connected disability income from being considered income for eligibility purposes for the HUD-VASH housing voucher program.¹⁷

An additional concern is that the housing subsidy requires that an applicant not be a current recipient of housing aid from any other public entity. However, not all housing aid programs are interchangeable. For example, the VA provides grants to charitable partners through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. This provides aid that is like that provided under the city proposal, but has a lower eligibility threshold, and provides for services in addition to rent costs, including utilities, transportation, provides incentives to landlords,

¹⁰ [United States Department of Veterans Affairs, "Current Veterans disability compensation rates," last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

¹¹ [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, "2024 Poverty Guidelines: 48 Contiguous States", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

¹² [NYC Department of Veterans Services, "Data About NYC Veterans", last accessed December 17, 2024.](#)

¹³ [Elizabeth Bass and Heidi Golding, "Income of Working-Age Veterans Receiving Disability Compensation", Congressional Budget Office, last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

¹⁴ [National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, "Statistical Trends: Veterans with a Service-Connected Disability, 1990 to 2018", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

¹⁵ [United States Department of Veterans Affairs, "Unsheltered Homelessness Among Veterans", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

¹⁶ [NYC Office for Economic Opportunity, "NYC Government Poverty Measure 2020," last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

¹⁷ [HUD Public Affairs, "Biden-Harris Administration Expands Access to Housing for Veterans", U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, August 8, 2024.](#)



childcare services, and more.¹⁸ If a veteran in New York City were to be found eligible for both programs, they may be forced to choose between them under the plain wording of the proposal. To prevent such an outcome, the language should be amended to instead offset any rental benefits received from a different source, rather than cut eligibility entirely.

Several New York Metropolitan Area organizations participate in SSVF or other similar programs and provide various forms of support to veteran families, including rental assistance. SSVF funding helped Volunteers of America – Greater New York house over 700 veterans and provided them with other services in 2023, according to their annual report.¹⁹ Services for the Underserved, Inc., another SSVF grantee, states they provided support including rental assistance and eviction prevention; while also aiding in finding employment and accessing healthcare and other services to over 3000 veterans in 2024.²⁰ As previously stated, SSVF funding does not always cover the entire rental payment. Samaritan Daytop Village, a recipient of New York State grants, requires participants to contribute 30% of their income to rent, and in addition to rental assistance veterans receive access to other support services in their community.²¹ Organizations like these use government grants alongside donations to provide their services, and participants in these programs could be forced to forego accessing the resources these organizations provide to maintain eligibility for support from the city under the proposed legislation.

Requiring the New York City Housing Authority to give veterans preference admittance to public housing will ensure New York remains a national leader in ending veteran homelessness

The proposal rightly points out that HUD assistance for veterans is different from giving an admittance preference, finding an area where municipal assistance can step up where federal assistance does not reach. Between 2009 and 2023, over 4,500 homeless veterans in New York state were successful in finding housing, according to HUD.²² New York has been a national leader in getting homeless veterans off the streets and into housing, with a reduction of over 80% in the homeless veteran population since 2009.²³ Giving veterans a preference for admittance into public housing could help end veteran homelessness in New York City. Today we are closer than ever to solving the veteran homelessness problem, and this program will allow New York City to continue to be a national leader in addressing the issue.²⁴

¹⁸ [United States Department of Veterans Affairs, "Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\) Program Guide", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

¹⁹ [Volunteers of America - Greater New York, "Annual Report - Building a Better Future Together", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

²⁰ [Services for the Underserved, "S:US 2024 Annual Impact Report", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

²¹ [Samaritan Daytop Village, "Services for Veterans", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

²² [Tanya de Sousa, et al., "The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report \(AHAR\) to Congress", last visited December 17, 2024.](#)

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Veteran Homelessness Drops", November 11, 2024.](#)

The logo for the City Bar Justice Center, featuring the text "CITY BAR JUSTICE CENTER" in a serif font, centered between two horizontal blue bars.

CITY BAR
JUSTICE
CENTER

From the perspective of the City Bar Justice Center's Veterans Assistance Project, the proposed bills would be positive steps forward in aiding veterans and increasing their access to services. However, veterans may have additional struggles that need to be considered such as access to the internet or circumstances that may unintentionally or unnecessarily disqualify them from aid that they need. For those reasons, the proposed bills should be amended to help veterans avoid falling through the cracks.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our feedback on this important matter as we continue to pursue our shared goal of best serving our nation's veterans.

Sincerely,

By: A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Makedah K. Salmond", written over a horizontal line.

Makedah K. Salmond
City Bar Justice Center
42 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036
(212) 382-6622



COGAP
COAST GUARD ART PROGRAM

December 18, 2024 | New York City Council's Committee on Veterans

Good afternoon.

My name is Karen Loew.

I am the Chair of the Coast Guard Art Program Committee, otherwise known as COGAP, at Salmagundi Club where I am an artist member and serve on the Board of Directors. COGAP has been co-sponsored by Salmagundi Club and the United States Coast Guard since 1981.

The Club is one of the oldest art clubs in the United States and is located in Manhattan at 47 Fifth Avenue in a landmarked brownstone in the Village. Created in 1871 as a 501(c)3 organization, by artists and patrons, its mission is to support one another and to encourage the advancement of art of all kinds. We engage with the public with numerous programs centered around the arts. Support of America's military veterans and Coast Guard has continued to be an important part of the Club's legacy.

The main focus with COGAP is to highlight the eleven missions and extensive training of the Coast Guard through art. The artists are all volunteers, giving of their time, talent and generously donating fine works of art. We immortalize in our paintings and drawings those who serve our country in the United States Coast Guard. Wherever COGAP art is exhibited, it serves to honor our service members and to educate the public.

Locally, the program has the support of the New York Council Navy League for the annual reception and Acceptance Ceremony at Salmagundi Club, which helps widen our public outreach. Coast Guard senior leadership attends this prestigious occasion where they accept the art on behalf of the Coast Guard and the country. Following the exhibition at Salmagundi Club, the art is on view for approximately two months at Federal Hall National Memorial on Wall St. where the steady flow of tourists assures an even wider audience.

COGAP has a national presence with more opportunities for public viewing. Art is often exhibited in maritime museums, in government offices, and, of course, at Coast Guard headquarters in Washington.

I am also very proud of my COGAP Committee's sponsorship of the Military Veterans' Art exhibition at Salmagundi Club. We have brought into the spotlight both visual and performance art, increasing public awareness of the unique and very personal perspective on the impact of military life beyond active duty. Salmagundi Club provides exhibition space and an impressive venue for the reception program.

We are most appreciative of the support for these popular veteran events from the New York City Department of Veterans' Services, The Art Students League of New York, and New York Commandery of the Naval Order of the United States as well as the veterans' community. They all understand that our military veterans deserve to be seen, heard and above all, valued.

All these opportunities for COGAP and military veterans' art on view increase the civilian public's awareness, and hopefully, appreciation of our military, for all they do for all of us.

Thank you,
Karen Loew
COGAP Committee Chair
Salmagundi Club
917-208-2572
KLoew@KLoew.com
<https://salmagundi.org/about/>
<https://www.uscg.mil/Community/Art-Program/>

Testimony to New York City Council Committee on Veterans

Román Baca

Artistic Director, Exit12 Dance Company

December 18, 2024

Subject: Veterans, the Arts, and the Transformative Work of Exit12 Dance Company

Good afternoon, Chair Holden, Members of the New York City Council Committee on Veterans, and guests.

My name is Román Baca, and I am a US Marine Iraq War Veteran and the Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Exit12 Dance Company, a New York City-based nonprofit that uses dance and storytelling to heal veterans, advocate for veterans issues, and educate audiences about the impacts of service. For over 17 years, Exit12 has proudly called New York City home, leveraging the vibrancy and diversity of this city to elevate the voices of active duty military, veterans and their families through the arts.

Our story begins with a simple yet profound realization: the arts have the power to heal and connect. As a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, I returned from Iraq searching for ways to process my experiences and reconnect with my community. I went back to dance, and it became my outlet and my lifeline. Exit12 was born from a desire to share that transformative power with others. According to the VA's Whole Health Program, last year approximately 41% of veterans reported experiencing mental health challenges like PTSD or anxiety. They also found that holistic approaches integrating physical, emotional, and social well-being, like dance and theater, showed promise in improving overall health outcomes.

