

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

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March 11, 2013
Start: 1:10 p.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: Mathieu Eugene
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Fernando Cabrera
Daniel Dromm
Lewis Fidler
Vincent Gentile
David Greenfield
Donovan Richards
Sara Gonzalez

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

Terrence Holliday
Commissioner
Mayor's Office and Veteran Affairs

Jamal Offman

Wesley Poriotis
Veterans Across America

Ms. Lanella

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good

afternoon. I'm Council Member Mathieu Eugene. I'm the Chair of the Council Committee on Veterans. Today we will hear three bills that will help veterans in New York City find permanent and rewarding jobs. On Friday, the federal government announced that the national unemployment rate was the lowest it has been in four years, yet for veterans, the recovery is not happening quickly enough. While the unemployment rate has dropped in the past year, unemployment among recent veterans has increased to over 9%. The unemployment rate for veterans aged 19 to 24 is over 26%.

Veterans are trained leaders and loyal team members. They can perform their duties under intense pressure. They are diligent and resourceful. In short, veterans are ideal employees for almost every industry. This legislation will help veterans transition back to employment more quickly by allowing military service to count toward a trade licensing requirement and require - - to modernize their web site and help connect veterans to private and city

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jobs.

The first - - considered intro we're hearing today is sponsored by Council Member Sara Gonzalez and this speaker, and this bill will amend a provision of the New York City law to allow veterans from the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Gulf War to count some of their deployment toward trade certain licensing requirements if they worked that trade for at least one year before the war. Veterans of World War II, Korean and Vietnam were able to take advantage of this law, but it has not been updated since 1970. This bill will fix the need to constantly update the law, and would ensure that veterans tied in their career in a trade can go and serve their country without completely interrupting their progress toward a license.

The second - - consider will up to date, sponsored by Council Member Ruben Wills and this speaker, would allow veterans to use whatever military service to count as experience toward certain license requirements. If your work as a plumber or electrician was good enough US Armed Forces, it should be good enough for New York

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2 City. Many of the trade licenses issued by the
3 city requirement that say where you needed to get
4 your experience, leaving some veterans that train
5 and work on bases of the United States and
6 overseas in - - . With this bill, veterans won't
7 have to repeat experience in New York City to
8 quality for a license.

9 Finally, for proposed intro 945
10 that I sponsor, 945A, would make more of our
11 website a one stop shop for jobs and resources for
12 veterans. Under the bill, more of our site would
13 have to include the veterans job bank, developed
14 by Google, and the White House, and make sure all
15 city government jobs are uploaded. Mobile site
16 would also have to feature a guide to city civil
17 service positions by military occupation and links
18 to a number of career resources, including
19 military skilled translators, and guides to
20 resources available through the state and federal
21 government.

22 We want the veterans community in
23 New York City to know that we take their needs
24 very seriously, and that this is a time--the time
25 to talk is over. We are here to take action, and

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2 we hope that this bill is only the beginning, and
3 that this committee can continue working toward
4 improving the lives of veterans and repaying the
5 debt we owe everyone who chooses to serve.

6 At this time, I want to acknowledge
7 that we have been joined by Council Member Sara
8 Gonzalez, and also Council Member Wills, and I
9 want to take the opportunity to thank also Council
10 Member Gonzalez and Council Member Wills for
11 sponsoring those two bills. We all know that
12 veterans are so important. They made the
13 sacrifices of their lives. They made the utmost
14 sacrifice to serve our country. We owe them a
15 good deal of gratitude, and it is very important
16 that we do everything possible from the city, from
17 the state and from the federal government to give
18 them back part of what they have done, part of
19 what they have given to our nation. And I want to
20 take the opportunity also to thank all of you for
21 being here, all the advocates, all the
22 organizations serving veterans, and especially
23 Commissioner, thank you very much for coming and
24 the other members of the party, thank you very
25 much.

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2 And I want to take the opportunity
3 also to thank my colleagues, and also all those
4 who have worked hard to make possible that we can
5 be here today to vote this very important
6 legislation. Now I want to turn it over to
7 Council Member Gonzalez.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Thank
9 you, Chair, and welcome everyone. Thank you,
10 Commissioner, for being here to testify and to
11 listen to what we're doing this special day
12 because I have to say that there are bills, and
13 there are bills, but this is a bill that I
14 strongly am honored to be able to lead and to be a
15 part of. My father who passed away, was a veteran
16 of World War II, and my husband is a veteran. So
17 for me and my family, it means that we're working
18 toward further opportunity for veterans.

19 People who go out to fight for us,
20 that protect our country, deserve the best, and we
21 need to continue to give them the tools that are
22 going to make that viable when they return, and it
23 will give them continuity. It will increase
24 economic development in our communities because
25 these folks will have the opportunity to have the

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2 training that they've had before, to continue it,
3 and now to be grandfathered in. So I love this
4 bill. I think it's a bill that serves the city
5 and serves our veterans, and I'm very proud to be
6 the lead sponsor of it, and I thank you, Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you,
8 Council Member Gonzalez. Council Member Wills?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Good
10 afternoon. You know, when I was younger, I
11 remember stories of my grandfather, and he used to
12 tell us about being in the World War, and those
13 stories had a profound and positive impact on
14 everyone in my family, so from there, I've had
15 uncles and cousins that have served in every war
16 we've been in from the Vietnam, the Korean War,
17 Afghanistan and Iraq. As a youngster, I started
18 to develop a great respect for these dedicated men
19 for our country. These outstanding individuals
20 served our nation and are facing difficulty
21 finding employment when they return home.

22 I believe it is time to recognize
23 the job skills they have developed in the military
24 and acknowledge that they can be used to
25 transition into not only long-term employment, but

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2 careers here at home. It seems many of our local
3 businesses still do not realize that our soldiers,
4 who are qualified in a particular field, receive
5 the same instruction as their civilian
6 counterparts, and in some cases, even more
7 advanced training. It is important today that we
8 are supportive of the legislation that helps our
9 veterans promote the skills they learn serving our
10 country to our employers.

11 Our service members have been there
12 for us, and now it is our time to be there for
13 them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
15 much, Council Member Wills. Thank you so much.
16 Let me take the opportunity also to thank Kelly
17 Taylor, the legislative attorney for the Committee
18 on Veteran Affairs, and also Robert Carnegie,
19 policy analyst for the committee, and also my
20 staff, thank you very much. And again to all of
21 you, I thank you. Now I'm going to call the
22 members of the first panel. We have First
23 Commissioner Terrence Holliday, and also Mr. Jamas
24 Offman [phonetic]. Did I do well?

25 MR. JAMAL OFFMAN: Jamal.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I was close.

MR. OFFMAN: You were there.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Very close. Thank you very much. And please state your names.

MR. TERRY HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir. I'm Terry Holliday, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office and Veteran's affairs. Please excuse me, timing is everything. I haven't been feeling too well. If I have to go down, he'll come out of the bullpen. I'm sorry.

Good morning, Chairman Eugene and members--

MALE VOICE: I'm sorry, commissioner, is it all right if we take a couple of pictures of you while you're testifying because it's a big deal for us to have you here.

MR. HOLLIDAY: Absolutely.

MALE VOICE: All right. I didn't want you to think I was being like a crazy paparazzi. I'm just really impressed by your work.

MR. HOLLIDAY: Thank you, sir. Okay. That's fine.

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2 Good morning, Chairman Eugene and
3 members of the Veteran Committee, Council Member
4 Gonzalez, Council Member Wills. I'm the
5 commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Veteran's
6 Affairs, and with me is MOVA's Chief of Staff, Mr.
7 Jamal Offman. By the way, he's a US Marine
8 veteran.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to
10 come before you to testify and express the
11 administration's support for improving employment
12 resources for veterans and recognizing certain
13 military service as an experience in a trade. The
14 Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs, MOVA, was
15 established by local law 53 in 1987, and advises
16 the mayor on issues and initiatives impacting the
17 veteran and military community. MOVA works
18 closely with the United States Department of
19 Veterans Affairs, the VA; the New York State
20 Division of Veterans Affairs, NYSDVA; city
21 agencies; veteran organizations; area military
22 commanders; and other stakeholders to assist
23 service members, veterans, their dependents and
24 survivors. MOVA is one of only a handful of city
25 level veteran constituent services in the United

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2 States. As a constituent services agency, MOVA
3 provides advocacy, referral and short term case
4 management services.

