

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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January 27, 2016  
Start: 10:15 a.m.  
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HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: CARLOS MENCHACA  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Mathieu Eugene  
Daniel Dromm  
Peter A. Koo  
Rafael A. Espinal

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

Karen Pennar, Editor  
Voices of New York  
Co-Director, Center for Community and Ethnic Media  
CUNY Graduate School of Journalism

Nisha Agarwal, Commissioner  
Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, MOIA

Abu Taher, Director  
Bangla Patrika, Bangladeshi Newspaper  
Time Television for Bangladeshi & South Asian  
Community

Lotus Chan  
Sing Tao Daily

Gabriel Dantur, Chief Executive Officer  
El Diario/Las Prensa, ImpreMedia

Isseu Diouf Campbell  
Founder of Afrikanspot Website

Javier Castano, Founder and Director  
Queens Latino

Newt Sanibel (sic), Reporter  
Impacto Latin News

Peter Szekely, President  
News Guild of New York

Marta Garcia, Vice Chair  
National Hispanic Media Coalition

Kimberly Price  
Red Hook Star Review

Camilla Jenkins, Director  
Communications  
New York Legal Assistance Group, NYLAG

Thanu Yakupitiyage, Communications Manager  
New York Immigration Coalition

Stefan Ringel, Communications Director  
Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams

Augusto Lacon  
Latino Leadership Institute

Frankie Miranda, Senior Vice President  
Hispanic Federation

Ayisha Irfan, Policy Analysts  
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer

Helen Dook, Senior Staff Attorney  
New York Legal Assistance Group, NYLAG

Pamela Denzer, Asylum Program Supervisor  
Immigration Equality

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [off mic] Quiet and we  
3 ask that you find a seat, and no eating on site.  
4 [sic] Thank you.

5 [gavel]

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Buenos dias  
7 atoros. I'm Carlos Menchaca, Chair of the New York  
8 City Council's Committee on Immigration. Before  
9 going any further, I'd like to introduce the other  
10 members of the committee and the members here today.  
11 We are joined by Council Member Dromm, Council Member  
12 Koo, Council Member Reynoso, and I want to thank all  
13 the staff who made today possible. Today, the  
14 Committee on Immigration will explore ways in which  
15 the City can support and really examine the local  
16 ethnic and minority media outlets in order to ensure  
17 that the immigrant and minority communities receive  
18 accurate and timely information on local matters.  
19 Additionally, the committee will hear proposed  
20 Resolution 928-A, which calls upon the United States  
21 Supreme Court to uphold the implementation of two of  
22 President Obama's 2014 Immigration Executive Orders,  
23 specifically, the expansion of the Deferred Action  
24 for Childhood Arrivals, DACA program, as well as the  
25 creation of the Deferred Action for Parents of

2 American Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents  
3 program, known as DAPA. I know you've all been  
4 following that news, and we're really excited to be  
5 hearing this resolution to support this very  
6 important conversation in the Supreme Court.

7           Ethnic and minority media outlets play a  
8 crucial role in ensuring that all New Yorkers  
9 regardless of race, ethnicity or English language  
10 proficiency receive timely updates on local issues  
11 and available resources. While countless students  
12 have uncovered the ways in which ethnic and minority  
13 media coverage--and minority media coverage civic  
14 engagement among members of historically marginalized  
15 communities, we need not look for--far for concrete  
16 examples of how collaborations between governments,  
17 community organizations and ethnic and minority media  
18 can greatly benefit their respective communities.  
19 The City of New York has often partnered with such  
20 outlets in order to quickly disseminate information  
21 to communities that are especially vulnerable to  
22 fraudulent schemes and often lack awareness of what  
23 the resources and supportive services available to  
24 them. And right now, we are at a more critical time  
25 than ever. A prime example includes the City's

2 outreach campaigns regarding IDNYC, something that we  
3 are all so proud of. The City Council's  
4 participatory budgeting that we are--many of our  
5 council members are taking on in a very serious way.  
6 Services available to unaccompanied immigrant  
7 children and the relief efforts after Super Storm  
8 Sandy. Despite the great benefit that ethnic and  
9 minority media provide to their respective  
10 communities and to New York City as a whole, recent  
11 cuts in staff size and shifts away from locally  
12 generated content, suggests that these invaluable  
13 resources are in a period of transition that results-  
14 -the result of which is sure to impact immigrant and  
15 minority communities. Testimony today will focus on  
16 current trends in ethnic and minority media what the  
17 city can do to ensure that industry changes do not  
18 reduce the amount and quality of content, and that  
19 ethnic and minority communities receive information  
20 from local matters. Members of local ethnic and  
21 minority media will testify about challenges they  
22 face, and provide suggestions about how the city can  
23 support their work. Representatives of the Mayor's  
24 Office of Immigrant Affairs are here today, and they  
25 will also testify, along with community-based

2 organizations and advocates about the importance of  
3 collaborating with ethnic and minority media on  
4 community outreach and education initiatives. Our  
5 committee and the Council are committed to ensuring  
6 that the immigrant and minority communities receive  
7 accurate information from trusted sources, and, I  
8 can't underestimate and underscore this enough.  
9 We're talking about the trust, public trust in a  
10 timely manner. The testimony today will help the  
11 committee learn from past challenges and successes in  
12 order to identify ways in which it can strengthen and  
13 grow its relationship with local ethnic and minority  
14 media outlets, and in doing so further support New  
15 York's immigrant and minority communities.

16 Additionally, we will also hear from proposed  
17 Resolution 928-A, which calls upon the Supreme Court  
18 to overturn the decision of the Fifth Circuit Court  
19 of Appeals and uphold President Obama's 2014  
20 Executive Orders, which allowed for the expansion of  
21 the DACA program and the creation of the DAPA program  
22 for parents of the U.S. citizens or lawful permanent  
23 residents. The implementation of the expanded DACA  
24 and DAPA programs would make four and five--four to  
25 five million individuals eligible for temporary

2 relief from deportation, as well as work  
3 authorization. It is believed that in New York City  
4 alone upwards of 200,000 individuals may be eligible  
5 for one of these programs. Many studies project that  
6 the implementation of these programs would lead to an  
7 increase of \$90 billion in gross domestic product  
8 over ten years. This is what is at stake here. We  
9 do not get to those members. We do not get to that  
10 economic achievement if we cannot communicate these  
11 messages on the ground. However, the most impact of  
12 implementing these programs will not be just an  
13 economic one. Rather, it would be a significant  
14 improvement in the quality of life of families who  
15 grapple daily with the fear of being torn apart. It  
16 is for this reason family unity that the Council  
17 calls upon the United States Supreme Court to  
18 overturn and--the current injunction--injunction, and  
19 allow for the implementation of the expanded DACA and  
20 the new DAPA programs. [Speaking Spanish] Muchas  
21 gracias, and I want to also--no new members--I want  
22 to call up our first witnesses Mrs. Karen Pennar from  
23 the Center of the Community and Ethnic Media at CUNY.  
24 Can you please come on up, and give your testimony



1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

9

2 and get us started in this conversation. [pause] Red  
3 light.

4 KAREN PENNAR: Got it.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Awesome.

6 KAREN PENNAR: Good morning. My name is  
7 Karen Pennar and I'm Editor of Voices of New York and  
8 Co-Director of the Center for Community and Ethnic  
9 Media at the City University of New York Graduate  
10 School of Journalism. I want to thank you, Mr.  
11 Menchaca for and your colleagues for this opportunity  
12 to address the Committee on Immigration. I think the  
13 subject of this hearing is an important one, and  
14 we're pleased and honored to be part of the  
15 conversation. Before I comment on the subject of the  
16 hearing, I'd like to provide a little background on  
17 the center. Our center as established at the CUNY J  
18 School in 2012 when the school agreed to assume some  
19 of the project of a predecessor organization, the New  
20 York Community Media Alliance. Our mission is to  
21 promote and represent the work of community and  
22 ethnic media outlets in the New York Metropolitan  
23 area. Our flagship website, Voice of New York,  
24 curates the best work from this media sector  
25 translating when necessary. [coughs] The center

2 conducts numerous trainings and workshops for ethnic  
3 press, as well as special newsmaker events with city  
4 officials and agency directors. We sponsor an annual  
5 awards ceremony know as the Ippies, which celebrate  
6 the best work of the community and ethnic media.

7 Finally, the center conducts outreach and publishes  
8 research to track the pulse of this sector. I've

9 been Editor of Voices of New York for two years, and

10 Co-Director of the Center for nearly a year. And I'd

11 like to thank you Co-Director John Yurcotic (sp?) who

12 has many years of experience in working the ethnic

13 media in New York for helping me in preparing these

14 remarks. As you well know, nearly 40% of New York

15 City's residents are foreign born, and 1.8 million of

16 them speak little or no English. Nearly half of the

17 residents in the city report speaking a language

18 other than English at home. It's perhaps

19 unsurprising that a large media sector has developed

20 to meet the needs of these ethnic communities. More

21 that 90 newspapers and many more magazines, websites,

22 radio and television broadcasters and programmers

23 serve the ethnic and immigrant communities of New

24 York in more than 35 languages. These publications

25 range from venerable ones with a century old legacy

2 such as El Diario La Prensa to relative newcomers  
3 such Hasokas (sp?) and White Hamal TV, which serve  
4 the burgeonings--burgeoning Nepalese community. And  
5 many of these outlets have a regional and national  
6 audience even though they may be based in here, and  
7 their management and structure may vary from mom and  
8 pop style operations to foreign owned entities.  
9 While El Diaro's recent lay-offs have drawn  
10 attention, many ethnic media outlets have been facing  
11 severe financial challenges for a long time. In  
12 recent weeks, we at the center have heard stories  
13 about reporting positions going unfilled for months,  
14 and about revenues being squeezed as ad buyers  
15 postpone payments. Just this month the Daily Nowy  
16 Dziennik, which has served the Polish speaking  
17 community in the New York Metropolitan area for 45  
18 years shifted to weekly publication.

19           Now, I'm aware that we heard a very  
20 important--we got a very important piece of news this  
21 morning from the city that the Mayor and the City  
22 Council Speaker have agreed to enhance and really  
23 build up outreach to the ethnic media, and to look  
24 toward more advertising in the ethnic media. And I  
25 have to say this is a really positive development.

2 At the Center, we've been pushing for this for a long  
3 time, and I can only applaud everyone involved in  
4 making it--bringing it together and making it happen.  
5 My remarks were originally going to actually talk  
6 about just some of these issues, and what needs to be  
7 done. I'll go through them a little more quickly  
8 just to reinforce what has been discussed, and to  
9 talk about--to reflect on a little bit of what the  
10 ethnic media has been telling us. We did a quick  
11 survey over the past few days, and asked some top  
12 editors what the single most important thing the City  
13 could do to help support ethnic media. What that  
14 would be. Here are some of their replies. The City  
15 should appoint an ethnic media czar to work with  
16 ethnic media. The City should translate press  
17 release for the ethnic media. The City should buy  
18 more ads in ethnic media. Now, these answers to us  
19 represent the three key areas in which we believe the  
20 City can take some action, and it sounds like they're  
21 going to really do that, and--and address these  
22 issues.

23                   The first area pertains to outreach.  
24 While council members know their constituents well,  
25 and work closely with them, City Hall and city

2 agencies and departments could probably do a better  
3 job of maintaining connections with individual ethnic  
4 communities via the ethnic press. More than 70% of  
5 our respondents felt that the Mayor's Office and city  
6 agencies don't do enough outreach. Fifty-five  
7 percent of our respondents said they had only  
8 sometimes been invited to City Hall briefings, and  
9 33% said they had never been. This--establishing  
10 regular lines of communication can be a win-win. The  
11 City can promote messaging of various campaigns and  
12 efforts such as Thrive New York City via ethnic media  
13 while the ethnic median in turn can bring--gain  
14 greater access to city representatives. Over time,  
15 such relationships cannot help but promote civic  
16 engagement. The second way in which the City could  
17 support ethnic media would be to provide easy access  
18 to news and information. Translation of every press  
19 release that every city agency puts out into all the  
20 languages represented in the ethnic media would be a  
21 daunting, not to mention expensive task. Already the  
22 City is making a herculean effort through various  
23 agencies to ensure language access. But what if the  
24 City produced a short daily digest of news from City  
25 Hall and city agencies, translated that into several

2 languages and made that available as a daily newsfeed  
3 for the ethnic media. Media of all kinds are always  
4 content hungry, and a ready-made daily digest I think  
5 would be welcomed by the ethnic media. Finally,  
6 ethnic media have been banging the drum and rightly  
7 so for more ad placements from city agencies and  
8 departments. A research study reproduced in 2013  
9 found that more than 80% of the City's ad buys were  
10 going to mainstream publications. Some ethnic media  
11 representatives report to us that they've seen an  
12 improvement since then, but many still feel shut out,  
13 and they are eager for a change in direction.  
14 Ramping up the placement of advertising in ethnic media  
15 would go a long way towards supporting such media.  
16 And as before in the other suggestions, that would  
17 help promote messaging and understanding of the  
18 City's activities and civic engagement by immigrants  
19 over the long term. The Mayor's Office of Immigrant  
20 Affairs has a history of serving and meeting the  
21 needs of the city's immigrant and ethnic communities.  
22 But because the number--because the number of  
23 immigrants, the number of countries from which they  
24 arrive, and the Number of languages which they speak  
25 are so great in New York City attentiveness to

2 immigrants and ethnic communities needs to cut across  
3 all agencies, and departments and to become second  
4 nature. I hope with the announcement we heard this  
5 morning that that is indeed what will happen. Thank  
6 you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much  
8 Ms. Pennar, and for being here. We're going to--we  
9 have a couple questions before you--you get off the  
10 mic, and one just thank you for being here. I know  
11 this has been a long journey--

12 KAREN PENNAR: [interposing] Uh-huh.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --and I want to  
14 just underscore a couple of things you said as we  
15 move on, and I know some of my colleagues have  
16 questions before we get to the next panel. The first  
17 thing I want to say is that I know you've been  
18 working on this and the team at CUNY has been working  
19 on this for a while, and the work that you did to  
20 kind of create these recommendations, like czar, I  
21 just want to get the three that you suggest. The  
22 ethnic media czar, translation of all press releases--  
23 -

24 KAREN PENNAR: [interposing] Uh-huh.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --and you--you had  
3 a third. I want to make sure that we all hear that.

4 KAREN PENNAR: The third was the--the  
5 ads. So the ad revenues

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] The  
7 ad revenues.

8 KAREN PENNAR: --the ad placements, and  
9 I--I should add that those are three quotes from the  
10 surveys. They're endorsing an ethnic media

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
12 Right, right--

13 KAREN PENNAR: --czar. I'm just saying  
14 that--

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] --  
16 you're just giving this information.

17 KAREN PENNAR: --speaks to the outreach,  
18 um, issue.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Great.

20 KAREN PENNAR: Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Tell me a little  
22 bit about the change most recently. Because I want  
23 to honor that, too. We have a new Council and I want  
24 to say that--or I want to say, and kind of repeat  
25 something you said. You're very excited that--that



2 the Speaker Office and the City Council and the Mayor  
3 proposed this new database. Just exactly tell us how  
4 important that is, and what a big step that--that was  
5 for the Administration and the Council to work  
6 together to make this happen. What does that do, and  
7 how does that really change?

8 KAREN PENNAR: Well, I think if all city  
9 agencies and departments are daily--on a daily basis  
10 referring to a directory of--of these media, they'll  
11 have a--it'll be--it'll be part of that process of  
12 making--making it second nature to think about all  
13 media in the city, all residents of the city and how  
14 they can best be served. So, if they have that  
15 directory, if they need to reach out to a certain  
16 community, or need to try to set up a certain--a  
17 certain collaboration or something, it's handy. If  
18 they need it for press release purposes. If they  
19 need it for some kind of sort of public service type  
20 messaging. Whatever, it's--it's a--it's a great  
21 thing to have.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And then the final  
23 question--and I'm going to hand it over to Council  
24 Members--how important are ad revenues to the industry  
25 from the CUNY perspective?

2 KAREN PENNAR: Well, I--I think the--the  
3 entire media industry--for, you know, there's a lot  
4 going on, and not just ethnic media, and for--for  
5 print publications especially, ad revenues are huge  
6 and the loss of those ad revenues has been a story  
7 for many years. And for--it's--it's just as true for  
8 the ethnic publications. So, it's a big--it's a big,  
9 big issue for them.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And how different  
11 is ad revenue to an ethnic and community paper to say  
12 the Daily the News?

13 KAREN PENNAR: They don't--I don't think  
14 they have the regular buys that--that the Daily News  
15 does. They don't get the major, you know, the major  
16 retailers checking in with them. So they need--they  
17 need to sort of piece together ad revenues from many  
18 different sources.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. I'm  
20 going to hand it over to Council Member Reynoso, But  
21 I also want to acknowledge that Council Member  
22 Rodriguez is in the Chambers as well. Thank you so  
23 much.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you,  
25 Council Member Menchaca. I just want to say you've

2 done an amazing job of really bringing this issue to  
3 light, and really championing it, and I'm extremely  
4 grateful that I could be sitting here in this  
5 committee fighting for something that I think is  
6 extremely important to the folks in my community  
7 specifically. I do want to just ask when it comes to  
8 trends, we've seen other publications outside of  
9 ethnic media that are also struggling let's say to  
10 stay afloat. We've seen the New York Times and other  
11 publications move to--to the Internet and charge a  
12 fee to get its content to a certain degree. What--  
13 what are you seeing with the ethnic media and how  
14 they're trying to--to adjust to--to the times that we  
15 have upon us when it comes to print media?

16 KAREN PENNAR: Right. Well, there's  
17 certainly--I mean there's certainly more websites  
18 than there were before. There's certainly more  
19 exploration of mobile presentation of news, but it--a  
20 lot of things are challenges. As I said, many of  
21 the--many of the outlets that we communicate with are  
22 small. They are mom and pop operations. They are  
23 operations where the editor may be the publisher or  
24 may be the report or may be-- So they're not all like  
25 that, but many of them are short-staffed, and it's

2 hard to envision moving into the digital age, and  
3 seeing that as a--a rescue for them when it's not  
4 even clear that that's rescuing large media  
5 organizations so--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: In hearing your  
7 response, I--I--I'm concerned there that staying in  
8 print might not be a sustainable model, and that what  
9 you think as an--as an alternative and--or what folks  
10 might see as an alternative in--in media or online or  
11 on the phone, is not necessarily a viable one.

12 KAREN PENNAR: I--I think all media  
13 outlets today have to look across all possible  
14 platforms.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So, for--for the  
16 general public I just want to make a quick statement.  
17 There's a too-big-fail situation that we--we--we end  
18 up hitting, for example, in saving banks and of  
19 government's involvement in helping financial  
20 institutions, and then when we look at ethnic media,  
21 for example, and I want to use El Diario as an  
22 example.

23 KAREN PENNAR: [interposing] Okay.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: El Diario is  
25 probably the largest publication of Spanish media in

2 the--in the City of New York. Should they for any  
3 reason not be able to continue to operate in print  
4 media, we would lose a huge chunk of the work that  
5 we--of the--of the messaging that we get out to a lot  
6 of our immigrant communities, especially the Spanish  
7 speaking community, which is extremely. And I think  
8 we account for almost a third of the population here  
9 in the City of New York, and to lose that would be--  
10 would be a disaster I think in being able to get  
11 information out especially to these Latino  
12 communities. We're going to hear from the  
13 Commissioner of Immigration Affairs about what they  
14 think they can do to be helpful, and we're talking  
15 about ad buys. But I really want to really to have a  
16 more expansive conversation because there-- We're at  
17 a point where we need to do more than just ad buys  
18 because the failure to save a lot of these  
19 institutions and these publications can mean almost a  
20 complete blackout when it comes to information for  
21 the--for a lot of immigrants here in the City of New  
22 York. But I--I really appreciate your testimony and  
23 I thank you for your time.

24 KAREN PENNAR:

25 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO:

2 KAREN PENNAR: Thank you.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you,  
4 Chair, for your leadership as always, and I look  
5 forward to asking more questions of the  
6 Administration.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council  
8 Member Reynoso. Thank you, Ms. Pennar.

9 KAREN PENNAR: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And we're going to  
11 call up the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs,  
12 Commissioner Nisha Agarwal and thank you for coming  
13 today. And--and again, I just want to applaud the  
14 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, and the release  
15 of today's incredible opportunity that we've just  
16 heard from CUNY, and the real shift. It was this  
17 Council, this City Council with the leadership of our  
18 Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and Mayor de Blasio.  
19 And, with your leadership that really got us to this  
20 place, and so I just want to say thank you for that  
21 dedication. This is the beginning of a long, long  
22 new commitment throughout the community--ethnic media  
23 and community newspapers. And so, I just want to say  
24 thank you as you get to the mic. It's all yours.

2                   COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Thank you. Thank  
3 you so much Chairman Menchaca and the members of the  
4 Committee on Immigration. My name is Nisha Agarwal,  
5 and I'm the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of  
6 Immigrant Affairs. New York City is the most diverse  
7 city in the country and possibly the world. New  
8 Yorkers speak over 200 languages. While this is--  
9 this multi-lingual mosaic is a huge asset, it also  
10 presents a challenge for government to serve who are  
11 not proficient in English. Approximately 23% of all  
12 New York City residents or 1.8 million New Yorkers  
13 speak a language other than English at home and have  
14 a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand  
15 English. Communicating effectively with this  
16 population is mandated on the federal and state  
17 levels and locally with Executive Order 120 and Local  
18 Law 73 and others. Not only are government agencies  
19 bound by law to provide equal access to information  
20 and services regardless of language, the de Blasio  
21 Administration is committed to making sure that all  
22 New Yorkers who are not proficient in English have  
23 access to needed city services. Simply stated, the  
24 City should speak the language of its residents. To  
25 implement the Mayor's vision, my office working with

2 partner agencies has developed a comprehensive  
3 approach to language access. We've engaged senior  
4 staff of city agencies in assisting the effort, and  
5 we have created a new senior level position at MOIA,  
6 the Executive Director Language Access Initiatives to  
7 oversee the implementation and coordination of  
8 citywide language access compliance and programming.  
9 One important component of our comprehensive vision  
10 of language access is to support agencies and  
11 outlets--outreach to limited English proficient New  
12 Yorkers with important information about the services  
13 and resources for which they may be eligible.  
14 Engaging the ethnic and community media is a key  
15 strategy in this effort. Many people who don't speak  
16 English rely on native language print, radio and  
17 online news outlets for news and information about  
18 government services and resources. Many other  
19 residents of all language abilities turn to local  
20 independent news outlets that focus on their  
21 neighborhoods. New York City is a remarkably rich  
22 hub of ethnic and community media with an estimated  
23 270 ethnic and community newspapers that have a  
24 combined readership of--of about 4.5 million New  
25 Yorkers, as well as a Number of foreign language



2 radio and TV broadcast outlets. The city's range of  
3 ethnic media is a crucial connector in the lives of  
4 New Yorkers. The large mainstream newspapers and TV  
5 and radio stations simply do not have the same reach  
6 and resonance in immigrant communities as do many of  
7 the smaller local papers or neighborhood-based  
8 websites. In recognition of the importance of ethnic  
9 and community media and reaching New Yorkers, the  
10 city government under the de Blasio Administration  
11 has increased the proportion of advertising dollars  
12 spent on placements in those outlets. In Fiscal Year  
13 2015, nearly 20% of the city government advertising  
14 expenditures were in ethnic media accounting for  
15 roughly \$1.1 million. This represents a higher  
16 proportion of advertising expenditures than in recent  
17 years, and indicates greater awareness among city  
18 agencies of the important benefits of engaging ethnic  
19 and community media.

20           And I'd like to now describe some of the  
21 Administration's recent public campaigns that have  
22 included a significantly ethnic and community media  
23 advertising to successfully reach their target  
24 audiences just to provide some examples. In 2014, my  
25 office with the support to the Young Men's Initiative

2 ran a public education and advertising campaign to  
3 help young immigrant New Yorkers learn about and  
4 apply for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or  
5 DACA. DACA is an important form of temporary  
6 protection from deportation, and a source of work  
7 authorization among other benefits. One hundred  
8 percent of the approximately \$89,000 that we spent on  
9 print and radio advertising is allocated to ethnic  
10 media with 40 print ads in eight languages across 11  
11 publications, and with 200 radio spots in three  
12 languages four stations. And I should have brought  
13 examples of the ads because they were great. IDNYC,  
14 the City's Municipal ID Program, as you mentioned  
15 Chairman Menchaca, is a prime example of the citywide  
16 campaign that focused much of the marketing and  
17 communications on immigrant communities. The  
18 approach with IDNYC included extensive engagement  
19 with ethnic and community media, including  
20 roundtables, and partnerships with organizations like  
21 the Hispanic Federation, and work with outlets such  
22 as Telemundo, Uno Decione (sp?), El Diario and Radio  
23 WADO to create unique opportunities for New Yorkers  
24 to learn about the program. Since the program's  
25 launch last January, ethnic and community media print

2 ads have so far totaled \$340,000, which comprises  
3 approximately 64% of the total ad buys, print ad  
4 buys. IDNYC print ads have appeared in 32  
5 publications representing 10 languages, and among  
6 IDNYC's radio ad buys, more than 33% of them  
7 dedicated to ethnic radio stations. Similarly, the  
8 Department of Consumer Affairs who's recently been  
9 involved in two outreach and educate--educational  
10 campaigns, the Paid Sick Leave Campaign, which spent  
11 27% of its ad dollars with ethnic media, and the  
12 Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign, which spent 37% of  
13 its ad budget with ethnic media.

14 To continue to build on these recent  
15 successes with the ethnic and community media, we  
16 have developed three key strategies. First, we have  
17 worked with the City Hall Press Office, the City  
18 Council Speaker's Office, and the CUNY School of  
19 Journalism to created a directory of ethnic and  
20 community media. The directory is a database of 200  
21 TV, radio, print and digital news outlets covering  
22 more than 30 languages. This directory will help  
23 city agency communication staff identify the most  
24 effective ways of reaching their intended audiences  
25 through articles, editorials and paid in their media.

2 This resource will strengthen the Administration's  
3 communications reach to all corners of the five  
4 boroughs, and the directory is, of course, is also  
5 available to members of the City Council.

6           Second, my team has already trained the  
7 communications departments of city agencies on  
8 accessing ethnic media and the importance of making  
9 ethnic and community media ad buys to reach all New  
10 Yorkers. And, we will conduct follow-up training  
11 starting in March of 2016. And finally, we have for  
12 the first time added categories related to ad  
13 procurement to the Annual Internal Language Access  
14 Assessment that all city agencies are required to  
15 prepare. This change will allow MOIA to better  
16 monitor agency level ethnic media ad buys in their  
17 marketing campaigns. We look forward to working with  
18 our public facing city agencies, to the Council and  
19 the ethnic and community media to continue to improve  
20 the city's communications with New Yorkers or all  
21 backgrounds and languages.