I have dedicated my career to engaging veterans in both the U.S. and the U.K. in arts and recovery programs, collaborating with esteemed organizations such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, the Royal British Legion, and the U.K. Ministry of Defense. Holding a Master of Fine Arts in this work, I am now pursuing a PhD to further explore how the performing arts profoundly impact and benefit the military community.

Since our founding in 2007, we have:

- Presented over 125 performances across NYC and internationally, including at prestigious venues including Lincoln Center, the Intrepid Museum, the 92nd St. Y, Walter Reed Military Medical Center, and West Point Military Academy that have showcased the personal stories of over 1,000 veterans.
- Engaged over 75,000 audience members with stories that explore themes of war, service, and the human condition.
- Released two short documentaries, filmed in NYC, detailing our impact with the military community that won national awards and attention while highlighting NYC as a place where veterans could heal and connect through the arts.

One of our core missions is community engagement. We conduct workshops where veterans, military families, and civilians come together to create performances and art, fostering mutual understanding and healing. This work is particularly impactful for underserved populations like the military community, offering a safe space for dialogue and self-expression.

One of our participants, U.S. Army Veteran and NYC resident Anthony Roberts said, "How does dance feel? I feel like I look like Joe Cocker after happy hour...but that's okay. I'm still very uncertain, very tense until I'm actually doing it. I've definitely felt a sense of release, peace, coming to terms with what happened through the movement."

The setting of New York City and its unparalleled cultural ecosystem has been essential for our success. It allows us to collaborate with local arts organizations and bring veterans and interested members of the public to gather in community spaces that cultivate and celebrate diversity. New York City is the world's cultural center, and as such we argue it should be an example to the world by offering world-class arts to veterans. However, as costs rise and resources become scarcer, we need continued support to sustain and expand our work.

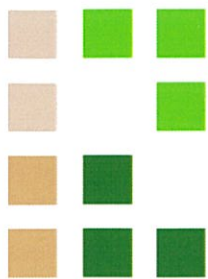
I urge this council to recognize and support the critical role that the arts play in the lives of veterans and their families. Programs like our annual workshop and performance partnering with the Intrepid Museum are vital to organizations like ours, ensuring that we can continue to enrich the cultural fabric of this city while addressing the unique needs of its veteran population.

On behalf of Exit12 Dance Company, I thank you for your time, your attention, and your commitment to fostering a city where art, healing, and community intersect. I invite each of you to attend one of our performances or workshops to witness firsthand the profound impact of this work.

Thank you.

Román Baca
Artistic Director, Exit12 Dance Company
Roman@exit12danceco.org
www.exit12danceco.org





EXIT12

DANCE COMPANY



Photo: C.T. Dorman

EXIT12 DANCE COMPANY
HEALS EDUCATES ADVOCATES

Exit12 investigates the military experience by exploring the service member, the family, the perceived enemy, shared humanity, homecomings, and trauma. Through movement workshops, performances, and presentations, Exit12 heals the veteran and military-connected community, educates civilians, and advocates for veterans' issues.



Photo: Square Inc.

“I watched as a room full of veterans opened up, expressed their horrors and healed themselves in real time. There aren’t many people who have seen veterans act vulnerably without appearing helpless on screen. They really took control of the adversities that had taken place throughout their lives and redefined it in front of us to show the strength in humanity and our inherent sensitivity. It made me appreciate the power of art and dance, especially.”

-Mohammad Gorjestani

Director of the film Exit 12: Moved by War

EXIT12'S WORKSHOPS:

Repurposing movement; transforming trauma.

Exit12's workshops and programs are designed to connect participants through shared movement, transform traumatic experiences into expressive choreographic themes, and inspire them to push beyond their comfort zones.

Exit12's movement workshops engage participants in creative expression and teamwork that improve social connectedness, resilience, and reintegration to civilian life.

Workshop participants have the opportunity to perform their creations either alongside Exit12's professional artists or within informal showings. The performative element stimulates discussions about the impact of war and our mutual responsibility in conflict.

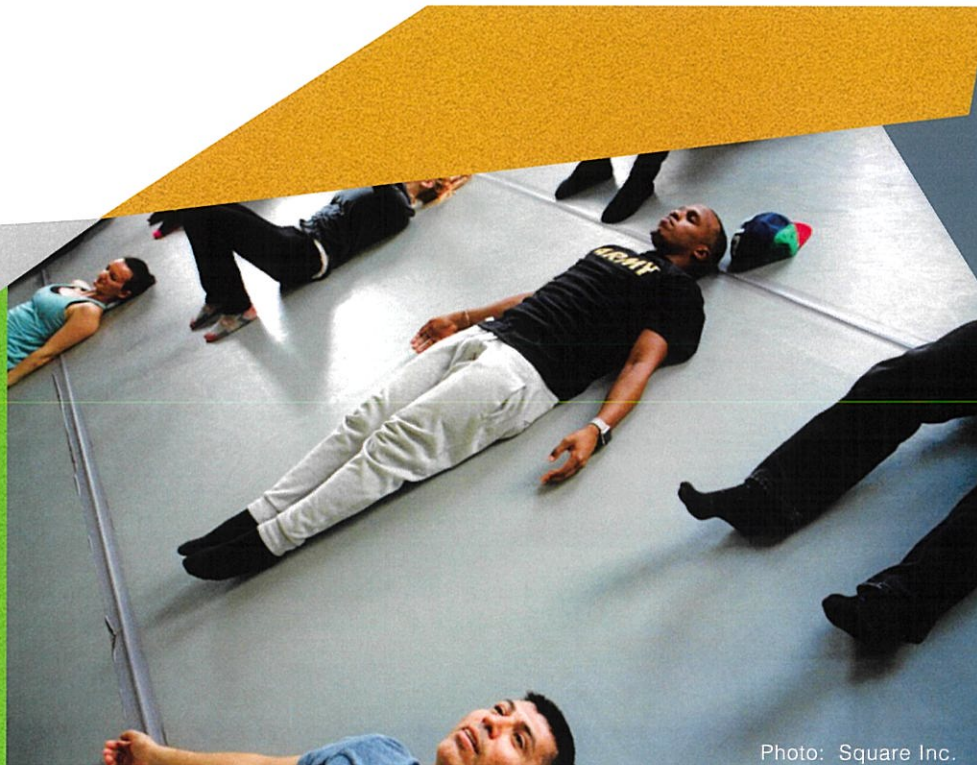


Photo: Square Inc.

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS

“When you had us draw our life maps and then put movement to various significant times, I re-created the movement of my worst nightmare. I was shocked at how much I felt it in my muscles and bones. I was shocked to be under a rocket attack in Viet Nam but on the Intrepid in 2023. But to be surrounded by others also struggling with painful and joyous timelines gave me the safety to continue to repeat that gesture until my heart was still.

About a week ago, my vet counsellor told me she was changing my status from high suicidal risk to low. Exit 12 has played a large part in this change.”

-Everett Cox, US Army, Vietnam War

“I wanted to say how privileged I feel to have been able to participate in the beautiful project. My heart is filled with such joy and I know I really needed that. You gave me a gift I desperately needed.”

-Bridget Dolan, US Navy Veteran

I can't express how truly profound these workshops have been to my healing. For many of us, our pain is hidden yet somehow seen as connected to our service. In this workshop, I feel seen in my totality via expression, transmuting my heavy baggage into wings that give me flight and freedom instead of weighing me down. To do this in community and connection with my fellow participants is extremely meaningful.

-Dãmasa Doyle, US Navy Veteran

One word to sum up my experience with Exit12: “catharsis”.