5 The veteran community in New York
6 City is extremely diverse and complex. Today,
7 approximately 210,000 veterans of all reside
8 within the five boroughs. Our veteran community
9 consists of those who served during the eras of
10 World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War and
11 Persian Gulf War, Operations Desert Storm, Desert
12 Shield, Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and New
13 Dawn. Combat operations in Afghanistan, in
14 addition to those concluded in December 2011 in
15 Iraq witnessed the largest wartime mobilization of
16 United States military reserve forces since World
17 War II. The New York National Guard, the US
18 Marines, Army, Navy and Coast Guard reservists
19 headquartered in greater New York metropolitan
20 area made significant contributions to the overall
21 combat presence and will immediately and over time
22 present the most significant demand for services
23 and reintegration support, including access to
24 employment resources.

25 You'll notice that I didn't include

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2 the Air Force because the Air Force is basically
3 90 miles south of here and doesn't have any
4 headquarters in New York City, though we do have
5 residents who are in that service. MOVA supports
6 the goals set out by the bill, INT0945 to improve
7 employment resources for veterans. In fact,
8 MOVA's website currently provides access to many
9 of the provisions of the bill, such as links to
10 the Federal Veterans Job Bank, federal and state
11 employment services, including the US Department
12 of Labor, the New York State Department of Labor,
13 the VA, and the New York Division of Veterans
14 Affairs. MOVA has been working with the
15 Department of Information Technology and
16 Communication, DOIT, to revamp our entire website
17 and make it more user friendly as veterans
18 navigate access to resources.

19 If INT0945 is passed, MOVA will
20 work to ensure--I will say, will vigorously work
21 to ensure that all the links described in the
22 legislation will be incorporated as part of these
23 ongoing efforts to make substantial improvements
24 to the MOVA web site. MOVA supports the
25 provisions of the bill, INT0945, to include city

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2 job postings to the Federal Job Bank, and to
3 identify and make available on MOVA's web site
4 relevant, competitive examinations.

5 We have begun discussions and will
6 work closely with the Department of Small Business
7 Services, SBS, and the Department of Citywide
8 Administrative Services, DCAS, to implement these
9 provisions. Additionally, MOVA on behalf of the
10 administration, including DCAS and SBS supports
11 the bills T5924 and T5925, which recognize certain
12 military service as qualifying as experience in a
13 trade.

14 Our American service members and
15 veterans receive some of the best training in the
16 world, and work expertly in many military
17 occupations that are applicable in the civilian
18 job market. MOVA continues to reach out to
19 veterans of all backgrounds and strives to expand
20 outreach to all our communities. In a recent
21 example, MOVA organized a gift collection and
22 distribution during the holidays where over 100
23 gifts were provided to veterans and their
24 families. MOVA also continues to honor and
25 recognize our veterans through a variety of

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2 events, most recently partnering with DCAS and the
3 Department of Records and Information Services to
4 organize and host a well-attended recognition
5 event for Black History Month, which highlighted
6 the achievements of black veterans and service
7 members. In coming weeks and months, MOVA's
8 actively preparing several events and initiatives
9 for veterans, service members and their families.
10 Examples include an event that will happen just
11 next week in partnership with Columbia School of
12 Medicine to present a seminar on suicide
13 prevention among veteran and a workshop in
14 partnership with OEM to host an emergency
15 preparedness workshop for veterans and their
16 families.

17 In closing, during my 38 years of
18 service as a military reservist, I worked with and
19 observe personnel from all branches of the
20 service. We need to provide access to resources
21 for our veterans, in particular employment
22 services. Not only because it's the right thing
23 to do, but because it's the smart thing to do.
24 The fact is we need the talent and skills that our
25 veterans can apply to key jobs in our city.

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2 As we all know, the intentions of
3 the city council reinforce those that served bring
4 critical and diverse talents that can be leveraged
5 to strengthen our city's economy. Lastly, I think
6 it is incumbent on every organization, whether the
7 government or private sectors, that understand the
8 level of maturity and experience that all veterans
9 possess. This includes strong leadership traits,
10 management skills, ability to work effectively in
11 teams as well as independently, adaptability to
12 adverse conditions and a strong work ethic, all
13 done under extreme amounts of pressure. I
14 respectfully submit that those qualities are
15 extremely valuable to the economic health and
16 future of this city.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to
18 testify before you on this important topic. I
19 would be happy to answer your questions. A
20 representative from DCAS and SBS and I think some
21 other agencies are present and would be available
22 to answer questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you,
24 Commissioner. Thank you very much for your
25 testimony. Commissioner, according to the

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2 statistics, veterans who have served since 2001
3 have experienced higher rates of unemployment than
4 other veterans. I don't know if it's correct, but
5 besides the age factor, why do you believe there's
6 a discrepancy between employment among the
7 veterans who have served before, to veterans who
8 have served in 2001? Are you aware of that?

9 MR. HOLLIDAY: Sir, it would just
10 be a guess on my part. We can look into that and
11 get back to you.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yeah, it's
13 that the veterans who have served before 2001 and
14 then those who served after 2001 have the
15 opportunity to have employment more than those who
16 served before.

17 MR. HOLLIDAY: So you had a better
18 economy. That was prior to 2008, but you've also
19 had changing technologies. You take a look at
20 banks that are doing away with jobs because people
21 are getting services from ATM machines. The post
22 office is a good example. They're making money,
23 but they're doing away with jobs because people
24 are finding other resources. So that might be the
25 answer. I really don't know. I haven't taken a

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look at that.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But it's also that the unemployment is higher among female veterans than male also. Any explanation, anything you can tell us about that?

MR. HOLLIDAY: I don't know. I don't have an answer for you on that.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But also it seems that as we talk, it seems that the unemployment is decreasing among the general population, but it is increasing among the veterans.

MR. HOLLIDAY: You know, there are a number of factors that you have to take a look at. I can go back and take a look at some of them, but if you have a--and I've said this once before, that if you have a student who's living at home and has completed tours with the military and qualifies for VA benefits and is in school, they are statistic [phonetic]. I don't think you can do it with a family, but they're unemployed, but they are receiving tuition reimbursement and housing from the VA as well, too.

You know, you get a lot of these

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2 young men and women who are in a circumstance, and
3 they want education. They don't necessarily want
4 a job. And I know that's just one factor. That's
5 just one factor, and if we talk about the economy
6 today, the economy's just starting to turn around
7 now. It's been turning around, but I think we're
8 beginning to see signs of that, and employers are
9 coming to us, and they're expressing an interest
10 in hiring. As we get employers who are interested
11 in hiring veterans, while we make certain that's
12 available to our veterans community, SBS has it
13 for Work Force One, and things are picking up.

14 Now, the questions you asked about
15 female vets, are you talking about female vets
16 today or in 2001?

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: 2001 up to
18 now.

19 MR. HOLLIDAY: 2001 until now?

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Until now.

21 MR. HOLLIDAY: I don't have an
22 answer for you. I think some of it--a lot of it
23 has to do with--and again, this is not fact. This
24 is what I believe. You have a lot of women who
25 are heads of household, and you have soldiers who

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2 are female, and they're mothers, they're raising
3 kids. So it's a combination of balancing where
4 they are and jobs and raising a family and
5 maintaining a household. So I'm sure that's a
6 factor, and we're probably seeing more female
7 veterans.

8 Female veterans have always been
9 there, but they're coming out in larger numbers
10 now, and that's what we have to service that's out
11 there. That's the new reality that we have.
12 Women are doing just as much as men are out there.
13 If there's a difference, it's very slight, but
14 they're coming back with the same problems and
15 probably even more so than a lot of the other men
16 in their situation coming back. That's something
17 we're dealing with.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you,
19 commissioner. I have to mention also, we have
20 been joined by Council Member Lew Fidler and
21 Greenfield, but they had to leave because they
22 have also other hearing going on right now.
23 Commissioner, in your testimony, you mentioned
24 that MOVA works closely with the US Department of
25 Veterans Affairs, VA; the New York State Division

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2 of Veterans Affairs; and city agencies Veterans
3 Organization; - - military command and other
4 stakeholders to assist active service members and
5 veterans. Can you tell us how you work together
6 with those institutions to help veterans get jobs
7 and use their skills? Is there any way you're
8 working together with those institutions to help
9 veterans with skills to get jobs in the private
10 sector?

11 MR. HOLLIDAY: I'll give you a
12 quick one.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I know you
14 have been doing a lot of that, and I commend you
15 for that. I know you have organized many job
16 fairs and trying to reach out, and I attended
17 several of them. That was a wonderful thing.