22           And finally, on a separate note, I'm  
23 pleased to see that the Speaker has introduced a  
24 resolution expressing support from President's  
25 Obama's Immigration Executive Actions; the

2 President's expansion of the existing DACA program  
3 and his creation of the new Deferred Action Program  
4 for parents of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent  
5 resident children have been enjoined from  
6 implementation by a Federal District Court in Texas.  
7 The federal government's appeal of that injunction is  
8 now before the Supreme Court. The DACA and DAPA  
9 programs would provide immense benefits to thousands  
10 upon thousands of New York City's immigrant  
11 residents, and to the City itself. Mayor de Blasio  
12 together with the Mayor's and account executives  
13 Cities for Action Coalition have filed an amicus  
14 brief to support the President's executives at the  
15 District Court, and the Fifth District Court of  
16 Appeals, and we will continue to express our support.  
17 So we're really thrilled about the resolution.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you,  
19 Commissioner for your testimony, and I hope everyone  
20 here is taking notes because I'd like to hear from  
21 you about what you think in this new world with this  
22 database, but also just the commitments, and I'd like  
23 to hear your responses when we talk to you next.  
24 But, my--my first question is really, and I want to  
25 hand it over to my--my colleagues, too. Well,

2 actually, my first kind of comment to my colleagues  
3 is that there's a new directory. And this is going  
4 to be an important piece, and I'm hoping that we can  
5 keep ourselves accountable in using this directory,  
6 and really allow ourselves to expand our ability to  
7 take more messages that we're doing in the district  
8 like participatory budgeting, and like IDNYC. And--  
9 and use the directory to communicate with local  
10 reporters. There is always one reporter that you  
11 just didn't know because they've just--they just  
12 signed up to become a new writer part-time for a  
13 local newspaper. And, it sounds like this is going  
14 to be updated often. So, my first question to you on  
15 the database is how often is this going to be updated  
16 and how dynamic has it been? You know, you got  
17 really deep into this with our staff. How deep or  
18 how often are you going to update this, and how often  
19 do you have to do this so that we're getting that  
20 fresh glow of information about who these writers are  
21 on the ground?

22 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Right. So I think  
23 that one thing I'll say is that the--database will be  
24 updated particularly as we get information back from  
25 the folks who are using it to say, you know, that

2 this information may be out of date. It's not. We  
3 can keep it updated as we need to, but we'll need the  
4 information back both from the Council and from our  
5 city agencies if the information starts to feel like  
6 it's moving out of date. But, really the idea here  
7 is that sometimes the investments are not made, the  
8 outreach is not done with ethnic and community media  
9 because people don't know where to look. And so, if  
10 we can keep an updated comprehensive database of  
11 those resources, and who exactly to contact, I think  
12 that alone will enable us to see a lot of  
13 improvement. And so our--our sincere hope is that  
14 we'll hear that feedback. If we find that there are  
15 parts of the database that need to be updated and  
16 refreshed, then we're ready and able to update it as  
17 needed.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Great. I have  
19 more questions on the Ethnic Media Database, but I  
20 want to ask a question about ads. The Numbers have  
21 grown and they're day and night from the previous  
22 administration to this administration. The work and  
23 probably the most championed and successful project  
24 is a joint project with the legislative work for  
25 IDNYC and the implementation from the multi-agencies

2 that made that happen. How difficult was it to shift  
3 into placing these ads? What challenges did you face  
4 in doing that internally, and what can you tell us  
5 about the future of ad buying in our newspapers, not  
6 just for what MOIA is doing.

7 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: [interposing]  
8 Right.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: It sounds like I'm  
10 going--I'm going to hear that it's kind of--it was  
11 easier kind of taking control of your budgets, and  
12 for all the other agencies that I'm hoping to hear  
13 from you on in the coming months, and if you can tell  
14 us today that have sometimes bought zero ads in  
15 making our big public service announcements readable  
16 to everyone in the city.

17 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Right. So, I'll  
18 start by saying, you know, in the context of IDNYC,  
19 it wasn't that hard. You just have to think about it  
20 at the beginning, right, which is who are we trying  
21 to reach? Who are the New Yorkers we're trying to  
22 communicate with, and I can't imagine a program in  
23 New York City where, you know, nearly 40% of the  
24 population are immigrants, but we're not trying to  
25 reach immigrant communities. And so I think the key



2 thing is to think about it from the beginning to do  
3 an analysis of the target communities and languages  
4 are spoken, and that may vary depending on what the  
5 program is. And then be able to use the directory to  
6 then identify who are the outlets and--and how the  
7 agency wants to make those decisions. As I mentioned  
8 in my testimony, we now have an Executive Director of  
9 the Language Access Initiatives who's here today I  
10 think really very happy to strategize and work with  
11 agencies to do that to make it even easier. And  
12 then, what you find--many people ask how did we get  
13 740,000 people signing up for IDNYC in year one. And  
14 do I think that ethnic and community media was a big  
15 part of that because we're getting to community  
16 members in the language they speak in the  
17 publications that they're reading or listening or  
18 watching. And so, I think that's got to be right at  
19 the outset part of how agencies think and we've done  
20 trainings, and will continue to do trainings to make  
21 that part of the DNA. (sic)

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Got  
23 it. And the last question and I'm going to hand it  
24 over to my council member colleagues. How hard has  
25 it been this last--these last two years to really

2 change the culture with your fellow commissioners  
3 and this commitment that you're sharing with us is  
4 easy because you're at the top in that--

5 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: [interposing]  
6 Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --division. Tell  
8 us about the challenges that you're facing there, and  
9 really what kind of opportunities you're seeing from  
10 that.

11 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah, so I think  
12 it's been very helpful, of course, that May de Blasio  
13 has made clear his commitment to language access and  
14 to reaching all New Yorkers including immigrant New  
15 Yorkers from the beginning. So that message has been  
16 communicated pretty readily to all of the  
17 commissioners. And I think that in many, many cases  
18 it's really a question of how do you do it, and  
19 working with the agencies to get better practices  
20 going. With regard to that, you mentioned the  
21 Department of Consumer Affairs. They actually--the  
22 Paid Sick Leave Campaign came before IDNYC to the  
23 fantastic job of translating materials, but also  
24 using community ethnic media right from the outset.  
25 So I think this is something that's going certainly

2 beyond MOIA related programs, and I feel very  
3 confident that the other agencies will look up there  
4 as well.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So it sounds like-  
6 -it sounds like strong messages from there. Continue  
7 the strong message from there, and you're working  
8 with the database to make that happen.

9 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Exactly.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay. Council  
11 Member Rodriguez with first questions.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Yes. Thank  
13 you Chairman and you've been doing a great job on  
14 this issue, and other issues related to the--our  
15 immigrant community even though everyone here is an  
16 immigrant. What percentage is the Latino population  
17 in our city?

18 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: In the city?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: In the city.

20 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: That's a good  
21 question. I'll get back to you. We'll figure that  
22 out right away. I don't want to--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: [interposing]  
24 Great.

25 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --misspeak.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: So, so--and--  
3 and as you know like in the 1900 census we were not  
4 counting. Our Latino population did not appear in  
5 the census. So, 96% of the population in New York  
6 City was white; 2% was Latino--well, it was all  
7 American. Latinos were not there, and if you go back  
8 to the 1900 Census. Today, we are the second largest  
9 group in our city, and I believe that and sometimes  
10 when we look at the Latino population, people we're  
11 thinking as undocumented, people with Green Cards.  
12 Immigrants like myself that still Spanish is my  
13 native language and I speak with my accent. But in  
14 my family with 12 brothers and sisters, I have more  
15 than 75 nieces and nephews. The whole family is born  
16 here. And even those like in my generation that came  
17 here on my Green card, there is no one on my family  
18 among the 12 brothers and sisters who are not USA  
19 citizens today. And I think that it is unfortunate  
20 that in 2016 we still have to be making a case that  
21 we deserve the same attention when it comes to  
22 investing in the second largest group in our city.  
23 So, for myself, someone that really works very  
24 closely with this Administration that appreciates and  
25 know that he's putting his dollars where we have the

2 need on the Early Childhood Education or on the UPK,  
3 on the After School Computer Science but--and, of  
4 course, like we also appreciate your leadership. You  
5 know that you're someone that has a background  
6 advancing the agenda of the immigrant community.  
7 When it comes to the issue that we are having--facing  
8 today of the El Diario La Prensa, the first thing  
9 that we want to be clear is that, you know, we from  
10 this side doesn't--we don't--we don't expect to be  
11 telling any investor who takes the risk putting the  
12 dollars in what it is that you need to do. So this  
13 conversation is not coming from us as saying you, the  
14 new owner of the El Diario La Prensa, this is what  
15 you should do. You should not close not the El  
16 Diario La Prensa if it means all about having a  
17 conversation or the importance of El Diario La  
18 Prensa, the legacy of the El Diario La Prensa. And  
19 how we can work together to save the El Diario.  
20 Because for many members or about 28% of the Latino  
21 population in our city who are still Spanish is the  
22 only language that they speak, El Diario became the  
23 only real contact that they had to being informed.  
24 And it's still today is the only real contact that  
25 they have. So, my first question to me is how much--

2 to you is how much does the city spend in ads (sic)  
3 in 2015, and what percentage of those ads were  
4 invested in the Latino media.

5 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Sure. So I can  
6 share that in 2015 the total ad funding was about  
7 \$6,300,000, and in ethnic publications it was about  
8 \$1,150,000 dollars, which was about 18% of the ad  
9 buys, and that's almost doubling from 2013. What I  
10 don't currently have in front of me, but we can get  
11 that Number to you is the breakdown in terms of  
12 Spanish language or Latino media, which we should--it  
13 should be pretty easy for us to get from the raw  
14 data. Oh, okay, and then the answer to the total  
15 population of Latinos in New York City almost \$2.5  
16 million or 29% of the city's breakdown there. (sic)

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Great.

18 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: So, you know,  
20 we are there, and--and again I--we know that we have  
21 a Mayor, we had an administration that cares for the  
22 Latino community, that is working hard to make  
23 changes. So that whatever we do reflect, that 29%  
24 that we are in the city, I just would like to see how  
25 on some level we work toward as El Diario--it's the

2 owners that again, we are not expected to tell them  
3 what to do. By this here possibility or I hope they  
4 can keep the newspaper open because the value, they  
5 are huge with the El Diario La Prensa. So from the  
6 governmental side, we should be looking, you know,  
7 doing the investments that reflect the 29% of the  
8 population that we as the Latinos are in this city.  
9 Thank you, Commissioner.

10 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Gracias.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council  
13 Member Rodriguez, and did--did you have the answer to  
14 the--the Latino population.

15 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: We're--pulling up  
16 now.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, so we're--  
18 we're--we're seeing 28%, and so I think one question  
19 we have is--is does it make sense for us to look at  
20 population and connect it to ads? Is that a fair way  
21 to think about how we place our ads?

22 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So I would say in  
23 MOIA we've been thinking about it is we definitely--  
24 you know, by including this ad procurement metric  
25 within the reports that city agencies provide, we can

2 get a sense of whether there's been improvement and  
3 kind of overall Number. I do think depending on what  
4 the campaign is, that you have to think about who are  
5 the audience that you're trying to reach. And so,  
6 there might be some programs where, you know, you  
7 want to mix up. It's not always the top seven  
8 languages spoken citywide, but it might be particular  
9 to certain neighborhoods. We just have to be sort of  
10 thoughtful about giving agencies the flexibility to  
11 design campaigns that really are reaching the groups  
12 that they--that they need to reach for their  
13 programming, and I think that flexibility is really  
14 important to actually do a good job depending on the  
15 program.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right, so I hear  
17 responsibility. I hear that, see that with IDNYC,  
18 but as a city policy, how should we measure our ad,  
19 revenue spending? How do we--how do we--how do we  
20 think about this? Help us understand that. How do  
21 we think about this? Beyond responsibility. So you  
22 answer the responsibility question.

23 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Right.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: But on the money,  
25 on the dollars and the-- You know, we're seeing an



2 uptick in--in spending and commitment at an agency--  
3 at your agency. How do we think about this as a city  
4 that's pumping millions of dollars into ads?

5           COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yep. So I think  
6 one--one thing I would say is we just first need to  
7 see an increase, and an a continued increase, and  
8 then I think we think we want to look at the Numbers  
9 really holistically to understand. You know, I  
10 wouldn't say that we need to set specific percentage  
11 targets or things like that, but we have to hold our  
12 agencies very accountable based on improving. I  
13 think we can all have improvement. And candidly, I  
14 think if we were doing the DACA ad campaign, we  
15 wanted to spent 100% of our budget on ethnic media,  
16 and wouldn't want to change that, right. So I think  
17 it could work either way. Then in some cases like  
18 IDNYC and like DACA we want to make sure that we have  
19 the ability to go even above what may be the  
20 percentage breakdown of immigrant communities, right?  
21 So, I think again--I think there needs to be  
22 flexibility, and not sort of targets that agencies  
23 are--are moving towards that are actually just an  
24 accountability to be improving, and having their

2 campaigns reflect New York is and what their programs  
3 are and who they should be reaching.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: The last  
5 questions, and I'm going to hand it over to Council  
6 Member Reynoso, but what would a--what would a goal  
7 do in this conversation? So say where--where we--  
8 where--we are where we are now, but if the  
9 Administration wanted to set a goal, what would that  
10 do to this conversation to move it forward?

11 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah, I mean I  
12 think a goal could be fine. I think a goal could  
13 also be--

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] And  
15 what is a goal to you, as you--as you understand it?

16 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah, yeah, and I  
17 think a goal could candidly also be distorting or not  
18 really reflect what it is the skills essentially that  
19 we want agencies to develop. It's not just about  
20 meeting a numerical target. It's actually about  
21 having the practices and the policies in place in an  
22 agencies communication staff (sic) but in other ways  
23 as well, where it's just something you're thinking  
24 about right from the beginning. It's not like oops,

2 we need to meet this goal, but it's really about this  
3 is part of what we do to do our job well.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it, and I want  
5 to--I want to highlight what you--what you just said  
6 right now, which is really changing the relationship  
7 so it's not an after thought and we let go. It's a  
8 checklist--

9 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: [interposing]  
10 Exactly.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --of who did not  
12 talk to, but more about really creating a  
13 relationship and I think we're going to have some  
14 questions about that. Council Member Reynoso.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you,  
16 Councilman. I just want to make mention to the fact  
17 that you congratulated the Mayor's Office and the  
18 Speaker's Office on the work that they did in this  
19 new announcement. And I just want to say that if it  
20 wasn't for this hearing being scheduled for today, I  
21 don't think that announcement would have come up.  
22 So, I want to thank you for that work that you did  
23 there. I just want to make sure that, you know, you  
24 do get the recognition that you deserve. I do want  
25 to say that 29% of Latinos, of those do we know how

2 many speak--only speak Spanish or their primary  
3 language at home is Spanish?

4 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: I don' have that  
5 now, but we can get that Number.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I think--I think  
7 that's extremely important, and--and I don't think  
8 this is policy that we're supposed to be talking  
9 about. There has to be mandates that we are reaching  
10 our populations fairly. It's an equity issue at this  
11 point. More money was spent on the Daily News and  
12 the New York Post that all ethnic media combined by  
13 the City of New York. I--I guess I can't even have  
14 a--there's no question to follow that up. I just  
15 want you to be very mindful of the fact that two--two  
16 outlets have more money in--in--more money was spent  
17 on ad buys by the City of New York than the entire  
18 ethnic media combined. That's sad. That's a sad  
19 thing to say when 29% is Latino. The minority in  
20 general, I don't know what the population is. I  
21 would also like to get that Number that everyone,  
22 just the minority populations, the ethnic population,  
23 how much--what percentage is that, and what  
24 percentage of those only speak the language that is  
25 native to where they come from? That's very

2 important They should be getting the percentages  
3 almost exactly the same, and if it's not yet, I'm  
4 going to figure out a way to be helpful with Carlos  
5 in making sure that it's mandated that you do  
6 everything possible to make that happen. Not you. I  
7 know you've got that done. I do want to say there's  
8 been increases in Latino--in--in--in Latino media  
9 recently by the City of New York. But I do want to  
10 say the IDNYC is a huge rollout, and I see that more  
11 as an exception to what the traditional spending is  
12 in ethnic media than it is the standard, right? It's  
13 right at the margins. IDNYC is a huge program. I'm  
14 pretty sure you guys spend a lot of money on media,  
15 and ad buys to get us to a place where we are  
16 actually a city that has over-- What Number are we up  
17 now with IDNYC? Is it 600,000, 700,000?

18 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah, 740.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: 740. So, I do  
20 want to say that I hope that that's not a blip in the  
21 system given that we had some aggressive--aggressive  
22 opportunity--opportunities to aggressively pursue  
23 the--the population of the City of New York through  
24 that media. So I want to ask that. Is that a  
25 reason? Is that the reason why we have an increase,

2 or is it just the fact that you've changed your  
3 internal policies to get to that Number?

4 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yep. So I can  
5 address the range of those points. So I think IDNYC  
6 was definitely one of the campaigns that really sort  
7 of led to the increase that we've seen--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: [interposing]

9 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --in the ethnic  
10 media spending, but not the only one, right. Paid  
11 Sick Leave. I think in this administration in  
12 general the degree to which outreach has been done to  
13 ethnic media has been significantly greater than the  
14 past. So I think IDNYC is a piece, but the whole. I  
15 would add, you know, there are mandates in many  
16 respects around language accessibility right? That  
17 we need to speak the language of New Yorkers. We  
18 need to translate. We need to provide interpretation  
19 services. And so, I think those do exist, and we  
20 have to make sure that our agencies are doing what  
21 they need to do in terms of that--in terms of that  
22 work. But also agree that the degree to which we  
23 have failed to invest in sort of reaching immigrant  
24 communities through ethnic and community media is  
25 reflect in the announce that was done today. That we

2 have to do a better job of reaching out in the  
3 languages and through the outlets that New Yorkers  
4 read, listen to, and watch, and that's exactly the  
5 goal of the directory among other things. And then  
6 I'll say, you know, this work, though the  
7 announcement was made today has really been going on  
8 for quite some time both on the Speaker's side hiring  
9 people who are very well respected in the field of  
10 ethnic and community media to lead the effort on the  
11 Council side. As well as in our case also staffing  
12 up to make sure that we have the capacity to do that  
13 work. So I think it's very much been something we've  
14 been thinking about and planning for quite some time.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: You spoke about  
16 language access. It's okay to translate something,  
17 but if it's just on paper on a desk and it doesn't  
18 get out to the people, it has no value. So, we need  
19 to get those things out, and we're not getting them  
20 out at the rate that we're supposed to in the ethnic  
21 media. It's just not happening, and what we have in  
22 outreach and engagement is not enough. Giving me a  
23 directory of every single--and I've worked really  
24 hard to get my--my media directory together, and it's  
25 a disaster. So, I'm glad that you guys are going to

2 give us some more information so I myself can do  
3 better being able to reach more folks. But, not just  
4 reaching folks or getting--trying to plug in a story  
5 in some media outlet so that I can--so folks can see  
6 what I'm trying to do. But I'm talking about money.  
7 Money is what talks, and at this moment, the city has  
8 completely failed the ethnic media when it comes to--  
9 or not the ethnic media. I want to be very clear  
10 that the--the general population in the City of New  
11 York that's what they've done by not being able to  
12 reach out to them through the--the means by which  
13 they--they generally obtain information. Just  
14 completely failed them, and I don't think a policy is  
15 enough. I really do think that we need to talk about  
16 mandates as to how we work. And then my last  
17 question, Chair, if you will allow me, is what about  
18 this blackout? What about if we no longer have media  
19 that's specific to a language of a general--of a  
20 large population of this--of this city. How does the  
21 city plan to compensate for not being--and how are  
22 they going to reach out to these populations outside  
23 of that media? How would they? What--what plans of  
24 action do you have in place to prepare for that  
25 possibility?



2 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: If an entire  
3 language media were to disappear?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Let's say El  
5 Diario for example, and I'm going to keep using that  
6 as an example. If El Diario can no longer do print  
7 media? They are probably the largest outlet in the  
8 Latino community. They go down. How do you  
9 compensate for that? How do you get information out  
10 to the Latino communities then, and I feel like you  
11 guys are going to be at a loss, and I hope you have a  
12 plan of action so you can compensate.

13 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yep. So, you  
14 know, my understanding is this actually quite a lot,  
15 a very rich and diverse Spanish language media  
16 environment outside of El Diario. So I think what we  
17 would do is continue to work with those outlets to  
18 make sure the information gets out there. And, the  
19 other thing I would say is the City needs to be very  
20 responsive, and make more investments in ethnic and  
21 community media. I don't think even from a  
22 perspective of journals and ethics that we should see  
23 our investments as trying to support the news  
24 agencies in a way that they somehow feel hole done  
25 (sic) to the city, and to how they cover the city,

2 right? We need to make sure that the news and the  
3 content stays separate from the business side of the  
4 operation, and that includes sort of how the city  
5 relates to these things. And I do think that would  
6 be very important just for the--the field as well.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you.  
8 Thank you, Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Before  
10 I hand it back to my council member colleagues, we  
11 have been joined by Council Member Rosie Mendez from  
12 Manhattan and Council Member Mathieu Eugene from  
13 Brooklyn. And, you know, we got testimony today.  
14 I'm kind of looking through the testimony from  
15 Controller Scott Stringer and Borough President Eric  
16 Adams, and they've been kind of looking at this as  
17 well. Looking at some of the raw data, there's no  
18 analysis yet, and we're hoping to analyze this data.  
19 But, from what we can see here, El Diario got almost  
20 half of the city money over the last three years of  
21 all this money that's being spent on ethnic media.  
22 Tell us a little bit about what that--that kind of  
23 says, and--and in really thinking about how--how we--  
24 we can kind of--well, actually just kind of what--

2 what does that say right now about--about where we  
3 are?

4 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yep, so I, um,  
5 with the caveat that we haven't had a chance to  
6 analyze the data that was presented as well by the B  
7 Borough President and the Comptroller, I do think  
8 that says something about sort of the decisions that  
9 agencies are making when they're choosing to get the  
10 word out about their programs depending on the  
11 publication. And so, I think some of the things  
12 we've looked at are circulation Numbers, reach and  
13 visibility. Sort of we make decisions based on how  
14 we want to get our message out. And so, I think that  
15 the breakdown of those Numbers as they're there  
16 probably says something about how agencies are  
17 thinking about their strategy.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And my last  
19 question and I'll hand it over to Council Member Koo,  
20 how can we help El Diario right now? How--how do you  
21 believe that the city can help, and then insert what  
22 we just said, which is they're separate. We've got  
23 to keep separation between the sector media and  
24 government without a doubt, but how--how can we help  
25 in this moment as we begin to learn a little bit

2 about just the nature of--of media in general. El  
3 Diario is not the only one going through this  
4 problem. All our ethnic media. The New York Times is  
5 going through this as well. They're all trying to  
6 evolve how can we help?

7           COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Sure, so I--you  
8 know, I don't know that I feel competent to speak to  
9 the sort of state of journalism broadly speaking in  
10 the industry, but I do want to echo what Council  
11 Member Rodriguez said, which is heroes (sic) like  
12 this lifting up the importance of community and  
13 ethnic media and what they do. And city officials  
14 affirming that this is a really important way to get  
15 the world out about the critical programs like  
16 Universal Pre-K, like paid sick leave, like IDNYC.  
17 It just shows that this is a vital service within New  
18 York City

19           CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Council Member  
20 Koo.

21           COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you and thank  
22 you Chair Menchaca for advocating for New York City  
23 immigrants, and Commissioner, thank you for coming to  
24 speak to us. Before I ask you a question, I want to  
25 give you some of clarifying (sic) information. Most

2 people know I'm an immigrant myself. I spent the  
3 last 30 something years in--in Flushing, Queens and I  
4 noticed that slowly the news stands when you buy  
5 newspapers, you can see the difference. 20 years ago  
6 they saw a lot of the news when they fill the New  
7 York Times post. Well, lately it's where you're  
8 living. Compared with the ethnic paper the Korean  
9 paper, the trans (sic) newspapers, the trans were  
10 this high, but the thing is they don't apply, you  
11 know, on the full. (sic) So that you can tell, you  
12 know, the population changed. Even though people  
13 understand English--there's--they--they can read  
14 perfect English, they won't buy the New Times any  
15 more because they don't cover local news that much.  
16 Well, not in Flushing. They want the daily news.  
17 They don't cover any news in--in Flushing nor in  
18 Sunset Park or in Brooklyn, right. Only--they only  
19 cover sensation--sensational news, or not like  
20 practical news. They don't advertise job openings  
21 for the city or for other things, and the reason I  
22 want to tell them is because of the population  
23 change. The Asian-American just like Latinos we grew  
24 a lot. Now it's like 14% of the New York City  
25 population. So, it's something I think about, you

2 know. (sic) So, I'm wondering like on this  
3 advertising of projects, I see in the--in the box  
4 (sic) there. Is this American (sic) or Asian-  
5 American news, newspapers or TVs, and radios. So I'm  
6 hoping in the future how can you do a better job in  
7 outreaching to Asian-Americans?

8 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Uh-huh.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah. Do you--and  
10 how do you do the contract in the city? I mean you  
11 ask advertising agencies to decide what papers they  
12 advertise or you give them directions to hey what's  
13 the proportion of the budget that's going on each  
14 ethnic groups?

15 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Do you--do you have  
17 a say and the city has a say?

18 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yes. So first I  
19 will say I agree with you completely. My parents are  
20 from India and they speak English, but they always  
21 grew up reading the Indian Press. And so that's, you  
22 know, part of the experience that I am very familiar  
23 with. And just a little bit on the process of how  
24 City agencies make ad buys. So city agencies,  
25 communications, marketing staff, et cetera identify

2 their goals for a campaign. An example, you know,  
3 could be informing low-income New Yorkers about the  
4 Earned Income Tax Credit. And then they work with  
5 one of three ad placement vendors that are under  
6 citywide contracts. But all of those vendors have  
7 expertise working with non-English press, but it's  
8 really the agencies that made the decision about how  
9 to distribute those ad dollars. So we have the  
10 ability to really shape, and we have with IDNYC. We  
11 have with paid sick leave kind of where those dollars  
12 go for ad buys, and that's part of the goal as well  
13 with the new directory that was announced today.  
14 It's certainly the goal with the training that we're  
15 doing to ensure that agencies know kind of how to  
16 design their strategy, and then finally, you know, I  
17 would say that in addition to ad buys, things like  
18 roundtables with the ethnic and community press  
19 making sure that press releases go out. Just  
20 continuing engagement. So there's a very open line  
21 of communication is really equally critical in make  
22 sure that those news items are shared with the  
23 communities that are in New York.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [off mic] I'm  
25 hoping--[on mic] I'm hoping in the future you explain

2 your budget buy in Asian-American newspapers or a  
3 meeting, and the other with the newspapers do you buy  
4 ads on the radio or TV?

5 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah?