-Donnie Banks, US Army Veteran

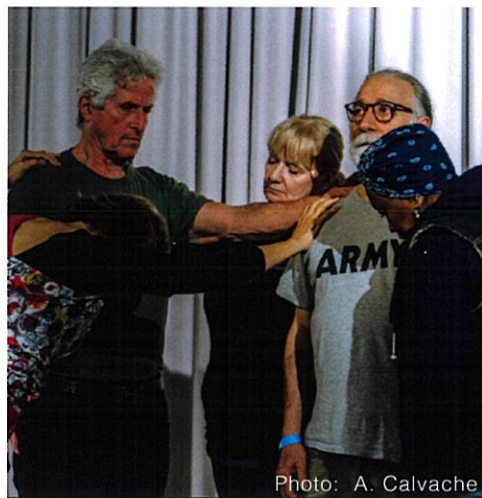


Photo: A. Calvache

PERFORMANCES

Exit12's signature full-length evening performances weave together veteran storytelling with concert dance that takes the audience through the military experience exploring war, humanity, homecoming, and family.

A unique element of Exit12's work is the opportunity for workshop participants to share elements of their stories through live performance. The military-connected professional dancers then act as creative vessels to carry the more challenging participant experiences that still must be communicated to educate the audience and advocate for the veteran community.

SELECT WORKS

Sometimes, Silence

Sometimes, Silence is an autobiographical account of an Army mother's experience watching her sons simultaneously deploy to Afghanistan.

For My Father

For My Father is the brave autobiographical story of a father and sister of a US Army Afghanistan War Veteran who died by suicide.

Conflict(ed)

Conflict(ed) is the exploration of the internal and external conflict service members encounter in a war zone when faced with the choice of following standard operating procedure (SOP) or their own humanity.

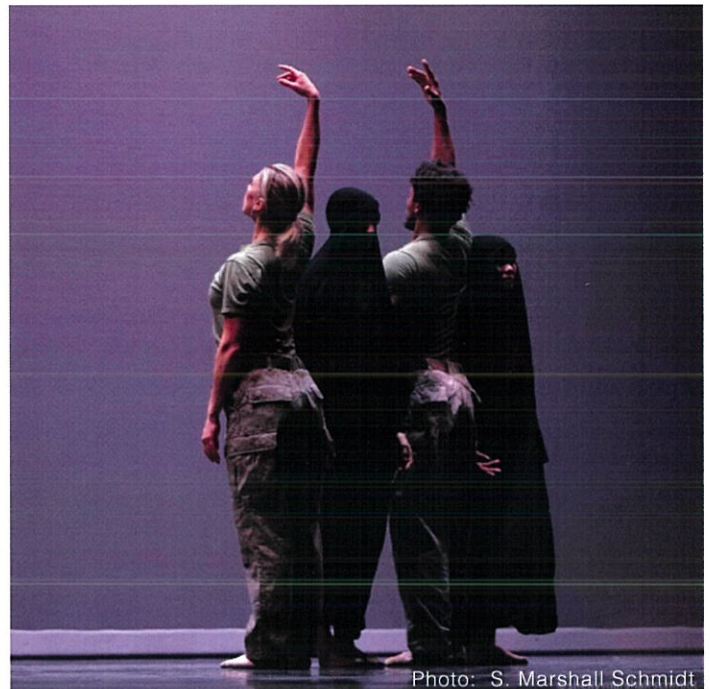


Photo: S. Marshall Schmidt

CONFLICT(ED)

Aggessed/This is War

Set to a US Marine Iraq war veteran's poetic reflections on issues leaving a close band of brothers and returning home after experiencing heavy combat in Iraq.

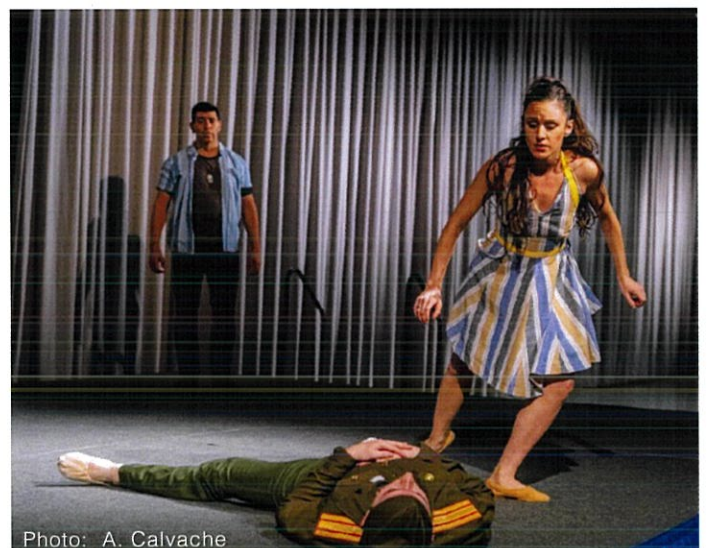


Photo: A. Calvache

FOR MY FATHER

“Exit12’s pieces were very moving,
I felt so many emotions watching.”

-Bridget Dolan,
US Navy Veteran



SOMETIMES, SILENCE

Photo: Frank Morales

“I never understood what my partner was going through, after returning home. I didn’t know what to say, and my partner didn’t share. Now, I think I get it.”

-Military spouse feedback

“**The story was clearly communicated through dance...**I was particularly impressed with the impact made on the young people in the audience.”

-Audience member, SSgt USMC



Photo: JK Photo

LECTURES AND KEYNOTES

Exit12's lectures **communicate the transformative power of art**, inspire with **incredible stories** and educate by connecting contemporary and historical themes with the **military experience**. Exit12 has lectured at universities, secondary schools, corporations, and other organizations.

RECENT TALKS

The Art of Releasing Trauma From the Body, Boston International Trauma Conference, USA 2023

Choreographing War Stories, University of Montana, USA, 2023

The Mind is the Frontline, Panelist, Army@theFringe, Edinburgh, UK, 2021

Horace Mann Middle School, NYC, 2019

Fulbright Association Annual Conference, Selma Jeanne Cohen Lecture, Washington, DC 2019

TEDXTUBerlin, Artist Presenter, Berlin, Germany, 2019

University of Florida Art in Medicine Symposium, Guest Lecturer, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 2018

Mayo Clinic Humanities in Healthcare Symposium, Keynote Speaker, Arizona, 2016

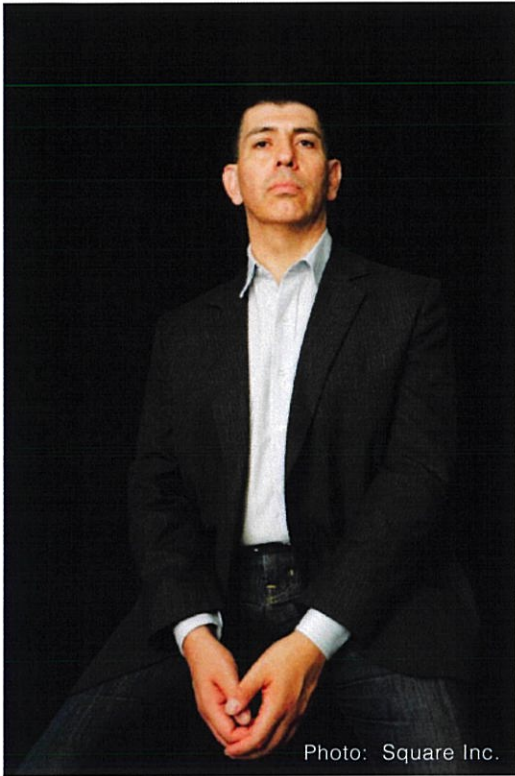
LECTURE TOPICS

Exit12's Lectures can be tailored for each audience and cover the following themes:

- The inspiring story of Exit12.
- Going deliberately, decisively, and energetically into directions that make you afraid.
- Un-training the lasting impact of military training through movement.
- Communicating the impact of war through choreography to release trauma and increase empathy.
- Cultural diplomacy: returning to Iraq as an artist.



Photo: Exit12



ROMAN BACA, PHD (C) MFA

Román Baca has dedicated his life to improving veteran mental health and combatting veteran suicide through the arts.

Román Baca is a classically trained ballet dancer and choreographer. In 2001, recognizing his desire to defend the defenseless, he took a hiatus from dance and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, serving as a machine-gunner and fire-team leader in Fallujah, Iraq during the Iraq War.