18 MR. HOLLIDAY: Thank you, sir. The
19 6th US Marines Communication Battalion is located
20 out of Floyd Bennett Field. The command is
21 Lieutenant Colonel Rich Bardinero [phonetic]. I
22 got a phone call from him that they were having a
23 job fair about two weeks ago on a Saturday, three
24 weeks or so ago on a Saturday. So I told him I
25 was going to be there and got the word out. Work

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2 Force One was there. There were about ten
3 employers that were there. They did this for
4 about 75 Marines.

5 So we were all out there. I got a
6 phone call from Jim Malarkey, who's the State
7 President of the Catholic War Veterans. He told
8 me there was a guy in the Bronx who was looking
9 for some truck drivers and maintenance people. No
10 problem. I call the guy. I connected this guy
11 with the Marines. The Marines got back to him,
12 did whatever, he hired about two people. I met
13 him at the employment fair, and he hired about two
14 more people.

15 So it's like we're doing things in
16 singles and a couple here, a couple there, but the
17 thing is, they didn't need a state certification
18 to do what they were doing, but they needed
19 training, and the guy said, I'll take them on in
20 training. Now, I think about 45 to 50 Marines
21 came through at that point and there were about
22 ten job offers or follow up interviews that were
23 in the flow by the time I left. They still had
24 about an hour or so to go. So that was a pretty
25 successful thing.

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2 That's just one unit, but we've
3 helped out with other units directly before, but
4 that was something that was very tangible.
5 Another thing we do is put things out on our
6 social media, but we take MOVA out of the mix so
7 that if someone is interested in a job and if
8 they're interested, they go directly to the
9 employer. So we're getting feedback from that,
10 and we're going to keep pressing on with that as
11 we get later on into the year. But we've had some
12 success.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
14 much, Commissioner. We have been joined by
15 Council Member Cabrera from the Bronx. Let me
16 turn it over now to Council Member Wills for some
17 questions.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Great. Good
19 afternoon again, Commissioner. I was told that we
20 only have one panel after this, so I get to ask a
21 couple more questions. I'll take liberty with
22 that one.

23 A couple of things. I noticed that
24 you highlighted on page two in your testimony the
25 work that you guys did around Black History Month.

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2 I am actually in my District, we are doing
3 legislation now to rename a specific road, which
4 is South Road, that has a traditionally negative
5 connotation to it, to the Tusgekee Airmen Way.
6 And I would love to be able to reach out to your
7 office to get support for that. I'm actually
8 going to meet with them in the airport I think on
9 the 16th of this month or something like that.

10 MR. HOLLIDAY: I was raised on
11 119th Road and Merrick Boulevard, and then I went
12 to St. John's University, so South Road, I know.
13 I'll do whatever you want to do for that. I think
14 it's a very good initiative.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Thank you.
16 I have a couple of questions for you. How many
17 hits does the web site get each month, and do you
18 analyze the statistics to see what kind of
19 information the visitors is seeking for? I guess
20 that would be for your Chief of Staff?

21 MR. OFFMAN: It would. Thank you,
22 Council Member, for the question. We've been
23 working with DOIT to sort of ascertain what those
24 numbers are. According to the reporting, in all
25 of 2012, MOVA's web site had approximately 160,000

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2 visitors. Just last month alone, the month of
3 February, we had close to 10,000 visitors to the
4 web site. The average last month was about 353.
5 It usually tends to increase as we get closer to
6 veteran type events and holidays.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIS: Okay. I
8 think it's important to distinguish the difference
9 between visitors and page hits because most people
10 don't understand that that's a significant number
11 when you have an individual visitor hitting the
12 site. I would like to work with you to maybe
13 better promote the web site because in Queens and
14 I would say Northern Long Island, going into
15 Elmont, different places like that, we have over
16 100-something thousand veterans alone combined
17 with the two, which is one of our biggest fights,
18 trying to get the healthcare hospital emergency
19 room there. So I would love to work with you to
20 try to promote that because I think that with our
21 network, we can move that up and get the
22 information out.

23 MR. OFFMAN: MOVA would look
24 forward to that, Council Member, particularly when
25 you look at the web site and social media. A lot

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2 of the enhancements we're making is going to make
3 it easier for all veterans, but particularly for
4 returning veterans who like to access a lot of the
5 information online and through social media. So
6 it would be our pleasure to work with you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: I think we
8 should maybe try to do an initiative with some of
9 the post, whether they be American legion, or
10 veterans of foreign wars, to make sure that they
11 have a computer bank or something there, maybe
12 have one or two computers so that when the vets
13 come for their leisure time, they can do that. I
14 think that would help us with promoting
15 information.

16

How many veterans do you reach out
17 to each month regarding employment? That's just
18 to piggyback off of the chair's question about
19 employment.

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MR. HOLLIDAY: I can't give you an
21 answer to that on vets. Our role in the
22 appointment end of it is passive, unless somebody
23 like Jimmy Malarkey from the Catholic War Veterans
24 reaches out to me, or an employer says,
25 Commissioner, can you come and help me out with

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2 something. So Work Force One is in the battle to
3 find the vets, to find the employers and get the
4 vets jobs and help them get jobs.

5 I don't want to--you know, what I
6 learned in the military, and it wasn't that much,
7 probably, but you stay in your own lane. If you
8 stay where you're supposed to do and you do what
9 you're supposed to do, then everybody's taking
10 care of what they have to take care of. Once you
11 step outside your lane, it's like blocking people
12 going after a kickoff. You go off in the one
13 direction, and then somebody else comes through.
14 So what I'm doing down here with employment, I'm
15 getting the information out, and I'm making
16 certain that Work Force One are the people doing
17 it.

18 They've got the specialists, and
19 they're the ones who are funded for doing that.
20 We'll do a little bit more to sort of help out.
21 We can probably crunch some numbers for you by
22 June or July with some stuff that we might be
23 doing, but I'm purely passive right now.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: So my last
25 two questions, do you categorize or tag certain

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2 jobs, or do you have SBS, do you tax them to
3 categorize or tag certain jobs as veteran
4 friendly, and if you do, how does that process
5 work? If you don't, have you thought about doing
6 it?

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MR. HOLLIDAY: You'd have to ask
8 that question of them, but when I run across an
9 employer who seeks us, because they'll seek us
10 out, and if I find that employer and we take a
11 quick look and we don't like what they're doing
12 with veterans, they hit the shredder.

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MR. OFFMAN: Council Member, I
14 wanted to add that MOVA does work closely with
15 SBS, and they have a very robust veterans
16 initiative. They have what they call a priority
17 one blog and they also have other resources that
18 are specific just to veterans where they have
19 veteran friendly job postings and other resources.
20 They can provide some of the specifics, but they
21 have a pretty good initiative going on at SBS.

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COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Thank you,
23 gentlemen, for coming. Mr. Chair, I yield the
24 rest of my time.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very

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2 much, Council Member Wills. Commissioner, do you
3 have a way or structure in place to find out how
4 many veterans who visit your web site, how many of
5 them get jobs because they contact MOVA or using
6 the web site or the information that is available
7 on the MOVA web site?

8 MR. HOLLIDAY: The only thing that
9 we really did is that when we had a few job fairs,
10 we tracked everybody after the job fair, whether
11 they got jobs or they didn't get those jobs. But
12 within the last year as Work Force One was
13 robusting, we really stayed out of that business.
14 So we not stayed out of it. We just did the
15 referral to them and let them do what they had to
16 do. So they're the ones that could probably give
17 you that answer. Anything from me would just be a
18 guess.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But do you
20 also have a database of veterans with certain
21 skills, of knowledge, and then you can use those
22 skills to inform the employers in case they're
23 looking for particular veterans with certain
24 skills?

25 MR. HOLLIDAY: No, sir, we don't.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And do you think as we're trying to help the veterans with skills when they come back, as we're trying to help them get jobs, don't you think this will be something that is necessary to do? A database of veterans with certain skills, and we know this group of veterans, they're very good handymen, they can do plumbing or electricity, and this one can translate?

MR. HOLLIDAY: I think that type of a resource would be very handy, but I have a four-person shop, and I think that we're effective by getting the word out that there is a particular job and a company, and they're looking for this. We'll put this out on our social media, but we also give that information directly to Work Force One. But if we put that information out, and even if I don't have that, the people who are interested are going to look at that site and apply for a job.

It's almost like a help wanted in the New York Times. If you don't have the skills and you're not interested in the job, you're not going to apply. So I do think that the database

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2 that you're talking about would be very, very
3 helpful. But I don't know that it would improve
4 anything that I could do.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yeah, but
6 let's say, for example, I'm an employer. I'm
7 looking for people to work for me, and I call
8 MOVA, and I say, Commissioner, could you send me
9 ten people because I got opportunities for people
10 who know how to do plumbing? So what would you
11 do?

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MR. HOLLIDAY: We would refer the
13 individual to Work Force One, and then I would get
14 the contact information, and I send it directly
15 over to my contact at Work Force One to say please
16 have somebody call this individual up and work
17 with him on getting what they want. That's what
18 we've been doing, and it's been working well.

19

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: So you don't
20 believe that it is necessary for MOVA to have its
21 own database?

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MR. HOLLIDAY: No, that would just
23 be duplicative, I think. It was a good idea,
24 though. Sorry.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: In addition to

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2 that, what do you think we should do, the city
3 council, and also MOVA together, or the City of
4 New York, to make sure that more veterans who come
5 back from service can have more jobs to improve
6 the job opportunities of veterans or to decrease
7 the unemployment in the veterans when they come
8 back? What else can we do besides the
9 legislation, besides upgrading the MOVA web site?
10 What else do you think we can do together?

11 MR. HOLLIDAY: I think the intent
12 of these bills is looking at the veterans who are
13 coming back and saying, you've got a lot of
14 experience. You've got a lot that you can add to
15 the bottom line. We need you. And I think that
16 while the bills are defining certain specific
17 jobs, I think we need to encourage the private
18 sector, okay? To say, hey, when somebody comes to
19 you with a job, with experience, the only thing I
20 need to know if I'm qualified for a job, and I
21 think most of us have all experienced this, is for
22 the first week or so, you don't know what subway
23 station to come in, you don't know where the
24 coffee break room is, and you have to find it.

25 After a while, you get acclimated

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2 and you just take off. You just do your job.
3 That's what's going to happen with these service
4 folks coming back. You know, yes, some will come
5 back with some special issues that will have to be
6 addressed, and we need to try and help them do
7 what they can do, but I think we need to encourage
8 our friends in private industry and academia to
9 turn around and say these people are coming back
10 to you with skills. You don't have to hold them
11 by the hand.

12 They're going to come to work on
13 time. They're going to be good leaders. You tell
14 them to get a job done, they're going to get the
15 job done for you, and I think if we encourage
16 people to go ahead and do that, we can. On the
17 other hand, I think if there's some way that you
18 can help with some incentives to employers in
19 hiring vets, I think that that would be something
20 that would work out very well. But that's not
21 something I would do.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Because we
23 always have to think about female veterans also,
24 anything special you believe we can do to make
25 sure that the female veterans also have access to

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2 jobs? It seems that there's always a disparity
3 between female and male veterans in civil aspects.

4 MR. HOLLIDAY: Sure. We created a
5 female veterans board about a year or so ago, and
6 we've gotten some real good growth out of them.
7 But some of the problems that we're looking at in
8 terms of female veterans reintegrating into
9 society, a big one is childcare. You know, if
10 you've got children to take care of, how are you
11 going to be able to go out there and find that job
12 and do whatever you need to do? So we need to
13 find a way to get affordable childcare out there,
14 and we also need to find a way to encourage
15 employers who will be receptive to female veterans
16 with families coming back and providing some
17 support with them, too.

18 So there are a lot of keys, and I'm
19 just talking about childcare, but you know,
20 there's a navy female lieutenant commander, Sarah
21 Higgins, and she works up 149th Street with the
22 Navy, and she's a Prowler pilot. And I think it's
23 an E6B Prowler pilot. Somebody asked her the
24 question, you're a woman. How are you making a
25 decision flying this jet plane, and her response

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2 was--and she later told me it was like a stock
3 response at 500 miles an hour, you learn it and
4 you do it man or woman. So what's the problem?

5 So if we have good jobs, if we can
6 find the childcare link to it, and I know that's
7 very difficult, but I think if we can do that,
8 we'll help our female vets out. Also, there are
9 going to be some of them coming back with post-
10 traumatic stress, and some of them will be coming
11 military sexual trauma. It's just not women with
12 the military sexual trauma.

13 We're having a suicide prevention
14 mental health seminar at Columbia next week on the
15 21st. So Columbia partnered with MOVA. We
16 started doing this about two years ago, and you
17 get good discussion. What we really need to do--
18 another thing is when we get veterans coming in
19 and they show up in the emergency room, people
20 need to ask them if they're veterans. If they
21 start seeing something that they don't normally
22 see, they might want to take the tack that if it's
23 a veteran, there's something else that's going on,
24 that perhaps if we make the initiative at this
25 point, we can do it.

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2 I would say--this is just a plug
3 for something I love. You've got veterans courts
4 and treatment courts in Kings County and in
5 Queens, and I've worked with both of them.
6 They're really find places. If you have a veteran
7 who's in any type of trouble and as you're going
8 through the arraignment process, the word's got to
9 get out that the first thing you have to tell the
10 arraignment officers is that I'm a veteran, and a
11 veteran is anybody who served.

12 That's what you need to get out to
13 folks, and they'll see what they can do. So I
14 think if we package all those other things up and
15 we begin to take a look at people and sort of say,
16 you know, I think there's a problem. Maybe I can
17 be--in the Air Force we call it a wingman. A good
18 wingman means that you make certain everybody's
19 okay till they get home, and then after they're
20 home, you make certain that they're good, too.
21 That's just me.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Commissioner,
23 I know your office has been working with Work
24 Force One and many other institutions. Since Work
25 Force One has been created, do you know how many

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veterans were able to get jobs through them and from them?

MR. HOLLIDAY: You'd have to ask Work Force One. They're here today.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You don't have this type of information?

MR. HOLLIDAY: I don't have it with me.

MR. OFFMAN: We do interface with them on that exact information, but I'd like to defer that question to them.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Can you please forward the information to my office?

MR. HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir, we can do that.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Just to get an idea. And if - - , what can we do. But I think the idea is a wonderful idea, but there's always room for improvement. So if you analyze what we have done, that would allow us to move on and to make progress and to make the necessary change to make more progress.

We have been joined by Council Member Vincent Gentile, and also Council Member

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2 Daniel Dromm. Council Member Gentile, do you have
3 any questions?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Just
5 quickly, thank you Mr. Chairman, and you may have
6 covered this while I wasn't here, and I'm sorry
7 for being delayed. I'm just curious, do veterans
8 who want to start their own business come to you
9 for any assistance, or do you direct them to
10 particular places? I'm curious about that segment
11 of the veteran population.

12 MR. HOLLIDAY: We had engaged with
13 veterans with the New York State small business
14 services, and we had reached out to the federal
15 SBS as well. And what we really did was provide
16 information to them. When we had opportunities to
17 provide information to them and invite people up,
18 we did. We did host a very well received--I won't
19 say very well, but it was a well-received seminar,
20 and I'm going to say it was probably around the
21 spring of last year. The New York State people
22 ran it, and I think it went very well.

23 It's something that we have to get
24 back and revisit.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: This is

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about starting a business?

MR. HOLLIDAY: Starting a business, franchising, how to get financing, and what we did is that everybody who attended, we really try to step out of the middle on this. What we do is a little bean counting and say this works. Let's see what we can do, but then once you get the parties joined together, we sort of step back unless somebody says there's a problem. It moves faster that way. So the last time we did it, I might be off a little bit, but I'm going to say it was around June or July, and what we've maintained a contact with the business folks as well, but it's something that we need to reengage with, and we will. It was just other things took us in different directions.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I might mention also that the main branches of the three public library systems also do a great job not only for veterans but for everyone who might be interested in starting a business, so that's another resource that you might refer people to.

So do you plan on doing that again?

MR. HOLLIDAY: To be honest with

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2 you, it was something we would've gotten around
3 to. With you bringing it up, it means we're just
4 going to get to it sooner. But it was something
5 we needed to do. We've got a bunch of things
6 going on right now, and as we're moving from one
7 thing to another, just things crop up, but that's
8 something we were going to get to eventually.
9 We'll get to it sooner because it's the right
10 thing to do.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you,
12 Council Member Gentile. Commissioner, talking
13 about small businesses, we know that Sandy was a
14 very big blow to many small businesses, including
15 veterans. Do you know any programs or assistance
16 available for veterans whose business has been
17 affected by Sandy? Any city or federal or state
18 program?

19 MR. HOLLIDAY: We asked some
20 questions. We sent a mailer out to a lot of
21 veterans. First it started out just Sandy, but
22 then I think we mailed one out to every veteran in
23 ZIP codes, but we didn't get any replies back.
24 What I also did was I reached out to the VA to
25 say, hey, by the way, how many veterans were

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2 affected by Sandy? I know veterans were affected
3 by Sandy, but in terms of VA benefits that are out
4 there, there really weren't any or very many, and
5 there were veterans who were dislocated and had to
6 go into a VA hospital. I think that number went
7 from about 135 down to a handful over a two or
8 three week period, but that's all I know of.

9

10 The short answer is I don't know of
11 any veterans or veteran-owned businesses that are
12 out there that were affected by Sandy. I don't
13 think the--we'll follow up on it, but I don't
14 think the VA has received anything about that.
15 Maybe SBS does. We'll call SBS and find out from
16 them. They might have an idea.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right. I
18 got another question, probably the last one, but
19 before I ask you the last question, I would like
20 to--people can fill out a witness slip. If they
21 want to testify, they can go to the - - , please?
22 Okay.

22

23 Commissioner, what would be your
24 advice to veterans coming back home? Veterans who
25 have skills, and they're looking for jobs, what
would be your advice to them?

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MR. HOLLIDAY: It depends on what

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I--

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Where should

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they start? Go to MOVA? Contact the businesses

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personally? Go to the library? What would be the

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first thing they should be doing?

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MR. HOLLIDAY: It depends on the

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skill that they bring back. Okay? My background

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is the United States Air Force. When you do

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certain jobs in the United States Air Force and

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other military places, probably the Coast Guard is

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good, too, you get licensed. You'll get a federal

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license. To fly a plane, the FAA has got to say

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that you can fly the plane. FAA has got to sign

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off on anything having to do with the plane, so if

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you service a Blackhawk, you can service a Bow.

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If you service an engine on a--if you service an

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engine on a KC135, you can service a commercial

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engine on any of the planes that Jet Blue flies.

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So if I have an FAA license, or if I qualify for

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an FAA license while I was in the army, the Air

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Force or the Navy, I'd go to Jet Blue if I came to

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this area.

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I would go to the airline industry

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2 to find out where they are. If I was a certified
3 EMT, I would go to the fire department. I would
4 go to hospitals. So I would say depending upon
5 the license that you have.

6

7 I found that one thing as we were
8 preparing for the legislation today, the meeting
9 today, is that once you get into the IT field, I
10 might get this a little bit wrong, but once you
11 get into the IT field, Cisco has a certification
12 that is throughout the industry. And all of the
13 people in the military, when they hit a certain
14 grade or they do something, they get this Cisco
15 qualification.

16

17 Well, I'd go to some place that
18 needed quality assurance people. It's not to say
19 that you couldn't get it by contacting MOVA, but
20 we're a middle person. Workforce One is somebody
21 that could get you there, and there are other
22 places. But I think that with those skills,
23 depending upon the skills that you have, you need
24 to take a look. The MTA is always sending us
25 jobs. We're always putting stuff on our web site
about the MTA.

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We've got a gentleman through the

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2 United War Veterans who is always looking for
3 mechanics and bus drivers nationally, and we put
4 that information out, and that man is going to be
5 showing up and looking for jobs.

6

7 So depending upon the licenses that
8 you bring in, and I'm sure there are other
9 certifications that you're getting when people
10 come in, if you're a doctor or a nurse, and you're
11 looking for a placement someplace else, you're
12 probably not going to go to Workforce One, or
13 you're not going to come to MOVA. You're going to
14 go directly to a medical industry folks to hire.
15 But they have jobs.

16

17 Everybody, there are jobs at
18 Workforce One. There are jobs at other agencies.
19 And I think if people look, they'll find it.
20 There's another place, USAjobs.gov. People should
21 just take a look, and you can pick up and go
22 wherever you need to go.

23

24 There are job sites. When we take
25 a look at other governmental organizations, and
that's something people--if you need a job, I
think you can find it, or at least you got some
places to look, whether you get it or not, but you

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can find it.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, Commissioner. Let me thank you one more time for everything that you have been doing for the veterans. I've been to many of your events, and I think you are doing the best that you can do. Feel free to contact us on the committee. Anything that you can do in addition to what you have been doing and what we have done. I think it is our responsibility as I said before, and we all know that, to do everything possible to make sure that our veterans, they have job opportunities, they have access to medical care, and also we-- this is the only way we're going to show our gratitude to them and show our respect. Every, single one of us should be involved in improving the quality of life of veterans.

Thank you very much, and to Mr. Offman. Is that correct?

MR. OFFMAN: That's correct, sir, yes, that's correct.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much. Have a wonderful day. Thank you.

Now let me call the next panel.

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Mr. Wesley Poriotis [phonetic]. Do I have it right today?

MR. WESLEY PORIOTIS: - - .

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good to see you, sir. Good to see you. Very good. Good to see you.

So I think we're going to have in the same panel, we're going to see Ms. Lanella [phonetic], please. Will you please join Mr. Poriotis? Good to see you.

So you may start any time, Mr. Poriotis, Ms. Lanella.

MR. WESLEY PORIOTIS: Mr. Chairman, it's good to see you again.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good to see you, sir.

MR. PORIOTIS: It's good that you made a great pronunciation of Wesley Poriotis. I remember testifying early here last year when someone briefly looked at my name and said, how is Mr. Psoriasis doing? So everybody laughed, and it broke the ice, it was informal.

You've asked us as experts to comment on the legislation, to comment on the

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2 actions, and for one reason or another, even in
3 this bad job market, I'm considered an employment
4 expert. I may look close to 70, but inside, I'm
5 only 26 years of age. I've still got a few
6 youthful endeavors left in me, but nearly 40 years
7 ago, as you know, Councilman, I established the
8 nation's first national retained executive search
9 firm dedicated to women, people of color and the
10 veterans. And this was before affirmative action,
11 before EEO, before even the word diversity had
12 appeared on the American scene. By the mid-'90s,
13 we were called by the Dupont corporation and given
14 the honor having achieved the highest level of
15 diversity for executives of color in corporate
16 America.

17 In fact, I didn't even know what
18 the word diversity was at the time because it was
19 a new term in the corporate scene. We had
20 established the nation's first search firm
21 dedicated to inclusion before the word diversity
22 came about. So with that in mind, having achieved
23 the first--the highest executive of color in
24 corporate America for 261 of the Fortune 500,
25 either the first or the highest, we were asked by

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2 the Clinton Administration to come in and identify
3 and recruit political appointment level candidates
4 of color because they needed that stream of
5 candidates across all the cabinets.

6 We began to work with Hazel
7 O'Leary, the first African-American Secretary of
8 Energy, and we worked closely with the Pentagon to
9 identify those with nuclear and navy training,
10 submarine captains, commanders and others, who
11 could fill the top spots at energy.

12 Along the way, and I'll make this
13 even briefer to show you how Veterans Across
14 America was created, along the way we did a study
15 for the joint Chiefs of Staff to determine the
16 employment status for the first of its kind report
17 and study of those Desert Storm veterans coming
18 back to the civilian sector. As you recall, we
19 downsized the military from about 1.7 million to
20 about 1.2 million, so in '91, '92, '93 and '94, we
21 had 3-400,000 military servicemen and women being
22 transitioned out.

23 Our study for the joint chiefs on
24 the status of the military transition into the
25 private sector was deplorable. It showed--and the

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2 more things changed, the more they stayed the
3 same. It showed a deplorable stereotype and
4 stigma against military service. In fact, our
5 studies later for Congress and our testimony in
6 front of the Senate in front of the Veterans
7 Affairs Committee reflected an unusual aspect
8 post-Vietnam. We all know this because you've
9 been very active in analyzing the reasons for
10 impediments to employment.

11 Post-Vietnam, that sourness and
12 stereotypical anti-military service had embedded
13 itself in employers. I still think it exists to
14 some extent, but the study was so novel, it
15 reflected the sense that military, be they white,
16 black, brown, yellow, whatever gender, whatever
17 persuasion, they were the newest diverse
18 demographic in America. And as such, President
19 Clinton asked me to dinner in 1996, and I briefed
20 him on the joint Chiefs of Staff study, and I said
21 to him, sir, there are a group of Americans being
22 deselected based on stereotype, based on stigma, a
23 holdover from the Vietnam era. It's seeped into
24 the consciousness of employers in power.

25 Those who protested on the colleges

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2 on Vietnam were now in the power positions in
3 corporate America, and they still had that stigma
4 of a military back in the '60s and early '70s.
5 Mr. Clinton, it was a very unusual dinner. His
6 human resources chief was there, Harold Dickies
7 was there, and Mr. Clinton said, well, I thought
8 they had it made. I thought the military had it
9 made when they came out. And I said, sir, they
10 don't have it made. I said, there's a deselective
11 bias that's embedded itself into the DNA of
12 corporate America. It's deep. It's very
13 entrenched.

14 In fact, we found executive search
15 firms, which are that bridge to the hidden job
16 market, the job market that doesn't appear, that's
17 never advertised, that's never publicized, we
18 found boxes marked military. We went to corporate
19 America and talked to the CEOs, who we've served
20 for 20 years, and we suggested that there's an
21 underutilized leadership that could be harnessed
22 by corporate America, and we said, what do you do
23 with military resumes? This is now 15 years ago.

24 They said, we embrace them and give
25 them every consideration, and we throw the sons of

1
2 bitches away. I mean, this was when you could get
3 away from the policy and the formality and listen
4 to a CEO you'd served for ten years tell you what
5 he and his human resources staff did with military
6 resumes.

7 So the president asked us to set up
8 Veterans Across America, a nonprofit 501C3, a
9 foundation that would have as its mission the
10 economic wellbeing of veterans, the employment of
11 veterans, and creative strategies based on our
12 unique and first of its kind work and diversity.
13 How do you apply that work to this newest
14 demographic that are being deselected by
15 stereotype and stigma?

16 Well, Mr. Chairman, as you know, we
17 created Champion mentoring. Very simple. If you
18 ask the folks in this room and you ask the folks
19 that testified the last two years as we've
20 testified here how you got your job, it's usually
21 through who you know. People get a job through
22 who they know. At one point or another, who they
23 know, who they know, how they know. The
24 individuals in the public sector who structure
25 processes of resume writing, military to civilian

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2 transfer, interview skills, they've never been in
3 the private sector. They've never gotten jobs for
4 people, they don't have the employment experience.
5 Most of them got their jobs through who they know,
6 yet they're developing more and more processes
7 that are fraught with resume writing that go out
8 to a numbing silence and to no response.

9 So we created the champion
10 mentoring program, and through your encouragement
11 and leadership last year, we developed a plan for
12 the New York City council that would actually
13 allow a veteran job seeker to be connected with a
14 champion mentor or career sponsor who would act as
15 their so-called rabbi to open up their
16 professional and personal networks. The one
17 abiding thing that the veteran does not have as a
18 job seeker is a network, especially our enlisted
19 servicemen and women, and even more than that, our
20 enlisted servicemen and women of color.

21 They do not have a network. They
22 have limited skills, limited education. Now, let
23 me go to the legislation. The legislation is to
24 accelerate certification and licenses for trades,
25 a wonderful vehicle, a wonderful idea that's

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2 already had its origin in other movements like
3 that because we've known that's always been a
4 block.

5 It's a great vehicle. I liken it
6 to a beautiful car. It's a wonderful vehicle, but
7 it has no engine. It has no engine. I disagree,
8 and I've sat here month after month and year after
9 year listening to the commissioner. The
10 commissioner is passive. He didn't answer your
11 question. He doesn't have the facility in the
12 employment and the corporate market and the
13 business field to understand that the one abiding
14 thing that the military servicemen and women,
15 those transitioning and those veterans do not have
16 is a voice. There is no union-like voice. There
17 is no bully pulpit.

18 We need to create a voice for the
19 veterans. So I suggest three things. In your
20 legislation, I suggest you embed material or
21 information regarding champion mentoring so that
22 each and every individual who receives that
23 certificate or that license is connected with
24 let's say a retired laborer or a retired union
25 person, a business person.

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2 Our history is having positioned
3 for job creation almost 10,000 veterans, mostly
4 enlisted servicemen and women, mostly employable
5 or unemployable, most of those who have come to us
6 have already sent out 500 resumes, most are
7 depressed deeply.

8 I connect a lot of the PTSD that we
9 hear about and the emotional depression to the
10 economic depression because once a mentor or
11 mentors is connected with a veteran mentee, they
12 open up their own professional and personal
13 networks. This is not about veteran mentors. The
14 most successful veterans in New York are non-
15 veterans who want to do something more than just
16 slapping a yellow sticker on the back of the car
17 saying, thank you for your service. They open up
18 their networks. They aggressively position
19 everything from a personal, professional--and
20 they've had small businesses.

21 And one out of six businesses in
22 New York is owned by a veteran. If they've had
23 small businesses, they can open up their vendors,
24 suppliers, etc. We put that together last year,
25 but I think--and I'll close with this. In my

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2 written testimony, I suggest something bolder.
3 The New York City council, through Councilman
4 Eugene, has been an indefatigable advocate for
5 veteran wellbeing. You continue to advocate for
6 employment, and we know that in the Freudian
7 lexicon work and love, if you have work, a lot of
8 that emotional depression, a lot of that PTSD sort
9 of dries up.

10 You've been that advocate, so I
11 suggest you do something bolder in this
12 legislation. I call for a New York City Council
13 Veterans Institute to circumvent the passive,
14 timid, lack of bully pulpit that we have in the
15 mayor's office. It's terrible.

16 I've sat here. People are very
17 delicate, and they're very polite, and they're
18 very formal, but even Councilman Sanders last
19 year, now State Senator, a marine, said to this
20 commissioner, you have \$192,000 in your budget.
21 Don't you want more money? He said no. He said,
22 well, that's \$0.50 for each veteran in New York
23 City. Why don't you want more money? Why don't
24 you want more resources?

25 You asked the question, what are

1
2 the blockages? What are the blockages to
3 employment? There's a deep set deselective bias.
4 The veteran has no network, no network at all. He
5 has no rabbi opening up personal and professional
6 networks to open up opportunity, and I say if the
7 New York City council creates a Veterans
8 Institute, and we embed that in the legislation,
9 then it can do five things.

10 First, it can be a promoter and
11 marketer of military service and raise the level
12 and raise the value. The brand equity in the
13 value of military service has sunk to an all-time
14 low. We need to create a coalition and a board of
15 the leading corporate entities in this country.

16 For example, Maureen Casey
17 [phonetic], a former police inspector in this
18 city, at J.P. Morgan, runs the Veterans
19 Operations. They have created a consortium of 92
20 companies and have now hired almost 60,000
21 veterans on their own. J.P. Morgan Chase has
22 hired 5,638. People like Maureen Casey. Does the
23 city council and does New York City have to fund a
24 Veterans Institute? The New York City Council
25 Veterans? No.

1
2 Let me give you an example. Leon
3 Cooperman [phonetic], the very famous hedge fund
4 billionaire from the Bronx, grew up in the Bronx,
5 his father was a plumber. His father was a
6 plumber. He's worth \$12 billion. Steven Cohen,
7 SAC Capital, just gave \$20 million for PTSD. So
8 we go to the hedge fund billionaires and we ask
9 them to give back.

10 If John Paulson can give \$100
11 million of his own money for Central Park to save
12 the trees, who the hell is saving our veterans?
13 Who the hell is creating a bully pulpit?
14 Councilman Eugene, I applaud you. You've been the
15 closest thing to a bully pulpit. The bully pulpit
16 days of Theodore Roosevelt made that term very
17 popular.

18 If we could take the same energy
19 and vivacity and push and aggressiveness through a
20 Veterans Institute that could promote veterans,
21 promote the value of employment, coalesce the
22 corps in New York and have them give back, as soon
23 as the CEO says to the human resources Vice
24 President, let's do something about embracing
25 veterans, things change. The job fairs are

1
2 neither fair, nor do they create jobs. They're
3 horrible. About 2-3% of people who go through
4 these job fairs get jobs.

5 Councilman, we're talking about
6 MOVA and its web site. I mean, that's 1920s and
7 '30s. Web site? People don't get jobs through a
8 web site. People hire people. Web sites don't
9 hire people. So I'm suggesting that the New York
10 City council has a legacy for helping veterans.
11 It's deep in your marrow and deep in your DNA and
12 it's growing. Create the Veterans Institute.
13 Veterans Across America. Get the private funding
14 for it.