7 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So we've bought TV  
8 and radio ads. Print ads I think are the largest ad  
9 buys, but we definitely--especially for immigrant  
10 communities we allow the radio.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Immigrants and if  
12 you want to know the people they're reading this in  
13 the newspaper now. They--they allow people to listen  
14 to the radio, and will watch TV when they go home,  
15 and sometimes it's really important you find an ad  
16 that goes in the radio, too, and on TV.

17 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Absolutely.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah, and one more  
19 question. It's--well, I'll come back again. I think  
20 you asked her enough.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, I'll come  
22 back to you if you want, on the second round.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah, thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council  
25 Member Koo, and before I hand it over to Council



2 Member Eugene, I just want to know that some of the  
3 data coming to the Comptroller's Office in  
4 partnership with the Borough President looks like in  
5 the last three years there's three big contracts,  
6 advertising contracts spent about \$20 million total  
7 between Graystone (sic), Creative and Miller. And  
8 with contract--the contract ending 2017, is that I've  
9 been looking to really change the standards and how  
10 to include smaller papers like our--our Urdu (sp?),  
11 our Chinese paper, all reading the language papers.  
12 Is that something the administration is looking at?

13 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Um, so I think the  
14 ad placement vendors are not the same as the actual  
15 media outlets.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] I  
17 see.

18 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So they have reach  
19 to--

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
21 break it down for us.

22 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah, so they have  
23 the reach to the media outlets, and can sort of help  
24 the agencies place those ads. And that's--I think  
25 the goal that we've had is to make sure that the

2 agencies make those interests known from the outset  
3 to the ad placement so that by default you don't go  
4 to the sort of major English language press, which is  
5 what the data is reflecting, right. And the--we will  
6 fully acknowledge that if you look at the data from  
7 2013 to 2015, there's not enough investment in the  
8 ethnic and community media, but we've seen a  
9 significant uptick within our administration, and we  
10 want to continue that. And that has to be with  
11 agencies really shaping a strategy that has ethnic  
12 and community media as central to part of their  
13 outreach strategy.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. Thanks  
15 for kind of breaking that down, and I think we're  
16 going to have follow-ups on that after the hearing.  
17 And finally I--I kind of want to bring it out of just  
18 the important critical work around immigration, and  
19 think about other things like NYC and Company. When  
20 I think about all of this stuff in my career working  
21 with the Borough President's Office Marty Markowitz,  
22 and his excitement for Brooklyn, getting people to do  
23 staycation. And, NYC and Company spends a lot of  
24 money. What's the responsibility of MOIA to think  
25 about those papers that we're talking about today,

2 and the city life? Getting people to Coney Island to  
3 enjoy a restaurant and--and like does MOIA--and do  
4 you have data on that as well that you can share with  
5 us? Not today, but very soon.

6 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Uh-huh. So, are  
7 you asking about the advertising that New York and  
8 Company does around Restaurant Week or something  
9 like.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
11 There's a lot--there's a lot of citywide internal  
12 kind of staycation advertisement that's happening to--  
13 -which I get in Time Out all the time. It's like go  
14 to your local, shop local, but I'm not--I don't think  
15 and I'd love to hear from others later in the panels  
16 that that's not happening with our--our Chinese  
17 community isn't getting the messages from the NYC and  
18 Company to go to Coney Island and enjoy a wonderful  
19 hot dog with--at Nathan's. And--and so, I want to  
20 also just elevate this conversation, and not just  
21 about immigration, but the life and the work that we  
22 do with our cultural institutions.

23 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Totally. So I  
24 mean I will start by saying that again in a city  
25 where we have more immigrants than there are people

2 in Chicago, the--the reality is that in all of our  
3 work we need to be effectively communicating to those  
4 communities. Whether it's to get a hot dog or to get  
5 Universal Pre-K, that needs to be a part of the DNA  
6 of the system. So we've very--

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Or,  
8 or a churro in Sunset Park.

9 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Or, exactly.  
10 Right, wherever the--whatever it may be. So I think  
11 we want to--I'd be very happy to help with New York  
12 and Company and sort of start that conversation about  
13 how they think about their own outreach, and  
14 particularly sort of outreach to New Yorkers about  
15 New York. This is still an amazing city with so many  
16 exciting things happening all the time. How do we  
17 learn about the things happening in other  
18 neighborhoods and other immigrant communities.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Great. Thank you.  
20 Council Member Mathieu Eugene.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you  
22 [coughs] Excuse me. [off mic] Thank you very much.  
23 [on mic] Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I  
24 want to commend you for your leadership on this  
25 issue, and I want to commend the Speaker also, and

2 this is a very important issue because as we know  
3 that New York City is home to so many immigrant  
4 people and people who came from different immigrant  
5 backgrounds. It is very important that all of them  
6 they've got the same access. They deserve it, and  
7 the same access to information because the city will  
8 be a better city when all the people who are even in  
9 New York City regardless of their ethnicity they get  
10 access to the information available to make New York  
11 City better. Information that are very important for  
12 themselves to improve their quality of life, and also  
13 to improve the--the education of their children. I  
14 think we all agree, you know, on that. But my--my  
15 question to you that is-- As a matter of fact, thank  
16 you very much also for your presentation, and thank  
17 you for all the effort that the admin--that you are  
18 doing, and also the administration is doing to make  
19 sure that everybody gets access to the information.  
20 In terms of ethnic media companies, you mentioned  
21 that they are probably 28% of the budget allocated to  
22 Spanish or Latino media. But before I go there,  
23 could you tell us what are the media companies,  
24 ethnic media companies that the City has contracted

2 to--to promote the information that they are sending  
3 to the New Yorkers.

4 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Could you give  
6 us a list?

7 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Absolutely.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So to give you a  
10 sample of the types of media outlets that we've  
11 worked with that I think reflects sort of what other  
12 agencies have as well. Of course, Spanish language  
13 El Diario and Queens Latino, Chinese Language Media  
14 like Sing Tao, Korean Times. Also, the Russian  
15 Press, English language but press from South Asian or  
16 the Urdu language like practice on Poster Week, Wi  
17 Bunia (sp?); Haitian-Creole Press like Haiti  
18 Progress, and Bengali Press--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: [interposing]  
20 I'm sorry, could you--you said Haiti what?

21 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Haiti Progress.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Haiti Progress.

23 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: And the--and  
24 Bengali publications. So just to give a sampling of

2 sort of the range of different communities that we've  
3 tried to reach with our ad buys.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Could you tell  
5 us how much money, you know, in total that is  
6 allocated to the media in general?

7 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: How much money  
9 and what? Yeah.

10 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So in terms in ad  
11 buying in 2015, which is the last year for which we  
12 have data. It's about \$6,300,000.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: \$6 million?

14 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yep.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Uh-huh.

16 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: And the for ethnic  
17 press in 2015, it was about \$1.1 or \$2 million.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: \$1.2 for ethnic  
19 media. Do you believe that there is enough for  
20 ethnic media--

21 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: [interposing] I  
22 think--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: --or is the  
24 administration is doing any effort to increase this  
25

2 amount since we know that \$6 million is allocated to  
3 media and for ethnic media we got only \$1.12

4 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yep, so we--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: [interposing] Do  
6 you believe that this enough?

7 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: We would like to  
8 see an increase and the ways in which we're  
9 supporting agencies to do that is by certainly having  
10 trainings on how to outreach and to sort of  
11 effectively outreach to ethnic and media--and  
12 community media. The directory, which will sometimes  
13 just be able to give information, it's--I don't think  
14 it's ill will on the part of agencies. I think it's  
15 just need for information that can really make a big  
16 difference. And than doing things like asking  
17 agencies to report back on their ad procurement so  
18 that we can better track whether those Number are  
19 going up or down.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: You mentioned  
21 that you have been in contact with Haiti progress.  
22 This is one of the Haitian newspapers. I don't know  
23 if they exist any more. I don't know. You know, I  
24 don't I don't know if they exist any more. But could  
25 you--is it the only major outlet, a major company



2 that are you are in contract with, that the  
3 administration is in contact with in terms of  
4 promoting the information to the Haitian people?

5 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: No, you know, we--  
6 we have worked with a range of other community media  
7 from Haiti, but also the Caribbean more broadly, and  
8 also--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: [interposing]  
10 What the name?

11 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: I'm sorry? Oh,  
12 for the Caribbean broadly, and then also Haiti in  
13 particular. I don't have that list with me, but we  
14 can share that with your office afterwards.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Would you please  
16 send me a list of not only of the Haitian media, but  
17 also the--the media that--the ethnic media in total  
18 that the agency--the agencies are getting with and  
19 they are promoting the information to the people And--  
20 -and let--let me inform you that we have a lot of  
21 media companies in the Haitian community also, TV,  
22 radio, print media, but Haiti [coughs] excuse me--  
23 Haiti Progress, I am not too sure they are still in  
24 existence, but I would appreciate it if you can share  
25 with me the--the--the lists of the media that-

2 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: [interposing]

3 Absolutely.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: --you are using  
5 to promote the information within the Haitian  
6 community. Because we believe that as you know, that  
7 people that got less of the ethnicity, you know,  
8 living in New York City they now listen to their own  
9 radio. They are reading their own papers, and  
10 especially many of them from different ethnic  
11 backgrounds they don't speak English properly, and if  
12 you're not comfortable I think this is a wonderful  
13 asset for the--for that organization. You know, the  
14 ethnic media constitute a wonderful, very efficient  
15 and media asset for their organization, and I  
16 recommend you and the administration to do the best  
17 use of that because this is very important. My last  
18 question is, um, what is the process for the  
19 organization to hire or to select and ethnic media?  
20 I don't know if you mentioned that already, but will  
21 you please elaborate on that for me please?

22 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Sure, so for any  
23 agency there are communications, marketing, whatever  
24 the relevant staff may be have to decide on strategy  
25 for their campaign from the outset. And, then they

2 can work through three different agencies or vendors  
3 that help to place those ads to actually do the  
4 mechanical work of it. But so from our perspective,  
5 the real work happens at that strategy phase, right,  
6 when the agency is deciding where is it going to  
7 place its ad dollars. How is it really going to get  
8 the word out about a new program to New Yorkers? And  
9 so, that's why we're trying to do the trainings, and  
10 sharing of information about ethnic and community  
11 media for those personnel, communication personnel,  
12 marketing personnel, agency heads, who are really  
13 deciding how it is that the word gets out about their  
14 programs. And encouraging them to put ethnic and  
15 community media as part of that strategy right from  
16 the outset. So that we can reach New Yorkers in the  
17 language that they speak.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Well, do you  
19 have any--and this is the last one on subject. I  
20 know that you've got to--to move on. Do you have,  
21 all though the administration has among the staff  
22 what in charge to select the ethnic media outlet. Do  
23 you have people from different ethnic backgrounds who  
24 can help you, guide you to make sure you make the  
25 right choice? Because I know, you know, people, you

2 know, from different ethnicities they know exactly  
3 what's going on in their communities. So you have  
4 staff, you know, from the different--not all ethnic  
5 background, but from ethnic backgrounds. the major  
6 ones to help you do the right choice?

7 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah. So, you  
8 know, agencies each have their own marketing and  
9 communications staff, but what we've done is at MOIA  
10 we're sort of responsible for essentially  
11 coordinating language access and--and issues like  
12 this across city agencies. We've hired an Executive  
13 Director who has experience in this area, and then  
14 also work closely with the CUNY Journalism School and  
15 with other individuals in the field to help us sort  
16 of make those decisions, identify the relevant press.  
17 Keep track of who's still in existence, who's not,  
18 that sort of thing. And so we make sure we really--  
19 we value those partnerships and we really use them.  
20 And they're very much [bell] a cross-section of--of  
21 New York, and have a good sense of the field.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Well, I thank  
23 you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Thank  
25 you. I'm going to hand it over to Council Member

2 Koo, but before that, I just want to do a couple  
3 follow-up items. One is that it doesn't sound like  
4 you're going to change those big--three big kind of  
5 ad companies, but we're going to be pressuring really  
6 strong to change, and you hinted at those things and  
7 I want to add or kind of repeat some of the language  
8 in really enforcing reporting on some of that. So,  
9 how can we ensure if we're not changing the companies  
10 that we're going a different response? And so, how  
11 confident are you that that's going to happen, and  
12 what are you going to do differently to enforce these  
13 contracts? And really kind of secondly, when we look  
14 at the broader--broader view not just between those  
15 three agencies, but the broader use of advertising in  
16 our local ethnic media providing oversight. So that,  
17 for example, we're getting data that the Department  
18 of Health spent zero one year in any ethnic media  
19 press as an agency. This isn't-- You known, this  
20 is unacceptable on so many levels, but how--how are  
21 you really going to keep all of this accountable by  
22 not changing a simple--a simple contract?

23 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yep, so I think to  
24 emphasize, the contracts by themselves are not what  
25 are driving the decisions about where ad buys are

2 made. It's not like the contracts say you have to  
3 spend 80% of your funding on English language press.  
4 It's the agencies that are making those decisions.  
5 So if you want to change the practice, it's less  
6 about changing the vendor, and it's more about  
7 changing agency practices and behaviors. And we sort  
8 of firmly believe that. So, if there were an  
9 instance where an agency was not spending money, or  
10 were doing effective outreach in ethnic and community  
11 media, we have a very open relationship with both,  
12 and can sit down and sort of talk about that. We've  
13 worked closely with the City Hall Press Shop, which  
14 really cares about this, and with the Speaker's  
15 Office. And so, I think there's ways to really  
16 facilitate agencies improving their outcomes in terms  
17 of ethnic and community media, especially now that  
18 we're providing them with important tools to do that  
19 as well.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Great. So, I'd  
21 like to join you in that, and really add another  
22 voice to this very important re-culture--a change in  
23 the culture in our agencies.

24 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Right.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Council Member  
3 Koo. Oh, and actually before you go, are there any  
4 other newspapers here that have yet to give us your  
5 testimony slips? We're going to need your testimony  
6 slips, and that's going to be the next panel. So if  
7 you haven't come on over and speak to Collin who is  
8 right in front of you. Thank you. Council Member  
9 Koo.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [coughs] Thank you,  
11 I'm sure. Commissioner, I want to re-emphasize the  
12 importance of local ethnic press because I just see a  
13 great example. If I hold a press conference in  
14 Flushing, and none of these major media will come,  
15 you know, but the local press, the Chinese press, the  
16 Korean press they will come, the radio, the TV. So  
17 they do a good job in spreading to see this message  
18 if there's a policy change, if there's a hurricane  
19 coming They call come to my press conference. So  
20 they're doing a diligent job. So, are you rewarding  
21 the press, which you would do the--at least the same  
22 proportional. Think about them. They always cover  
23 the news ones. If you have a major press conference,  
24 you always question why the local press didn't come.  
25 Because in the past, sometimes I see some major

2 conferences, but they are notified, only the--the big  
3 media come. And you know what, the next day they  
4 only do a small. There are even cameos (sic) in real  
5 time. But if you have a major conference, they put--  
6 the only time it is a few sentences of the--of the  
7 years, of the press conference. The local press will  
8 cover you in detail so there's a big difference  
9 there. They are doing the job for all the city.  
10 But, you know, in terms of advertising so the city is  
11 reporting, too. It was all of the media and their  
12 financial problems. So we want the city to reward  
13 those who work the city. They are the ones who  
14 spread and news, either policy or news from the  
15 Mayor's Office, from my office. So this is  
16 important. So I'm here to remind the advertising  
17 agencies that you have to do smaller and making more  
18 contracts to smaller media companies, and make sure  
19 at least they get a proportional revenue. And the  
20 last thing I want to say is there's a big difference  
21 between this administration and the last  
22 administration. The current administration they are  
23 doing a much better job in outreaching to a minority  
24 owned media companies. So with that, I want to  
25 congratulate you. Thank you.



2 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Thanks.

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And on that note,  
4 thank you, Council Member Koo. We can't emphasize  
5 that enough. When I think about the last two years  
6 as a council member and Chair of the Immigration  
7 Committee, our ethnic newspapers are doing our work.  
8 They are incredibly passionate about the subject, and  
9 they cover it with great sensitivity to our  
10 residents. And so, can you speak to that tension  
11 that essentially we won't give them an ad, but we're  
12 going to expect them cover out--and we'll them.  
13 They'll come. They'll write about it, but we won't  
14 give them ad at the end of the day that says the  
15 Numbers. Talk to us about that tension that you're  
16 seeing.

17 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Sure. So, I don't  
18 thing that ad buying should be connected to news  
19 coverage. I think that would be--

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
21 Right.

22 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --risky. [laughs]  
23 For them a plus--

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] I'm  
25 with you on that.

2 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --but I do think  
3 that, um, the point I should emphasize is that we  
4 hear you loud and clear. Totally, I mean look at  
5 this room. It's full, right.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah.

7 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: And that's  
8 certainly been my experience in working with MOIA's  
9 work. So our point here is that we've taken steps  
10 and we will continue to take steps to make sure that  
11 not just my office, but really agencies across the  
12 board are engaging with community and ethnic media  
13 because they do get the word out. They do the  
14 coverage. Sometimes longer stories or more in-depth  
15 stories, and I think importantly from my perspective  
16 telling the story of immigrant communities themselves  
17 and community members. And so, I fully agree with  
18 you. We've taken some steps here, and really opened  
19 the thinking about other suggestions. This is a  
20 priority for the Mayor, and certainly a priority for  
21 the Administration. So, we're really excited to work  
22 with you on it, and we agree completely.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Great. Before you  
24 leave, there are some really suggestions from CUNY in  
25 their report, and--or actually not suggestions. Just

2 raw data that was presented about an ethnic media  
3 czar and a real commitment to translating every press  
4 release into all the languages. How can MOIA make  
5 that happen?

6 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yep, so we have  
7 hired an Executive Director in our office who focuses  
8 on these. We didn't give her the title of czar, but,  
9 you know, it's sort of a similar kind of role.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
11 Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: So, agree with  
13 that recommendation, and if the need grows, and we  
14 need to increase staffing very open to that, too. I  
15 really like the idea of the daily or potentially sort  
16 of weekly news brief that can go out to ethnic media.  
17 So happy to talk to our folks at City Hall to see if  
18 we can make something like happen--

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
20 Great.

21 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: --and generally  
22 with this point that the larger press conferences are  
23 sort of ways in which we're getting the word out, and  
24 making sure we're doing that equitably to ethnic and  
25 community as well as English language media.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Wonderful. We're  
3 going to be following up on all these things, and  
4 really offer an opportunity for a year from now to  
5 have another oversight hearing. We're going to have  
6 more before that, but have--have in a year from now a  
7 real change in culture, and I think these pieces are  
8 critical changing that culture. Culture is hard to  
9 change, but we did it with IDNYC in a lot of ways.  
10 And I think we have a lot more to do with all of you.  
11 So congratulations on the work that you're doing  
12 with--in partnership with the City Council and  
13 Speaker. Looking forward to more.

14 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Yeah, great.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much.

16 COMMISSIONER AGARWAL: Thank you so much.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you,  
18 Commissioner. We're going to have three new--so  
19 we're going to have the next panel. We're going to  
20 have Gabriel Dantur from El Diario, Lotus Chan from  
21 Sing Tao, and Isseu Diouf Campbell from the  
22 Afrikanspot and African Media. [pause] Oh, and then  
23 a fourth panelist Abu Taher, from Time Television.  
24 So now we're going to hear from the newspapers.  
25 Really looking forward to this. [background

2 comments] If you have testimony, please give it  
3 Collin who will hand it over to us as well. And for  
4 the rest of you who have signed up to speak, we  
5 really want to hear you speak. Thank you for being  
6 in this room. I'm hoping that MOIA leaves somebody  
7 behind.

8 FEMALE SPEAKER: [off mic] That would b e  
9 me.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Is that you?  
11 Thank you so much for further discussion.  
12 [background comments, pause] Great. So thank you so  
13 much. Get some water there. Let's start from our  
14 right to left. Would you introduce yourself, and  
15 give us your testimony. We're going to put three  
16 minutes on the clock. So we can make sure we get the  
17 rest of the--the conversation going, and so if you  
18 have testimony that's long, I would encourage you to  
19 summarize it. We're going to do a lot of that deeper  
20 dive in conversation and Q&A. Thank you. [pause]

21 MAKE SPEAKER: [off mic]

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Make sure that the  
23 light is on.

24 ABU TAHER: Hello, hello. Hello,  
25 everyone. My name is Abu Taher, and I'm the Director

2 for Bangla Patrika. It's the newspaper for the  
3 Bangladeshi community, and also I'm working Time  
4 Television. It's the new 24-hour channel for  
5 Bangleshi and South Asian Community. Thank you for  
6 inviting us in this hearing. I think that New York  
7 City is very important. It is the city of the  
8 immigrants, and if you go anywhere you will see the  
9 face of the immigrant community. So New York cannot  
10 exclude the immigrant community in any way. If I  
11 talk about my experience with the City hub, as a  
12 reporter because I am working with the community  
13 media. It's been about 23 years now in the Queens  
14 side of the city. (sic) And we are trying our best  
15 to have a relation with City Hall, but I think my  
16 experience will not be very, you know, pleasing  
17 because for today's hearing, no one even contact us  
18 for a few days yet. (sic) The--

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Can you repeat  
20 that again? No one--

21 ABU TAHER: No one contact us about the  
22 hearing except Warner who is working Speaker Melissa.  
23 She called me yesterday. She sent me--she forwarded  
24 me the email. So that's what I--I'm here. The--I  
25 think the city, New York City in the Mayor's Office

2 they should have more effort to have a relation with  
3 the ethnic media because the ethnic media is serving  
4 the community as best as the ethnic media I think  
5 because the New York City is very diverse, and the  
6 roles of the ethnic media is very important. So  
7 about the voter ID program. I don't see any ethnic  
8 media they go out to any advertisement to dedicate,  
9 you know, how important the--the City ID, the City ID  
10 program and we had just a couple of meetings, and we  
11 emphasized that okay it's very important because the--  
12 -the city ID, Municipal ID card it is not of the  
13 citizen or anyone. They will not be interested.  
14 Most of the people who are an immigrant, they will be  
15 interested, and the, you know, whoever is taking the  
16 city, they should emphasize more to the immigrant  
17 community. But we don't see any advertisement of any  
18 ethnic newspapers for--to decide how important it is.  
19 And there are, you know, issues. I can talk many  
20 issues. So I think I'm thanking Carlos to take the  
21 initiative today enough, a couple of questions to the  
22 person who are, you know, related with the [bell]  
23 immigrant community. And I think we can continue to  
24 work with the City Council--

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

3 Thank you.

4 ABU TAHER: --from our community. Thank  
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. I  
7 believe that, too.

8 LOTUS CHAN: Hello, my name is Lotus Chan  
9 from Sing Tao Daily. I want to share my own personal  
10 experience with City Hall. Before I worked for a  
11 Council Member, I worked as a reporter a long time  
12 ago. I already wonder why all the Chinese newspapers  
13 are always like the second hand. You know,  
14 translated from New York Times, translated from AP  
15 wires. So I have the luxury work for a Council  
16 Member who represent Chinatown. So I'm the first  
17 Chinese bilingual staff who work for a City Council.  
18 Then I realized that nobody from Chinese community to  
19 come from City Hall and government before. So, after  
20 I left that Council Member and worked as a reporter  
21 in the Chinese newspapers, I--I want to be the first  
22 hand of hand. So I witnessed the whole big  
23 difference, you know, or in the past 20 years. I--I  
24 will be brunt, but I hope people in City Hall won't  
25 be mad at me. When I worked for--under Giuliani



2 Administration, every day when I come to City Hall  
3 I'm not welcome here. Yes, because every time when  
4 the press person give--give out the press release,  
5 they will ask you who you come from, where you come  
6 from. When they said that I'm from New York Times,  
7 I'm from Post or I'm from Daily News, they were  
8 happily to give the press release. When I said I'm  
9 from Sing Tao, they said, "What? What? What? Sing  
10 Tao beer?" You know, something like that. Because  
11 the newspaper's name is really close to a Chinese  
12 famous beer. So, um, but so as a minority newspaper,  
13 so I'm not welcome in City Hall, but I don't--I'm fed  
14 up to translate from the New York Times. For  
15 example, New York Times would mention about the  
16 little man, you know, who--who--they have a bill to  
17 make the little man wear the helmet and bicycle. So  
18 their point of view is totally different from us. So  
19 I want to be the first hand to cover City Hall at  
20 that time. So I come to City Hall almost every day  
21 until they get used to my face. So after like two--  
22 three years, they--they realized that even though I  
23 have a strong accent English--in English, but they  
24 think--they still respect that. You know, she's just  
25 doing the job, and they start to give out the press

2 release--release to me. I also see a big change is  
3 from John Neal. When Johnny become the first council  
4 member, the Chinese council member, and I (sic) also  
5 complain to him, and then he stopped to--outreach to  
6 the Chinese media with the council member, with the  
7 Speaker Quinn at that time. So, the--the media have  
8 a big change. So after Council Member Koo--Council  
9 Member Menchaca (sic) change so that things really,  
10 really change. So--and because the Chinese  
11 population is--is also getting bigger, so even you,  
12 you know, they--they all have bilingual staff. So  
13 then they start to realize that, you know. [bell] A  
14 couple of Chinese is also very important. So about  
15 the advertisement, relatively we--we are lucky  
16 because Sing Tao is one of the largest Chinese  
17 newspapers so we--we share, but it's not enough.  
18 Sometimes we get the advertisement. It's also just  
19 like MTA, they change the--the surface, you know, or  
20 they need more translation from the Department of  
21 Election--the Department of Elections. They need  
22 more translators. You know we have a small  
23 advertisement in the newspapers. Other than that,  
24 you know, from the HRA or the other big Education

2 Department we--I don't think we still have our fair  
3 share. So, I think we still have a long way to go.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, and  
5 we're going to talk more about that in Q&A. I want  
6 to just say I want to lift something up that you said  
7 that I--I so desperately believe, how important it is  
8 for us to have representation in rooms like this one.  
9 When you have the first Chinese-American in the  
10 Council, when have the first Mexican-American in the  
11 Council, and you have representation from our  
12 immigrant community in the room, things change. And  
13 so, I just want to lift that up for everybody. That  
14 doesn't change, though, if all the other pieces that  
15 get more representation. You're part of that.  
16 Getting civic participation isn't just us opening the  
17 doors of government in the words that we're doing.  
18 We have to do it on the ground, and you play a big  
19 role in that. So, I just want to make sure that we  
20 honor that what you just said. It's so incredibly  
21 important. That's the only way things change. Thank  
22 you.