After the war, Mr. Baca returned to dance and co-founded Exit12 Dance Company, to investigate his own story, choreographically, in order to better reintegrate to civilian life and heal. He has choreographed and championed dance works that explore the military veteran experience and the impact of war on civilians and families.

“Roman has persevered not only because he wants to tell the stories of those impacted by war, but also because he sees the power of artistic expression to help heal those who have experienced it. And like many other veteran business owners, he feels a responsibility to give back to that community.” -Square Inc.

“I lost four of my Marines who served with me in Fallujah to suicide, as well as countless other military and veteran friends. After we lost Mark in 2011 I knew I had to do more, so with Exit12, I started leading veteran workshops.”

Mr. Baca received his MFA in choreography with merit at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London and is a PhD Candidate at York St. John University researching the power of connecting veterans to the performing arts.



Mr. Baca is the recipient of the 2019 Fulbright Selma Jeane Dance Lecture Award, a 2017-2018 US-UK Fulbright Postgraduate Award to the Trinity Laban Conservatoire in London, a 2018 HillVet Nominee, a 2015 New York State Veterans’ Hall of Fame Inductee, an 2014 Art and Healing Network Awardee, and has served as a fellow with Veterans in Global Leadership, The Mission Continues, and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

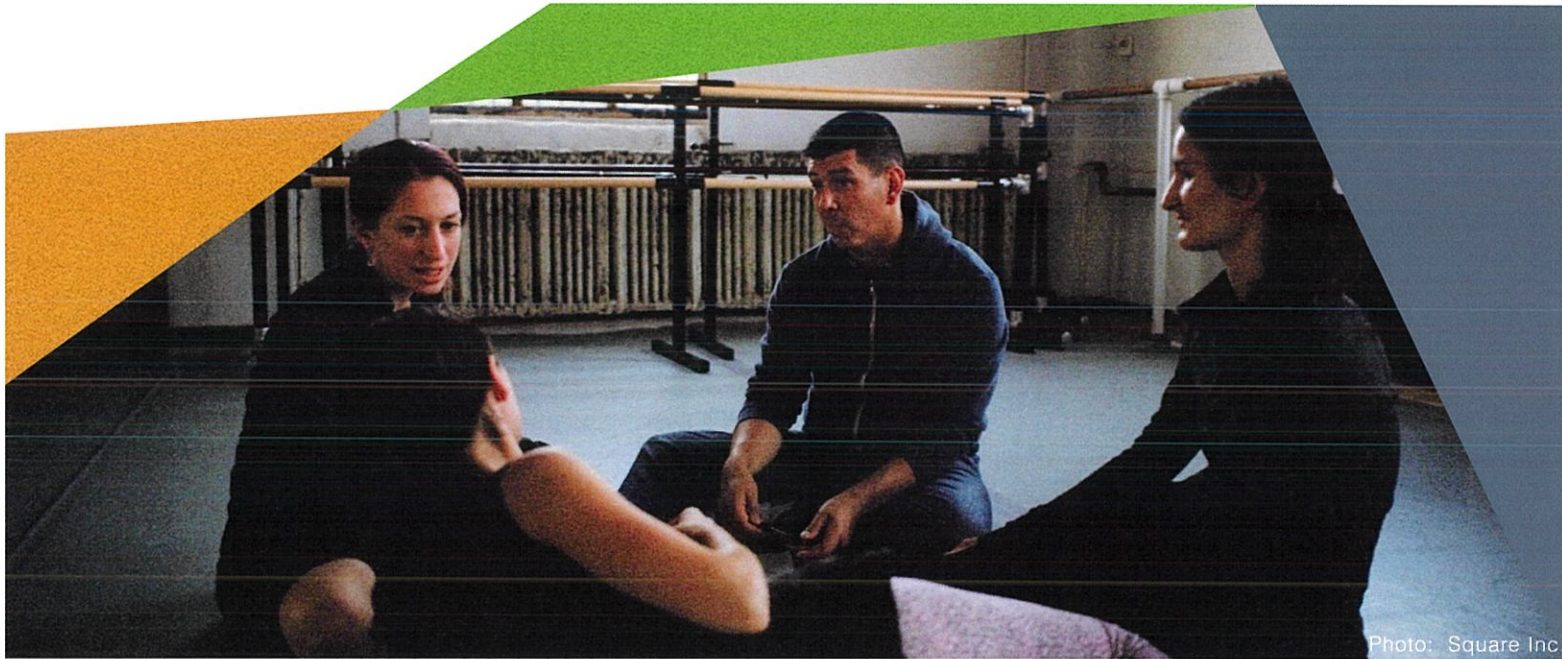


Photo: Square Inc.

OUR TEAM

The company's artistic leadership has strong, personal connections to the military. Improving veteran mental health and combatting veteran suicide is our passion.

ADRIENNE DE LA FUENTE

Executive Director

Adrienne de la Fuente joined Exit12 in 2010 and has been with the company ever since, performing and leading workshops throughout the US and abroad. In addition to her role as company dancer, she became Exit12's Company Manager and Rehearsal Director in 2016, a founding Board Member in 2018, and Executive Director in 2024.

As the daughter of a former Army Captain, Adrienne has developed a greater understanding of the military's influence on her own family and the community where she was raised through her work with Exit12. In 2022, Adrienne lost her cousin, a US Marine Afghanistan War Veteran, to a drug overdose after his return home from his second tour, making Exit12's mission more deeply personal.

Adrienne studied at The Ailey School and Fordham University. She was also Chief Operating Officer at Private Prep, an educational service company headquartered in New York City.

LISA FITZGERALD

Associate Artistic Director

Lisa Fitzgerald co-founded Exit12 Dance Company as a way to help Román process his deployment and heal.

As Associate Artistic Director and dancer, Lisa has contributed to the growth and impact of Exit12 around the world. Ms. Fitzgerald is currently an MA student in Dance Education at the Royal Academy of Dance in London.

Lisa has performed internationally with Exit12, Connecticut Ballet, Ballet Theatre Company, Sarah Berges Dance, and Ballet Ambassadors.

"What would you do if you could do anything in the world?" she asked.

"I'd start a dance company," said Román.

TAYLOR GORDON

Rehearsal Director

Taylor Gordon has been deeply connected to Exit12 since 2010. Her brother was in the Army, deployed twice to Afghanistan, and took his own life in 2016. This fuels her passion for sharing Exit12's mission with veterans and new audiences.

She is currently a Show Supervisor for Step One Dance Company/RWS and Resident Director for Dublin Worldwide Productions as well as on Musical Theater faculty at New York Film Academy.

Taylor has performed at Lincoln Center with The Metropolitan Opera Ballet, The Radio City Christmas Spectacular, The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Jacob's Pillow, Off-Broadway, on national and international tours, TV, and with numerous ballet & contemporary companies.



IMPACT - SINCE 2007 EXIT12 HAS

REACHED OVER

900

**PARTICIPANTS
THROUGH
WORKSHOPS**

REACHED OVER

10k

**VETERANS
THROUGH
PERFORMANCE**

REACHED OVER

77k

**CIVILIANS
THROUGH
PERFORMANCE**

REACHED OVER

1.1M

**PEOPLE THROUGH
PRINT, ONLINE, AND
STREAMING MEDIA**

“When are we doing this again? Can I do this again? I have so many vets who I will bring along with me.”

-Monique Arrucci
US Army Veteran



EXIT12 HAS DONE ALL OF THIS WITH

- NO OPERATING BUDGET
- 4 PASSIONATE MILITARY CONNECTED VOLUNTEERS
- COUNTLESS VETERANS WILLING TO TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT
- A NETWORK OF PARTNERS
- A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

WITH

\$250k

EXIT12 CAN SCALE OUR WORK TO HEAL MORE VETERANS, EDUCATE MORE CIVILIANS, AND ADVOCATE FOR CRITICAL VETERAN ISSUES.