15 We're dealing with Julianne
16 Robertson of the Tiger Fund. Steve Cohen of SAC
17 Capital. It struck me when I read your
18 legislation, if Leon Cooperman and Leon Black can
19 spend \$160 million for Edvard Munch's painting,
20 The Scream, The Scream went for \$160 million at
21 Sotheby's auction. If they can spend \$160 million
22 for that, let them endow a Veterans Institute that
23 has the champion mentoring process, it has the
24 promotional expertise, we have the resources to
25 hire the Daniel J. Edelmans, the Burston

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2 Marstellers, the marketing agencies, to market
3 military service to corporate America because
4 everything you've talked about today is okay, I
5 find out there's a job, I send my resume in, or I
6 recommend Workforce.

7 We met with the Workforce One
8 people in 2011. They interviewed 3,946 people.
9 They placed less than 800, and I don't know what
10 those jobs were. No one in this business in
11 employment wants to talk about performance
12 measurements, how many they place. They always
13 void you. I'll get back to you. I'll get back to
14 you.

15 No one wants to. Even the labor
16 department doesn't want to do it, but I suggest
17 that if we have the resources from private funding
18 for the New York City Veteran Institute as part of
19 this legislation or even separate legislation, you
20 can raise the ship, raise the tide and create the
21 pull.

22 Right now, everything is oriented
23 toward push. Won't you hire a veteran? They've
24 got leadership and they've got this and they've
25 got that and they've got discipline. You know

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2 what? The human resources person sitting across
3 from them is often neither human nor a resource.
4 That's my next book, by the way. And often, is
5 trying to put that resume into a--that round
6 resume into a round hole--a round peg into a round
7 hole, it doesn't work because we haven't promoted,
8 we haven't marketed, we haven't positioned
9 aggressively.

10 I think if you look at your
11 legislation, if you create the engine, the New
12 York City Council Veterans Institute, or whatever
13 you want to call it, that will be a legacy for the
14 next 20 years because this problem's going to be
15 here for the next 20 years. It took 25 years for
16 military service post World War II where it was at
17 its height, and post-Vietnam, to drop to its ebb,
18 it took 25 years for the brand equity and military
19 service to fall to an all-time low in terms of the
20 value proposition for all employers. We have to
21 change that. It'll be 20 to 25 more years.

22 You know, I was thinking on the way
23 down, look at David Patraeus [phonetic]. He's not
24 working. He got slammed upside the head for
25 sexual problems, but he still is a name, and we

1
2 have enough money in that Veterans Institute, we
3 hire someone like that. Not someone like this who
4 goes to each of these companies because he has
5 access and he coalesces this city, the city's
6 employers, to embrace veterans the way J.P. Morgan
7 Chase is doing.

8 Forgive my ranting and raving.

9 Psoriasis will now hush up. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
11 much, Mr. Poriotis. I know how passionate you are
12 when it's about veterans issues, and again, I had
13 the opportunity to start working together with
14 Veterans Across America to try to get some
15 consistent programs. Also I know what you have
16 been doing. Thank you very much for doing what
17 you have been doing.

18 Ms. Lanella, would you please
19 start?

20 MS. LANELLA: Thank you for your
21 leadership in raising the profile of veterans'
22 problems, Chairman Eugene. I would just like to
23 say that Military Families Speak Out supports
24 proposition interim 945A, that increases the
25 likelihood that veterans searching for employment

1
2 can access federal, state and New York State
3 network. Advising applicants of positions that
4 are available. In addition, we suggest an
5 amendment that acknowledges Title 38, which allows
6 veterans with a dishonorable general discharge due
7 to mental problems, the veterans incurred during
8 their military service, whether overseas or state
9 side to have access to the services of the
10 veterans administration healthcare system.

11 I stated the last time I was here
12 that veterans who got a dishonorable discharge
13 couldn't use the VA, and that's true unless they
14 can prove that they were somehow affected by some
15 kind of mental problem, PTSD or TBI, that they
16 incurred during service, and I think that's what
17 the young man was talking about. So anyway, we're
18 just suggesting that there is a similar provision
19 in these amendments and laws so that it can be
20 fair to people who reacted differently to their
21 service.

22 And it would also be stabilize the
23 population that has been negatively impacted by
24 leaving their nexus in society and going to war or
25 going to the military and then returning a few

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2 years later to the same situation that they came
3 from. For example, in New York City, most of the
4 people who are deployed come from five ZIP codes.
5 They're the same five ZIP codes where a lot of
6 people are sent away to be incarcerated. So when
7 they come back, they might be very young, and they
8 might not really know what's going on and be at a
9 loss as to what to do.

10 I found personally that the main
11 obstacle to veterans getting aggressive about
12 seeking employment is their own hesitation. They
13 didn't have the skills when they went into the
14 military to find a job, or the nexus, and when
15 they come out, they don't. We've been in a
16 recession, and that goes also for the female
17 veterans that you were talking about who have
18 children. They come back, and they have to have
19 child care, so there have to be certain--they need
20 help, and also in terms of--I agree with you, by
21 the way, with your idea. I think it's really
22 great. He has, you know, 40 years of hard work on
23 his side, advocating for people, for veterans, so
24 he's got a lot of experience behind his opinions.

25 As far as your question about

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2 female veterans, I'm not sure exactly what
3 percentage of the military they comprise, but
4 let's say there were 250,000--according to Chris
5 Quinn, there were 2.5 million veterans who passed
6 through Iraq and Afghanistan, and let's say they
7 were 10-15% of the troops. Well, there's figures
8 that one third of all women were raped, and one
9 fifth of all men, so they might've left the
10 service under less than dishonorable conditions
11 and be traumatized.

12 Now, we have the problem with PTSD
13 that affected 300,000 troops, and luckily for us,
14 PTSD can be brought to a level where people are
15 functioning and work. I myself know people who
16 are veterans from Vietnam, and they're still on
17 medication, and they still have PTSD, but they're
18 working and holding families together. So you
19 know, I'd also like to say that somebody who's a
20 contentious objector and decides after
21 experiencing real war that they don't support war,
22 maybe was imprisoned in the brig, doesn't have an
23 honorable discharge, or take the example of
24 someone I know who was a 12-year veteran of the
25 army and also a recruiter, and he was at a

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2 checkpoint where somebody was killed, and because
3 of the fact that they didn't speak Iraqi and the
4 Iraqis didn't speak English, they killed an
5 innocent civilian.

6 The guy came up to him and said,
7 why did you kill my brother or something in Iraqi.
8 So he had to live with that, and he had PTSD. So
9 we have all these situations, so that's why I
10 implore the legislators to have a provision
11 analogous to Title 38, which allows people who are
12 suffering from PTSD or some kind of mental problem
13 that they incurred in the military to be admitted
14 for consideration to these licenses and
15 applications.

16 There are many people from--who may
17 not be citizens of the United States that I know
18 they follow all the rules and the applications,
19 and they get jobs, and so why not have that happen
20 for our veterans also because it helps to
21 stabilize society, and it shows that you can have
22 a pathway to the American dream. Anything that
23 you can do, it's like this. You know, we're not
24 in the best economic situation or social
25 situation, but every little thing that can help

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2 and help families or individuals to achieve
3 successfully transition from military service to
4 civilian life is something that we should do. I
5 applaud your efforts in this way.

6 Also, I think it's really a good
7 idea to have a civilian committee, and if
8 possible, get nonprofit funding. Why not? That
9 would be fantastic.

10 MR. PORIOTIS: I would think for-
11 profit funding. I don't think the New York City
12 council has to put one nickel into this. I live
13 at 150 East--

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Before, Mr.
15 Poriotis, you speak, let me thank you Ms. Lanella
16 one more time. Thank you very much. I know that
17 you are a very strong advocate for veterans.
18 Every public hearing, I see you at every public
19 hearing, and you're always trying the best you can
20 do fighting for veterans. Finally, we got to vote
21 and try to get you a job over here. Thank you
22 very much. Thank you for your advocacy.

23 MS. LANELLA: Thank you for caring.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mr. Poriotis,
25 please.

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2 MR. PORIOTIS: Forgive me for
3 interrupting. I was just saying that money is the
4 mother's milk of politics, but I think money is
5 the mother's milk of enhancing veteran opportunity
6 because if we have so many billionaires--I mean,
7 the average Goldman Sachs employee made \$662,000
8 last year. That's the porter, the janitor, up
9 through the CEO. They have a pledge to give 4% of
10 their earnings at a certain level back to charity,
11 so together, Mr. Chairman, we should approach
12 Goldman Sachs to ask for a percentage of those
13 dollars to endow a New York City Council Veterans
14 Institute. We could put the Veterans Institute on
15 governor's island. We could put it in a number of
16 different places.

17 We as a nation have a defense
18 system that allows these people to make tens,
19 hundreds of millions. I don't resent that because
20 we have a charitable mentality that exceeds every
21 other country in the nation, but veterans are our
22 newest part of the philanthropic giving, and I
23 think instead of going to the foundations, we go
24 to the very wealthy individuals, have them fund
25 this so we have an endowment.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I see. Mr. Poriotis, I remember at the beginning of your testimony, you mentioned stigma. And we know about all the veterans, usually they don't go for services because of the stigma issue. And they don't want people to know about certain situations that they are in. But do you think that stigma is a very important element on the fact that unemployment is higher among veterans population than the civilian population?

MR. PORIOTIS: Having served corporate America for close to 40 years in terms of their recruitment, we were always the ones hired with a retainer to delve into the hidden talent pools to induce people to the table who historically wouldn't--for hidden jobs. And I have to tell you, when you become--in my business, your candidates became your clients, and your clients became your candidates, so we became very close to the human resources vice presidents.

Now when you ask their staffing managers about veterans, they quietly say to you, well, we don't want them to go postal on us. There is a subliminal sense in the American

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2 psyche, especially among staffing and recruitment
3 managers that there's trouble there. I think you
4 can divide stigma before 9/11 and after 9/11.
5 Before 9/11, there was a non-military stigma that
6 ran deep post-Vietnam.

7 After 9/11, Americans came to love
8 our troops and our military, but that didn't embed
9 itself in the employer. The employer still has
10 that structured process of a staffing manufacturer
11 looking at hundreds of resumes, and I have to tell
12 you that we recently did an executive search to
13 find a head of quality for an organization, and
14 the female president, wonderful lady, very
15 wealthy, very well-positioned, 60,000 people under
16 her inner division, she said, if I go in and I
17 tell the CEO that your candidate's from GE, he's
18 go, wow. If I go in and I say that the
19 candidate's from the military, he'll go why? Why?

20 People want to say this legacy of
21 military service not having value, is gone away.
22 It hasn't. But I think there's different kinds of
23 military. I think the enlisted service person
24 who's basically unmarketable with few skills and
25 few education is one military. The officer, the

1
2 young officer from West Pont, Indianapolis who's
3 pretty well structured, articulate, socially
4 adroit, 28, 29 years old is another military.

5 Those are the folks that GE and the
6 giant corporations are hiring. But at the
7 enlisted level, we need to create these jobs, and
8 I think we create the jobs by raising the value
9 proposition. You buy a BMW because it's been
10 marketed and marketed and remarketed and the brand
11 is there. The military brand has not been
12 marketed like the GE brand.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: That was the
14 question I was going to ask you, but you answered
15 part of it. So what should we as a city, as a
16 nation, what should we do or can we do to have the
17 veteran overcome this very difficult challenge,
18 this stigma? What can we do to encourage the
19 private sector, the jobs, the employers, to hire
20 the veterans? Not only legislation. That's a
21 part of it, you know what I mean?

22 MR. PORIOTIS: This is public
23 relations and promotion and marketing. Do you
24 remember the environmental movement with the
25 Indian with the tear coming down the eye? Do you

1
2 remember Magic Johnson, Elizabeth Taylor and Rock
3 Hudson coming out as celebrities on the AIDS
4 issue? It changed the whole nature of AIDS being
5 a scourge to AIDS being a problem we should
6 attack.

7 I have to tell you that this is not
8 a tactical or nonprofit--we've got 40,000
9 nonprofits doing what they can. They're
10 underfunded, they're all fighting for money, they
11 guard their turfs very jealously. This is a large
12 national public affairs problem where we have to
13 raise the specter of veterans.

14 We need a new veteran social
15 movement like we had the civil rights movement and
16 we had the women's movement. Until we had the
17 civil rights movement, until we had the women's
18 movement, all these tactical programs and these
19 it'sy-bitsy little do dads that we're doing failed.
20 We have to raise the specter.

21 I tell you, it would take millions
22 of dollars to the New York City advertising,
23 public relations, advertising council, it would
24 take millions of dollars to create a BMW-like
25 marketing program to revalue military service, and

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2 we don't have to raise the money. That money is
3 there. All we have to do is go to the McArthur
4 Foundation. Chuck Feeney, who started the duty
5 free shops--we're all familiar with duty-free
6 shops. He was in the New York Times recently
7 saying I'll be happy when my last \$1.4 billion, my
8 last check bounces. Let's make him happy. Let's
9 let his check bounce. Let's get his money to hire
10 these agencies under the Veterans Institute and
11 promote and increase the value, enhance the value
12 of military like we do for other products.
13 Military service is a product, and the product has
14 that stigmatic, very low value on the scale.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mr. Poriotis,
16 I know that you have been doing a wonderful job
17 with Veterans Across America, but what can
18 Veterans Across America do with respect to this
19 legislation and to help us reach our goal, which
20 is to help veterans use their skills to have jobs?

21 MR. PORIOTIS: Very good question.
22 Veterans Across America can help formulate the
23 legislation as part of your existing legislation
24 to create champion mentoring, and we can, with
25 you, coalesce the hedge fund and financial

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2 billionaires in this city to bring the dollars to
3 the table, to fund a program so that every veteran
4 job seeker, after getting that certification or
5 getting that trade license, who then sends in as
6 they do--before they come to us, they send out 500
7 resumes to a numbing silence. They're depressed.
8 They get no response.

9 We need to assign multiple mentors
10 and have this paid for by these very wealthy
11 people in New York City to support that. More
12 than that, we need a public relations program in
13 New York City by the--we have brilliant
14 advertising and PR people here who take Tide and
15 they relaunch it. They take the Malibu Chevrolet.
16 They relaunch it. Why don't we relaunch military
17 service to the private sector? We can do that by
18 embedding a requirement that we at least seek that
19 out in the legislation, and then Veterans Across
20 America can work with you to create the advisory
21 council.

22 I mean, people don't know who the
23 commissioner is. The CEOs from Estee Lauder to
24 Pfizer are not sitting down with him. We need to
25 raise the money to find the person or the people

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2 that can get access to these organizations to
3 change their behavior about veterans. And it can
4 be done. You don't have to raise the money. We
5 can raise the money and give the city--the city
6 council should be given the credit for this
7 because you have been advocates and active in
8 enhancing wellbeing, but you haven't done what the
9 simplest consumer packaged product does, and
10 that's promote--create a coalition and I mean, we
11 haven't even got Kathy Wilde [phonetic] from the
12 New York City business partnership involved in
13 this. When I go to the New York State economic
14 regional development conference council meetings
15 chaired by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, no word
16 of veterans comes up.

17 Yours is the only organization that
18 continues to bring this up, but it ends like the
19 atomic particles with the half life of a door. As
20 soon as we leave the door--we need the money. It
21 can be raised by the private sector to endow a
22 Veterans Institute that can take care of a lot of
23 problems, but employment is one of them.

24 We have 15,000 veterans before
25 Don't Ask Don't Tell who have less than honorable

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2 discharges who are gay. They have less than
3 honorable discharges and no security clearances.
4 There's a lot of problems, and we can speak about
5 the problems all day, but what Veterans Across
6 America can do is work with your legislative
7 council to formulate the language, and then to
8 raise the dollars through a corporate and business
9 aggressive group in this city.

10 And we have it. We have everything
11 here. We have the finance. We have the
12 promotion. We have the advertising agencies. We
13 have the employers, and those employers are
14 constantly being besieged. Won't you hire a
15 veteran? They've served. They've leadership. We
16 need to create the pull. Right now, all we're
17 doing is pushing.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you,
19 very much, Mr. Poriotis. Thank you very, very
20 much. And Ms. Lanella. I love your idea of
21 creating legislation for those veterans who have
22 been discharged not honorably, and I think we have
23 to look into that. Thank you so much, the both of
24 you. Thank you very much for your testimony, and
25 thank you for your advocacy also. Thank you.

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MR. PORIOTIS: Thank you.

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MS. LANELLA: Thanks.

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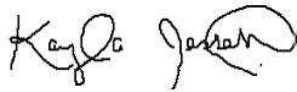
CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: The meeting is

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5 adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kayla Jessen, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kayla Jessen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'K'.

Signature

Date March 27, 2012