23 GABRIEL DANTUR: Coming up. One second.  
24 My name is Gabriel Dantur. I'm the CEO of  
25 ImpreMedia, the company publishing El Diario here in

2 New York, and all the dailies and weeklies throughout  
3 the--the country. So thank you very much for  
4 inviting me over representing the company. It's  
5 really an excellent opportunity to share thoughts.  
6 So what I wanted to share with you today is the fact  
7 that our industry is under stress. Internet is a  
8 disruptive technology affecting media business in  
9 general, but striking harder on printed media,  
10 especially on newspaper companies. Disruptive  
11 technologies changes the budget proposition in any  
12 industry, and has definitely done so in ours. The  
13 value that an audience expects from their media  
14 source, or the news source have changed. They have  
15 developed new habits in terms of accessing  
16 information, not only news, but only services and  
17 promotions, and even the information they need to buy  
18 stuff, which is found in the newspaper. Because  
19 sometimes we tend to think that a newspaper has only  
20 news, and it's a package with much more value than  
21 that, and there are news habits. As a result of this  
22 change, newspaper circulation has fallen  
23 dramatically. So one thing that we should bear in  
24 mind is our journalistic relevance is at stake. And  
25 what I mean journalistic relevance it's if we are not

2 able to provide to people what they need, they will  
3 go elsewhere, and besides any other consideration  
4 that will be very dangerous for us. The value that  
5 we give to the advertisers, which is the other side  
6 of value equation, the value you expect from a  
7 printed ad in our newspaper has changed. Internet  
8 has provided multiple cheaper utilities (sic) to  
9 achieve the same commercial results. Consequently,  
10 they are not willing to pay for printed advertising  
11 any longer. So our commercial relevance is at stake,  
12 and this is of uttermost importance because mainly  
13 what happened in here is that the revenue stream that  
14 allowed us to do our job and to inform people has  
15 been seriously affected. And at the end of the day,  
16 this is basically the problem we are facing. We are  
17 facing the problem of financial viability. So, we  
18 are here reaffirming our intention and commitment to  
19 achieve this final sustainability, which is the only  
20 way in which you can exercise free and quality  
21 journalism, which is definitely needed, and it's the  
22 kind of journalism that the Hispanic community in our  
23 case deserve. With the tremendous challenging  
24 reality that our industry is facing, the search for  
25 financial sustainability has meant taking

2 uncomfortable and painful decisions that are  
3 nonetheless justified by the interior move of  
4 ensuring survival of our company and its friends. In  
5 spite of the loss of valuable resources, we have  
6 succeeded in maintaining journalist quality [bell]  
7 that our audience--that our audience deserves and  
8 there are lots of proofs of this. Finally, what I  
9 would like to say is that after four years of  
10 continuous and solitary investment in the quest of a  
11 new value proposition that will allow us to get this  
12 financial sustainability. We celebrate the city's  
13 initiative, and we hope to attain the same level of  
14 support and commitment our shareholders have shown to  
15 ensure that the immigrant community receive on local  
16 matters, and vital services for everyday life. We  
17 are open to all ideas and contributions, and we're  
18 willing to work together in the search of new  
19 creative solutions that will help us overcome this  
20 situation of stress.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for your  
22 testimony. Sorry. Thank you.

23 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: Good morning. My  
24 name is Isseu Diouf Campbell and I'm the founder of  
25 Afrikanspot that become a valuable French and English

2 community-based website showcasing refreshing images  
3 of the African Diaspora living in New York, and  
4 providing useful information. Originally, from  
5 Senegal, West Africa, I moved to New York City nine  
6 years ago after living for several years in France.  
7 I chose New York because of its--because it is a  
8 melting pot of diversity, and I can proudly say that  
9 living here makes me feel at home outside of home.  
10 Thank you for inviting me to testify. I freelance  
11 for several ethnic publications such as La Griot that  
12 stopped publishing. The African Sun Times, the  
13 Amsterdam News, the Network Journal before launching  
14 Afrikanspot in 2009. We started online before going  
15 into print for almost three years. During that time,  
16 I worked seven days a week partnering with some and  
17 paying others to get the job done from covering  
18 stories to editing, translating, working on the late  
19 out of the paper, supervising the printing,  
20 distributing the newspaper and looking for  
21 advertisers. At times where there were not enough  
22 ads to print in the paper I would supplement with  
23 money earned from photo gigs. We stopped printing  
24 for financial reasons before--

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] I'm  
3 sorry. Can you repeat that last piece, that last  
4 sentence?

5 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: Okay. We started  
6 online before going into print for almost three  
7 years. During that time, I worked seven days a week  
8 partnering with some and paying others to get the job  
9 done from covering stories to editing, translating,  
10 working on the layout of the paper, supervising the  
11 printing, distributing the newspaper and looking for  
12 advertisers. At times when there were not enough ads  
13 to print in the paper, I would supplement with money  
14 earned from photo gigs. We stopped printing for  
15 financial reasons and went back online. Running an  
16 ethnic news publication in New York has been a bumpy  
17 ride because an ethnic outlet is no different from  
18 any other business. We are the mom and pops of the  
19 media industry. We live and work with the community,  
20 speak the language, and understand the culture.  
21 Nevertheless, like any business, we need capital to  
22 start, employees to do the work, distribute and  
23 market and customers to sell our products to. For  
24 many of us, the capital came from our own pockets.  
25 We worked with limited staff, if any, wearing several



2 hats, and often times don't sell enough products and  
3 ads to sustain the business in part because we have  
4 for many years been stripped from our potential  
5 biggest clients in the Big Apple, the city itself.  
6 According to a report published by the Center for  
7 Community and Ethnic Media in 2013, the city spends  
8 in advertisement about \$18 million with 80% going to  
9 the mainstream media even though 30%--37% of the city  
10 population was born outside the U.S. and the City has  
11 the language access load for its residents. For many  
12 years, [bell] the ethnic media-- Yeah, I'll do that  
13 first. For many years, the ethnic media has  
14 expressed its frustration and participated to  
15 countless meetings and roundtables with no visible  
16 change. Often times the city has no problem finding  
17 the ethnic media in times of crisis like Ebola for  
18 instance last year or for free advertisement, but  
19 when money is involved, nobody seems to know where  
20 the ethnic media is. Even though our main goal is to  
21 inform and educate our communities, the financial  
22 half of our outlet is essential to our survival. New  
23 York City officials are always so proud to talk about  
24 the city's diversity, and what immigrants bring to  
25 the table. It is unfortunate that when it comes to

2 giving to that same group its fair share, there is a  
3 complete silence. We hope that recommendations that  
4 members of the ethnic media will be making today will  
5 not fall on deaf ears. It is sad that El Diario had  
6 to encounter financial difficulties for this hearing  
7 to have to take place. If the city really wants to  
8 support ethnic media to ensure that immigrant  
9 communities receive information on local matters,  
10 there must be a change now. If these ethnic media  
11 outlets disappear, the city will lose its biggest  
12 allies when it comes to reaching out to local  
13 communities. Again, we are the mom and pops of the  
14 media industry. We live and work with the community,  
15 speak the language, and understand the culture, and  
16 most importantly, we do what we do because we are  
17 passionate and we care about communities that are  
18 often forgotten. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Well  
20 said. Thank you so much for all of your testimonies  
21 today, and I just want to recognize the--the kind of  
22 consistency that we're hearing from all of you. I  
23 want to lift up a couple big topics. We're going--  
24 we're going to talk about them, the tension between  
25 ethnic media and the city, and how that's changing

2 over time. The financial viability that I'm hearing  
3 from all of you about how the economics are just not  
4 working. The fact that our future really is now, and  
5 that is with something like this, the telephone,  
6 which is not just a telephone any more. It's a  
7 multi-media connection to the world that's changing  
8 the way that we think about how to--for individuals  
9 to be able to access information, and that's  
10 challenging each and every one of you in a real way.  
11 So my--my first question, and I'll start with El  
12 Diario, is how--how can we help? There is no doubt  
13 that everyone in this room wants all of you to  
14 survive, to thrive. To move away from surviving and  
15 move into thriving, how can the city of New York and  
16 the City Council help you get to the point of  
17 thriving in the history of this paper's commitment to  
18 the city?

19 GABRIEL DANTUR: Okay, so probably the  
20 first thing that comes out of my mouth will be  
21 advertising, and I don't want to just focus on that.  
22 Just let me say about advertising, which is probably  
23 the first way in which you can help. Because as I  
24 said before, advertising means revenue, and revenue  
25 means the way to carry on with your work. The one

2 thing I would like to say about helping with  
3 advertising is, and I--I heard from the Commissioner  
4 that New York City (sic) will say something like 15%  
5 of the budget was spent on ethnic media, and alone  
6 the Hispanic community is almost 30%. So probably  
7 it's not even that simple like saying that they  
8 should invest at least twice as much, and I do recall  
9 I think it was you who asked about the--the--how did  
10 they distribute that money? The one thing I think  
11 that probably we should be doing is taking in account  
12 of the messages that the City needs to deliver to the  
13 ethnic communities probably are more important than  
14 the general market because there are not alternative  
15 ways to deliver to them. So probably they shouldn't  
16 rely on the agency just applying percentages, but  
17 they should kind of plan a communication plan, and  
18 say well I need to put that much money--that much  
19 money in each of the communities. So the Number one  
20 thing to do is they should involve in what things  
21 they need to communicate to a specific ethnic group.  
22 I mean best in advertising accordingly. The second  
23 thing that probably the city can do is if the city  
24 take resources, which are not money, needed in

2 printing, distributing, creating a newspaper,  
3 whatever it takes. So, um--

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Can  
5 you--can you clarify that? What--what does that  
6 mean?

7 GABRIEL DANTUR: That--that means that  
8 whenever you are producing a form of the news,  
9 whether it's a newspaper or a website, you need a lot  
10 of things to be done. I mean--

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Are  
12 you talking about like city services like approvals?

13 GABRIEL DANTUR: No, no, I mean resources.  
14 For example, maybe the city can help you with local  
15 things that they do have the information. They can  
16 even tap it for you, and they can help you out, and  
17 you can be as ethnic media a channel of distribution,  
18 and then you have to do all the work from scratch.  
19 Maybe they can help you if you need--I don't know--to  
20 buy things to--to--a contract or assistance with  
21 information. So, or--or renegotiate ideas with a guy  
22 selling you the software to print the newspaper, or I  
23 don't know--helping you find ways to distribute along  
24 with whatever the city distributes--the newspaper all  
25 throughout the--the region. Helping you a lot with

2 information to be more effective at the time of  
3 distributing a newspaper because they know, you know,  
4 sacred information and where are the places to go and  
5 whatsoever. So I will say that probably that will be  
6 the--the other thing that the--the city can do. And  
7 then--

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] I  
9 will--can I pause you? Just that I want to get some  
10 other ideas on table 2 and then we're going to--we're  
11 going to work together to get some solutions on the  
12 table. Ms. Diouf.

13 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: Isseu.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Isseu, Ms. Isseu  
15 Diouf Campbell, do you have something to say?

16 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: Yes. So, what we  
17 recommend is first a transparency of how the ads are  
18 allocated because we spoke about the--the two main  
19 agencies, but if-

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
21 Three. Three's three--

22 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: Yes, three.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --three major  
24 ones.

2 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: But--but we are  
3 two against one. (sic) But if you look at--it seems  
4 like we are giving them all the power. They are the  
5 ones choosing the publication and--and how long, and  
6 I think that for instance I will give you an example.  
7 Last year we reached out to the Mayor's Office of  
8 Immigrant Affairs to try to create a relationship  
9 with the African media, right. So, um, but what we  
10 realized is during the IDNYC campaign none of the  
11 African media received the ad. So, how--

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Is  
13 that correct?

14 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

16 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: None of them. So  
17 we reached out to the immigrant--the Mayor's Office  
18 of Immigrant Affairs to try to understand how it  
19 could happen because--but we didn't have answers.  
20 They told us oh, we-we had--they had advice from the  
21 center, the community and ethnic media, and they had  
22 a limited budget. They give us a bunch of excuses to  
23 us, but--and again, I come back to the point where  
24 it's always easy to find us when it's free  
25 advertisement, all kinds of prices. So why can't you

2 find us when there is money? So, can it be more  
3 transparency on how to ads are allocated? Second, is  
4 it possible to have a coder system, systematically  
5 allocating a person's pitch to the ethnic media for  
6 every campaign? Is it possible also for us to have  
7 the list of scheduled media campaign every fiscal  
8 year. Because for instance, last year we had the  
9 Ebola outbreak. We knew that they would have a  
10 campaign on Ebola. None of the African media again  
11 received a single dime, and it's--it was a problem  
12 related to us. And he spoke about it a little bit  
13 translating--translation of city material because we  
14 spent a lot of time translating things, and if we  
15 could get--

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Can  
17 I pause there to ask everybody--is there anybody not  
18 dealing with the--what I'm dealing with, too, as a  
19 council member because I have five languages that are  
20 in my district in a very, very real way, Spanish,  
21 Chinese, Arabic, or probably the three--the three big  
22 pieces Spanish. Did I say Spanish? What I'm asking  
23 all of you is how much time do you spend translating  
24 things from the city to get back out? And is that a--  
25 -is that a high percentage of work that you do just



2 to do the work that you're all passionate about, and  
3 understand the public service piece? How--how much--  
4 just some quick answers. I just want to get a bit  
5 like a quick--

6 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: [off mic] I have  
7 somebody else answer.

8 ABU TAHER: And it's--it's--it's a bit of  
9 work to translate because we don't get that much  
10 material, which is to say--

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] But  
12 you're not getting material. That's the problem on--  
13 on your end.

14 ABU TAHER: Right.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. Ms.  
16 Lotus.

17 LOTUS CHAN: Half and half. So we will  
18 like City Council, so we will based on other  
19 materials and then after that, we translate into  
20 Chinese, and we also interview, you know, related  
21 people.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Got  
23 it.

24 LOTUS CHAN: So, it's half and half.

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And for El Diario?

2 GABRIEL DANTUR: I mean I don't have the--  
3 the set percentage. We can check that with our  
4 newsroom staff, but it is--it is--

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
6 It's--it's a lot?

7 GABRIEL DANTUR: --time consuming  
8 definitely.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

10 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: I would say  
11 between 30 and 40%, and what you also have to  
12 understand about the translation is if you can't pay  
13 somebody to do the translation, or you don't have the  
14 time to do the translation, the information doesn't  
15 go out.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah.

17 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: Because we do so  
18 many things that if we're struggling doing it, it's  
19 not getting done.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it, got it.  
21 It's a whole--whole language access issue that I just  
22 wanted to make sure to--to highlight. So, Council  
23 Member Koo, do you have a question?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [off mic] No  
25 question.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Council Member  
3 Mendez, as well?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: [off mic] I'll  
5 wait.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: You'll wait.  
7 Okay, so I'm--I'm just going to ask a couple more  
8 questions and then we'll hand it over to Council  
9 members and we're going to continue to talk about the  
10 bigger--the bigger questions here. But the other  
11 piece to this is there's a lot of tension right now  
12 in the conversation about two things. One, keeping  
13 government separate from the media, and that is an  
14 important integrity of this entire system. That  
15 changes. That changes and we're not saying that  
16 that's going to change at all, but the integrity of  
17 the whole democratic system falls. That's not what  
18 we're talking about. What we're talking--but yet we  
19 inch forward in this discussion, and the symbiotic  
20 nature that exists right now with the city. And so  
21 talk, how do you--how are you struggling with that  
22 question about ads, free service in getting the  
23 information out, and talk to--talk to us about it.  
24 We heard it from MOIA. Tell us about that tension,  
25 and if you understand that tension the way I'm

2 understanding it, this is a big piece. This is a  
3 real big piece and that--that's part of the  
4 accountability question making the Mayor and the  
5 agencies--with some agencies spending zero a year.  
6 From the Department of Health we're getting  
7 information that's not getting into our--into our  
8 communities. So tell us how you're reconciling these  
9 two or--or this--this question. Anybody?

10 [background comments]

11 GABRIEL DANTUR: I mean definitely you  
12 want to keep your newspaper and the content  
13 independent, and as I said before, of good quality.  
14 So you're right. I think that the answer for that is  
15 clear separation in between the use of a newspaper or  
16 any form that we ethnic media provide for the  
17 government to communicate. Not their political  
18 agenda, not things that do have to deal with  
19 elections or whatsoever, but communicate services and  
20 useful things for people. I mean definitely in the  
21 newsroom you can separate that, and the other thing  
22 is you need to have a very good mechanism to  
23 distribute the advertising where you can ensure that  
24 no one will take a decision based on something they  
25 didn't like in terms of editorial content. So,

2 transforming (sic) like my colleague said here, I  
3 think that's--that's a--the question there, but I  
4 believe that you can keep things separated, and you  
5 can have a very independent newspaper. And then,  
6 whenever it comes to I don't know communicating about  
7 healthcare things or whatsoever, which is--doesn't  
8 have to do with an editorial opinion, you can keep it  
9 separated. The same way I mean we kept separated in  
10 the past classic fights from the content. That's  
11 pretty much on analogy that we can take. As I said  
12 before, services and news, we don't want the  
13 government to be involved in the news and in the  
14 opinion. Yes, we do want them to be involved in  
15 services and being useful to communities.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So you recommend,  
17 being as a recommendation to create a whole other  
18 kind of--kind of classified like government resources  
19 page that is a committed revenue source, but also  
20 just a committed city public trust option? Is that--  
21 is that what I'm hearing?

22 ABU TAHER: No, I mean I think the--what  
23 he's saying that the advertisement or anything will  
24 not, you know, make any kind of problem with the  
25 entities (sic) of the newspapers or the media. The--

2 what we are talking about the city has to have a kind  
3 of city alert with the--the advertisement and other  
4 issues. We should not be excluded by the city,  
5 because the city is for all. It's not for just--for  
6 any mainstream media and then the other people who  
7 are living there they are like a second citizen. It  
8 should be--it should have some kind of similarity.  
9 And the--as he mentioned, the--because--because the  
10 ethnic media they are facing a huge problem because  
11 there's a lot of media they are not printing. They  
12 are going to online, and there is the appending media  
13 there. So they're seeing a lot of difficulties. So  
14 I think this is the--this is the time where they  
15 help, and it doesn't mean that the city doesn't the  
16 advertisement for a newspaper. The newspaper's  
17 editorial policy has to change. There have been no  
18 changes to the editorial policy, and if a newspaper  
19 shut down or any media shut down, it will impact as  
20 well the--the--in the city as well because--the  
21 ethnic media they have about 10 people, 15 people, 20  
22 people employed. So if the media is shut down, then  
23 these people where they can go? So I think it is the  
24 obligation of the newspaper as well as the--in the

2 public media (sic) where we can expose and keep this  
3 business alive.

4           ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: The--the city has  
5 a budget every year a budget when it comes to  
6 communicating its services, right. The City  
7 communicates its services through the different  
8 agencies. Well, what we do is relay that message.  
9 It can be IDNYC's available or maybe should go get  
10 it. It's--it's a good card if you're an immigrant or  
11 resident, et cetera. HHC, for instance, the  
12 hospital--the hospital system. So I don't think  
13 there is a conflict at all with--with the city itself  
14 because what we're doing is pretty much relaying a  
15 message about services. So, we're not really  
16 getting--I--I don't think that there is the conflict  
17 there because of the type of message that we are  
18 relaying. So now, when it comes to covering  
19 elections or for instance council members reaching  
20 out to us and saying, hey, I want to be elected. And  
21 I think it's up to the publication itself to decide  
22 whether--what they want to do, but I think that the  
23 city can be working with the ethnic media without  
24 creating any sort of conflict because we are only  
25 relating messages that are already existing.

2                   CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. So before  
3 I hand it over to my colleagues, I want to just  
4 remind everyone this is--this is the first time we're  
5 having this conversation like this, and I--I just see  
6 it as an--as an incredible opportunity to really kind  
7 of get down beyond the kind of political  
8 conversations what we're having, and that are real.  
9 Just to the nitty-gritty about relationships between  
10 government as just our whole life evolves. [laughs]  
11 And so, as municipalities, as government, et cetera.  
12 So, on that note, digital versus print. Tell us a  
13 little bit about that tension as well, and what we're  
14 hearing from criticism, from a lot of people  
15 including the readers that are--are reading your  
16 newspapers, some more than others. But as we  
17 transition to digital and there's plans to it, and  
18 I'm going to ask some specific questions for some of  
19 you. There's a question criticism that as we move to  
20 digital we remove the local content. Tell us about  
21 that dynamic and how real is that. And we're start  
22 with Don--Dantur?

23                   GABRIEL DANTUR: Dantur.

24                   CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Dantur.

25



2 GABRIEL DANTUR: I--I don't think that  
3 there is a correlation in between going to digital  
4 and losing the local content. The thing is I mean  
5 from the genesis of--of a the format, a paper a news  
6 paper it's local because you distribute it  
7 geographically. I want to remind you to go to the  
8 web sometimes. It's difficult to get local because  
9 sometimes the way people get their information is not  
10 just typing your URL or going directly to it, but  
11 it's just-

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Can  
13 I--can I pause there. I just want to understand what  
14 you just said. You're saying that--that moving  
15 digital doesn't--doesn't-- you don't lose local  
16 content by moving to digital because it's  
17 distributed--distributed locally?

18 GABRIEL DANTUR: No, no. What I said  
19 sometimes it seems that if you take a look at the  
20 digital product it wouldn't seem as local as a paper  
21 product, and the thing is probably the perception  
22 problem. Well, it's not--it's not only a perception  
23 problem. They're--they're not getting--it depends on  
24 where did you go? How did you reach that product? I  
25 mean if you are looking--doing a search in Google,

2 probably you will be getting for that search  
3 regardless that Google tries to make it local, lots  
4 of things, which are not local. Definitely on your  
5 printed newspapers you are getting local stuff. What  
6 we are trying to do is we are trying to have the same  
7 local coverage with, as I said before, problems of  
8 resources because of our financial stress in digital  
9 and in print. And definitely the digital version of  
10 any of our products shouldn't contain any less local  
11 product than--or local story news or local stories  
12 than the printed one. I mean that--

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] How  
14 is El Diario going to maintain that climate to local  
15 content as you shift? And there's been kind of--very  
16 kind of public shifts in count for local writers. So  
17 how do you--how do you reconcile the realities that  
18 are just the Number of people who can generate  
19 content, and just printing information about local  
20 stuff? I'm trying to understand exactly how the  
21 business model is changing.

22 GABRIEL DANTUR: Okay. I mean the way you  
23 do it is trying to rebalance the workload in your  
24 newsroom and whenever you discover that something is  
25 not local, probably someone on the newsroom was

2 working on that, and you focus the people that--that  
3 are now in your newsroom--newsroom, all that staff  
4 that was reduced in working local. Of course, it's a  
5 challenge. Of course, if I could, I would have lots-  
6 -much more local reporters than I do have. What I  
7 need to do is to ensure that El Diario will go out  
8 every day, and way. And the only way to ensure that  
9 is that I have the money to pay for the expenses of  
10 the company, and--and the wages of the people. So  
11 basically, what we are doing here is we're trying to  
12 balance, and yes definitely anybody saying that we  
13 lost local coverage, maybe it's right. If you  
14 measure coverage in--since requests--requests  
15 teenagers (sic) or what--or whatsoever. But, at the  
16 end of the day, if you try to measure your work, and  
17 I said some of this in our testimony. Yes, we got  
18 awards for being the best newspaper, Hispanic  
19 newspaper from--we got one award, which in my opinion  
20 it's--it's very important, which is the work of the  
21 people being friends on Facebook page. We have  
22 500,000 people. That's the Number one fan--fan book  
23 Facebook page of media. So at the end of the day  
24 even though you may say we lost some things, we're--  
25 we are still of good service to the community. And

2 as I said before, maybe if we can get help, you know,  
3 the earliest we can shift resources more to local.  
4 But to your question, the answer is every day what we  
5 are trying to do is do more with less.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, so I guess  
7 what we're also trying to do is understand a couple  
8 concept--I don't call them misconceptions because we  
9 have to understand what the conception is or the idea  
10 is. But that newspapers that are struggling with  
11 staff often just translate the big news that's coming  
12 from the AP wires of the New York Times, and we're  
13 seeing that in El Diario. We're not going to, you  
14 know, we read it everyday. And so, how do you recon-  
15 or how do you distinguish between translating news  
16 that was generated from another kind of source and--  
17 and--and essentially stand on the integrity of that  
18 reporting, or a newspaper that has from 100 years  
19 done something different. So tell us a little bit  
20 about that. Are we wrong in thinking that what--  
21 what--what is happening in terms of that?

22 GABRIEL DANTUR: I mean what we are  
23 definitely not doing is substituting things that we  
24 should be doing, which are really important in the

2 local with, as you said, translated or it's--let's  
3 see, I don't--generic content. Yes, so--

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] And  
5 that's not happening, right?

6 GABRIEL DANTUR: Huh?

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: That is not  
8 happening.

9 GABRIEL DANTUR: No, that's not happening.  
10 What we are trying to do is whenever you have limited  
11 resources, you pick priorities and you pick what  
12 things are important to say. Of course, many things  
13 will be left out if your staff is reduced. And the  
14 thing is if you take a look at the reduction, our  
15 revenue stream has had not only in terms of  
16 advertising, but in--in paid circulation, too. It  
17 will be practically impossible to--not to lose some  
18 things. If you take a look at the El Diario and if  
19 you take a look at the front page of the El Diario,  
20 I'm sure that besides relevant and important events  
21 like it was Chapel Run (sic) a couple of days ago.  
22 Usually, the front page of El Diario has to do with  
23 local things in here, and that's the way we want to  
24 keep it. And as I said before, if I could, I would  
25 have much more local coverage. The one thing I need

2 to do now, and my responsibility is to have El Diario  
3 coming out every day, and in an affordable company  
4 that needs to pay salaries and needs to pay expenses.  
5 Sometimes we have to make decisions and choose. I  
6 think that probably you can look at the El Diario  
7 let's say the empty part of the glass like saying  
8 they lost some things, and not look at the filled  
9 part of the glass. Which is there are still putting a  
10 front page, and they are still trying to inform  
11 which--what things are important for the local  
12 community. We are here because if the City can help  
13 us, probably we can regain some of the local coverage  
14 that we lost because of this reshaping of the company  
15 that was in inducted by the market. I mean it was  
16 not us that decided that we wanted to shift contents.  
17 What we are trying to do is balance in between  
18 restrictions, unanswered restrictions, and companies  
19 available to us. (sic)

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Great, and I--I'm  
21 glad you ended that way because that's what we're  
22 here to do trying to understand--

23 ABU TAHER: [interposing] Can I add one--  
24 one point--

25 GABRIEL DANTUR: Sure. Go ahead.

2 ABU TAHER: --if you may, which is the--  
3 the--in order to survive the ethnic media, right,  
4 they have to have the local content more--content  
5 more than previous times. Because the readers,  
6 several Bangladeshi communities, if anything happen  
7 in Bangladesh, they have all the media online, the  
8 Bangladeshi media, or they are they publishing it on  
9 line.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] All  
11 online?

12 ABU TAHER: So they can read the whole  
13 thing being online, and as well as they have  
14 television sort of like television so they can watch.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And is that  
16 community okay with that being on online?

17 ABU TAHER: Yeah, I mean the--if any of  
18 them have been back Bangladesh or back to the country  
19 where we are from, right. But so what we have to do  
20 in order to survive, we are focusing more local  
21 content where we are going to cover with Bangladeshi  
22 media or Bangladeshi television, right or it came  
23 from Bangladesh. So that's that big challenge right  
24 now, that we have to, you know, produce more local  
25 content in order to feed up bureau translators. And

2 in--if we want to produce more content, you need  
3 more, the journalists, more reporters, you have to  
4 spend more money.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: So the future of  
6 ethnic media is connected to the content being local,  
7 and connected to hire--being able to hire more local  
8 journalists?

9 ABU TAHER: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Great. That's a  
11 theme here. Council Member Men--or actually, you  
12 want to--?

13 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: Yes, just a quick  
14 think. I believe that there is one thing that is  
15 constant in life, and it's change. You can either  
16 fight it or you can adapt.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Adapt.

18 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: And I have the  
19 feeling that that's where we are right now with the  
20 media when to me print is dead. Some people don't  
21 want to hear it, but we are going to the digital  
22 word. Now, the--the main concern with the--going  
23 from print to digital age. Going from three to  
24 phased (sic) because when you sell a newspaper  
25 somebody buy it. You put the contents online. Some



2 people are willing to pay for it. People will pay  
3 for the New York Times content, but will they--will  
4 they pay the contents of an ethnic media? So I think  
5 that's where the--

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] What  
7 prevents people from paying--what--what--you tell us,  
8 you did the--you're doing the market studies. What  
9 prevents our, or--and I know the answer. I think I  
10 know the answer to it, but I want you to just tells  
11 us from your perspective what prevents that from  
12 happening?

13 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: So, maybe because  
14 we haven't started it first, and to me I believe that  
15 information should be free. That's my personal  
16 belief, and I don't know. So, for me--

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Amen  
18 to that.

19 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: --going--going to--  
20 -to the fake content is not something that we'll look  
21 into, but it's--it's one of the biggest issues right  
22 now, trying try to do that transfer from paying for  
23 the digital, and be able to still get some money.  
24 The other thing also that I think we have to be  
25 proactive and we have to be creative. If for

2 instance we went on line, but we could have still  
3 continued spreading the word by--via emails, sending  
4 El Diario, for instance, digital. People are doing  
5 it and not paying for printing costs. You can also  
6 use social media. So you--I think that where we are  
7 right now you have to find different ways to make it  
8 work, and--and, of course, the biggest issue will be  
9 financial. The money is shrinking. You have to do  
10 more, but with less money. How do you do that?

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got it. Got it.  
12 Good questions. Council Member Mendez.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you, Chair  
14 Menchaca. Um, so I have a--a series of questions.  
15 First for Sing Tao. Did I say it correctly?

16 LOTUS CHAN: [off mic] Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you. Do  
18 you have an online publication, and do you put your  
19 news stories online?

20 LOTUS CHAN: Yes, I think my boss in Hong  
21 Kong is very smart because before people--actually  
22 phasing digital is the big challenge of not just  
23 ethnic media, I think it's all the media. So the  
24 other newspapers they put everything on the--on the--  
25 in the web, and then they find out that print

2 dropped, the circulation dropped very big. So my  
3 bosses like put part of the content in the--in the  
4 website, and part of them still in the newspaper. So  
5 if you still want to look at the whole newspaper word  
6 by word, you have to go to buy it. But, he--he put  
7 part of them in--in the web. So that's why some--  
8 somebody will call it, how come this--this article  
9 not in the website, and we really said that oh,  
10 because it's in--in the newspaper. It's not in  
11 digital because we--we see the other Chinese  
12 newspaper put everything on the web, and then they--  
13 the--the circulation dropped--dropped very far. So,  
14 and then when they tried to, you know, have money to  
15 subscribe they also dropped. That's why Sing Tao has  
16 put part--part of them digital and part of them in  
17 the newspaper.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I see and--and  
19 how long has the paper been available here in New  
20 York City? How many years?

21 LOTUS CHAN: We celebrated 15 years in  
22 New York, and in Hong Kong I think it's 77.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay. El Diario,  
24 you--you've been around a 100, over 100 years.

25 GABRIEL DANTUR: [off mic] 100.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay, and when  
3 did El Diario start putting articles online?

4 GABRIEL DANTUR: Well, I just started in  
5 El Diario. So I'm not sure. Maybe I can check when  
6 was the date that El Diario was launched online, but  
7 I'm sure it was--

8 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic]

9 GABRIEL DANTUR: '90?

10 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] It was all up in  
11 2000, and some more was added in 2000. (sic)

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: 2000.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Wait. Sorry, one  
14 at a time--

15 GABRIEL DANTUR: [interposing] Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --and if you could  
17 walk over and speak to him.

18 GABRIEL DANTUR: Sorry. So sorry, I  
19 wasn't precise about that answer, but it's after 2000  
20 that media. (sic)

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay, and Ms.  
22 Diouf Campbell. So, you started online, and then you  
23 went to print. Okay, so you were online for how long?

24 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: We--we were online  
25 for a year, and the--the same way. I saw like we had

2 to go to prints to have that sort of--for people to  
3 recognize, and accept the work that we're doing.  
4 That's the feeling that I had at some point. But  
5 because maybe we--we did it early--earlier. But then  
6 we realized that when we--when people get to know us  
7 more we could go back online and maybe we had more  
8 experience, more contacts, and I--I found it  
9 difficult when it started online. For instance, a  
10 lot of people the older generation like newspapers.  
11 T

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: [interposing] Uh-  
13 huh.

14 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: They think that if  
15 you're not printing, you're not valid, right. The  
16 younger generation everything is--they don't have  
17 time for a newspaper. Everything is online, and  
18 that's the future. So, it's--it's where we are right  
19 now. Do you really need to be a paper to be that  
20 valid, or can you stay online do a decent job, and  
21 still what you do? So I think that's the--the  
22 biggest--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: [interposing] Uh-  
24 huh.

2 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: --the print is  
3 dead.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Well, that's what  
5 I think some of my older constituents are lamenting--

6 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: [laughs]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: --and, you know,  
8 we're putting funding into our senior centers for  
9 them to learn how to use the computer, but they like  
10 to hold a paper. They like to read to the paper, and  
11 they like to wash the ink off--

12 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: [interposing]  
13 Right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: --of their hands  
15 [laughs] that--

16 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: [interposing] They  
17 like this. They like this.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: -- get on the  
19 paper, you know. Okay, that entering--interesting.  
20 I--I--I see a connect between the ethnic papers with  
21 my local papers. So my little community newspaper  
22 they used to charge whatever, and I would just get it  
23 mailed at home. And then at some point they started,  
24 you know, doing the online, and they started doing  
25 what Sing Tao does. They get some stuff online, and

2 they if want it, you have to go buy the paper, and  
3 then at some point, they just started putting the  
4 papers out for free. So you can get them, you know,  
5 in the Lower East Side, and in the East Village in  
6 these boxes, and you can grab the actual paper that  
7 will have like all the articles So I think--I think  
8 they started doing it for free because they weren't  
9 able to maintain people just paying for it, and  
10 having it delivered. Whatever those costs ware  
11 associated with it. But I, you know, I think the  
12 most important value to these little local community  
13 papers as with the ethnic papers it's what's true  
14 about politics. It's, you know, a simple meal, to  
15 coin the phrase I guess. Everything in politics is  
16 local. We want to know what's going on locally, you  
17 know, and then for--for people who migrate here, and  
18 immigrate here, to get familiar with the city you--  
19 you do it through the local papers that you can read  
20 in your language. And I think that that is the--the  
21 big benefit in--I don't know, in the last few weeks  
22 I've been trying to find out what was happening in  
23 Oregon with the Federal Wildlife takeover, and I had  
24 to Google it to get it in their local papers because  
25 I wasn't getting it in the bigger papers here. So, I

2 guess that's what's really important. For me in  
3 terms of El Diario what--what I found as I've been  
4 reading the paper is it seemed like it was going more  
5 in national or global and getting away from the  
6 local. Which to--to me was disconcerting because  
7 wasn't getting all the local news that I wanted to  
8 get, and I had to do more talking or more information  
9 hunting or speaking to other people. So, is that  
10 just because of the drop in circulation, and you have  
11 to limit your content or is--is that a--maybe a  
12 conscious decision of some point that was financially  
13 based?

14 GABRIEL DANTUR: I mean basically the  
15 following circulation as a consequence is a falling  
16 revenue basically because you have less circulation.  
17 So advertisers are not willing to pay any longer.  
18 And I will say more profound than that some  
19 advertisers are already executing the print is dead  
20 decision without our consent or without our opinion.  
21 So the thing is when you have less revenue, you have  
22 to adjust. And naturally, when you adjust you lose  
23 resources, staff, and the--it's not a planned  
24 decision that you say I'm going to be a national  
25 newspaper. Definitely, what my colleagues said over



2 here is the best competitive advantage we do have.  
3 So media is being local because we talk about things  
4 that big newspapers do not talk. So that's one  
5 thing we don't want to lose, and with--we're trying  
6 to keep it. So it's not our decision not to be local  
7 and to be national. The thing is whenever you are  
8 trying to survive, I see probably a family that has a  
9 problem with the--with their income, you lose some  
10 things. You try to lose the things that are not  
11 important. So probably, what you are seeing is our  
12 exercise of prior enticing things, and probably some  
13 local coverage that's lost in there. And the  
14 national coverage is let's say free because it's  
15 there. So probably the average changes. Maybe what  
16 we could do is just chop off whatever we were doing on  
17 national so that the average--I said it isn't much,  
18 but I don't think that's a wise decision because it's  
19 not like you do not publish content because the  
20 balance with the local and national is not good. I  
21 mean our point is we need to be local and we need to  
22 be relevant, and we need to talk about like you said  
23 with the Oregon example, things that people care  
24 about. What we are trying to do is right now for  
25 example unfortunately--unfortunately the results from

2 2015 were not very helpful. So we had to reshape  
3 once again our--our organization, and now we are  
4 working with the newsroom to find out how we can stay  
5 as local as we can. And--and actually, we were  
6 planning on okay, this is how we are right now.  
7 Let's get together and see what we can do. Let's get  
8 as creative as we can, and that's-- Sorry if I'm  
9 repeating my myself, but the alternative to that is  
10 to die, and that's one thing that probably some  
11 people don't bear in mean. I mean there are more  
12 folks who have been saying you lost two or three  
13 local articles, and my point is I lost them, because  
14 I am able to go out everyday. And the thing is the  
15 prize of having the same coverage or the same kind of  
16 service I had before can be the survival of the  
17 company itself. And I said it a couple of--in a  
18 couple of interviews for the last four years El  
19 Diario hasn't been a profitable business. It's a  
20 sense of taking money out it, and as a company. And  
21 I am not going to say that El Diario is a mom and pop  
22 shop, but definitely a financial stress is kind of  
23 the same because you need to sustain a company. So  
24 you bet on that. You invest--you invest waiting for  
25 the--the table to turn, but the things you cannot

2 keep on investing forever, and--and then luckily the  
3 people out there who are taking decisions don't care  
4 about your financials. I mean, whenever Wal-Mart  
5 comes and says we're not going to do pre-prints any  
6 more with you, they don't care about your local  
7 coverage. They just take the decision, and I don't  
8 know why the news industry in the U.S. is advertising  
9 based. I mean the price that everybody is paying for  
10 a newspaper probably will pay for this tradition and  
11 the cost of printing and the income whatsoever. But  
12 the really, let's say thing that keeps our newspaper  
13 is advertising. So when we advertise the site not to  
14 advertise any, and let me give you another example,  
15 getting local. There's a very important local  
16 business for El Diario, which are lawyers. I mean as  
17 you can imagine the sector the people reading El  
18 Diario are sometimes more let's say relevant to  
19 lawyers, injury lawyers or whatsoever. Lawyers will  
20 come, and tell you I have been investing in you for  
21 the last year, and I didn't get--not a call, not a  
22 case. And the thing is, the one thing about local  
23 businesses is that they care a lot about money unlike  
24 Wal-Mart or Coca-Cola or big companies where they can  
25 afford putting a piece of advertising in your media

2 that's not repaid because they have lots of way of  
3 make money. The small mom and pop local business  
4 needs to have economic results from the printed ad  
5 they're putting on you. So, what--what I'm trying to  
6 say here is that something happened. Something  
7 changed. This is what I call disruption and the  
8 rules of the game are different. You can still play  
9 by the old rules.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Uh-huh.

11 GABRIEL DANTUR: I don't think that's  
12 going to be very successful. So there's one thing  
13 that we should bear in mind, the rules have changed.  
14 We are trying to adjust to those rules as painless as  
15 possible.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay. Sing Tao,  
17 when you--when the paper started doing the digital  
18 news, the online news, did you have--did the paper  
19 have to cut back on staff and shrink staff here?

20 LOTUS CHAN: No.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: In New York?

22 LOTUS CHAN: No.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: And how about  
24 back in China, do you know?

25

2 ABU TAHER: I think we are not online yet  
3 because we sell the newspaper, but we have to go  
4 because first we thought maybe can we get, you know,  
5 a big amount of money from selling the newspaper, but  
6 if we go online, then we find the people are reading  
7 it online, and then sell. You know, this is the  
8 selling the newspaper. But nowadays, we found the--  
9 we have to face that challenge because if we don't go  
10 online, then I don't we're doing well with the parts  
11 of the--from the people? Because the people that  
12 prefer online, though they still--they buy the  
13 newspaper, and it's kind of for entertainment. When  
14 they are going to the work, so they buy the newspaper  
15 in the train and read the newspaper, or when they--  
16 before they sleep, they---if they have a newspaper on  
17 the side bed, they can, you know, they can read.  
18 But, you know, still we--this is a reality that we  
19 have to go. But we are thinking to start it online  
20 and, you know, like the New York Times. That you can  
21 read ten articles free, and after ten articles, you  
22 have to pay for it.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: That was going to  
24 be my next question.

2 ABU TAHER: But that's we are--that's  
3 what we are thinking.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Yeah.

5 ABU TAHER: That, okay, if we have say  
6 about 600,000 or 800,000 readers or our newspaper  
7 living around the United States then we are thinking  
8 if we can get \$5.00 from each person, then we can get  
9 a big amount of, you know, money from the--from the  
10 readers. That's what we are thinking and, you know,  
11 we'll see whether we can execute this.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Right now,  
13 you're--none of you are charging for the online  
14 press.

15 ABU TAHER: No, no.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay. So, yeah,  
17 the--so that was my question because the New York  
18 Times locks you out after ten articles, and then  
19 like, you know, in my office, until I started having  
20 some budget problems, I would order and pay several  
21 hundred dollars so that all of my staff could have  
22 access to the Times.

23 GABRIEL DANTUR: Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: And then for the  
25 rest, we run and buy the--the print media--

2 GABRIEL DANTUR: Yeah.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ" --you know. But,  
4 um, yeah, that's something like if-if you end up  
5 doing that it might increase some of your readership  
6 online.

7 ABU TAHER: And there is--there is this--  
8 there did a survey about a couple of years ago by  
9 Meal Maker Media (sic) and they found, I'm--I'm talk  
10 about eight or nine years ago. They found over 16  
11 million Americans they are fully dependent ethnic  
12 media, but weren't even taught by the mainstream  
13 media. So this is also very important that, you  
14 know, if ten years ago, 50 million and now it might  
15 be more, you know, they absolutely depend on the  
16 ethnic media.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you very  
18 much, Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council  
20 Member Mendez.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: And thank you. I  
22 want to thank the panelists for answering questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Council Member  
24 Koo.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [coughs] Thank you,  
3 Chair. I want to thank each one of you for coming  
4 here to testify and give us insight about your  
5 business. And--and I want to thank--

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] You  
7 are a businessman, too, you know.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah, yeah, so--

9 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [laughs] We look  
10 to you for our business information.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Because a small--a  
12 newspaper is just like a regular business. They have  
13 a lot of subscribers, but the return is really small.  
14 You depend--you used to be--depend on the--you don't  
15 depend. Actually, you don't depend on the paper by  
16 the--the money from the--the readers, you know. You  
17 mostly depend on advertising. Yeah. So, the--and  
18 for most people they don't want to pay for it. You  
19 guys will go online, and very few people will pay  
20 \$5.00, you know, or \$10.00, you know. So it's a  
21 difficult business, and--but you are provider of news  
22 service to our constituents, and to our elected  
23 officials. Because like all politics is local. When  
24 we run for the elections, and you do a good service.  
25 So we--we want to be in an--as City Council members



2 we want to than our Speaker. The Speakers race is  
3 part of the local ethnic press. So we're going to  
4 ask then, ask our Speaker to support you as much as  
5 possible, and maybe you can use services with the  
6 SBS, Small Business Service. They have a lot of  
7 programs, financial programs. You can utilize them  
8 to help you financially. And also I noticed we have  
9 a report from the--the Comptroller's Office here.  
10 The Comptroller is not here, and being the financial  
11 center of the world here, every year the  
12 Comptroller's Office uses municipal bonds like  
13 sometimes a billion dollars. They always advertise,  
14 but I don't think they advertise on local media. So  
15 I'm going to ask the Comptroller's Officer to do the  
16 same because they--they were our brothers in  
17 criticizing the Mayor's Office not doing the job in  
18 advertising. So I will put him on the spot, on the  
19 same level and ask them to advertise when their  
20 Municipal Bond announcements or all these other  
21 financial services. They make major announcements of  
22 bond deals emerge in some market, IBOs. So they  
23 should give you one part--a small part of their--  
24 their budget on--on your newspapers or news media.

2 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: [interposing] I  
3 have--I have to say that--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Right, Mr. Chair, so  
5 I ask you, yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: A good--a good  
7 suggestion.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah, as a committee  
9 we--I'll ask the Comptroller's Office and other  
10 agencies when they do advertisements make sure they  
11 cover minority newspapers.

12 ISSEU DIOUF CAMPBELL: I have to say that  
13 they advertise the week on our website, and it was  
14 about this money that is available for all the city  
15 workers that were--but, yeah, they did, but it was  
16 the waste. (sic) So, we--we hope that it's--that's  
17 the bigger name, and hopefully in the near future  
18 we'll see more.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: You know, I noticed  
20 they have lines a lot on 1010 News, you know, on the  
21 radio. Because I sometimes hear it. So, I want to  
22 ask the Comptroller's Office to do the same to our  
23 local ethnic newspapers because a lot of the Asian  
24 people they save a lot of money.

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: They have money to  
3 buy the balance. (sic) So they are the market. So  
4 they should advertise to the market. So that's--

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: That's a good  
6 idea.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: --my concern. So I  
8 want to thank all of you again. You know, thank you  
9 for your wonderful very important service. (sic)

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Council  
11 Member Koo, and one last question, and then I'm going  
12 to make a point, and we're going to go to the next  
13 panel. And I encourage everybody to keep patience.  
14 This is a very important conversation, and as you can  
15 tell I think we're all learning a lot of new angles  
16 as we--as we dig deep. For Mr. Dantur, can you tell  
17 us a little bit--you mentioned earlier about  
18 commitment to local, and really that is what the  
19 panel is kind of speaking to. The integrity of a  
20 newspaper is really to stay local in this--in this  
21 business. And--and so, you also mentioned online and  
22 decreasing staff. At what point will El Diario make  
23 a decision? And we're hearing this, and this is why  
24 we have to ask this question, when it's going to  
25 leave its print and go all digital? Is that in the

2 plans? When is that happening? How are you making  
3 that decision, and how does jeopardize the local  
4 content question as we--as we anticipate those  
5 things.

6 GABRIEL DANTUR: Okay, many questions in  
7 one. I'll try to keep it to the order. The Number  
8 one question, I don't that there's a due date like  
9 you have in--in medicine, and we are not the ones  
10 establishing the date. Basically, as I said before  
11 when can run a sustainable business, you do it the  
12 moment, and I need to be very honest with this. If  
13 we cannot run a sustainable business any longer, that  
14 will be the moment, and it doesn't depend on us. It  
15 depends on a very complicated ecosystem of people in  
16 there, which is advertisers. For me, I don't know if  
17 there are organizations that can help or not, the  
18 city helping or not. So, my decision right now is we  
19 want to be relevant, and we want to be reach  
20 everybody. As the council member said before, there  
21 are some old people that probably like the newspaper,  
22 the print newspaper, and the print newspaper is very  
23 important to them. We want to service them, and we  
24 want to be there for them. The moment we stop doing  
25 that, depends a lot on the economic equation and not

2 our--or of a strategic decision. I mean in my--in my  
3 opinion, the print newspaper has still a lot of  
4 relevancy for people of--I mean I'm 50, people of my  
5 age. So I wish it could go--go on for years and  
6 years. It depends, as I said before, on the ways  
7 that we can find financial sustainability of the  
8 company. And the other thing that we must bear in  
9 mind in between print and on line is that lots of  
10 people as we have this older senior citizens that  
11 only rely on the print. Then you have this young set  
12 that only want to go online. So, you should take  
13 care of them, too. And not only--I mean not only  
14 take care of them with a website because it could be  
15 that 12-year-olds today will not even read your  
16 website. They will read you inside of a snack shop  
17 or inside of Facebook. So everything should be taken  
18 in that context. I think that our responsibility is  
19 to be abarcativo. I don't if that's a word in  
20 English, but in Spanish abarcativo as wide as we can  
21 be, and get everybody into the benefits of  
22 information and services. Our responsibility is to  
23 media companies to do whatever it takes to be there  
24 for everybody.

25 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Great.

2 GABRIEL DANTUR: There's a section of  
3 people that want stream.(sic) Stream is a more  
4 stressed because it's a more economical--economically  
5 unviable operation. We need help in there. And the  
6 second question?

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, I--it's--  
8 it's about local content, and really understanding  
9 how--

10 GABRIEL DANTUR: [interposing] Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --and how the--how  
12 are you maintaining and how you're going you're going  
13 to keep yourself accountable, and how can we keep you  
14 accountable as a community? No one is talking about  
15 Council. I'm just talking a Spanish reader that's  
16 representing seniors that are wanting to read local  
17 information.

18 GABRIEL DANTUR: I--I mean the moment you  
19 cease to be local, you die. The only reason of  
20 existence of an ethnic newspaper is local. For  
21 everything that's not local, you have the global  
22 brand, which is called New York Times, and that's it.  
23 So--

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Got  
25 it.

2 GABRIEL DANTUR: --we need to be local,  
3 and we need to speak about things that people do.  
4 Other media sources do not speak, and with time--

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] I  
6 just want to ask back on the timing. How much time  
7 do we have? Do we have a couple of years to figure  
8 this out? Do we have a couple months to figure this  
9 out? I know you don't want to hit a time, but we  
10 need to know, too, because we're going to--we're  
11 going to churn--we're going to churn this  
12 information. We're going to--we're going to commit  
13 to this work. How much time do we have?

14 GABRIEL DANTUR: Okay, I will say that  
15 if--not only El Diario either the print business as a  
16 whole doesn't get any kind of support from--not New  
17 York City. I mean from outside of the business  
18 ecosystem, probably the printed product is facing a  
19 couple of years. When I mean a couple, two or three.  
20 If we do get some kind of help, El Diario or any  
21 other newspaper, I think that we can prolong that for  
22 I'll say almost ten years. This is a personal  
23 opinion. If you ask me, I don't see that a printed  
24 edition will exist in terms for relevancy to people

2 reading it ten years from now, but that's a personal  
3 opinion.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Got.

5 GABRIEL DANTUR: So that's a little--

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] And  
7 that's helpful just because we want--I want to  
8 understand how--how urgent. It's urgent. I think we  
9 understand that, but understanding how government  
10 works so slowly sometimes. And for a lot of good  
11 reasons we need to check--

12 GABRIEL DANTUR: [interposing] Yep.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --everything along  
14 the way, but I--invitations for Controller, SBS.  
15 These are great ideas. We're going to begin these  
16 conversations. It's going to take time. It's going  
17 to take people coming into spaces like this again,  
18 and so I hope you can come--in all the work you're  
19 doing just to put the paper out, I hope you can carve  
20 out time to sit with us, and really make this next  
21 step a real--real effective next step for all of you  
22 on the bottom, and preserve the voices of our  
23 communities. Not just in the content that's being  
24 generated, but in what we're trying to as a city  
25 communicate to the people as well.



2 GABRIEL DANTUR: Okay.

3 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Is that fair/

4 GABRIEL DANTUR: Yeah, it is.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, great thank

6 you so much. We're going to have our next panel.

7 It's a big panel, but I think this is an important

8 thing to kind of get moving--things moving. So, we

9 have from the National Hispanic Media Coalition,

10 Martha--

11 MARTHA GARCIA: [off mic] Martha Garcia.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Garcia. From the

13 News Guild--the News Guild of New York, Peter

14 [background comment] Kelly, President, National

15 Hispanic, or Marta is there. Javier Castano, Queens

16 Latino. From Inspire Magazine, Ayisha from the Star

17 Review, Kimberly Price, and Ms. Newt Sanibel (sic)

18 from Impacto Latino or Latin News. If you can come

19 here, we're going to put three minutes on the clock.

20 Let's you sit--let's get you seated at the table.

21 [background comments] And if we can have Augusto

22 Alascon (sp?).

23 AUGUSTO ALASCON: Alascon.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Alascon. If you

25 can come and meet with my counsel over here, we have

2 a couple questions. [background comments] And if we  
3 can keep it quiet in the Chambers please.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Folk would you quiet  
5 down, please.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And I encourage--I  
7 encourage all the panelists that just spoke to stay  
8 in the room and listen to your fellow--your fellow  
9 fellows talk about their--their work as well.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet down please.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Come here at the  
12 table.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet down, please.  
14 Quiet, please.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, I'd like to  
16 have you introduce yourself. Can we get another  
17 chair? I think we're going to do a little bit on  
18 this side as well. You're good. Great, so we'll  
19 start from my right, and then we'll go to your left.  
20 Please introduce yourself, your role, the publication  
21 or organization you're representing and give your  
22 testimony. We're going to do three minutes on the  
23 clock. Thank you.

24

25

2 JAVIER CASTANO: I'm Javier Castano from  
3 Queens Latino. I'm the founder and Director for that  
4 publication both print and digital.

5 FEMALE SPEAKER: My name is--

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: All right, no, and  
7 give your testimony, a three-minute testimony.

8 JAVIER CASTANO: Oh, I have to continue  
9 with my testimony?

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yes, everybody  
11 give your three-minute testimony. Introduce yourself  
12 first. Thank you.

13 JAVIER CASTANO: I am here to talk about  
14 the Hispanic ethnic media only. The Korean, the  
15 Chinese, the Hindu, the Bangladesh ethnic media have  
16 different dynamics that I don't know. I consider  
17 myself an expert in the Latino media in the USA and  
18 the New York City Metropolitan area in particular. I  
19 have worked as general assignment reporter, editor  
20 and director in the bilingual edition of the Daily  
21 News, El Diario and our newspaper. I was also the  
22 international correspondent for El Tiempo and the  
23 biggest newspaper in Colombia. I have worked for  
24 many community-based publications in New York City  
25 and I have a master's degree from Columbia School of

2 Journalists here in Manhattan. I have written widely  
3 about the Hispanic speaking press, as columnist and  
4 reporter. Currently, I am the Founder and Director  
5 of Queens Latino with digital and print platforms.  
6 The Latino ethnic media is a reflection of what is  
7 happening in the Latino community in New York City.  
8 Just articulated, isolated without sophistication and  
9 looking for some kind of leadership. Those glossy  
10 magazines in the Latino community in New York City  
11 are glorifying the largest pile of the rich and  
12 famous that have nothing to do with the reality of  
13 our neighborhoods. The great majority of the Latino  
14 newspapers in our city only focus on news from Latin  
15 American countries. Some follow with local  
16 publications, and the voluptuous woman from the  
17 latest soap opera or Telemundo. (sic) Our radio  
18 station in Spanish seldom covers the local news, and  
19 are only available to promote entertainment and  
20 denigrate women with a strong and explicit vocabulary  
21 day and night. I don't want to describe the two  
22 Spanish TV stations because I don't consider them a  
23 part of the Latino ethnic media. I just want to say  
24 that Univision and Telemundo have enough money to do  
25 a better job advising the Latino community in this

2 country. The local Latino brokers on websites in  
3 Spanish are still fighting to find a place in the  
4 Internet and a way to make money. If this New York  
5 City Council hearing wants to find out a better way  
6 to communicate and help the Latino Annual  
7 Publication, the answer is in the lack of education  
8 and political sophistication of the Hispanic speaking  
9 publications. Our publishers, editors [bell] and  
10 reporters don't want to or cannot cover the city  
11 policies, education, housing or immigration stories.  
12 They don't know how the power of the city functions  
13 or they simply do not know how to communicate in  
14 English. In some cases, they are even afraid of  
15 visiting City Hall. City Hall and the New York City  
16 Council both have communication departments. It is  
17 not difficult to reach out to them, and ask  
18 questions. Their doors are open. Is Especialito--

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

20 Wait, I'm going to ask you--

21 JAVIER CASTANO: --of the Ecuadorian--of  
22 the Ecuadorian news--Yeah, I'm going to read it, but  
23 it's important. [coughs] Is, oh, where is that. Is  
24 the Especialito or the Ecuadorian News to give two  
25 examples, willing to dedicate some resources to cover

2 local issues such as policies of housing? I don't  
3 think so. The only way to motivate them is to place  
4 some ads in some publication, but before that, the  
5 City should educate the Latino newsroom and the  
6 people who read and watch our media outlets. For  
7 those who getting them, working in the New York City,  
8 New York State and big corporations, as you  
9 mentioned, should educate themselves, too. Allow me  
10 to give you an example. The housing crisis in 2008  
11 has a--has a devastating impact in Latino  
12 neighborhoods such as Corona and Woodside in Queens.  
13 But when the City and the State decided to help those  
14 families facing foreclosure, their retention money  
15 went to main street media with connections with the  
16 banking world. Those publications in English don't  
17 even reach our neighborhoods. The Latino community  
18 was left behind twice. The City Council should  
19 preen--sorry--to plan seminars to educate the people  
20 who work in our newsrooms. The City Council should  
21 inform on a regular basis in Spanish or English about  
22 this activities, and the City Council should place  
23 some ads in publications that covers Latino local  
24 issues. The City Council should go to our  
25 communities to talk about city participation on how

2 the system works. Finally and probably the most  
3 important thing that I have to say here today the  
4 City Council should look for those Latino communities  
5 that don't have any real representation in the city  
6 government, and are growing tremendously in terms of  
7 population. Those Latino communities that are  
8 isolated, floose (sic) trade, and excluded and  
9 activists and New York City politicians of the  
10 Democratic Party. In the City of--if the City  
11 Council does not help Latino community source of  
12 Mexicans, Ecuadorians, Peruvians, Argentinians, and  
13 Venezuelans, it's going to face the same the ugly  
14 reality that is taking El Diario Newspaper down. In  
15 the past 20 years, the leadership of El Diario did  
16 not fully open the--its pages to new immigrants from  
17 those countries, and it is now paying the  
18 consequences of exclusion. The new wave of Latino  
19 immigrants is important to the survival of the many  
20 publications and the development of the political  
21 power in New York City. Let's open our sincere and  
22 honest--honest Gallaver (sic). Next time when you  
23 wonder why Latinos don't vote, remember these words.  
24 Thank you so much.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, Mr.  
3 Castano and--and I hear your words 100%, and I think  
4 a lot of us are committed to that work. So thank you  
5 so much for that.

6 NEWT SANIBEL: Hi, my name is Newt  
7 Sanibel (sp?). I'm a reporter for Impacto Latin  
8 News. I'm talking in behalf of them. Impacto is a  
9 weekly newspaper with the Spanish newspaper with more  
10 than 50 years in the New York City market. However,  
11 over the last years, we have been struggling to  
12 survive as El Diario. Impacto is a Minority and  
13 Women Owned company. However, the money we receive  
14 by contract with City is not enough. It's not  
15 commensurate with the population we serve. What the  
16 City can do we think that the City could provide a  
17 media like us with the grants. Also, the City could  
18 enhance or increase the small percentage of the  
19 City's advertising budget directed to ethnic media  
20 publications. According to a study from the Center  
21 of Community and Ethnic Media published in 2013, even  
22 Hispanic make--28% of the city population is Spanish  
23 language publications receive less than 4% of the  
24 total of the budget directed to these type of  
25 outlets. That's all I've got to say.



2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

3 PETER SZEKELY: Thank you Chairman--thank  
4 you Chairman Menchaca. My name is Peter Szekely.  
5 I'm the President of the News Guild of New York. The  
6 Guild represents 2,800 journalists and other  
7 employees mostly at New York area news organizations,  
8 and there are several of our members here in the room  
9 today. Our members work at national and global news  
10 organizations like Reuters where I spent most of my  
11 working life. And our members also work at a host of  
12 smaller news organizations in the area, including the  
13 sum of the city's ethnic newspapers like the Jewish  
14 Forward, Amsterdam News and El Diario. As our union,  
15 as a union the Guild's chief mission is to try to  
16 improve the working conditions of our members, but we  
17 also consider ourselves to be the protectors of the  
18 craft of journalism and it is--and for that reason, I  
19 want to thank the committee for holding these  
20 hearings, and--and--and for beginning this very  
21 important conversation. We're very concerned by what  
22 we have seen at El Diario over the past few years.  
23 In the past two years, the size of the paper's  
24 newsroom has shrunk from--from 25 to 11. Where only  
25 a few years ago the paper was filled with local

2 stories that the larger mainstream press wasn't  
3 covering, today it's just a shadow of its former  
4 self. The paper that called itself the champion of  
5 the Hispanics is today filled mostly with stories  
6 that have been aggregated from wire service and other  
7 people's reporting. Last summer one of our members  
8 who left Airy--El Diario actually told us, "I did not  
9 become a reporter to cut and paste from other  
10 websites." We understand that--that El Diario and  
11 other news organizations, are privately owned  
12 enterprises and they need to turn a profit. But,  
13 they also assume the roles of public trusts. The--  
14 the Foreign Language Press is a pipeline into the  
15 city's immigrant communities. They bring to their  
16 readers news that often can't be found elsewhere, and  
17 that speaks to them in the language that--with which  
18 they're most comfortable. It must be said that the  
19 Guild's relationship with El Diario has been among  
20 the most contentious of our 20 employers in the last  
21 four years since its--its parent ImpreMedia was  
22 bought was LaNacion of Argentina. The elimination of  
23 13 of--of-of--or our members' jobs, and by the way,  
24 that includes the translator, the only translator on  
25 staff was among the 13 let go. That was announced

2 two weeks ago, and that also resulted in--in the  
3 halving of--the halving of the staff of the newsroom.  
4 That is now a dispute that is before the National  
5 Labor Relations Board, and it is now investigating  
6 that. And yet, in spite of our differences, I tried  
7 [bell] to find some reason to be hopeful where no--  
8 I'll--I'll wrap up in a sec. I--I--I tried to be--  
9 to find some reason to be hopeful earlier this week  
10 when Del Diario management issued a statement and  
11 said it wasn't setting a death date for print  
12 publication. I think we heard that again today. It  
13 said it intended to remain the voice of the Latino  
14 community, and it pledged to find what it called a  
15 value proposition to keep the paper alive. Well, the  
16 sobering rally, however, is that you've got to look  
17 at this in the context of log--of la nosio and the  
18 stewardship of its American properties since 2012.  
19 And what we've seen is that the journalist resources  
20 of its papers in other American cities have been  
21 depleted. And our members have told us that  
22 management has sharply reduced the number of  
23 distribution points for El Diario making harder and  
24 harder for reasons to--for readers to find the print  
25 publication. Now, we're not oblivious to the

2 upheaval in--in--in the news business, and our  
3 members offered to take a pay cut in order to  
4 forestall--to forestall the layoffs that were  
5 announced this month. Notwithstanding these  
6 challenges, all these challenges, there are  
7 successes. In New York's Chinese community, which is  
8 less than one-four the size of the Spanish speaking  
9 population of--of two million in the city, there are  
10 four thriving Chinese language newspapers. They're  
11 in robust competition with one another, and you saw  
12 one of them represented here today. So even in  
13 today's challenging business climate, it's still  
14 possible for newspapers to succeed and to--and to do  
15 good journalism, but it starts with the will to do  
16 so. It requires an investment in good journalism  
17 because people will pay for good journalism. And  
18 it's driven by a dedication to informing readers and  
19 providing them with information they need to be good  
20 citizens. If the current owners of El Diario cannot  
21 summon the will and--and the dedication and the level  
22 of--of investment to devote to this 102-year-old  
23 institution of the City's Hispanic communities, we  
24 hope they will step aside and make room for someone

2 who can. I thank the committee for inviting me and,  
3 of course, I'll take your questions with the other--

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

5 Thank you.

6 PETER SZEKELY: --members of the Council.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for your  
8 testimony.

9 MARTA GARCIA: Hi. I might go off script  
10 because a lot of the stuff we've said--

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

12 Absolutely.

13 MARTA GARCIA: --have--have written or  
14 already have been said. So, to--

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, use that  
16 three minutes and--and hit the hot points.

17 MARTA GARCIA: --to keep the conversation  
18 going, my name is Marta Garcia, and I am Vice Chair  
19 of the National Hispanic Media Coalition, a well kept  
20 secret perhaps in New York, but not nationwide. We  
21 have been around for about 30 years. We have--we are  
22 a civil rights and media advocacy group. We deal  
23 mostly with telecommunications and policy at the  
24 federal level as well as looking at what happens in  
25 our broadcasting industry right here in New York in

2 particular, which is my role. We have been  
3 instrumental in educating a lot of the Latino leaders  
4 on accessing media, and in particular we are proud of  
5 the fact that we took the leadership to ensure, and  
6 this maybe has nothing to do with ethnic media but  
7 indirectly. Ensure that Tiempo, WABC's Timepo was  
8 not only to be continued on air, but also to be  
9 allowed a more visible time slot. It used to be on  
10 at 5:30 in the morning. Now it's at 11:30 and many  
11 of you guys have been on, and that is the resource  
12 for many of our ethnic communities. So, we're very  
13 proud of that. I am very glad to see that finally  
14 this body has been interested in the media in  
15 general. I was appointed by the Mayor Bloomberg for  
16 the Latin Media and Communication--Latin Media--what  
17 is it called? And Entertainment Commission, which  
18 was the body that would have taken this issue and  
19 taken it to a broader level because many of the  
20 industry leaders sat on that commission.  
21 Unfortunately, this administration, despite the  
22 urging, despite the demands to do so has not revamped  
23 that--that commission. Commissioner Cynthia Lopez  
24 was very enthusiastic in meeting with some of us, and  
25 getting that commission going. Even El Diario was

2 sitting at that table as well as NYC and Company, as  
3 you mentioned earlier today. Part of our  
4 recommendations have to do with yes the advertising  
5 and outreach and I'm glad that my colleague mentioned  
6 something that I was going to mention that of that  
7 city budget, only four percent goes to Spanish  
8 language or ethnic media. So the Spanish language so  
9 I was very taken aback by that. I wanted to also to  
10 dispel the myth that Latinos own our own instruments.  
11 We don't and in advertising you have to look at the  
12 fact that the media is [bell] eroding. And in that  
13 erosion it's not only in the newspaper industry but  
14 in the broadcasting. When the Commissioner earlier  
15 mentioned today their advertising a large chunk to  
16 Waddel (sic) and some of the other ones that she  
17 mentioned, I said, Gee, does she know that they're  
18 doing the same thing that the newspapers are doing?  
19 They're streaming from L.A. from Miami and not  
20 locally, and if they are, very few. I think the  
21 Hispanic Federation has a program, you know, once a  
22 week or something like that. But, all in all to say  
23 that we're very concerned with--with the whole  
24 erosion of the media. And we're very cognizant of  
25 the fact that there needs to be profit, but we're

2 also cognizant of the fact that there needs to be new  
3 models. One of the models that we support is that  
4 which is--that's one of my recommendations--is that  
5 of Internet and media--and print media based because  
6 56% of our foreign born citizens prefer the hard copy  
7 as a--

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Can  
9 you repeat that?

10 MARTA GARCIA: the council member had  
11 said.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: What's--what's  
13 that?

14 MARTA GARCIA: Fifty-six percent.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, yeah.

16 MARTA GARCIA: That is the study done by--  
17 -

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] It's  
19 working for us in here.

20 MARTA GARCIA: --the FEW Foundation--  
21 Institute rather as well as the Scarborough Newspaper  
22 Penetration Report. It goes into the foreign born, a  
23 non-English language proficient individuals who just  
24 don't reach the Internet. One of my other  
25 recommendations is when you mentioned the Internet,



2 if I may disagree with you, the Smart phones, yes,  
3 but most of the people that we know in low-income in  
4 Bronx, in Queens they do not have the access that we  
5 do to the Internet. That is a huge problem  
6 throughout the City. I applaud the Mayor for the  
7 follow-up communications from the hot spots  
8 throughout the city, but I thank Commissioner, um,  
9 Scott Stringer for his interference to ensuring that  
10 those outer boroughs outside of Manhattan got covered  
11 and got those hot spots as well.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right.

13 MARTA GARCIA: So, a lot of our low-  
14 income families can't even have access to the  
15 Internet because those big mergers are taking over  
16 those Cablevision companies, and the cost is  
17 prohibitive for many of them.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

19 MARTA GARCIA: So that is something to  
20 take into consideration that many of our people  
21 despite the fact that we're heavy users of Smart  
22 phones, self included, we do not read from that, but  
23 rather we read directly from the Internet when we do  
24 want to get our news information. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and--and  
3 on that note, I want to just say that I--I would  
4 encourage you to spend some time with me in the  
5 district. The question of--of Smart phones and  
6 Internet, there's so much conflicting information  
7 right now, and it's so dynamic, and I don't know what  
8 to believe when I read everyone saying yes, everybody  
9 has a phone. Everyone saying no, no one has a phone.  
10 So what I say is this is the beginning of a  
11 conversation, and--and I encourage any of you to walk  
12 with me through the streets of Sunset Park and the  
13 amount of organizing that's happening on Facebook is--  
14 -is insane. And I--that's how effective we are, and  
15 if you look at all the participatory budgeting  
16 success that we've had, it's been out of our  
17 immigrant, low-income, undocumented community that's  
18 been utilizing--utilizing that--that social media  
19 tool. And I know not everybody has. A long story  
20 short, that's not the topic of today completely, but  
21 it is connected and thank you for bringing that up.  
22 Because it's a good topic.

23 MARTA GARCIA: [interposing] It's a  
24 generational issue.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: It's a  
3 generational issue, too, but even that, even that I'm  
4 going to, I'm going to--I'm going to leave as a  
5 question. Ms. Price, can you please actually come up  
6 to the table, or are you fine there?

7 KIMBERLY PRICE: I think so.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yes, great.

9 KIMBERLY PRICE: Can you hear me.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right, excellent.  
11 Thank you so much for being here today.

12 KIMBERLY PRICE: Sure. My name is  
13 Kimberly Price. I am with the Red Hook Star Review  
14 in Red Hook, Brooklyn. I am a co-publisher. I'm  
15 also the editor. I am the reporter, the  
16 photographer, the entire ad bill team, and I even  
17 every issue get in my 1992 Toyota Camry and drive to  
18 Connecticut, put 8,000 papers in the back of my car,  
19 and bring them back to Brooklyn to my co-publisher  
20 who hand delivers. So, we are not necessarily an  
21 immigrant newspaper. However, we are reporting on  
22 the largest housing development in Brooklyn, the  
23 second largest in the city. Lots of minorities, lots  
24 of ethnicity. We do all local and it's really,  
25 really tough. We haven't had a reporter full or

2 part-time since Sandy. We have free publication, and  
3 all of our funding comes through advertising. When  
4 your neighborhood is under water and you do a local  
5 paper, your advertising is local when those people  
6 are out of business. So one of the things that we've  
7 been working really hard to do is to build that up.  
8 We are at a point where we can start to stop  
9 surviving and start to grow again. It's been hear 3-  
10 1/2 years. A lot of that has to do with advertising,  
11 and there's been a lot of money that's--that's gone  
12 into bus stops, into train stations, into major  
13 media. One of the most astounding this is that the  
14 cost of a full page in Daily News is more than twice  
15 what my publication pays would give a year contract  
16 for a full page, and our pages are bigger, too.  
17 However, that's not where it's going. Not everybody  
18 in my community goes to the bus stops. Not everybody  
19 in my community rides the same train. Not everybody  
20 in my community sees those, but we print 8,000  
21 issues, 8,000 copies per issue, print copies, and  
22 they don't come back. [bell] We actually have  
23 gotten to a point where we have to hoard a few extras  
24 so that we'll have back copies in our office. So,  
25 um, I have--I have a little bit of statistics that

2 aren't super specific, but I'll be more than glad to  
3 get the Numbers for you. In 2015, more people were  
4 reading hard copies than digital, and the--

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] Ms.  
6 Price, can you just specifically say that again.  
7 This is--this in 2015?

8 KIMBERLY PRICE: In 2015, there was more  
9 than one study, more than one source that said that  
10 prints--for first--the first time in more than a  
11 decade was read more widely than digital. And the  
12 demographic with that the 18 to 35-year-olds who are  
13 choosing the print version. Studies also suggest  
14 that when you read print, you're going to absorb more  
15 than when you read online. Also, distrust of  
16 mainstream media and national media is at an all-time  
17 low. Local readers rely on what we do. There is a--  
18 a big surge in the popularity of community  
19 newspapers. What we need is help and support. We're  
20 not asking for financial grants or financial loans or  
21 anything like that. You're buying exactly what our  
22 other advertisers are buying. We're asking you to  
23 invest in us because we play an essential role. I  
24 tutor at a local art program called the Red Hook Art  
25 Project. I do homework help after school. My co-

2 publisher he started a weekly jam at one of the local  
3 business, which has driven business to that place.  
4 I'm a Rotarian. He's a member of the Carol Gardens  
5 or the Gowanus Cags, and a lot of other things that  
6 we're involved in. What that means is that my--we  
7 broke a story on customs pulling out of the Red Hook  
8 Container Port 11 days before the New York Times did.  
9 Because we were invested in the community, we were  
10 there. It wasn't something that we were sent out to.  
11 We were there. We changed the entire tone of the  
12 reporting on Lynch (sic) throughout the city because  
13 of our investigative reporting.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Uh-huh.

15 KIMBERLY PRICE: These are--these are--  
16 this is what we do. This is what we love to do.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Uh-huh.

18 KIMBERLY PRICE: It is full-time, non-  
19 stop 2 o'clock in the morning, 5 o'clock in the  
20 morning, whatever it is. After Hurricane Sandy I was  
21 in Red Hook in the office days and nights 11 days. I  
22 went home to shower twice, and went straight back to  
23 the office. I slept in my office. I was on the  
24 street at 2:00 a.m., 3:00 a.m. I was at meetings at  
25 10:00 a.m. This is what we do.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right.

3 KIMBERLY PRICE: The Wall Street Journal  
4 comes in and does one story, and then they leave.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah. I'm going  
6 to ask you to summarize the rest if you have anything  
7 else.

8 KIMBERLY PRICE: Right, I--I think that  
9 that's really it. Um, I've--I've, you know, we've--  
10 we work really hard.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] And  
12 you've made some incredibly strong points, and--and  
13 I'm glad we ended on that note on this panel because  
14 what I want to emphasize is that there's a difference  
15 in the commitment here is--is not just on the  
16 economics and the ads. What we're talking about here  
17 is real--real reporting, the integrity of the  
18 journalism that you all have been advocating as the  
19 Guild, and I--I just want to--before we go into media  
20 questions just take that right now, and sit with  
21 that. That what we're talking about is actual  
22 reporting that is separate and apart from all the  
23 other sectors that are trying to move public policy  
24 forward. It's a very particular kind of role and  
25 responsibility that I'm hearing is dying because we

2 just can't get the economics down. We can't get the  
3 economics right. That is--that is of critical  
4 importance for us to continue to say. Even if you're  
5 not an immigrant newspapers our ethnic newspapers in  
6 a different language, and I'm glad that a community  
7 newspaper--and for the record Red Hook Star Review is  
8 in my district, which is why I invited them to come.  
9 And in relationship it continues to grow and is what  
10 it is. It's an important one and it's an important  
11 one because they keep us accountable on a local level  
12 to every single world that we say. That's the kind  
13 of integrity that we don't want to disrupt, but the  
14 tension there is real, and the importance of that  
15 symbiotic relationship of the investment is real,  
16 too, and I think we can solve that. Peter, can--can  
17 I ask you a couple questions about the Guild? How  
18 long has the Guild been representing the workers of  
19 El Diario?

20 PETER SZEKELY: Um at least since 1950.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Since 1950.

22 PETER SZEKELY: Longer than I've been  
23 alive, and it's a long time.

24

25



2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: That--that is a  
3 long time. How have the needs changed, and I know  
4 you testified--

5 PETER SZEKELY: [interposing] You didn't  
6 have to agree with that, Chairman.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Say that again.

8 PETER SZEKELY: [laughs] I said you  
9 didn't have to agree with that.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [laughs] I--I  
11 have to. How--I'm just kind of thinking about how in  
12 this kind of long guild representation, how do we  
13 begin to understand the shifts in this--in this kind  
14 of world where a new owner has come into El Diario,  
15 and taking the Guild's multi-representation across  
16 the country. How confident are you that--that you're  
17 doing in the Guild is--is really going to have an  
18 impact in the work that's happening in this newspaper  
19 here in New York?

20 PETER SZEKELY: Well, obviously, first  
21 are--are, um, our first responsibility is to do all  
22 that we can--all that we can do to represent our  
23 members. That means bartering hard for the  
24 contracts. That means enforcing those contracts.  
25 Right now, with this latest layoff we think that

2 that--that the contract has been violate. So we're--  
3 we're--we're now pursuing that, but as--I mean  
4 obviously we also keep our eye on--on the  
5 sustainability of the enterprise with--with which we  
6 deal because without that enterprise there are no  
7 jobs. And--and to a degree, we--we--we think that we  
8 can help here. I mean we offered to help on--on--on  
9 some cost cutting, and it was rejected, and--and I--I  
10 think that there is-- Look, you got two million  
11 Hispanic-speaking people in the city. I can't  
12 believe that there's not a good market for a news  
13 organization like the El Diario, and they're  
14 insisting--

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] So  
16 what's the problem?

17 PETER SZEKELY: A number of the problems  
18 are that we don't think that the current owners are  
19 really--are really doing all that they can to--to  
20 actually promote the product, you know, on--on--on a  
21 very basic matter like circulation, for example.  
22 You--you have--you have a certain number of places  
23 where you can find the publication. Go to your  
24 neighborhood store, and if it's not there, you're not  
25 going to buy it. That affects circulation. Well,

2 they reduced the number of those neighborhood stores  
3 that have El Diario, and that was a business  
4 decision. It--it was cheaper not to have as many  
5 drop points, and--and--and they made that decision a  
6 few years ago. This is what our members are telling  
7 us, and--and as a result, I mean yes they can point  
8 to other things, but that in and of itself has had an  
9 impact on the level of circulation.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Do you encourage  
11 the--the conversation was--was super robust, and we  
12 had conversations--or in the conversation we had  
13 ideas like connecting them to small business  
14 services, and rethinking how we can create more  
15 viable economics around newspapers that can help El  
16 Diario or Red Hook Star Review. I--I--I remember  
17 actually learning about how--how you have to travel  
18 far away out of the city to print because the cost is  
19 better to do that. Those kinds of things are--are a  
20 concern to us in public policy realms. Do you feel  
21 like what we discussed today, all those ideas are--  
22 are in good effort that we can--that we should  
23 continue to move forward in that direction?

24 PETER SZEKELY: I do. I think it  
25 certainly--it probably and I don't know the absolute

2 answer to this, but I think it may be the extent to  
3 which government actually can help, and you--you  
4 rightly pointed the danger of--of the government  
5 meddling in--in this area, an area of the free press  
6 and in the area of--of--of--of a private enterprise.  
7 And I know you don't want to do that. I know the  
8 committee doesn't want to do that, and that's good,  
9 but there is certainly a role that the government can  
10 play. And--and--and having more revenue, making more  
11 revenue available to these local publications can  
12 only help, and it can certainly only help El Diario.  
13 In and of itself, is it--is it the magic--is it the  
14 magic bullet. I--I don't know, and I'm--I'm afraid  
15 it may not. We still need to have an owner that  
16 wants this entity to survive. It has a commitment to  
17 maintaining a print publication because as was said  
18 here today, there are--there are so many New Yorkers  
19 in the Hispanic communities who--for whom a print  
20 publication is their only outlet. And so if--if we  
21 don't have that commitment, if we don't have that  
22 dedication all the revenue in the world isn't going  
23 to help.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you and--and  
25 Mr. Javier Cantano, you know, your testimony really

2 kind of pointed to some of that on-the-ground  
3 experience of our reporters, and I just want to thank  
4 you for really elevating that in a real way. And the  
5 question that we could--if you can just give us a  
6 little bit more on how the city--how the city can  
7 support the reporters, the ethnic media reporters in  
8 education and training? And what role do we have as  
9 a city? And I know CUNY was here earlier, and  
10 there's a lot of ethnic media studies, and there's an  
11 educational piece, but how do--how do we help? What  
12 are we not doing? What can we do differently? How  
13 can we reallocate resources to really address the  
14 things that you--that you addressed and/or that you  
15 spoke to in your testimony?

16 JAVIER CASTANO: Of course, given ads to  
17 many publications will help those publications, but  
18 what about the social responsibility that the City  
19 has? What publication to help or what publication is  
20 covering the politics or immigration in a real way?  
21 If--if--if you want to have a better impact right  
22 now, probably you select El Especialito (sp?) right,  
23 because there's a nice voluptuous woman on the cover.  
24 It seems to be the strongest weekly newspaper out  
25 there right. But they--they don't--you can inundate

2 the newsroom of El Especialito with--with press  
3 releases in Spanish. They never are going to publish  
4 that. And I guess so--

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
6 Right, and so I--

7 JAVIER CASTANO: --so the problem is not  
8 to translate the press release, and the problem is  
9 not to--to--to give money. The problem is only to  
10 educate the public and to educate the news room with  
11 forums, with the--with the--with the meetings, with--  
12 with information about how they'll better understand  
13 better the city, how the power of city works. And  
14 how you have to engage in city participation. You  
15 have to build that first, and then--and then they  
16 will understand the importance of the newspaper.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah.

18 JAVIER CASTANO: We are here talking  
19 about all, El Diario, how to save it. Yeah, you can--  
20 -you can--the City can write a check to El Diario of  
21 \$10 million today. They will swallow that money with  
22 wine from Argentina in less than a year. That's--  
23 that's the problem, of course.

24 FEMALE SPEAKER: [off mic] No, it isn't.  
25 (sic)

2 JAVIER CASTANO: No, that is--that's the  
3 truth--

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] I--I  
5 hear you.

6 JAVIER CASTANO: --because the--because  
7 the problem is not the money for them. The problem  
8 is that there's--that there's connections with the  
9 community. The community is--is telling them we  
10 don't want you any more. We don't want to buy the  
11 paper any more because you don't print local news  
12 because you don't--you don't come to our business.

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, and--and  
14 that's really what I want to focus on is this idea  
15 and--and I just--you said it so well this idea of  
16 civic participation, and I'm thinking that it's not  
17 just about getting our residents engaged in  
18 government. It's about getting the mechanism itself,  
19 the media understanding the mechanisms of government,  
20 and--and you've just given me a whole bunch of new  
21 ideas to really think about how we train, not just--  
22 and I have a whole bunch of other extracurricular--  
23 extracurricular activities that I'm doing on the side  
24 that are helping train new leaders to run for  
25 government. We need to think--think about our ethnic

2 media the same way, and really train them in how they  
3 interact with government--

4 JAVIER CASTANO: [interposing] Uh-huh.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: --understanding  
6 the machinations of government, being able to walk  
7 into a hearing and understand how it's going to work.  
8 These are things that just don't happen. I didn't  
9 understand that until I started working for  
10 government myself, which got me more excited about  
11 working for government. These are great ideas about  
12 how we train our--and--and really understanding from  
13 you what you need so that the City can understand--  
14 understand how to educate and create programs for  
15 you. And I think there's some even non-profits that  
16 we can engage, and we're engaging for our youth, and  
17 for seniors that we can now engage our ethnic media.  
18 And--and I think the--the bang for the buck is--is  
19 there as well. The better you're equipped at  
20 engaging and maneuvering through system so complicated  
21 and so--and we're in the middle of it. We're in the  
22 middle of so many complicated conversations now in  
23 the city. You need to be understanding just how the  
24 mechanics. And so I just want to say thank you for  
25 inspiring me to do that today, and I think our



2 committee and our staff is going to really think  
3 about doing that. And that's a call to all of you in  
4 this room right now to help us do that, and build  
5 some of that, and that's separate from ads. You're  
6 right, we can--we can flush this market with ads, but  
7 if we don't--if we don't solve the other question  
8 about understanding how government works, we're--  
9 we're not doing justice to the whole question. Thank  
10 you. I don't know if anybody has anything else to  
11 say, but we want to make sure we get other people who  
12 are here that wanted to speak. So thank you so much  
13 for your time effort, and if you can stay and hear  
14 your--your--your fellow colleagues. Thank you.

15 [background comments, pause] Great, so we're going to  
16 have Ms. Camilla from NYLAG; NYIC, Thanu Yakupiliyage  
17 (sp?). From the Latino Leadership Institute, Arosto  
18 El La Con. From the Hispanic Federation Frankie  
19 Miranda. Mr. Stefan Ringel from Mr.--from the  
20 Borough President's Office, and from the Manhattan  
21 Borough President's Office, Ayisha Friend.

22 [background conversation, pause] [bell] We're going  
23 to give you three minutes. Try to create a summary  
24 that we can--we can get through so we can get the  
25 other panels up. Thank you so much for being here

2 again. We can start on my right. Please introduce  
3 yourself.

4 CAMILLA JENKINS: Hi. Well, thank you so  
5 much for--for inviting NYLAG to be part of this, and  
6 I--before I give you my two cents about my own  
7 perspective on the value of ethnic media in our city,  
8 I wanted to just react to something from your earlier  
9 panel, because it's been on my mind that it could be  
10 a model, and very quickly. The legal profession  
11 could be a helpful private sector model for a way to  
12 maybe add resources to the ethnic media industry  
13 without necessarily adding more cost. And I'm going  
14 to point to one particular program, and it's called  
15 the Pro Bono Scholar's Program, and it was initiated  
16 by Judge--Chief Judge Lippman in the last year of his  
17 amazing tenure, and, you know, it--it essentially  
18 taps into law students. So the idea would be we  
19 could tap into journalism students, and New York City  
20 has the finest journalism schools of any place in the  
21 world. And it's underwritten by private money, but  
22 what it does is it gives young students sort of a leg  
23 up on getting a degree one semester early, and in  
24 return they spend at least one semester doing a--a--  
25 essentially a pro bono internship at a non-profit

2 legal services organization. But in this case it  
3 could be a for-profit newspaper organization that  
4 could use their talent. So I just wanted to sort of  
5 lay that out, and I can share with your staff who I  
6 have a feeling knows all about it anyway, a lot more  
7 about his--

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
9 Yeah, make sure you introduce--yeah, introduce  
10 yourself.

11 CAMILLA JENKINS: Yeah, [laughs] so thank  
12 you so much. My name is Camilla Jenkins, and I'm the  
13 Director of Communications at the New York Legal  
14 Assistance Group. Over half of the clients we serve  
15 are immigrants. NYLAG works with City, community and  
16 private bar partners to bring legal services to  
17 immigrant communities. We galvanize forces to give  
18 immigrants every opportunity to enhance the quality  
19 of their life, and maximize the contribution to--  
20 their contribution to the vitality and prosperity of  
21 New York. But no matter how effective, our efforts  
22 cannot succeed without the support of ethnic media  
23 whose strong bonds of loyalty and trust provide a  
24 vital link to local communities. A reporter from a  
25 Latino news outlet told me she thinks of herself as

2 both an objective journalist and an advocate. She  
3 knows her audience, their culture, their language,  
4 their concerns, and works to strengthen the community  
5 by cherishing its traditions, and giving immigrants  
6 the information they need to assimilate and thrive.  
7 NYLAG conducts legal clinics and assessment programs  
8 at schools, churches, and other safe places within  
9 immigrant neighborhoods. A critical success factor  
10 has been extensive and prominent ethnic media  
11 coverage. Ethnic press exposure help us spread the  
12 word to Haitian Nationals seeking temporary  
13 protective status following a 2010 earthquake [bell]  
14 to dreamers newly eligible for DACA in 2012 to the  
15 forgotten immigrant victims of Super Storm Sandy to  
16 women in Chinatown seeing--fleeing domestic violence.  
17 It enabled us to communicate the benefits of the  
18 city's Municipal ID Program. And at a time when the  
19 inflammatory politic rhetoric has created  
20 unprecedented levels of fear, we have been able to  
21 help communities isolated by culture and language get  
22 the real facts about our nation's immigration policy.  
23 We have long made it a priority to educate immigrant  
24 communities about the dangers of immigration fraud, a  
25 pervasive problem that tends to surge at times of

2 heightened insecurity. In this area in particular  
3 ethnic media has provided a cultural and education  
4 lifeline. An example of its power played out in 2014  
5 when NYLAG was tasked with locating thousands of  
6 immigrants who years earlier had been harmed by  
7 fraudulent immigration law practitioners, and might  
8 be eligible to receive money from a multi-million  
9 dollar state restitution fund. Over the course of  
10 months Spanish language newspapers, websites, TV and  
11 radio outlets blitzed immigrant communities with the  
12 news that they may be eligible for relief. 75% of  
13 the nearly 2,000 immigrants who eventually received  
14 compensation, read or hear about the fund through  
15 Spanish language media. A recent Rutgers University  
16 study looks at the health of the medio eco--media  
17 ecosystem in Newark as compared to several nearby New  
18 Jersey suburbs. It raises concerns about media  
19 deserts, communities that get significantly less  
20 original news coverage than others, creating an  
21 information gap can be devastating--devastating to  
22 underserved populations. We need to make sure that  
23 there are no media deserts in New York City. Ethnic  
24 media provides vital information in a targeted,  
25 culturally sensitive way that has helped us reach

2 more people more effectively in less time than  
3 mainstream media alone. I applaud the efforts of  
4 this committee to confirm unique value and role of  
5 ethnic media, and to take steps to ensure that these  
6 trusted messengers remain a central partner in our  
7 commitment to immigrant communities. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, thank  
9 you and thank you for--for saying the words that I  
10 think are going to really shape how we think about  
11 this, too, desert media--media deserts in our  
12 communities, and really defining what that is  
13 together. Thank you.

14 CAMILLA JENKINS: Great.

15 THANU YAKUPITIYAGE: Thank you so much,  
16 Council Member Menchaca for having me here today. So  
17 I'm just going to launch right into it. My name is  
18 Thanu Yakupitiyage, speaking of ethnic names. I'm  
19 the Communications Manager at the New York  
20 Immigration Coalition. As you know, we are an  
21 umbrella policy and advocacy organization that  
22 supports up to 200 organizations across New York  
23 State. The organizations that we work with are very  
24 broad. They represent the Arabic, Asian, South  
25 Asian, Latino and broad communities. As part of my

2 job at the New York Immigration Coalition, I work  
3 with hundreds of reporters and media outlets from  
4 across the City, State and nation. In particular,  
5 I'm liaison with dozens of ethnic media reporters in  
6 New York many of whom are here today, who are truly a  
7 lifeline for immigrant communities. Without ethnic  
8 media who produce and distribute news in Spanish,  
9 Urdu, Arabic, Korean and Haitian-Creole, Chinese,  
10 Polish, Bengali, Nepali, and countless other  
11 languages to new--countless other languages--excuse  
12 med--we would not be able to make an impact on  
13 immigrant communities. It is through our close work  
14 with ethnic media and through our strong  
15 relationships with reporters from a range of print,  
16 broadcast and radio outlets including Sing Tao Daily,  
17 El Diario La Prensa, Urdu Times, Korea Daily, NSA  
18 (sic) and Quattro, Lian Visora (sp?), World Journal,  
19 Picana (sp?), Univision(sp?) Sonovision (sp?). I  
20 could go on, but we are able to communicate with over  
21 three million immigrant New Yorkers. I want to  
22 emphasize that ethnic media is a not a niche market.  
23 Thirty-seven percent of New York City's population is  
24 foreign born, and less than a quarter or more than  
25 1.8 million of our residents speak a language other

2 than English in their home. Ethnic media in New York  
3 City serves a population that speaks over 170  
4 languages. In a 2013 report from the Center for  
5 Community Ethnic Media that testified earlier today,  
6 they note that the combined circulation of community  
7 and ethnic media publications in the city is about  
8 4.5 million equal to 55% of the population. This  
9 means that city agencies and organizations cannot  
10 ignore the power that ethnic media has as an  
11 informational resource for our communities. It is  
12 often the first, last and only media source for  
13 million of immigrant New Yorkers. The NYIC's ability  
14 to get information out to our communities relies  
15 heavily on ethnic media. In 2015 alone the NYIC was  
16 mentioned over 400 times in ethnic media  
17 publications. Just this month our communities have  
18 dealt with the news of Immigration and Customs  
19 Enforcement raids in different parts of the country  
20 where recent Central American arrivals have been  
21 detained. The news led to a flurry of rumors based  
22 on the fear and trauma for families of possible  
23 deportations. The NYIC kept a close eye on potential  
24 raids in New York City and state, and made sure to be  
25 in close contact with ethnic media particularly



2 Spanish language media to confirm or deny reports.

3 There were some cases where the media misreported eye  
4 sightings on raids in New York [bell] further causing  
5 panic in communities as a response. As a response,

6 NYIC put together several Naya (sic) read materials

7 and worked with publications such as Queens Latino to

8 ensure that our communities knew what to do in the

9 event of an ICE raid. In addition, ethnic media has

10 been really critical in order to spread information

11 about Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. One of

12 our events, the City Council funded Key to the City

13 Initiative that--which provides a broad range of the

14 services including proper identification cards,

15 passports for immigration legal services with the

16 support of NYLAG. Without these kinds of resources

17 and workshops, we wouldn't be able to spread that

18 information without ethnic media. Since 2011, we

19 have served 27,000 New Yorkers from nearly 50

20 countries providing more than 16,000 identity

21 documents and over a thousand immigration legal

22 assistance report. Finally, our work with ethnic

23 media is vital as our committees continue to wait for

24 a decision now on--from the U.S. Supreme Court on the

25 delayed executive actions on immigration announced by

2 the President. We are working closely with ethnic  
3 media to ensure that individuals have the latest  
4 information on the court case, where it stands and  
5 what to prepare. Getting the correct information out  
6 to ethnic media in the case of immigration relief is  
7 particularly important to ensure that communities are  
8 not subject to immigration fraud, and unscrupulous  
9 providers who misinform immigrants and make false  
10 promises of what they can provide. In conclusion,  
11 without New York City's ethnic media, millions of  
12 immigrants would be shut out, left in the dark about  
13 programs they can access and changes to city, state  
14 and national policy, and vital information that  
15 impacts their health, education and livelihood. The  
16 City can continue to strengthen ties with ethnic  
17 media by further utilizing these outlets to advertise  
18 programs, as we've heard this morning, and to ensure  
19 that ethnic media reporters are some of the first to  
20 receive critical news that impacts immigrant  
21 communities. We encourage the city to host  
22 roundtables for ethnic media executives and reporters  
23 and get to know reporters and what issues their  
24 communities are most interested in hearing. Ethnic  
25 media at the end of the day, can be the city's eye

2 into what matters most for immigrant communities, a  
3 powerful tool that we should take seriously. Lastly,  
4 we really look forward to working with the Council  
5 and the Administration to make sure that ethnic media  
6 remains of key importance to New Yorkers' lives.  
7 Thank you so much.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you, thank  
9 you, and thank you for reminding us how important and  
10 how critical at the level of saving lives. We're  
11 essentially saving the lives of so many different  
12 immigrant communities and not--there's no one that's  
13 doing it best that NYLAG and the New York Immigration  
14 Coalition, and all are--are non-profit--profit  
15 partners. Thank you. Stefan.

16 STEFAN RINGEL: Good afternoon, Chair  
17 Menchaca and the members of the New York City Council  
18 Committee on Immigration. My name Stefan Ringel.  
19 I'm the Communications Director for Brooklyn Borough  
20 President Eric L. Adams, and thank you for the  
21 opportunity to testify at this oversight hearing on  
22 how New York City can better support ethnic media to  
23 ensure immigrant communities receive information on  
24 local matters. Our office applauds you on your  
25 commitment to this issue, and we share your concerns.

2 In October or 2014, Borough President Adams joined  
3 with the New York Black Publisher Alliance to host a  
4 forum at Brooklyn Borough Hall that explored the  
5 challenges facing ethnic media and the need for  
6 government to take action. Additionally, as a result  
7 he was pleased to work with New York City Controller  
8 Scott Stringer on an analysis released today,  
9 performed by his office that helps determine in what  
10 media outlets that the advertisements were placed.  
11 The viability of ethnic media outlets is critical to  
12 the overall health of New York City's press  
13 landscape. Every voice needs to be heard, and  
14 publications that have been trusted to speak to the  
15 issues of our various diverse communities are the  
16 most viable vehicles for millions of voices our five  
17 boroughs. We believe the city has a history of  
18 short-changing ethnic media from advertising dollars,  
19 the life blood of these businesses, which is  
20 affecting our ability to communicate about important  
21 municipal opportunities and resources to oft  
22 underserved New Yorkers. These media outlets have a  
23 circulation of three million, over a third of New  
24 York City's population. With the amount of City  
25 resources dedicated to outreach in advertising in

2 these outlets is far less. According to analysis  
3 over the course of the past three fiscal years, only  
4 12.7% of city funding for advertising was dedicated  
5 to ethnic media. Only one ethnic media publication,  
6 El Diario La Prensa cracked the top ten of  
7 publications by total spent from 2013 to 2015. Of  
8 the spending in ethnic media only 4.6% of funding  
9 went to recruitment advertisement, which is--is  
10 comprised of job postings and listings. This is a  
11 troublingly low figure considering that according to  
12 the Migration Policy Institute, limited English  
13 proficient individuals were more likely to live in  
14 poverty than English proficient individuals. In  
15 2013, about 25% of LEP individuals lived in  
16 households with an annual income below the official  
17 Federal Poverty Line. Nearly twice as high as the  
18 English proficient persons. In addition, according  
19 to Our New York, non-speaking English constituents  
20 often face the highest barriers to accessing  
21 employment opportunities. In short, people cannot  
22 find jobs if they don't know that they're available.  
23 Residents cannot engage in community-driven  
24 neighborhood development if they don't know that  
25 they're being asked to participate. Our track record

2 is unacceptable if we are to fulfill our shared  
3 mission of a vibrant democracy with a fully engaged  
4 populace. The information gleaned from this analysis  
5 and today's oversight hearing should be used to fuel  
6 a serious conversation that results in greater  
7 institutional backing and funding from engaging all  
8 New Yorkers regardless of their background in this  
9 grand experiment called New York City. [bell]  
10 Borough President Adams is hoping that the City  
11 Council will mandate quarterly reporting from each  
12 city agency with an advertising budget on how much of  
13 their dollars going to ethnic media creating a  
14 CompStat type system for City advertising. We cannot  
15 continue to wait until year's end to find out if our  
16 agencies are falling short. Furthermore, Borough  
17 President Adams believes we must focus attention on  
18 the state and federal levels as well ensuring that  
19 the distribution of all of our government advertising  
20 resources are deployed in a manner that maximizes  
21 effective and strategic community participation.  
22 Borough President Adams looks forward to working with  
23 Controller Stringer, yourself, the Committee on  
24 Immigration as well as both sides of City Hall to  
25 raise our voices, put forward a thoughtful plan

2 including today's announcements that identifies how  
3 we can do better and spend smarter in our civic  
4 outreach. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Thank  
6 you, and I--I can't--I can't thank you enough in the  
7 research that the Controller and the Borough  
8 President brought to us today and this committee.  
9 This is an example of a kind of coalition effort to  
10 solve this big problem that I know has been plaguing  
11 the Borough President in Brooklyn in a big way. When  
12 I think about his big vision to really change the  
13 lives of every--every Brooklynite, this is at the  
14 core of how--how he's going to do it, and how we're  
15 going to do it together. I can't thank you enough.  
16 Data is always hard to get. So when we have  
17 colleagues in government that are working with you,  
18 you have to applaud that with the greatest respect.  
19 And so thank you, and please extend my thank you to  
20 the Borough President. And this is just the  
21 beginning in a long set of recommendations that will  
22 be developed, and where we'll take your  
23 recommendations seriously. And really developing  
24 that level of scrutiny, transparency, and  
25 accountability as you well said. Thanks so much.

2 STEFAN RINGEL: Thank you.

3 AUGUSTO LACON: Good afternoon. My name  
4 Augusto Lacon (sp?), and I'm here speaking on behalf  
5 of the Latino Leadership Institute. The Latino  
6 Leadership Institute is a not-for-profit non-partisan  
7 organization that works with Latinos and other  
8 minorities to prepare them in their desire to either  
9 run a campaign or run for office or become involved  
10 in unions. And their point of view was that El  
11 Diario has an amazing legacy, and is well known for  
12 it's ability to inform and connect with Latinos. El  
13 Diario has always been able to provide its readers  
14 with details and factual information. At a time when  
15 it's--is--when it is undoubtedly necessary to look at  
16 all the facts. For a significant amount of time El  
17 Diario was well respected by Newsday, the Daily News,  
18 the New York and the New York Times. The reason for  
19 this is that El Diario was the only newspaper that  
20 had a solid grasp on the Latino community. In 1989  
21 during a time David Jenkins ran for mayor, El Diario  
22 endorsed him for the mayoral run, and both for the  
23 primaries and general elections. This election was  
24 extremely gratifying as expressed by the president  
25 and founder of the Latino Leadership Institute, Jaime



2 Estates, because it signified to his campaign team  
3 that he was going to win the Latino vote. All the  
4 other--all of the other papers knew that whoever El  
5 Diario endorsed would be the candidate that would  
6 eventually win. This would--this goes to show just  
7 how big the Latino community was back then and  
8 continues to be today. With the vote of the Latino  
9 community only getting that much greater, it is  
10 important to step in now, and keep this resource in  
11 the Latino community. And then just to personalize a  
12 little bit of what I went through regarding El Diario  
13 was I always noticed that my father really always  
14 woke up in the morning to make sure that he bought El  
15 Diario because by 10 o'clock or 12 in the afternoon  
16 it would be sold out in our neighborhood. And, you  
17 know, as we continue working with El Ahly (sic),  
18 we've had an opportunity to work with young people.  
19 And I was sharing with the President and Founder of  
20 El Ahly that in the past when I had worked with young  
21 people and particularly in exploring social issues,  
22 when we told them to write things down that concerned  
23 them, what they began to do was write in the manual  
24 in which they'd do in social media. So rather than  
25 spitting our words, they'll write--they'll--they'll

2 write letters. And I told him, he expressed to me  
3 that this is why it's important that we keep sources  
4 like El Diario as print so we can use them as a  
5 sources of reference. Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: And I want to  
7 thank you so much for having a committed--your moment  
8 in time in your life right now to the causes that I  
9 just heard you talk about, bringing new  
10 representation in government has been important to me  
11 and I think the Speaker and a lot of members of the  
12 Council. And anything we can do to continue to help  
13 you to do that, please don't hesitate to reach out,  
14 and I think you're--you're kind of a personal example  
15 about how important print is. And as we move into  
16 digital, language in the digital format because of  
17 the constraints, and I was just--I'm glad you--you  
18 said that. And I think it's been kind of hinted out,  
19 but I think you just--you hit it on the nail, and so  
20 thank you so much for--for that.

21 AUGUSTO LACON: Absolutely. Thank you.

22 FRANKIE MIRANDA: Good afternoon. My  
23 name is Frankie Miranda and I am the Senior Vice  
24 President for the Hispanic Federation. I would like  
25 to thank Chairperson Carlos Menchaca and the members

2 of the Immigration Committee for this opportunity  
3 today. The Hispanic Federation is the nation's  
4 premier Latino membership organization founded to  
5 address the many inequities confronting Latinos and  
6 the non-profits, which serve them. The topic being  
7 discussed here today is of critical importance to the  
8 more than 2.5 million Latinos who call New York City  
9 home, and to our city's ability to communicate and  
10 engage with these growing communities. Latino New  
11 Yorkers heavily rely on Spanish language media to  
12 meet their information and resource needs regardless  
13 of whether they are newly arrived or have been living  
14 in the city for decades. Both bilingual and Spanish-  
15 dominant (sic) Latinos understand that Spanish  
16 language newspaper, radio and TV are trustworhty--  
17 trustworthy sources. The Hispanic Federation has  
18 organized dozen of large-scale outreach campaigns  
19 throughout the years to inform and educate the Latino  
20 community of immigration, health, education, economic  
21 empowerment, and environmental programs and policies.  
22 Many of these programs are focused on New York City  
23 public services that often tap into the federation's  
24 ability to disseminate information to our community's  
25 most vulnerable individuals. Many of these

2 collaborations have been successful due to the  
3 support of our integral partners in the Spanish  
4 language media. It was through our weekly column at  
5 El Diario that many Latino New Yorkers learned about  
6 the city's proposal and implementation of Universal  
7 Pre-K. When many mainstream outlets question the  
8 rollout of the City's first ever municipal ID, the  
9 Telemundo 47 volunteered a significant amount of  
10 their own air time to inform, educate, and encourage  
11 Hispanic New Yorkers to enroll in--into IDNYC.  
12 Univision 47 has also been a pioneering partner of  
13 the federation's Civic Education and Border  
14 Information campaigns along with other city inspired  
15 initiatives providing countless hours to helping  
16 Latinos get information, connected, and empowered to  
17 improve their lives in New York City. Univision  
18 radio and Spanish Broadcasting System provide the  
19 Hispanic Federation with 104 hours of public service  
20 air time each year to provide critical information on  
21 ESL classes, training opportunities, health services,  
22 and much more. Through these joint efforts, we touch  
23 the lives of tens of thousands of Latino families  
24 each year. These are only a few of the many examples  
25 that we can provide with the success of the

2 Federation, the communities we serve and this New  
3 York City are linked to the support provided to us by  
4 Spanish language media partners. But the most  
5 surprising fact of this collaboration is that none of  
6 these media outlets have been compensated for the  
7 valuable air time or print space they provide to our  
8 city. By and large, they have been offering this  
9 public service and helping our community on a pro  
10 bono basis. The underfunding of Spanish language  
11 media is nothing new, and it has been a problem for  
12 many decades now. Government spending in the Spanish  
13 language media is barely enough, especially when you  
14 consider the fact that Latinos represent nearly a  
15 third of our city's total population. If El Diario,  
16 Telemundo and Univision struggle, imagine how it is  
17 like for smaller media outlets. If our city  
18 government wants to represent--if our city government  
19 wants to--wants the diverse and vibrant ethnic  
20 communities living in the five boroughs to thrive and  
21 succeed, it is critical that the New York City--that  
22 the New York City re-evaluates and reinvigorates its  
23 media investment to meet the real needs of its  
24 residents. In many cases, investing in ethnic media  
25 will ensure that the most vulnerable New Yorkers

2 receive the services they need and do so without the  
3 fear of becoming a victim of fraud. Indeed, all  
4 media outlets must provide no cost public service to  
5 the communities they serve. However, it is time that  
6 we recognize the value and return on investment  
7 generated by ethnic media outlets particularly around  
8 their ability to inform and mobilize our diverse  
9 communities. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you. Some  
11 really good idea there, and I'm hoping we can  
12 actually follow up with you. I think--I think you  
13 have--as the Federation you have a lot of robust--  
14 you--you have current mechanisms, and I think they  
15 can serve as models for us. So thank you. Thank you  
16 for those--those ideas. And then we also have a  
17 representative from the Manhattan Borough President's  
18 Office. Thank you for being here today.

19 AYISHA IRFAN: All right. My name is  
20 Ayisha Irfan. I'm one of the Policy Analysts for the  
21 Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer. Thank you  
22 Chair Menchaca, Councilwoman Mendez, and the  
23 Committee on Immigration for holding this hearing and  
24 the opportunity to speak about how we can work with  
25 ethnic media sources to ensure a solid line of

2 communication regarding local issues between city  
3 government and immigrant communities. Each month the  
4 Manhattan Borough President convenes the African  
5 Immigrant Task Force and our ethnic media partners  
6 such as Dr. Onyeani of the African Sun Times, play an  
7 integral role in ensuring that the task force and our  
8 office are addressing issues of concern to the  
9 African community. In 2014, New York Magazine  
10 reported that New York City's ethnic newspapers have  
11 a combined circulation of 2.2 million people across  
12 95 ethnic newspapers. In a city where half of our  
13 public school families speak a language other than  
14 English, ethnic media plays a vital role in how they  
15 stay informed. The city must do a better job of  
16 supporting these media outlets and their communities  
17 in two ways. First, by purchasing space for  
18 announcements for public information, such as  
19 auctions of city properties. Second, by informing  
20 them of important public policy initiatives or issues  
21 that are relevant to the immigrant community. In two  
22 recent examples New York City has not--New York City  
23 government has not adequately utilize ethnic media to  
24 publicize key fact in a timely way about either the  
25 recent--about either the recent state of ICE raids on

2 undocumented refugees or the public health  
3 implications of the Zika virus. With regards to the  
4 immigration raids, it has widely been reported in  
5 mainstream media that since 2013, an estimated  
6 100,000 adults and children have fled from Honduras,  
7 Guatemala, Nicaragua and other areas of Central  
8 American to the U.S. to escape systemic violence. In  
9 response, starting on January 2nd, 2016, DHS  
10 undertook a series of raids across the country  
11 targeting these undocumented Central American  
12 refugees and detaining 120 people for immediate  
13 deportation. News of these raids caused alarm in New  
14 York City neighborhoods as immigrant communities  
15 across the country reported ICE raids on home,  
16 businesses and schools. In order to protect  
17 themselves, city parents began keeping their children  
18 home from school and avoiding their jobs. Within a  
19 few days it became apparent immigrant advocacy like  
20 the New York Immigration Coalition that New York  
21 State was targeted in these raids, and to get correct  
22 information how advocacy groups organized emergency  
23 calls, Know Your Rights workshops and help answer  
24 questions and calm people's fear. Yet, it was not  
25 until January 6, 2016 that MOIA released an official



2 statement that New York City was not a target of  
3 these raids, and failed to partner with local ethnic  
4 media in an adequate or timely way, and thereby--  
5 thereby allowing fear and unfounded rumors to spread.  
6 In recent years, city government has taken many  
7 measures to make New York City safe and welcoming for  
8 immigrants. It has limited its cooperation with ICE  
9 and launched the groundbreaking Muni ID program that  
10 enables all city residents to acquire an official  
11 form of ID and ease their access to financial and  
12 other services. [bell] Similarly, through the Zika  
13 virus outbreak there has been an issue of concern  
14 that has been an issue--a concern for African and  
15 Central and South American constituents for months.  
16 With recently Colombia, Ecuador, Salvador and Jamaica  
17 all recommending that women who have traveled to  
18 these countries delay pregnancy, mainstream media  
19 outlets and city agencies have just begun to share  
20 the info about the virus. This is an opportunity--  
21 another opportunity where city offices and agencies  
22 could have utilized, and invested in ethnic outlets  
23 to address the serious cause for concern for large  
24 segments of our population. We are missing a key  
25 piece of outreach to immigrant communities when we

2 fail to utilize local ethnic media to publicize  
3 critical information, support local newspapers, take  
4 the pulse of these communities and address issues of  
5 immediate and particular concern to them. We must  
6 and can do better. I call on the administration to  
7 increase its outreach and liaison (sic) on these  
8 issues, but particularly with the media that serves  
9 communities of immigrants whose members rely on their  
10 native language and news services to stay informed.  
11 I look forward to working with the administration,  
12 the Council and our community boards to address these  
13 concerns, and help create a more well informed and  
14 inclusive city. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you so much  
16 for your testimony. And before we call up the next  
17 panel, I--I just want to say thank you for all of  
18 your--your testimony. I think we got a good array of  
19 ideas that, you know, stem from activating a whole  
20 pool of workforce, taking NYLAG's system and model  
21 and bringing some of that journalism steam power  
22 into--into the work in our communities, in our ethnic  
23 papers. And I'm hoping that we can actually create a  
24 table where we can discuss, and for all the ethnic  
25 media that's still in the room, I hope you can take

2 this back to your--to your newspapers and really see.  
3 Because all these things are going to require time  
4 and money in some real way, and commitment. And I  
5 think the commitment is there, which is how do we--  
6 how do we shift from the work that is very important,  
7 and we're in survival mode I'm hearing. We're in  
8 survival mode, and it's always hard to ask people  
9 when they're digging themselves out of--out of--out  
10 of their hole to say, well, how about we just create  
11 this other nice little program. I know it's  
12 difficult. So we're going to figure out how--how we  
13 bring resources to create that extra bandwidth and  
14 that new capacity, but I know that we--we have some  
15 good resources. And all of the work that all of you  
16 have been doing recently on the new raids that ICE  
17 has--has generated across the country, and have  
18 really created a panic. We--and I'm going to tell a  
19 story, and we're going to get to the next panel. But  
20 back to creating a new relationship, we were in  
21 Corona, Queens with the Speaker, myself, Danny Dromm,  
22 and Julissa Ferreras-Copeland. We were at a press  
23 conference with advocates talking about how important  
24 it is that we--we elevate the--the--the ask for calm  
25 and return to an ability to just get information and

2 not stay- People are staying at home, and not going  
3 to doctor's appointments, for example. These--these  
4 were affecting people at--at home. Families weren't  
5 taking kids to school. People weren't going to work,  
6 and that's--that's fear. That's real fear, and the  
7 only way you--you combat that is with information.  
8 And the Coalition, the New York Immigration Coalition  
9 and all our partners came out. But, the main point  
10 of the story is that we started the press conference  
11 in Spanish. And said, you know what, we're--we're  
12 trying to reach a very particular community, and all  
13 the Council members spoke Spanish. We all started  
14 our remarks in Spanish, and it's--this is the kind of  
15 shift we need to do to really understand that we are  
16 respecting a very particular kind of medium and  
17 outlet to get information out. And if we can't do  
18 that, or I should say that's exactly what we need to  
19 continue doing more of, and--and so thank you so  
20 much. You're right. We must and can do better. So  
21 thank you so much. Is this our last panel?  
22 [background comments] The last panel on the  
23 Resolution, and thank you for other mentions on the  
24 panel. The next panel is Ms. Helen Door--Drewer.

25 HELEN DREWER: Drewer.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Drewer?

3 HELEN DROOK: Now, you got it. It's  
4 Drook.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Drook from NYLAG.  
6 So sorry. Ms. Pamela Denzer from Immigration  
7 Equality. [background comments]

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [off mic] There is an  
9 exit and you must exit as soon as possible for all  
10 attendees. Thank you. [sic]

11 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay, yes, have a  
12 seat. Pull the mics closer to you. Thank you so  
13 much for staying. We are--I forget what hour we are  
14 now, four of five, and, um, and for speaking on the  
15 Resolution, there's no doubt that New York City when  
16 we speak we speak in one voice. This is this  
17 resolution and when we speak our--our country listens  
18 in a big way, and I'm hoping that the Supreme Court  
19 will be listening to us today.

20 HELEN DROOK: [laughs] I hope so, too.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [laughs]

22 HELEN DROOK: Thanks for giving me an  
23 opportunity to speak here today.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Absolutely.

25 HELEN DROOK: My name is Helen Drook.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

3 HELEN DROOK: Thank you Chairman. Thank  
4 you staff. My name is Helen Drook and I'm a senior  
5 staff attorney with the New York Legal Assistance  
6 Group. My colleague spoke here earlier on a different  
7 resolution. As you know, NYLAG is one of the largest  
8 providers of free immigration services in New York  
9 City. We represent people in a variety of  
10 immigration matters. DACA, Deferred Action for  
11 Childhood Arrivals is something we've been involved  
12 with ever since it was implement in 2012, and we  
13 assisted over 1,200 applicants, you know,  
14 successfully to get their deferred action. We were  
15 thrilled when President Obama announced  
16 administrative relief in November of 2015 including  
17 the expansion of the DACA Initiative and the new  
18 initiative for undocumented parents of U.S. citizens.  
19 While not entitled to a citizenship or a green card,  
20 those who qualify will not longer be--need to live in  
21 threat of deportation and will be entitled to receive  
22 temporary work authorization and other benefits.  
23 This will remove barriers to many hard-working  
24 immigrants who have been forced to work under the  
25 table often for appalling low wages, and in

2 substandard conditions. Most importantly, thousands  
3 of families will--who lived in fear of being  
4 separated will for the first time be assured that  
5 parents and children will no longer be torn apart.  
6 NYLAG has been screening immigrants for months. We  
7 have conducted over 33 clinics actually citywide.  
8 Some of them were Key to the City events. So we did  
9 this together. And we have a list of a thousand  
10 people who have pre-screened already and qualify as  
11 we understand in the event of the, which will call  
12 for the--

13 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Repeat that. How  
14 many thousand again? How many?

15 HELEN DROOK: We have a list of a  
16 thousand people--

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing] A  
18 thousand pre-screened.

19 HELEN DROOK: --who were pre-screened and  
20 who we're advising to--to collecting the necessary  
21 documents who potentially will be qualified for the  
22 expanded DACA and DAPA relief. And--and here I want  
23 to emphasize we think that the biggest issue and the  
24 challenge would be for the agencies in New York City  
25 to be ready. Again, we're counting optimistically on

2 a good outcome obviously for New York City immigrants  
3 and immigrants throughout the country in this  
4 decision. And--and we--if NYLAG stands ready to, um,  
5 to assist them because I feel the danger is obviously  
6 twofold. One is in the event of a favorable  
7 decision, we will have a limited time before the next  
8 [bell] administration comes into office, and we'll  
9 obviously have concerns because we're not sure, you  
10 know, what's going to happen. And another aspect of  
11 this is the potential for immigration fraud. Because  
12 if there is a vacuum create between the time the  
13 decision--again, hoping for a positive one here--is  
14 rendered. And in this vacuum, unfortunately from our  
15 prior experiences we know that many--you know,  
16 unscrupulous providers may be able to come in and  
17 promise people when in reality we don't know, of  
18 course, exactly what the parameters, you know, of  
19 those benefits would be and who specifically would  
20 qualify, et cetera. So, I just want to thank you  
21 again for giving me this opportunity to talk briefly.  
22 You know, I do have an example of one of our actual  
23 clients, which I can talk about, but this is just a  
24 common story of, you know, the husband being  
25 deported, a woman living here with two kids with a



2 higher education from the Dominican Republic.  
3 Basically, keeping such a low profile and being so  
4 afraid of being separated from here children that she  
5 has been, you know, washing floors for the past seven  
6 years. But this is not, you know, a new story for  
7 everyone. So, again, thank you again.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

9 HELEN DROOK: And I think it's very  
10 important to this--this readiness that NYLAG  
11 certainly feels--

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
13 Yeah.

14 HELEN DROOK: --that we're ready to go.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: You're ready to  
16 go. Thank you.

17 PAMELA DENZER: Good afternoon, Chairman  
18 Menchaca. I want to thank you and your staff, and  
19 the council members that were talking to you [sic]  
20 for giving us these opportunity to be here today. My  
21 name is Pamela Denzer, and I am the Asylum Program  
22 Supervisor at Immigration Equality. We are a  
23 national organization that is dedicated to working  
24 with our clients that are fleeing persecution on  
25 account of their sexual orientation, their gender

2 identity and/or their HIV status. While we are  
3 national program, we are headquartered here in New  
4 York City, and the majority of our clients are based  
5 here in the New York City area. We are especially  
6 thankful to be here today to discuss the proposed  
7 Resolution 928, which is call on the Supreme Court of  
8 the United States to issue a decision in the  
9 Department of Justice appeal for the Fifth Circuit  
10 decision in *Texas v. United States*. The case will  
11 decide if President Obama's Executive Order granting  
12 DACA status to qualified immigrants will be expanded  
13 so that more immigrants are eligible for relief as  
14 well as providing DAPA relief to their eligible  
15 parents and many more.

16 I am here today to testify that we are  
17 very happy for the support of the New York City  
18 Council in passing this resolution. As a legal  
19 services organization we believe President Obama has  
20 the authority to issue executive orders, and he not  
21 abusing his powers or his discretion. This is what  
22 presidents have done in the past, are tasked to do  
23 today in order to ensure a functioning government,  
24 and will continue to do so in the future. Presidents  
25 Ronald Reagan and George Bush issued executive orders

2 that did the very thing, which was to help millions  
3 of immigrants. In 1995 during the Administration of  
4 President Reagan Congress passed a reform bill that--  
5 [coughs] excuse me--shielded some three million  
6 immigrants from deportation. The bill, however, did  
7 not include family members and Reagan responded by  
8 halting the deportation of their children without  
9 waiting for Congress to act. Similarly, President  
10 George Bush acted unilaterally to protect families  
11 from breakup through deportation when Congress failed  
12 to act during his tenure. To give some perspective  
13 as to the number of executive orders that have been  
14 issued by previous presidents, President Reagan  
15 issued 351 executive orders during his presidential  
16 terms. George Bush issued 166; President Clinton  
17 issued 364; and George W. Bush issued 291. Again,  
18 the use of executive orders is nothing new, and the  
19 practice will continue. Deferred action is also  
20 nothing new, and should be extended to as many  
21 undocumented individuals as possible. In the past,  
22 it has been granted to New York City immigrants  
23 living with serious illness or medical conditions  
24 requiring ongoing care including people [bell] living  
25 with HIV. It has also been granted to survivors of

2 domestic violence, thus offering them much needed  
3 protection and assistance to leave dangerous  
4 situations. Ensuring inclusive immigration reform is  
5 one of the LGBT movement's top priorities. The  
6 administration must protect our entire community  
7 [coughs] including the loved ones of LGBT  
8 individuals. No one should left behind. DACA and  
9 DAPA will help thousands of undocumented immigrants  
10 living in New York City with strong ties their  
11 communities. It will allow them to remain with their  
12 families, and be free of the fear that they will be  
13 separated by deportation. For individual--excuse me--  
14 -for LGBT individuals the fear includes being to--  
15 deported to countries that are homophobic, trans-  
16 phobic and fundamentally unsafe for our folks. While  
17 DACA was a welcomed opportunity for certain LGBT  
18 youth, it was a sufficient solution. When even one  
19 member of a LGBT family is undocumented, the ever  
20 present threat of deportation causes extreme anxiety  
21 and stress to the entire family. Too many LGBT  
22 families have already been torn apart by deportation,  
23 and deportation could be particularly detrimental to  
24 LGBT immigrants because of the pervasive homophobia  
25 and trans-phobia worldwide. To demonstrate how

2 deportation is especially harmful to LGBT families, I  
3 would like to just quickly summarize that--the story  
4 our National Field Officer Marco. He came here when  
5 he was two years old from Peru with his brothers,  
6 sister and mother, and unfortunately, his brother was  
7 deported back to Peru. The family now--Marco and his  
8 sister both have DACA, and they're very thankful for  
9 that, but their mother remains undocumented. If she  
10 is, in fact, picked up in a raid and sent back to  
11 Peru, it's very unlikely Marco will be reunited to  
12 her. As a gay rights activist, it would be extremely  
13 dangerous for him to go back to Peru. We wish to  
14 thank you for the opportunity to present testimony  
15 today, and we look forward to a continued working  
16 relationship.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you to both  
18 of you on this not only important resolution, but the  
19 preparation that both of you and all our immigrant  
20 community advocates and organizations have done in  
21 preparation. Ms. Drook, I have a question for you on  
22 preparation. I think there's--there's so much at  
23 stake here, and I think the last few hours on the  
24 media is actually going to be very critical in--in  
25 getting this right. Getting the information out to

2 these communities about what will eventually come  
3 down from the Supreme Court. And this resolution  
4 hopefully will become the action that the Supreme  
5 Court takes, but what--what--what kind of major  
6 pieces need to be in place to ensure that one--as  
7 many people apply? And you mentioned already a  
8 thousand or so folks already pre-screened, and the  
9 expectation of fraud being just the nature of things  
10 at the--at this moment. And, we're using our media  
11 to--to really counter that. You know, we've been on  
12 radio often talking about that. So, I'm looking at  
13 those two things, the fraud piece going up in this,  
14 like you said, vacuum in this--this crunch time. We  
15 don't know where our next president coming--but  
16 really, what can tell us? And give us some  
17 confidence that--that you are all doing right.

18 HELEN DROOK: That's exactly as I--as I  
19 mentioned. That's exactly what NYLAG has been  
20 concentrating our efforts on. We've been reaching  
21 out to all the immigrant communities in New York City  
22 ever since President Obama made this announcement  
23 back in November of 2014. And trying to reach as  
24 many people as possible. We work very closely with  
25 the Mexican Consulate. I was there myself every

2 couple of weeks, and the folks they were wonderful.  
3 They had groups of anywhere between 50 and 75 people  
4 every time I went, and we actually screened. We  
5 interviewed with the help of interpreters, and we  
6 also have native and fluent Spanish speakers on our  
7 staff, and the embassy was very supportive. We  
8 literally must have met thousands of people just  
9 through our work with the Consulate. In addition  
10 that, we had 33 clinics just in this past year. Some  
11 of them were Keys to the City and some were the  
12 different--we work with the New York Immigration  
13 Coalition, and Catholic Charities and other groups.  
14 And the two--because the ideas are the same. We  
15 developed a list of questions in order to understand  
16 we are working with the assumption that the criteria,  
17 you know, will be more or less the same as for DACA  
18 in terms of the requirements of residence  
19 requirements, no criminal convictions. So when these  
20 individuals were basically separated, those  
21 questionnaires in piles. You know, expanded DACA  
22 eligible checkmark. DAPA eligible a separate pile,  
23 and that's how we created that list. And I think  
24 even though wasn't here for all--the entire morning  
25 session, but the media can also be very instrumental.

2 Just going back to what we do, we also conduct  
3 workshops and trainings in addition to the clinics  
4 with the staff of social service agencies throughout  
5 the city, and preparing, you know, leaflets and  
6 flyers, and telling people--and this happened in the  
7 past--please only go to attorneys or to providers of  
8 legal services. Please do not to notarials because  
9 gain we have unfortunately many instances that we've  
10 learned of in the past of people saying yes there is  
11 a relief when there was actually no relief--

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

13 Right

14 HELEN DROOK: --for example. So--and  
15 media is very important. I can certainly see, you  
16 know, of the opportunity place ads and say listen,  
17 this decision came down, but this is the type of  
18 relief. Please come to us for consultations. Come  
19 to us as legal service providers. Just make you are  
20 not paying anyone any money. Or, let's say if the  
21 implementation of this is postponed let say--

22 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]

23 Right.

24 HELEN DROOK: --the implementation is--  
25 we'll say and they will say, or whatever it will be.



2 January 1, 2017, and people start charging the money  
3 in November--

4 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
5 Right.

6 HELEN DROOK: --but they're not listed.  
7 Again, this is from prior experience.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Right, and so just  
9 two questions to really understand the work that is  
10 next, and understanding the capacity of our legal  
11 service providers and NYLAG I think could be a  
12 bellwhether in understanding where we are. NYLAG is  
13 at capacity I believe in--in--in taking on these  
14 cases. So one, understanding what--what are the next  
15 steps, and--and understanding the capacity that NYLAG  
16 has to continue to do this in preparation one. And  
17 then two, as people are prepared and they're on your  
18 lists, are they--are--are those lists a  
19 representation of New Yorkers who are now fraud free  
20 because they're connected a service?

21 HELEN DROOK: Well, certainly the people  
22 that were screened, and they're on our list of--I'm  
23 told, as I said, it's over a thousand people already.  
24 These people are pre-screened. They have NYLAG  
25 attorneys' contact information, and they were told

2 before they do anything else, they are to call us,  
3 and we will let them know when and if. And it was  
4 sort of went to this complex processes where we were  
5 doing the screening. Then the injunction  
6 unfortunately, you know, was the--took place, and we  
7 had to tell people, listen, wait. We don't know  
8 really know what's going to happen, but please  
9 continue collecting documents. Because then, you  
10 know, the government is going to appeal and we trust  
11 and hope that they'll--we'll be successful and we'll  
12 prevail, and that we'll be able to continue  
13 protecting your rights. So please keep collecting  
14 documents of your continuous residence in the United  
15 States, whether they're medical records, school  
16 records and that kind of thing.

17 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Yeah, I got you.

18 PAMELA DENZER: I--I would like to point  
19 out, Chairman--

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: [interposing]  
21 Sure.

22 PAMELA DENZER: --and we applaud, you  
23 know, NYLAG and all of our community, but there's a  
24 important factor here for clients, which is the  
25 difficulty that they have in particular with

2 accessing things like documents. You know, when DACA  
3 came about, a lot of our clients that are served are  
4 kicked out of their homes. For our transgender  
5 clients obtaining documents in the proper name is an  
6 issue. They can't walk into an embassy because of  
7 fear of being persecuted. I've had many, many, many  
8 clients tell me just horribly they were treated. So  
9 I think that these efforts are great, but we also  
10 have to think about, you know, expanding some of  
11 these to reach some of the other communities, most  
12 likely the ones that Immigration Equality serves,  
13 which is--is hard. I mean we welcome partnerships  
14 because it's necessary. A lot of folk are just not  
15 going to be best served in some of these clinics  
16 where they're not able to bring this sort documents  
17 Because either they've been thrown out of their  
18 homes, they're fleeing abusive situations. Maybe all  
19 of those documents they got rid of them because they  
20 don't want to be associated with the name that they  
21 were given at birth. So, you know, I present this as  
22 something that we should all in this dialogue think  
23 about.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Okay.

2 HELEN DROOK: NYLAG works for those gay  
3 persons. Many of our clients are members of the LGBT  
4 community, and I just used the Mexican Consulate as  
5 an example, but you have the clinics that--in all the  
6 five boroughs for them, too. And it's--I don't feel  
7 that people are necessarily intimidated to come in,  
8 whether they are normal--

9 PAMELA DENZER: [interposing] Not at  
10 NYLAG per se, but there are other providers that the  
11 same is not--cannot be said.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Well, and I think  
13 that's the--the thing we're going to be looking at.

14 PAMELA DENZER: [interposing] I think  
15 it's an important dialogue to have, right? Like, you  
16 know, we all serve the same community, which is the  
17 immigrant community, but within that community there  
18 are certainly different, you know, sub-communities of  
19 that.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Absolutely,  
21 absolutely and I think--I think that's something that  
22 we're committed to as we fund more legal  
23 organizations. This Council with the leadership--and  
24 with my leadership as the Chair of the Immigration  
25 Committee and the Speaker of the City Council and the

2 rest of our colleagues that understand this at the  
3 level of the district are really putting more legal  
4 resource funding into the budget. What we want to do  
5 is be able to create that access point that is  
6 respectful as the community changes through as  
7 spectrum of experience, and--and identity. And--and  
8 that's--that's a commitment and that's a real  
9 commitment. So we're going to continue having that  
10 conversation. But on--on the topic at hand here, the  
11 resolution is a good resolution, and I'm glad that  
12 you're here in your capacity to really help us send  
13 this off in a real way that's not ceremonial at all.  
14 We are committed, and the world needs to know that  
15 we're committed as the Supreme Court. And I--I think  
16 it's okay that I announced this, but we're working on  
17 really creating our own, um--[pause]. We're working  
18 on ways to support the Supreme Court [laughter] in  
19 making this as--as an option. So, we're--we're here.  
20 This is one of many things we're going to do to  
21 really push the Supreme Court in a big way. Thank  
22 you so much to this panel, and I'm going to conclude  
23 with some final remarks and just thanking Indiana  
24 Porta, our counsel. She, um, she just started this  
25 calendar year essentially, and we're really proud to

2 have you on the team. Also, my staff Adriana Garcia,  
3 who has been supporting us in this Council hearing as  
4 well as Vladimir Martinez and the entire Immigration  
5 Committee.

6 I will say that my kind of final thoughts  
7 on--on this entire hearing remind me of just what we  
8 woke up to this morning. We woke up to this morning  
9 with an announcement of a dedicated database that's  
10 going to allow for council members that are just, you  
11 know, waking up to it and say, wow, this--this is  
12 wonderful. And being able to have a tool, and access  
13 that. I'm going to keep them accountable, and so  
14 this is a relationship that we're going to do. But  
15 it's open to the rest of the city and the  
16 Communications Departments of every city agency to be  
17 able to have something that we can point to and  
18 saying, if you're doing it, there's something that  
19 you can use. So that's tool is incredibly important,  
20 and we woke up this morning with that new tool  
21 announced. This is also the first time ever that the  
22 Council has been having-- That this is the first  
23 time this Council opened up this conversation about  
24 media. And so, this is going to be an important  
25 thing for us to follow up, and our ideas are

2 plentiful. I did not imagine how many variety of  
3 ideas were placed on the table, written down with  
4 our--with our own hands. And--and the conversation  
5 evolved on workers' rights as well. The--the real  
6 understanding of how the plights of our workers in  
7 the media are also--I heard that, and that was real.  
8 The dedication and the passion from our media is  
9 real--is not only real, but incredibly important and  
10 critical. We also learned that we have to spend more  
11 money as a city, and that we only know because now we  
12 have data. We have data now that's showing how much  
13 we're--we're spending, and we need to do better.

14           So, with all that said, I--I want to end  
15 with, the final tension that--that is--that is  
16 grabbing me the most is this idea of understanding  
17 after this conversation how important ethnic media is  
18 to our--our people. And the immigrant community is  
19 growing in our city past our original or--or, you  
20 know, days of--of--of New York City being--being  
21 founded. And so as--as we return to those high  
22 immigrant numbers, so--so does our--our real  
23 commitment in--in resourcing them through ads, but  
24 also through trainings, through education. Through  
25 understanding how this government works. And so,

2 this is a livelihood for our communities. This--this  
3 means life and death for so many people in our  
4 communities. When I think about all the things we're  
5 debating right now, and listening to it in--in our  
6 media, Ebola is and this Zika virus, our zoning that  
7 is--that is terrifying people in a--in a real way,  
8 the gentrification, the issues of gentrification in  
9 our communities. The things that are happening in East  
10 New York and Sunset Park and the Bronx, horse  
11 carriages. We're in the middle of a conversation  
12 about horse carriages. These are all messages that  
13 show how government works, and the transparency that  
14 is needed does not just stop by us talking in English  
15 on these mics. It happens when they get to the  
16 houses in our neighborhoods, and that is critical and  
17 that's important for the future of this city. And,  
18 if we don't get this right, the whole--our whole--our  
19 whole future is at stake here in New York, and we're  
20 not going to let that happen. Thank you so much for  
21 staying this long, and we'll continue the  
22 conversation.

23 PAMELA DENZER: Thank you.

24 HELEN DROOK: Thank you.

25 [gavel]



1 COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date February 3, 2016