Photo: W. Correa

VETERAN PARTICIPANTS ON THE INTREPID AIRCRAFT CARRIER, 2023



Photo: A. Calvache

FOR MY FATHER



Photo: Exit12

VETERAN PARTICIPANTS PERFORMING WITH EXIT12 ON THE INTREPID, 2018



Photo: F. Morales

VETERAN PARTICIPANTS PERFORMING WITH EXIT12 IN AUSTIN, TX, 2019



Photo: A. Calvache

AUDIENCE DIALOG WITH VETERAN PARTICIPANTS AND ARTISTS, 2019



Photo: Exit12

VETERAN PARTICIPANTS PERFORMING WITH EXIT12 IN WOODSTOCK, NY, 2020



HEALS EDUCATES ADVOCATES

444 Manhattan Ave. #5M
New York, NY 10026

✉ info@exit12danceco.org

🌐 www.exit12danceco.org

f www.facebook.com/Exit12DanceCo

in www.linkedin.com/company/exit12-dance-company

🐦 @exit12danceco

📷 @exit12danceco

**Metropolitan Opera Public Testimony to
New York City Council Committee on Veterans
December 20, 2024
Connecting Veterans with Arts and Cultural Opportunities**

Good afternoon, Chair Holden and Members of the New York City Council Committee on Veterans. My name is Meredith Ernstberger, and I am the Director of Foundation and Government Relations for the Metropolitan Opera Association.

It is a pleasure to submit testimony on behalf of the Metropolitan Opera's outreach to active-duty military personnel and veterans, expanding their access to world-class performances of opera. We appreciate the opportunity to share our ongoing efforts and highlight recent artistic work and public programs that are especially relevant to military personnel.

The Met Opera's mission is to present high-quality opera performances featuring the world's best artists, conductors, directors, musicians and designers. The largest performing arts center in the United States, the Met serves an annual audience of 575,000 and employs a roster of nearly 4,000 people in New York - including over 3,000 New Yorkers. The Met engages more than 80,000 New Yorkers in their homes and neighborhoods and at the Met's Lincoln Center home with extensive in-person and virtual public programming initiatives. The Met's programs also reach far beyond its New York City home; over 11 million people worldwide watch and listen to the Met's media programs.

The Met's total annual investment in public programming tops \$44,000,000.

ENGAGEMENT WITH MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS

The Met is proud to offer active US military personnel and veterans discounted tickets of \$37.50 per ticket – a 77% discount – to nearly 200 performances every year, including additional reduced-price tickets for their friends and family. In gratitude for their service and with conviction that they will be moved by our performances, the Met is committed to supporting service people's access to extraordinary artistic experiences that also reflect and relate to their lives.

This fall the Met had a special opportunity to reach out to military personnel and veterans with the opening opera of the 2024-25 season, *GROUND*. Composed by Jeanine Tesori with a libretto by George Brant, the opera tells the story of Jess, a fighter pilot whose unplanned pregnancy takes her out of the cockpit and lands her in Las Vegas, operating a Reaper drone halfway around the world. Jess struggles to balance life as a wife and mother while fighting to maintain her sanity and moral compass at work. The opera is a compelling commentary on contemporary battlegrounds and the real-life experiences of American military fighters.

Opera star Emily D'Angelo who sang the role of Jess said, "*GROUND* is saying so many things. It is an homage to anyone who has served their country, or anyone who has had a difficult moment in her life."

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING FOR *GROUND*

The Met offered additional access to performances and public programming around its production of *GROUND*, including:

Media Transmissions

- Live transmission of *GROUND* to movie theaters around the globe as part of *The Met: Live in HD* series.

- Complimentary access for students and educators across the country to screenings of GROUNDED at their local theaters as part of *HD Live in Schools*.
- Free transmission of GROUNDED directly into high schools in Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island that participate in *HD Live in Schools*.
- Two performances of *GROUNDED* were broadcast live on Metropolitan Opera Radio the SiriusXM app and streamed live on the Met's website, metopera.org.
- GROUNDED audio was rebroadcast for free over The Robert K. Johnson Foundation–Metropolitan Opera International Radio Network on Saturday, December 14.

In-Person Programs

- **Second Sundays** - Sunday, September 8 at Pioneer Works, 159 Pioneer St, Brooklyn.

Jeanine Tesori and George Brant conducted a conversation around the ethics of drone warfare, the gamification of remote piloting, and the psychological toll of 21st-century warfare, as depicted in their opera *GROUNDED*. Mezzo-soprano Emily D'Angelo and Tesori will also perform excerpts from the opera. *Free*

- **Works & Process at the Guggenheim** - Monday, September 9 at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Participants were treated to highlights from *GROUNDED*. Met General Manager **Peter Gelb** moderated a discussion with the Met Music Director and *GROUNDED* conductor **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**, director **Michael Mayer**, **Jeanine Tesori** and **George Brant**. Mezzo-soprano **Emily D'Angelo**, tenor **Ben Bliss**, and soprano **Kirsten MacKinnon** performed selections from the opera. *Ticketed*

- **History & Innovation Series: Women in the Military** - Friday, September 13 at the Intrepid Museum.

The Intrepid Museum and the Metropolitan Opera teamed up for a behind-the-scenes program exploring *GROUNDED*. A special performance from mezzo-soprano **Emily D'Angelo** opened the evening, followed by a panel discussion hosted by **General Dana Born** and featuring **Lieutenant Colonel Tammy Barlette**, composer **Jeanine Tesori**, and D'Angelo reflecting on how work affects their domestic life, the roles of service to one's country and one's home, and the challenges of balancing service and domestic life. *Free*

- **Grace Under Fire: Moth Stories Inspired by the Met's Grounded** - Monday, September 16 at The Metropolitan Opera.

The Moth Mainstage came to the Met for a night of vibrant true stories. Hosted by comedian **Tara Clancy**, four storytellers including composer **Jeanine Tesori**, former fighter pilot **Rochelle Kimbrell**, professor and author **Tarek El-Ariss**, and Moth storyteller **Michael Fisher**, came together to share tales connected to the opera *GROUNDED*. The evening ended with a special performance from mezzo-soprano **Emily D'Angelo**. The stories are recorded for future episodes of *The Moth Podcast* and *The Moth Radio Hour*. *Free*

- **Fridays Under 40**

The Met's Friday's Under 40 series continues every Friday night with discounted tickets for audiences aged 40 and under. On Friday, September 27, there was a special pre-performance party prior to the performance of GROUNDED. *Ticketed*

THE MET'S REPERTOIRE

Beyond GROUNDED, the Met Opera's vast repertoire offers an extensive variety of stories, characters, and music that explore all facets of our shared human experience. From moving dramas to uplifting comedies, music touches the deepest parts of our audiences' emotions and guides us into a shared humanity that reflects what it truly means to be human. *Grounded* does just that, sparking dialogue around mental health and post-traumatic stress, even while including moments of levity.

As Ms. D'Angelo eloquently states, "*Opera is no stranger to the subject of war. Just because it happened a very long time ago in the standard repertoire, doesn't mean it's any less real than when we are talking about [recent] events. This subject matter is current but also timeless...and the characters are so real. The relationships are so relatable, despite the very specific circumstances.*"

The Met's programs expand access to powerful experiences of music, theater, dance and visual art that come together to create an opera. At the same time, our programming fosters a sense of community and belonging by bringing people from all walks of life to share common human experiences.

THE MET'S LINCOLN CENTER HOME

The Lincoln Center campus, founded in 1956 as "an experiment in cultural democracy," is grounded in cultivating, fostering, and centering the arts within daily life. The Met is proud to share the campus with 11 world-class arts and arts education nonprofits, presenters of emerging and established local and global artists, and civic and arts education partners to community-based organizations. Funding culture brings city-wide economic resiliency and growth, invests in tourism, and lays the foundation for an equitable and educated New York City.

I hope you will be able to join us for a performance and backstage tour of the Opera House. Please look for our invitations. Thank you for your interest and support and for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Metropolitan Opera Association.



The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Testimony for Committee on Veterans
December 18, 2024

Thank you to Speaker Adams, Chair Holden and the Committee on Veterans for the opportunity to submit testimony.

The Met Museum is known for its iconic permanent collection spanning over 5,000 years of artifacts, objects and art from around the world, and its current, must-see exhibits, but the Museum also serves as a unique destination for training programs, educational opportunities for all ages and abilities as well as supporting world class research divisions in preservation, conservation, and archeology. Further, the Met's multi-disciplinary offerings are available both virtually and in-person, and in recent years, brought millions of attendees to over 30,000 events.

Most recently, the Met has created a Community Initiative called Community Wednesdays, in which community groups and new populations to the Museum would be welcomed in for a visit when we would otherwise be closed to the public for artmaking, tours and refreshments. These are held in partnership with the offices of local, state and federal elected officials to reach constituencies. So far, the Met has hosted groups such as senior citizens, foster youth and families, NYCHA neighboring residents, justice-based workers, among others. On December 4, 2024, the Met hosted its second annual Vets Take the Met event. Nearly 300 veterans and their loved ones have participated in this opportunity.

The Met also remains committed to supporting diversity in suppliers and procurement. The Met is proud to partner with Sempe Ride, a veteran owned and operated bus company founded by Fredy Tello, a US Marine and combat veteran, to support public and special programming at the Museum. Please see attached testimony to hear directly from the company and their work with The Met.

The Met thanks the City Council for having this important hearing on oversight and the related legislation that is critical to supporting the well being and livelihoods of those who have served. We look forward to continuing to work with veterans and organizations that support them.

Thank you,

**The Metropolitan
Museum of Art**

1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10028
metmuseum.org



Norah Yahya
Senior Government Affairs Officer



December 10, 2024

I would like to present my short testimony regarding the wonderful business relationship between Sempe Ride and your organization the Metropolitan Museum of Art of NYC which began over two years ago when Ms. Emily Vasquez reached out to us requesting immediate group transportation services for a MET event.

SempeRide was established over a decade ago in 2013 with the main goal of providing the most professional, reliable, and competitively priced ground transportation in the NYC and Tri-State area. The founder, Fredy Tello, a retired U.S. Marine and combat veteran applied the ethos learned during his 23 years military career to project a transportation company inspired by his military service.

We are very proud to serve both the disabled veteran community, disadvantaged and elderly populations from government agencies, medical providers, non-profits, and private clientele alike.

**The Metropolitan
Museum of Art**

1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10028
metmuseum.org

I feel that SempeRide and the MET have made a great connection because our organizations are aligned with the unconditional commitment of providing our communities the access and support that makes possible for great events at the MET such as: Teens take the MET, Seniors take the MET, and veterans take the MET among others.

We are very proud to continue to provide the bus and accessible transportation required in support of the multiple events held at the MET throughout the year. Our motto is to always provide a ride for everyone regardless of any individual's circumstances or limitations. We look forward to continue providing this important service for many years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Fredy Tello
Owner
Sempe Ride



Street
Vendor
Project

**NYC City Council Committee on Veterans
December 18, 2024**

Testimony of Matthew Shapiro, Esq.
Legal Director, Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center

My name is Matthew Shapiro and I am the legal director of the Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center. The Street Vendor Project (SVP) is a membership-based organization of over 3,000 street vendors who work in NYC's public spaces. These include a large community of immigrant vendors as well as native-born and veteran street vendors. We organize vendors to have their voices heard when it comes to policies that affect them, as well as provide legal and small business services to maintain and grow their businesses.

SVP is pleased to support Intro 0686-2024 and Intro 0687-2024. These bills codify support for veteran street vendors, a group that is an important part of New York City's street vending community. The Street Vendor Advisory Board includes stakeholders from across the street vendor and business community, and it makes complete sense to include veteran stakeholders. It should be noted though, that there has already been a veteran street vendor, Cheikh Fall, included on the board since its inception. Nevertheless, codifying this requirement is an important step in formalizing representation of all parts of the vendor community.

Street vendor commissaries that serve veterans are also deserving of support. Waiving the commissary permit fee is a great first step, and the council should think of other opportunities to support commissaries such as grants or low interest loans to pay for repairs, upgrades or other needs. Running a commissary is a difficult business, especially since these commissaries are subject to the current real estate industry and require a large footprint to operate. These small businesses are an integral part of the street vending landscape but are often left out of the conversation on vending. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on these important bills.



Testimony submitted to the NYC Council Committee on Veterans

Oversight Hearing: Connecting Veterans with Arts and Cultural Opportunities

December 18th, 2024

Introduction and Thanks: My name is Eric Lee, and I am the Director of Public Policy for Volunteers of America- Greater New York (VOA-GNY). We are a local affiliate of the national organization, Volunteers of America, Inc (VOA). I would like to thank Chair Holden and members of the Committee on Veterans for the opportunity to testify today.

About Us: VOA-GNY is an anti-poverty organization that aims to end homelessness in Greater New York through housing, health and wealth building services. We are one of the region's largest human service providers, impacting more than 12,000 adults and children annually through 70+ programs in New York City, Northern New Jersey, and Westchester. We are also an active nonprofit developer of supportive and affordable housing, with a robust portfolio of permanent supportive housing, affordable and senior housing properties—with more in the pipeline.

Background: Volunteers of America has provided direct services to veterans since World War I. VOA-GNY carries on this legacy by offering a continuum of care to support New York City's veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, serving 750 veterans every year. In addition to providing acute crisis intervention, counseling, financial assistance and housing placement services to veterans in the community, we are one of the largest providers of supportive housing for veterans in New York City, Northern New Jersey, and Westchester County.

Our Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) community-based outreach program identifies low-income veteran households and connects them with a range of supportive services to promote housing stability and prevent homelessness.

Thank you, Chair Holden, Speaker Adams, members of the Veterans Committee and the full Council, for your unwavering leadership and commitment to supporting veterans who served our country and the need for expanded access to rental assistance for them.

[Int 959](#) –

VOA-GNY appreciates the Council's continued leadership and commitment to supporting veterans who served our country, and we support Int. 959 which will expand access to rental assistance to more veterans experiencing the trauma of homelessness.



A significant number of veterans who experience homelessness struggle because they do not qualify for Federally funded SSVF services or rental assistance through HUD-VASH due to their discharge status or length of service or branch in which they served. In order to ensure that this legislation is as effective as possible and can assist veterans who served in the National Guard who were not called up to active duty, **we recommend changing the definition⁷⁹ for veteran to mirror the CityFHEPS rule, as “a person who has served in the armed forces of the United States.”**

We applaud the idea of having the NYC Department of Veterans Services’ (DVS) administer the voucher to ensure a no-wrong-door-approach for rental assistance. While veterans experiencing homelessness can qualify for New York City’s CityFHEPS rental assistance voucher, they must either reside in a DHS or HRA shelter or receiving services through a DHS-contracted street outreach provider to access the voucher. People should be able to receive services through programs where they feel the most comfortable and familiar including programs specialized to their needs such as veterans. **To ensure veterans are supported seamlessly across veterans’ programs, we recommend SSVF programs be able to make direct referrals to the program, as some veterans who may not qualify for SSVF rental assistance could benefit from this vital resource.**

To ensure the program is as effective as possible to help our veterans, we recommend removing the proof of residence requirement which may be a barrier to services. People experiencing unsheltered homelessness can see important documents and identification lost or discarded due to “street sweeps” and may not be the best personal historians to recount a complete housing history. Replacing documents and verifying fragmented address histories takes time and prolongs the experience of homelessness for service members.

To ensure rehoused veterans can earn enough to be self-sufficient, we recommend increasing the income limits for discontinuance of the voucher to mirror CityFHEPS rental assistance set at 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The proposed limit of 200% of the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL) is exceedingly challenging, especially for smaller sized households who can easily exceed the limit with just a little bit of overtime which may not be consistent enough to sustain housing without aid in the long run. Minimum-wage earners who pick up an extra few shifts or receive a small wage increase could see their housing jeopardized without earning enough to afford housing and will have to walk an income tight-rope to avoid losing their voucher. By raising the limit to 80% AMI, veterans will be able to grow their income and become more financially independent and able to afford the cost of housing before stepping off the voucher program.



Closing:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. If you have any questions, please contact me at elee@voa-gny.org.

Respectfully submitted by Eric Lee, Director of Public Policy, Volunteers of America- Greater New York.

Testimony for December 18, 2024 before The Committee for Veterans

Regarding Introduction No 686: A local law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York in relation to supporting veterans.

In order to achieve a fair environment for veterans to thrive, any amendment should include provisions to educate each and every member of the board.

During their tenure as member of the Street Vendor Advisory Board, each member must spend no less than 1 day a month in the field visiting and working with each of the various types of vendors with the goal of gathering information to improve conditions for street vendors.

To remain on the board all said members must spend such training days with each of the following types of vendors:

1. General Vendors who sell general merchandise (veterans and non-veterans) and
2. Mobil food vendors (veterans and non-veterans) and
3. Mobil Food Vendors who are food cart permittees (Veterans and non-veterans) and
4. Disabled-Veteran vendors who sell general merchandise with Specialized Vending License and
5. Disabled-Veteran vendors who hold specialized food vending licenses to sell food from mobil food vending units who must adhere to the Specialized Vending License prohibitions in GBL 35-a and
6. Disabled-Veteran vendors who hold full-term citywide mobil food vending permits with the NYS Hawkers License who are NOT Specialized Vending Licensees (aka Legacy Veterans or Holy Grail Permittees) and
7. Vendors of First Amendment matter.

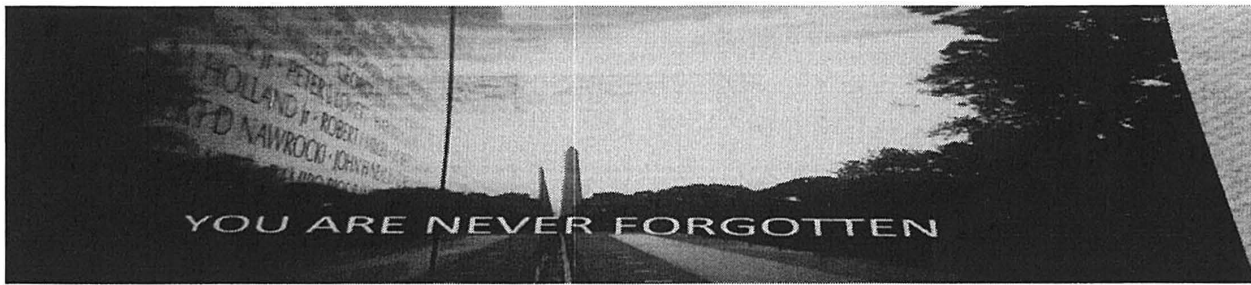
A training curriculum shall be created to enhance such training days to insure that each member is fully familiar with the city, state and administrative regulations effect ordinary vendors, Specialized Vending Licensees and Legacy food vendors with NYS Hawkers License.

All board members must show proficieny with The New York State Preemption Doctrine, NYS GBL 35, GBL 32 and all judicial interpretations of such Statutes from NYS Supreme Court and the Appellate Division. See Kaswan v. Aponte and its Progeny.

All board members must show proficiency with The Americans with Disabilities Act, the NYS Executive Law 296, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and awareness of how these laws provide rights for disabled-veterans who are a protected class under city state and federal law.

Submitted: December 18, 2024

Armando Crescenzi



Frederick C Gasior

[REDACTED] NY 11714

Chapter126nyc@gmail.com [REDACTED]

Ladies, Gentlemen, City Council members, Distinguished Veteran Representatives and Guest:

My name is Fred Gasior, I am a Vietnam Combat Veteran. President of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 126, Manhattan, NY. Also, President of VVA126 Foundation NYC.

I read the proposed legislated bills and applaud the actions taken by the city council and Committee on Veterans. Great start and certainly a small step that might Pacify a few Veterans in the community. ***But not me, this is but a drop in the bucket and a smoke screen by the city council to cover up lack of support for New York City veterans. The actions and lack of support by the administration and city council towards the veteran community has been DISGRACEFUL AND DISHONORABLE.***

New York city residents, Men and Woman, have for decades answered the call of their country. They signed up, volunteered, some were drafted, they served, they fought, and some gave their last breath of life. They received neither the country's glory, nor their country or city's compassion. They want nothing but to return to a safe place and a productive environment. The city of New York has FORSAKEN AND ABANDONED the American Warriors (VETERANS) those city residents who pay taxes, the citizens of our great city and country. It has replaced them (the Veterans) with and embraced the world's illegal migrants.

Two serious issues face veterans today in New York City.

Issue one: Veteran that are homeless, cannot find shelter, food, or clothing.

Over 175,000 illegal migrants have been welcomed by the city council and the city administration.

It has been said that the city is spending north of \$1.98 billion on housing.

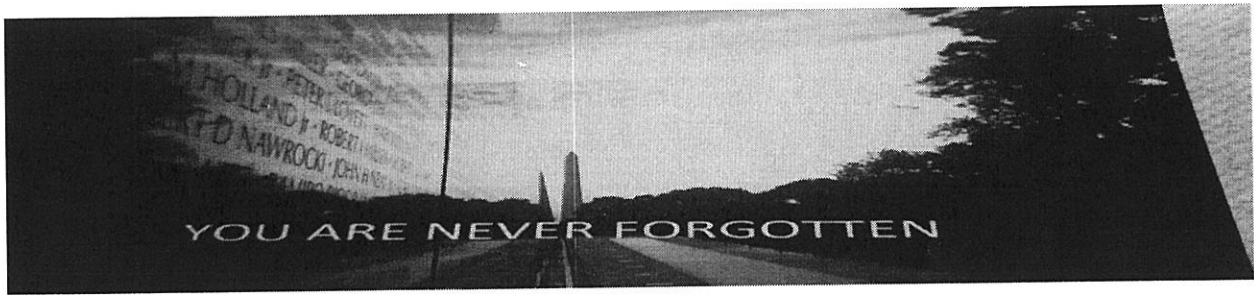
2.0 billion on services extras, supplies clothing cell phones entertainment, visa, and master cards.

\$500 million on food and medical cost

\$500 million plus to administer and maintain these programs.

Today December 18, 2024, the cost is close to five billion dollars.

Cost per day of one migrant \$388.00



Now please tell me about all the money spent, the great programs the city council has enacted to help Veterans. All the future money and plans they have allocated to veterans' programs for shelters, food, and clothing for the homeless????

How much per day per veteran\$\$\$\$ are they spending????

\$388?? \$300?? 100?? Or more like .50 cents a day.

The city council should be ashamed and embarrassed. *But they are not.*

Because some elected officials just do not give a dam about Veterans.

Issue two:

Veterans that need mental health treatments to heal the unseen wounds of war

Veterans' mental health and the Alleviation of Veterans suicide which is at epidemic levels. Over twenty-two veterans per day take their lives. *Their pain mentally overcomes the rationality of reason.* Actions can be taken to STOP VETERANS SUICIDE.

What is the city doing? How much are they spending to support Veteran groups that reach out and offer programs and treatments for their fellow veterans? These groups are the frontline the safe haven that troubled veterans need.

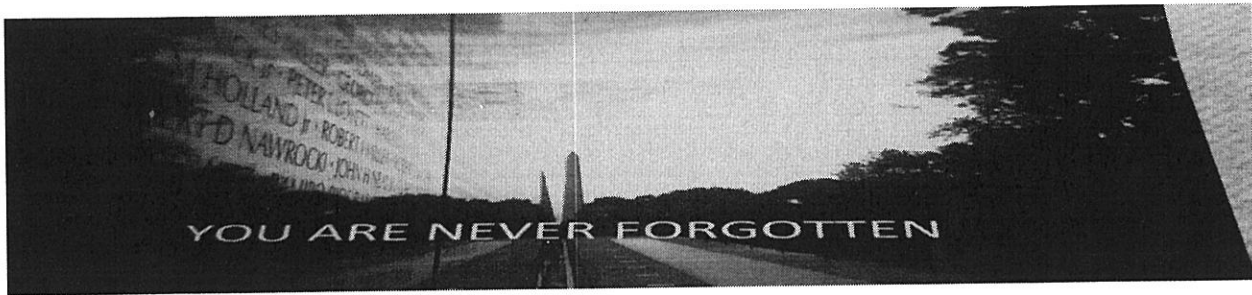
Why has the city Council, whose members are of an educated society, compassionate members of humanity, religious subscribers, and WHY do they do nothing to help those who need the help most?

Veteran's organizations, in the city of New York, like United War Veterans council, Operation Warrior Sheild, Vietnam Veterans of America chapter 126 and their foundation and many many others accredit groups are the safe haven for troubled veterans. These provide the avenue and sources for proven therapies and treatments. Veterans of all decades all races, colors, creeds religions and genders are welcomed. These front-line organizations need funding, the city could help.

As are esteemed Mayor has often said "Show me the Money."

Yes Mr. Mayor, show the Veterans community the money!

Mr. Mayor, where is the money?



To date Veterans have seem but pennies, lots of quibbling about statistics and the smoke screen of broken promises to the Veteran community.

(Small point and current issue.)

The city of New York gives each Illegal Migrant a city ID card and a master or visa card.

But some Veterans cannot get a City ID card with the word Veteran affixed.

Our New York City Korean American Vietnam Veterans cannot get a city ID card. What is the problem?? Why?? The complex rules, lack of money, or just not caring to help Veterans??? another smoke screen.

The city must help answer the calls of our veterans, our CITIZENS. Men and Women of all decades need to readjust to cope mentally with the unseen scars of war.

Veterans need a safe place to call their home, shelter, food, and clothing.

In closing I APOLOGIZE for my combative, aggressive attitude. But I am angry and pissed off as are many other veterans,

Enough is enough.

It is time to stand up and defend and help those who have stood and safeguarded our freedoms and liberty.

I ask that the city council uphold their oath to the Constitution of the United States, the State of NY, the Citizens, and Residents of the city of New York and discharge the duties that you have been elected, appointed, or hired to execute.

NEW YORK. NEW YORK VETERANS AND CITIZENS COME FIRST,

Thank you.

Please see attached comments on proposed bills.

Int. No. 0686-2024: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to supporting Veteran vendors **PROVIDED THAT THERE IS NOTHING NEGATIVE IN THIS BILL RELATIVE TO VETERAN VENDOR STATUS, I SUPPORT IT. IT APPEARS TO BE DESIGNED TO GIVE VETERANS A VOICE ON THE STREET VENDOR ADVISORY BOARD AND PROVIDE INFORMATION TO VETERAN VENDORS.**

Int. No. 0687-2024: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to waiving permit fees for mobile food unit commissaries that reserve space for Veteran vendors. **I DON'T OBJECT TO THIS BILL BUT AND WILL SUPPORT IT. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS TO ME THAT THE ANNUAL PERMIT FEE OF \$200 IS LOW RELATIVE TO THE COST OF ESTABLISHING AND RUNNING A MOBILE FOOD UNIT. FOR THAT REASON, IT IS UNCLEAR THAT THIS FEE IS DETERING POTENTIAL VETERAN VENDORS OR DRIVING EXISTING VETERAN VENDORS OUT OF BUSINESS.**

Int. No. 0688-2024: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to cure periods for certain violations by Veterans service organizations: **I AM NOT IN FAVOR OF THE PRESENT FORM OF THIS BILL. EVEN THOUGH IT DOES NOT APPLY TO VIOLATIONS THAT AFFECT HEALTH AND SAFETY, THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT THAT GOOD CAUSE BE SHOWN FOR A DELAY OR NO FINE BEING IMPOSED. VIOLATIONS SHOULD BE CURED REGARDLESS OF THE NATURE OF THE OFFENSE UNLESS EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES CAN BE SHOWN. ALSO, AN EXTENDED PERIOD FOR CURING VIOLATIONS MAY WELL NEGATIVELY AFFECT OTHERS IN NYC WHOSE INTERESTS SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED.**

Int. No. 0959-2024: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to providing rental assistance to homeless Veterans. **WHILE THIS WOULD BENEFIT IMPROVERISHED VETERANS WHICH I SUPPORT, I BELIEVE THAT, BASED UPON THE FACT THAT RESIDENTS APPEAR TO REMAIN IN SUBSIDIZED EVEN WHEN THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVE, THAT ANY SUCH EXEMPTION SHOULD HAVE AN UPPER LIMIT BASED UPON THE INCOME/ASSETS OF THE VETERAN. ALSO, IT SHOULD ONLY APPLY TO HONORABLY DISCHARGED VETERANS.**

Res. No. 0018-2024: Resolution calling on the New York City Department of Education to observe Veterans Day the Friday before November 11th if it falls on a Saturday and the Monday after the 11th if it falls on a Sunday **IT LOOKS LIKE DOE WANTS ANOTHER DAY OFF FROM SCHOOL WHEN VETERANS DAY IS ON A WEEKEND. WHAT IS THE POINT OF DOING THIS NOW? VETERANS DAY HAS BEEN CELEBRATED ON NOV 11 FOR A LONG TIME. I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS PROPOSED CHANGE FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF VETERANS.**

Res. No. 0311-2024: Resolution calling on the New York State Assembly to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.2028-A/A.2965-A, to establish a property tax exemption for Veterans with a 100 percent service-connected disability. **THIS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO HONORABLY DISCHARGED VETERANS.**

Res. No. 0465-2024: Resolution calling upon the New York City Housing Authority to include an admission preference for public housing in its next proposed agency plan for all Veterans of the U.S. military: **AS A MATTER OF POLICY, I AM GENERALLY NOT IN FAVOR OF PREFERENCES. PERSONS ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC HOUSING MAY HAVE A VARIETY OF PRESSING REASONS WHICH MIGHT BE JUST AS WORTHY OF A PREFERENCE AS VETERANS. GIVING VETERANS SUCH A PREFERENCE REGARDLESS OF THE SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF THAT VETERAN (OTHER THAN BEING ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC HOUSING) COULD CREATE RESENTMENT AND PROBLEMS IN ITS ADMINISTRATION. IF SUCH A PREFERENCE IS TO BE APPLIED, HOWEVER, IT SHOULD ONLY BE APPLIED TO HONORABLY DISCHARGED VETERANS**

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/19/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gene DeFrancis

Address: _____

I represent: American Legion

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12-18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Walter Wells

Address: _____

I represent: Veterans First

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/18/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Fredrick P. Casio

Address: _____

I represent: VVA 126-

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Matos

Address: _____

I represent: American Legion Post 917

Address: N/A

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0959 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/19/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: COCO CULHANE

Address: _____

I represent: VETERAN ADVOCACY PROJECT

Address: 1 Liberty Place 10006

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/18/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ronald Pan De Lu

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12-18-24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOE BELLO

Address: NS METRO VETS

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Timothy Pena

Address: 257 W. 29th St

I represent: Veterans Justice Project

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/18/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Brown Tefer

Address: _____

I represent: Jamaica NY 11436
Race of Sharon Enterprises

Address: 43 Madison Street 3F

Brooklyn N.Y. 11238
Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 2686 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 12/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GEORGE C SMY/ETON DVMY

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 2772 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 12/18/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROMAN BACA

Address: 444 Manhattan Ave SM, NY, NY 10026

I represent: EXIT 12 DANCE Co.

Address: same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Hendon

Address: _____

I represent: DVS Commissioner

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ellen Greeley

Address: _____

I represent: Associate Commissioner - DVS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0959-2024 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Roger Walker

Address: [Redacted] Richmond Hill NY

I represent: SAMARITAN Daytop Village

Address: 138-02 Queens Blvd. Briarwood NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/18/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Fredrick Hart

Address: PO Box 280131 Queens Village NY 11429

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/18/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KAREN J. LOEW

Address: [REDACTED] NY NY 10033

I represent: SALMAGUND-CLUB/COAST GUARD PROGRAM

Address: 47 FIFTH AVE, NEW YORK, NY 10003

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 959 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC LEE

Address: [REDACTED] RIdgewood, NY 11385

I represent: Volunteers of America - Greater New York

Address: 135 West 50th St NY NY 10020

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: Dec 19, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Armando A. Tesouro

Address: _____ Bx 101

I represent: Prof Veterans First

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Curtis Darval

Address: _____

I represent: DVS

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms