

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND
BUILDINGS/COMMITTEE ON GENERAL
WELFARE

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NOVEMBER 19, 2015
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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: STEVEN LEVIN
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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

Giselle Routhier
Coalition for the Homeless

Joseph Rosenberg
Catholic Community Relations Council and

Freddie Cox
CUCS

Elizabeth Hoffman
CCC

Sandra Mitchell
Homeless Woman Plaza Next Steps Shelter

Sandy Brower

Richard Gibbs
Jamaica NAACP

Carla Rabinowitz
Advocacy Coordinator at Community Access

Nicole Bramstedt
Director of Policy for Urban Pathways

Anthony Rivers
People for the Neighborhood

Joanne Floyd-Whitehead
People for the Community
Community Unity

Ruthie Campbell
Community Board 12
Community Unity

Larnell Johnson
ICL

Nicholas Gifford
Institute for Community Living

Michael Czackes
Gay Men's Health Crisis

Clayton Brooks
Director of Advocacy in Covenant Housing

Romel Jean Viel
Coalition for Concerned Citizens for
Complete Justice

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2 CHAIR LEVIN: Good morning everybody. I
3 am Council Member Steven Levin, Chair of the
4 Council's Committee of General Welfare. I want to
5 thank Council Member Jumaane Williams, Chair of the
6 Committee on Housing and Buildings for holding this
7 joint hearing with us today and thank everyone who is
8 come to testify. I want to acknowledge Commissioner
9 Steve Banks of HRA and his staff for testifying as
10 well. The Committee's will also hear today
11 resolution number 504214 a resolution calling upon
12 the Governor and the Mayor to approve a 4th New York,
13 New York agreement to create permanent supportive
14 housing. Obviously in light of yesterday's
15 announcement there may need to be some amendments.
16 New York City continues to face a record level of
17 homelessness with over 57,000 individuals spending
18 each night in the Department of Homeless Services
19 shelter system. Supportive housing is a form of
20 affordable housing, it offers residence access to on-
21 site support and is designed "primarily for people
22 with long history of homelessness due to persistent
23 obstacles like serious mental health, serious mental
24 illness, substance use disorders or chronic medical
25 conditions". Supportive housing is considered to be

2 the most successful existing model for ending
3 homelessness among vulnerable populations. That's...
4 that's why we know it works. Today more than 32,000
5 supportive housing units exist in New York City.
6 Supportive housing is considered to be the most
7 successful existing model for ending homelessness
8 among vulnerable populations, however, according
9 advocates more than 20,000 New York City households
10 are found eligible for supportive housing each year
11 but currently there is only one housing unit
12 available for every six eligible applicants. The de
13 Blasio administration announced yesterday plans to
14 create 15,000 additional units of supportive housing
15 at an estimated cost of 3 billion dollars. You can
16 applaud for that for just one second if you want.

17 [applause]

18 CHAIR LEVIN: Much of the existing
19 supportive housing in New York City has been
20 developed through a series of joint collaborations
21 between New York State and New York City known as New
22 York/New York agreements. In 1990 the first New
23 York/New York agreement was signed creating 3,615
24 units of supportive housing for homeless mentally ill
25 people in New York City. New York, New York II was

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2 signed in 1999 and developed 1,500 apartments for
3 mentally ill homeless adults over the course of 5
4 years. In 2005, New York/New York III was signed
5 committing to create 9,000 units over 10 years. The
6 agreement was the largest commitment to create
7 housing for homeless people in the Nation's history.
8 New York/New York III developed housing for both
9 individuals and families with mental illnesses,
10 substance abuse disorders, disabling medical
11 conditions and youth aging out of foster care systems
12 who are at risk of homelessness. According to
13 advocates New York/New York III reduced chronic
14 homelessness among single adults at 47% over the
15 first 5 years of program. Additionally 86% of New
16 York/New York III tenants remained stably housed
17 after one year. As indicated in resolution number
18 504-2014, advocates are calling for a New York/New
19 York IV agreement between Mayor de Blasio and
20 Governor Cuomo to create 30,000 units of supportive
21 housing in New York City. According to the campaign
22 for New York/New York IV, 15,000 of the 30,000 units
23 would be for new supportive housing construction and
24 the other 15,000 would be scattered in new affordable
25 housing developments and market rate housing. Since

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2 the City has now made a commitment to 15,000 units in
3 supportive housing I am hoping that the Governor will
4 also make a commitment to an additional 15,000 units
5 in order to meet the 30,000 supportive housing units
6 that New York City needs. I want to thank from the
7 General Welfare Committee in preparations for this
8 hearing: Senior Council Andrea Vaquez, Tonya Cyrus,
9 Senior Legislative Policy Analyst Dohini Sompura,
10 Unit Head in the Finance Committee and I want to
11 acknowledge all the advocates who have been a part of
12 the coalition, all the providers, all the tenants,
13 all those that have been advocating for this for a
14 long time. What we saw yesterday was... was the
15 confluence of an administration that cares and knows
16 to do the right thing and is willing to step up and
17 do the right thing. A confluence of that with an
18 active advocacy community that has made strong
19 demands and is willing to see those through... through
20 good organizing, so I wanted to acknowledge all of
21 your hard work and I also want to single out one
22 individual in particular Assemblyman Andy Hevesi
23 who's with us today as well. Who over the last, over
24 the last several months, more than several months,
25 he's been up in Albany doing organizing of his own

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2 getting the Assembly Members and State Senators on
3 board and that in a lot of ways has created the
4 political pressure, incentive for... for all of us to
5 get moving on this so Assemblyman Hevesi thank you
6 very much. With that I'll turn it over to my Co-
7 Chair oh and happy birthday. And with that I'll turn
8 it over to my Co-Chair Jumaane Williams.

9 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Thank you Council Member
10 Levin. Good afternoon everyone and again thank you
11 all for coming. My name is Jumaane Williams, Chair of
12 the Council's Committee on Housings and Buildings and
13 thank you to my colleagues for allowing me to co-
14 chair this hearing. Today in addition to an
15 oversight hearing on supportive housing were hearing
16 a resolution 504 which is in my Committee introduced
17 by my co-chair Council Member Levin which calls on
18 the State to invest the lives of a particularly which
19 would I'm sorry to invest in the lives of
20 particularly vulnerable population, our City's
21 homeless. Through the New York/New York agreements
22 the State and the City have worked together to
23 provide affordable supportive housing to homeless
24 residence. Over 14,000 units have been dedicated not
25 just to provide shelter but to help mitigate the

2 threats of mental illness, substance abuse and re-
3 entry into the criminal justice system. It often
4 threatens stability and health of our City's chronic
5 homeless populations. The latest New York/New York
6 agreement is reaching its expiration next June and
7 Governor Cuomo has called on New York City to
8 contribute to a greater financial contribution for
9 future supportive housing and rehab. Yesterday Mayor
10 de Blasio announced a plan for the City to invest
11 approximately 3 billion dollars of supportive housing
12 over the next 15 years. In resolution 504 we
13 encourage the State to continue supporting us in our
14 efforts (inaudible) and increasingly urgent and
15 critical problem endured by far too many New Yorkers.
16 Right now the Governor is proposing financing
17 approximately 3,900 supportive housing units over the
18 next 7 years. Again I want to thank the Mayor for
19 his commitment, not that there's any kind of rivalry
20 between him and the Governor but if there were the
21 Governor could feel free to step up and match and
22 surpass what we've put here and put money where his
23 mouth is. I'd also like to thank my staff for the
24 work they've done to assemble this hearing include:
25 Nick Smith, my Deputy Chief of Staff and Legislative

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2 Director, Jen Wilcox and Malaika Jabali, Councils to
3 the Committee Guillermo Patino and Jose Conde, Policy
4 Analyst to the Committee Sarah Gastelum the Committee
5 Finance Analyst and again Governor Cuomo where you
6 at. We've done our part we really need the State to
7 step up as well. Thank you very much.

8 CHAIR LEVIN: I want to thank Council
9 Members who have joined us today; Antonio Reynoso of
10 Brooklyn, Member of the Housing and Buildings
11 Committee, Councilman Menchaca of Brooklyn a member
12 of the General Welfare Committee and
13 Housing/Buildings (inaudible)just General Welfare,
14 Mark Levine of Manhattan of the Housing and Buildings
15 Committee, Donovan Richards, General Welfare
16 Committee, Eric Ulrich, the Housing and Buildings
17 Committee and Annabel Palma, General Welfare
18 Committee and with that I will ask Commissioner Steve
19 Banks to deliver remarks on... behalf of the
20 administration and Fisher Banks I'm going to swear
21 you in, is that ok? Do you affirm to tell the truth
22 the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your
23 testimony before this Committee and to respond
24 honestly to Council Members questions? And if you
25

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2 both can affirm that would be great, if you both plan
3 on delivering testimony.

4 [off mic: I do]

5 CHAIR LEVIN: Commissioner Banks.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Good afternoon I'm
7 joined here today by Jessica Katz, Assistant Deputy
8 Commissioner at the Department of Housing and
9 Preservation Development. Thank you Chairperson
10 Levin and Chairperson Williams and the Housing and
11 Building and General Welfare Committee for holding
12 this hearing and giving us an opportunity to testify
13 regarding supportive housing in New York City. My
14 name is Steven Banks and I'm the Commissioner of the
15 New York City Human Resources Administration and I
16 want to join you in acknowledging of the presence of
17 the Assembly Member Hevesi, the Chair of the Social
18 Services Committee... Committee in the Assembly.
19 Assembly Member Hevesi together with Senator Goldin
20 have been leaders in the Assembly in the Senate and
21 we have substantial numbers of Assembly Members and
22 Senators very much focused on the importance and the
23 needs for additional supportive housings so we really
24 appreciate the leadership from Assembly Member
25 Hevesi. We're here to discuss supportive housing for

2 homeless New Yorkers with mental illness, substance
3 use disorders and/or other disabling conditions,
4 homeless New Yorkers with HIV/AIDS, young adults
5 aging out of foster care, veterans, New Yorkers
6 living on the streets, and other high needs homeless
7 and at-risk populations and our efforts to expand
8 this critical housing resource.

9 Every day HRA plays a critical role in
10 homelessness prevention throughout the five boroughs.
11 HRA is focused on providing supports to those who are
12 working, but with income insufficient to support a
13 family. Providing temporary assistance and training
14 to those in search of work and proving a safety net
15 for those unable to work. For the purpose of
16 today's hearing it is especially important to not
17 that some New Yorkers face challenges in securing and
18 maintaining employment and stable housing due to
19 psychosocial, intellectual, physical health and/or
20 other conditions, and for these New Yorkers HRA plays
21 a vital role in connecting them to a continuum of
22 care and support services.

23 HRA and other City agencies have many
24 successes in moving vulnerable, chronically homeless
25 individuals into stable, permanent supportive housing

2 and ultimately helping to transition many of these
3 New Yorker back into the workforce. Not only is it
4 the right thing to do, but researchers positively
5 associate homelessness prevention and supportive
6 housing with improved long-term health and quality of
7 life outcomes for clients and substantial cost
8 savings for both the City and State by reducing the
9 costs associated with shelter, incarceration and
10 care.

11 Since its inception in the 1980s
12 supportive housing has become a powerful and cost-
13 effective intervention to end homelessness our most
14 vulnerable neighbors, including our youngest
15 neighbors. I should say congratulations Assistant
16 Deputy Commissioner Katz. It's a very big day.
17 Families and individuals coping with mental health
18 challenges, the trauma associated with domestic
19 violence, substance use disorders, HIV and disabling
20 or chronic illness are eligible for stable housing
21 accompanied as needed with an array of comprehensive
22 services, including healthcare for people with
23 physical and/or mental impairments, substance use
24 treatment, employment and education. Through
25 supportive housing these vulnerable populations are

2 able to address the multiple barriers they face when
3 trying to obtain and maintain stable housing and live
4 with independence and dignity.

5 Yesterday, the Mayor announced a new plan
6 to create 15,000 units of new supportive housing over
7 the next 15 years, more than the combined number of
8 units from the three previous supportive housing
9 plans and more than any other supportive housing
10 effort in the country. This sweeping and
11 comprehensive plan will target even more New Yorkers
12 in need than previous supportive housing plans,
13 including homeless veterans, domestic violence
14 survivors and street homeless individuals.

15 Supportive housing is affordable housing
16 with supportive services, including both mental and
17 physical healthcare access, alcohol and substance use
18 programs, and other social services. It is a proven,
19 cost-effective approach to deliver the stability and
20 to permanently house New Yorkers struggling with
21 mental illness, homelessness, substance use.

22 Supportive housing reduces reliance on homeless
23 shelters, hospitals, mental health institutions and
24 incarceration.

2 As the Mayor said yesterday in his
3 remarks at the announcement; Every person in
4 supportive housing and on the road to wellness is one
5 fewer person in a City hospital, a prison or a
6 shelter. By making this historic investment, we are
7 confronting the moral crisis of homelessness and
8 mental illness our city faces today.

9 Both the Mayor and the First Lady of the
10 City of New York also noted that this supportive
11 housing initiative is the housing component of the
12 First Lady's mental health roadmap. And her
13 leadership has been invaluable in getting to this
14 moment.

15 The City's 15,000 unit plan is comprised
16 of roughly 7,500 newly developed, congregate units
17 and 7,500 scattered site units with the exact numbers
18 to be determined as the plan proceeds. The plan will
19 cost \$2.6 billion in capital funds over the next 15
20 years to develop 7,500 congregate units. Of the
21 total capital cost, approximately \$1 billion will be
22 a City cost and all but \$380 million has already been
23 budgeted through the Housing New Plan. The remaining
24 capital cost approximately \$1.6 billion will be
25 offset with low-income tax credits and other private

2 sources. There is approximately \$96 million in net
3 operating cost over the financial plan years through
4 fiscal year 19 starting at \$8.8 million annually in
5 the first year and ramping up.

6 Supportive housing has a proven track
7 record in reducing costs. A Department of Health and
8 Mental Hygiene study showed New York/New York III
9 clients who were placed into supportive housing used
10 public benefits, Medicaid, psychiatric institutions,
11 jails and shelters less than clients who were not
12 placed, resulting in net cost savings.

13 The populations served by this new
14 supportive housing are as follows; Homeless families
15 in which the head of the household suffers from a a
16 serious mental illness or a serious mental illness
17 and a (inaudible) substance use disorder, a substance
18 use disorder, a disabling medical condition, or
19 HIV/AIDS.

20 Homeless single adults with a serious
21 mental illness, a substance use disorder, a disabling
22 medical condition or HIV/AIDS. Homeless single
23 adults with substance use disorders that are primary
24 barriers to independent living and who also have a
25 disabling clinical condition. Homeless single adults

2 who have completed a course of treatment for a
3 substance use disorder and are at risk of street
4 housing to sustain sobriety and achieve independent
5 living. Homeless single adults with HIV/AIDS and who
6 are clients of the HIV/AIDS Service Administration of
7 HRA or who are receiving cash assistance from the
8 City, and who suffer from a co-occurring serious
9 mental illness, or a substance use disorder.

10 Young adults aged 25 or younger leaving
11 or having recently left foster care or who have been
12 in foster care for more than a year after their 16th
13 birthday and who are homeless or at risk of
14 homelessness.

15 Homeless single veterans or families in
16 which the head of the household is veteran who
17 suffers from a disabling clinical condition such as a
18 medical or mental health condition that further
19 impairs their ability to live independently.

20 Domestic violence survivors at high risk
21 for persistent homelessness.

22 Street homeless individuals with
23 behavioral health issues, including those in safe
24 havens and stabilization beds.

3 Individuals receiving nursing home care
4 or medically frail individuals awaiting discharge
5 from the public hospital system that can make the
6 transition to independent living with medically
7 appropriate supportive services.

8 All of the City agencies before you today
9 work in close partnership to address housing
10 insecurity and homelessness as well as to provide
11 housing options for vulnerable clients who are
12 eligible for supportive housing through the Mayor's
13 new initiative. Those agencies include HRA, HPD,
14 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, ACS and the
15 Department of Homeless Services.

16 HRA's current supportive housing
17 application and eligibility process is as follows;
18 HRA's supportive housing system permits referring
19 agencies to submit the New York City supportive
20 housing referral application, which is called HRA
21 2010e, electronically to HRA Office of Health and
22 Mental Health Services Placement, assessment and
23 client tracking unit. In order to apply for any New
24 York/New York I, II or III housing, the HRA 2010e
25 must be submitted electronically by a service
provider who has been trained by HRA's customized

3 assistance services, after which the provider
4 received a username and password.

5 The 2010e application packet is designed
6 to gather the relevant clinical and housing
7 information to determine if the individual applicant
8 is eligible for any category of supportive housing.

9 Relevant information gathered in the application
10 includes; demographic information, benefits, service
11 providers, history of hospitalizations, housing
12 history and episodes of homelessness, behavioral
13 health and medical conditions, day-to-day functional
14 challenges, client preferences for housing and
15 recommendations for level of housing support needed.

16 Additionally, the packet requires a current
17 comprehensive psychiatric evaluation, completed by a
18 licensed psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse
19 practitioner within the last six months and
20 psychosocial summary completed within the last six
21 months. Service providers may choose to utilize the
22 Comprehensive Mental Health Report in lieu of a
23 separate psychosocial summary and psychiatric
24 evaluation. Supportive housing applications are
25 mostly prepared by mental health professional from a
variety of referral sources, like hospitals,

2 correctional facilities, homeless shelters,
3 outpatient programs, care coordination and community
4 based organizations. Other individuals, including
5 family members, are also able to assist people with
6 this process.

7 The eligibly criteria for New York/New
8 York I and II agreements are as follows; a person who
9 is seriously and persistently mentally ill meets the
10 New York State Office of Mental Health Community
11 Support Services criteria and is documented as
12 currently homeless.

13 The applicant must meet not less than one
14 of the four following criteria: The individual used
15 the DHS shelter system continuously for four or more
16 months. They may be hospitalized or incarcerated and
17 awaiting placement, but they must have used the
18 shelter system immediately prior to being arrested or
19 hospitalized. The individual has used the DHS shelter
20 for 14 of the past 60 days, but not necessarily
21 continuously. The individual may be hospitalized or
22 incarcerated and awaiting placement. The individual
23 has used a drop in center, voluntary shelter or
24 Partnership for the Homeless shelter for 14 of the
25 past 60 days, but not necessarily continuously. The

3 individual may be hospitalized or incarcerated and
4 awaiting placement. The individual does not meet any
5 of the above criteria, but is known to be homeless
6 and reside on the streets, in the parks, on the
7 subways or other public areas, and is a shelter
8 system user who does not meet the criteria. The
9 individual may also have been undomiciled prior to
10 hospitalization or incarceration and is awaiting
11 placement.

12 The eligibility criteria for New York/New
13 York III agreements are as follows; chronically
14 homeless single adults who suffer from serious and
15 persistent mental illness or who are diagnosed with
16 mental illness and a substance use disorder. Single
17 adults who are presently living in New York State
18 operated psychiatric centers or State operated
19 transitional residences and who could live
20 independently in the community if provided with
21 supportive housing and who would be at risk of street
22 or unsheltered homelessness, I'm sorry at street or
23 sheltered homelessness if discharged without
24 supportive housing. Chronically homeless single
25 adults with HIV, or clients of HASA or have
symptomatic HIV and receiving cash assistance from

2 HRA as well as co-occurring serious and persistent
3 mental illness, a substance use disorder or both.

4 Chronically homeless families, or families at serious
5 risk of becoming chronically homeless, in which the
6 head of the household suffers from a substance use
7 disorder, a disabling medical condition or HIV.

8 Chronically homeless single adults who have a
9 substance use disorder that is a primary barrier to
10 independent living and also a disabling clinical
11 condition such as a medical or mental health
12 condition that further impairs their ability to live
13 independently. Homeless single adults who have
14 completed a course of treatment for a substance use
15 disorder and are at risk of street homelessness or
16 sheltered homelessness and who need transitional
17 supportive housing which may include a halfway house
18 to sustain sobriety and achieve independent living.

19 Young adults age 18-24 who have a serious mental
20 illness and are being treated in a New York State
21 licensed residential treatment facility, a State
22 psychiatric facility or leaving or having recently
23 left foster care and live independently in the
24 community if provided with supportive housing and
25 would otherwise be at risk of street or sheltered

3 homelessness if discharged without supportive
4 housing. Chronically homeless families, or families
5 at serious risk of becoming chronically homeless, in
6 which the head of the household suffers from a
7 serious and persistent mental illness or mental
8 illness and a substance use disorder. Young adults
9 aged 18-25 leaving or having recently left foster
10 care or who had been in foster care for more than a
11 year after their 16th birthday and are at risk of
12 street homelessness or sheltered homelessness.

13 As noted earlier, the new program builds
14 on this process and these eligibility criteria and
15 includes additional categories of vulnerable clients,
16 including homeless veterans, domestic violence
17 survivors and street homeless individuals.

18 Permanent supportive housing provides
19 individuals and families transitional from a period
20 of homeless and emergency and institutional systems
21 with integrated, quality housing. These residential
22 apartment buildings are located in communities
23 throughout New York City. This supportive housing
24 reflects housing options available in the community
25 and meets standards for safety and quality

2 established by local, state and federal laws and
3 regulations.

4 Tenants sign a standard lease and receive
5 rental assistance. The continued tenancy is not
6 subject to any special rules or participation in any
7 particular services and tenants pay 30 percent of
8 their income toward rent.

9 The two types of supportive housing are;
10 Single site also referred to as congregate, which is
11 a designed building where each individual or family
12 has private living quarters and may share kitchens
13 and or common recreational rooms or other facilities
14 and scattered site, which are units in apartment
15 buildings spread throughout a neighborhood or
16 community that are designed for specific populations,
17 accompanied by supportive services.

18 The combination of affordable housing and
19 support services is designed to help families and
20 individuals, utilizing housing as a tool to promote
21 positive long term health and quality of life
22 outcomes, sustained recovery and lower rates of
23 repeat homelessness following chronic homelessness,
24 hospitalization or incarceration or for youth aging
25 out of foster care.

2 Participation in services is voluntary
3 and is customized to meet the needs of each resident.
4 A care management team is responsible for a person
5 centered assessment, care plan development,
6 implementation and monitoring as well as support
7 services including; case management, educational,
8 vocational and other recovery oriented services,
9 medication management and counseling, assistance in
10 gaining access to government benefits, such as food
11 stamps, referrals to medical services, mental health
12 care and treatment for drug and alcohol use and
13 recommendations for other needed services, such as
14 legal support.

15 This combined approach is effective in
16 reducing homelessness and maintain stable housing.
17 According to a 2014 study by the Urban Institute, 85%
18 of all clients remained housed in the program one
19 year after placement and after two years after
20 placement 74% remain housed. This supportive
21 environment can also reconnect individuals with
22 family members and integrate individuals into a
23 neighborhood, community and workforce creating a web
24 of social supports that are difficult to maintain
25 when housing is unstable or non-existent.

3 In a recent report, the Corporation for
4 supportive housing concluded that New York needs to
5 create 31,745 new supportive housing units statewide
6 in the near future to meet the needs of homeless
7 adults and families. Of these 24,155 are needed in
8 New York City. Another source, the Campaign 4 New
9 York/New York housing, a group of over 130 advocacy
10 groups found that the ratio of demand to available to
11 supportive units is six to one, while more than
12 20,000 families qualify each year for supportive
13 homes. The largest challenge with supportive housing
14 in the City is that there simply is not enough of it.

15 Based on HRA's data, in Fiscal Year 2015,
16 23,944 supportive housing applications were submitted
17 and of these 14,623 or 61 percent were approved.

18 There are currently, approximately 32,000 supportive
19 housing beds in New York City. As of last month,
20 October 2015, HRA's HASA program has; a contracted
21 supportive housing portfolio of 5,678 units of which
22 5,432 units are occupied. HASA spends about \$134
23 million annually for these units. 2,672 scattered
24 site units including New York/New York III and non-
25 New York/New York III of which 94.65% are occupied.
The average annual cost per unit is \$23,957. 2,181

2 permanent congregate units, including both New
3 York/New York III and non-New York/New York III of
4 which 96% are occupied. The average annual cost per
5 unit is \$22,200. 825 transitional units, 97.45 of
6 which are occupied. The average annual cost per unit
7 is \$25,160.

8 In addition to supportive housing units,
9 HASA is expecting to spend about \$33 million this
10 year for clients residing in emergency housing. As
11 of October 17, 2015 of the 2,313 units available,
12 HASA clients occupied 1,946 units and occupancy rate
13 of 84%.

14 An interim report concerning New York/New
15 York III issued by the New York City Department of
16 Health and Mental Hygiene in collaboration with the
17 New York City Human Resources Administration and the
18 New York State Office of Mental Health found that
19 when New York/New York III service and operating cost
20 were included, there were net savings for single
21 adults coming from State operated psychiatric
22 facilities. In for other populations, the cost of
23 the program was offset by savings in services and
24 benefits not used by New York/New York III tenants.
25 In two populations, net cost were greater for placed

2 than unplaced individuals. When New York/New York
3 III populations were combined, there were substantial
4 net savings per client, per year.

5 We know stable housing is integral to
6 improving health outcomes and lowering costs for high
7 needs, high cost Medicaid recipients with serious
8 mental health or disabling conditions; moreover,
9 supportive housing can reduce disparities and avert
10 preventable events and hospitalizations thereby
11 additionally reducing costs.

12 We know that investment in prevention,
13 rental assistance and supportive housing is more cost
14 effective than shelter. As we have testified
15 previously, the Administration is already investing
16 an unprecedented \$1 billion over the next for years
17 in rental assistance to prevent and alleviate
18 homelessness, legal services, and other prevention
19 assistance.

20 Results to date, it took many years to
21 reach this level of homelessness and it will take
22 time to reduce it. But we can already point to some
23 concrete successes with our rental assistance
24 programs with increasing placements in affordable
25 housing. To date 9,044 New Yorkers have received

2 eviction prevention legal assistance, including
3 working heads of households, and this will increase
4 to almost 33,000 households per year including well
5 over 113,000 people and the program is fully
6 implemented by fall of 17.

7 We have also helped more people with
8 emergency rent assistance, keeping thousands of New
9 Yorkers in their homes. In FY 14, HRA provided rent
10 arrears to 42,000 households at a cost of \$121
11 million. Comparatively in FY 2015, HRA provided rent
12 arrears to nearly 53,000 households at a cost of \$180
13 million. The 49% increase in spending was due to
14 11,000 more households being found eligible and was
15 due in part to rising rents. Another major driver
16 was the increase in homebased and legal services
17 enrollments to prevent eviction and homelessness
18 where clients are also referred to rent arrears. The
19 FEPS anti-evection program also provides rent arrears
20 and HRA spent another \$25 million on about 6,300
21 households each year for total rent arrears spending
22 of \$145 million in FY 14 and \$205 million in FY 15.

23 And I want to reemphasize that these
24 programs are cost effective. In FY 2015, the average
25 cost of emergency rent assistance was \$3,396 per

2 case, which is much less than the average cost of
3 almost \$37,000 per year for a family in a homeless
4 shelter. The cost of a legal services case averages
5 about \$2,000 which is again compared to \$37,000 per
6 year cost for shelter.

7 No price can be put on the human and
8 social cost of homelessness and the high level of
9 homelessness over the past several years has also had
10 a substantial fiscal impact on the City. We know
11 that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure
12 and we are diligently working to ensure that the
13 tools of government that can prevent and alleviate
14 homelessness are accessible and readily available to
15 those who are in need. We also know that investment
16 in these preventative and restorative services is
17 money well spent.

18 As I noted earlier, the cost of
19 supportive housing, legal services and rent arrears
20 is much less than the cost of shelter. And those
21 figures don't include the many other costs that
22 homelessness impose on adults and children including
23 the loss of jobs, the loss of social supports that
24 makes them more vulnerable to future crises, the

3 disruption of medical and other care, and the
4 disruption of children's education.

5 In order for HRAs and the City's programs
6 to be successful in preventing and alleviating
7 homelessness for families and individuals it is
8 essential that there is a sustained investment from
9 both the City and State for today and years to come.
10 Moreover, additional investment is needed in
11 supportive housing to prevent homelessness and keep
12 children and adults in stable homes and to move
13 children and adults from shelter to permanent
14 housing. We are hopeful that our State partners will
15 prioritize supportive housing in the way that we
16 have. In fact substantial numbers of Assembly
17 members and Senators have called for a dramatic
18 increase in supportive housing at the level of 30,000
19 additional units for New York City and as well as
20 thousands more units for the rest of New York State.

21 The first three New York/New York
22 agreements between the City and State have clearly
23 demonstrated that supportive housing is a proven cost
24 effective and humane way to alleviate homelessness
25 and the Mayor's historic announcement yesterday will
provide permanent and stable housing and essential

2 social services for literally thousands of eligible
3 New Yorkers. We are committed to working together
4 with you and your Council colleagues as this program
5 is implemented and to further help vulnerable New
6 Yorkers by enhancing access to supportive housing.
7 We have accomplished a great deal over the past 22
8 months, but we know that we have much more work to do
9 and look forward to partnering with you in the coming
10 year. Thank you and will be happy to answer your
11 questions after Commissioner, HPD speaks.

12 CHAIR LEVIN: Sorry folks yeah no we
13 really can't have any more clapping this afternoon.
14 We welcome it from time to time but from now on we
15 can do this and you know it'll... it'll... it'll show up
16 on the video. Commissioner do you have testimony?

17 COMMISSIONER KATZ: Yes. Chairman Levin,
18 Chairman Williams and members of the committees,
19 thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the
20 Department's behalf of the Department of Housing
21 Preservation and Development about our efforts to
22 create and preserve supportive housing. My name is
23 Jessica Katz I'm the Assistant Commissioner for
24 Special Needs Housing at HPD. I am joined today by
25 several of my colleagues including Eva Trimble, our

2 Deputy Commissioner for Financial Management and
3 Tenant Resources and as you heard the tiniest little
4 supportive housing advocate who is my 4 month old
5 daughter.

6 It's important that I begin this
7 testimony with a sincere note of thanks to the
8 Council. We appreciate your support. Council Member
9 Torres is my last meeting before I went on maternity
10 leave and the first face I see when I come back, hi.
11 I want to begin this testimony with a sincere note of
12 thanks for the Council. We appreciate your support
13 not only by helping to keep this important issue
14 front and center, but also the work that you do to
15 support non-profit providers in your local
16 communities. Councilmembers serve an important role
17 in the community engagement process. At HPD, we
18 very much appreciate the Council's support as we work
19 to combine all the necessary components of supportive
20 housing development including the financing, and as
21 well as the political and community support.

22 Supportive housing as you all know place
23 where even those with the most severe barriers to
24 independent living are stably housed in their own
25

2 apartments paying rent and with leases like anyone
3 else.

4 Since Housing New York launched when
5 Mayor de Blasio began his administration we've taken
6 care not only to discuss how many units we've built a
7 preserved, but also acknowledge the New Yorkers who
8 will reside in these homes. There is no kind of
9 development where it is more important that we
10 remember who is living in a unit than in supportive
11 housing. In many cases we've not only built a
12 supportive housing unit, but we've literally saved a
13 life. Anyone who has been fortunate enough to visit
14 some of our great supportive housing providers here
15 in New York can hear stories of residents who faced
16 death lingering on the streets, under bridges, or in
17 cars for now but who are now reconnecting with
18 family, addressing their health needs, and finding
19 gainful employment. There are many are reasons for
20 why we see such successful outcomes in supportive
21 housing including the dedication of staff and their
22 social service delivery, but at its core the model is
23 successful because the home is affordable and the
24 services that the resident needs are made available.

2 There are many examples of well designed,
3 richly programmed, and efficiently operated
4 supportive housing projects. Then I'd like to
5 highlight just a few here in New York City. The
6 Schermerhorn, the \$59 million project built by
7 Breaking Ground in Chairman Levin's district, just
8 steps from Mystery Restaurant Row. It is a 116 units
9 for a formerly homeless individuals with special
10 needs. The building is a total of 207 units. The
11 remaining are for low income community residents.
12 Many are whom are actively pursuing careers in the
13 performing arts and entertainment industries, such as
14 local actors, dancers, singers and filmmakers. The
15 actor's fund, who co-sponsored the building, provides
16 social services and emergency financial assistance,
17 health care, housing, and employment and training
18 services. The Center for Community and Urban
19 Services provides case management for tenants with
20 special needs. The building features green
21 construction, rooftop gardens, a glass façade, a
22 fitness room, and also home to dance studio operated
23 by the Brooklyn Ballet as well as a 2,000 square foot
24 black box performance space operated by the Actors
25 Fund.

2 Morris Manor is a CAMBA development that
3 opened in 2008 in Chairman Williams's district. It
4 is a beautiful energy-efficient and sustainable
5 building that provides tenants a safe and permanent
6 home, complete with on-site social services and a
7 landscaped rear garden with shona sculpture from
8 Zimbabwe. Morris Manor transformed a long vacant
9 City owned lot into an attractive neighborhood asset
10 and established a high standard for affordable
11 housing in Brooklyn. In fact when the building was
12 opening and we had the ribbon cutting I was walking
13 towards the from the subway to the event and hear
14 someone saying "Not another luxury condo" about that
15 building, so we are pretty proud of that.

16 True Colors Bronx was sponsored by the
17 West End residences is one of our newest projects to
18 open just this past fall in Council Member Cabrera's
19 district. True Colors Bronx is permanent, affordable
20 housing with on-site support services specifically
21 tailored to LGBT youths with a history of
22 homelessness. Residents receive case management and
23 ongoing assistance with every aspect of independent
24 living as well as obtaining employment best suited to
25 their individual interest and skills. A range of

2 services, including GED classes and healthcare, are
3 available through linkages with other nonprofit
4 agencies. This new Bronx residence continues the
5 partnership between West End Residences and Grammy
6 award winning artist Cyndi Lauper and her manager.

7 Yesterday the Mayor announced a major
8 commitment of \$1 billion in City capital over the
9 next 15 years that will fund 15,000 units of
10 supportive housing. Approximately half of these
11 units will be new construction, supported through HPD
12 financing. During the time that the supportive
13 housing commitment overlaps with Housing New York,
14 over the next 8 years, all those supportive housing
15 units that receive funding through City resources
16 will count towards the City's 200,000 unit housing
17 New York plan. The Administration is committed to
18 including supportive housing as an integral part of
19 our housing stock and fully embraces supportive
20 housing as proven solution to ending homelessness.

21 The announcement was particularly timely
22 for HPD because it will allow the City to avoid our
23 disruptive, disrupting our supportive housing
24 pipeline, which was beginning to feel the impact of
25 the uncertainty related to how services would be

3 funded in the future. We will also be injecting more
4 flexibility into the system by broadening the
5 populations that will be served as compared to the
6 previous New York/New York agreements. By doing this
7 we will ensure that a wide range of people who need
8 supportive housing in order to remain stably housed
9 have access to it.

10 In fact, this HPDs supportive housing
11 loan program has long been the primary financing tool
12 for the city's supportive housing production. Prior
13 to 2013, the agency financed approximately 650 units
14 annually through the supportive housing loan program
15 per year. Starting in FY13, the agency increased its
16 production under the program, financing approximately
17 1,000 supportive housing units per year.

18 While a typical affordable housing deal
19 depends on multiple sources of financing, supportive
20 housing deals often rely on even more sources. It is
21 not unusual to see five, six or more sources of
22 capital financing listed for one project. Most deals
23 include a combination of city capital through HPDs
24 supportive housing loan program, low income housing
25 tax credits and private debt. Additional capital
sources may include tax exempt bond financing and

3 funding from New York State sources including New
4 York State Homeless Housing Assistance Program, the
5 Office of Mental Health and the Medicaid Redesign
6 Team. Rental assistance is typically federally
7 funded through HUD Section 8, Shelter Plus Care or
8 HUD-VASH vouchers.

9 Housing New York committed to expanded
10 supportive housing production, which requires
11 creative partnerships and multiple sources of
12 support. New York City is fortunate to have some of
13 the most accomplished supportive housing development
14 partners who have established expertise in their
15 field and become adept at handling developments with
16 more complex financing that leverages public and
17 private sources. Indeed the majority of deals under
18 our supportive housing loan program are now
19 leveraging significant private debt in addition to
20 resources that include tax credits, bonds, capital
21 loans and rental assistance.

22 In addition to leveraging more private
23 debt, the City has closed on its first project through
24 Homestretch. Homestretch is an innovative model that
25 co-locates transitional shelter and permanent
affordable housing. The Homestretch model leverages

2 shared financing to provide cost effective shelter
3 and to subsidize rents for very low income, formerly
4 homeless individuals and families on the same site.

5 As I stated earlier, I'd like to
6 reiterate our appreciation to the Council for today's
7 hearing and for the ongoing attention to this
8 important topic. Supportive housing services an
9 incredibly vulnerable population and Councilmembers,
10 are critical partners in bring together all of
11 necessary pieces to make this housing a reality. As
12 the Mayor's Housing New York plan states, a measure
13 of any great City is how effectively it cares for its
14 most vulnerable residents. I'm happy to answer your
15 questions about our recent announcement and any other
16 issues, thanks.

17 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much
18 Commissioner, so we've also been joined by Council
19 Members Daneek Miller, Brad Lander, Karen Koslowitz,
20 Ruben Wills and Corey Johnson. So thank you very
21 much for your testimony. I will just say in response
22 to a point that you brought up the Schermerhorn
23 building which is in my district. I've been a
24 Council Member for going on 6 years now, I don't
25 recall ever getting a single complaint about that

2 building. It is a wonderful example of supportive
3 housing that is in a rapidly, I mean it's a
4 gentrified, it's already gentrified neighborhood.
5 High end neighborhood and the social services that go
6 along with it, the neighborhood programs Brooklyn's
7 Ballet Dance School is in that building. It is a, It
8 is a truly positive development and great example of
9 what can be done. So I want to point that out.
10 Common ground, actress fund has done a great job in
11 with partnership with the City. So I wanted to ask,
12 let's start off and I know my colleagues have
13 questions so I'll maybe just ask one or two here.
14 With the proposed 15,000 units has have the City
15 determined what the cost breakdown is likely to be
16 with those units? I know that the... the a commitment
17 if for the City to cover all of that but is that mean
18 that the State is not going to be covering any of the
19 operating expenses for those units? Because looking
20 at New York/New York III the State does pick up quite
21 a substantial part of that of the operating expenses
22 there so.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: This is New York
24 City stepping up to the plate and we will be covering
25 the operating cost.

2 CHAIR LEVIN: Is there, is there at some
3 point the State you know auto and we expect will come
4 to the table to pick up hopefully their fair share
5 but that will be then for any additional units that
6 come online that there will be, they will be
7 contributing to that operating expense?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well were hopeful
9 with the leadership that were seeing in the Assembly
10 and leadership that were seeing in Senate that this
11 need for additional supportive housing will be a
12 priority in the coming session and were certainly
13 going to participate in that process.

14 CHAIR LEVIN: You mentioned in your
15 testimony that the first year of expense will be
16 roughly around \$8 million.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Yes.

18 CHAIR LEVIN: And will ramp up from
19 there. Do you know what it will be when it's at it's
20 you know fully ramped up stage?

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well in terms of the
22 a financial plan dollars which is really you know as
23 were managing to the financial plan the net cost or
24 just north of \$90 million as I talked about does take
25 into account the savings that we expect, so that's...

2 that's going to be included in our financial plan
3 expenditures.

4 CHAIR LEVIN: And... and I know you spoke
5 to this a little bit in your testimony but can you
6 maybe expand a little bit on how for example OMB or...
7 or HRAs financial people look at the savings in count
8 the savings against the expenditure ultimately how
9 that's, how is that, how is that approached? Where...
10 where exactly are the savings that we know in we know
11 that you mentioned the Department of Health Report,
12 how can you flush that out a little more us?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean the primary
14 savings that studies have shown actually in are to
15 the benefit of the State in terms of psychiatric
16 institutionalization in terms of Medicaid savings.
17 The savings to the City relate more to the use of
18 shelters and the use of jails. The savings that the
19 reports are focused on sort of combine the savings
20 from all of those different sources so it's important
21 to be very focused on those that would be City
22 savings and those would be State savings and so of
23 course the steps that the City is taking will benefit
24 both the City and the State.

2 CHAIR LEVIN: Ok so I'll reiterate that
3 then that the with the City now is doing is the City
4 is committed to doing by covering... covering these
5 expenses for these 15,000 units, that's going to save
6 the State of New York money in addition to savings
7 that the City will see, the State of New York will be
8 seeing a significant savings through psychiatric
9 inpatient.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: And Medicaid as well
11 but of course the savings are an important aspect but
12 saving lives is of course the more imperative here.

13 CHAIR LEVIN: Right. I do want to turn
14 it over to my colleagues for questions, I may come
15 back with a few more. First of my co-chair Jumaane
16 Williams.

17 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Thank you very much, we
18 were also joined briefly by Council Member Espinal
19 and we also have our former Council Member Artie
20 Spigner (sp) who will be testifying shortly as well.
21 We were also joined briefly by Council Member
22 Cornegy. I thank you very much for the testimony and
23 on part as a Council Member and an advocate I'm very
24 happy of the announcement that was made yesterday by
25 the Mayor, I'm very excited and supportive of it. On

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2 another part as a Council Member and someone who has
3 to be a balance I do have some questions that I want
4 to ask moving forward. But first when will the first
5 new units be brought online?

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: So Assistant Deputy
7 Member Katz highlighted there are several pipelines
8 if you will for the units. First there are
9 congregate units that will be coming on during FY17
10 that are the end of the New York/New York III units.
11 Then because we're going to be able to continue that
12 pipeline we will be able to continue to move forward
13 and bring additional congregate units online in FY18
14 because development takes 18 to 24 months but we
15 expect the scattered site units to begin to come
16 online in 2017 so without distinguishing between
17 scattered site or congregate or New York/New York III
18 back that the end of the pipeline in the new ones,
19 there will be new units that will be available to us
20 to begin to... to make... make the connections between
21 the very vulnerable individuals that I described
22 beginning over the course of FY17 but the kinds of
23 units will differ depending on the stage in which the
24 development is, so in sum there will be units
25 available in FY17 that'll be a combination of the

2 scattered sites from the new program, the tail end of
3 New York/New York III that's already in the pipeline
4 and then the congregate units in this new initiative
5 will begin to hit in FY18 but if we waited to begin
6 to continue the pipeline they'd be a delay and they
7 would be available much further into the future.

8 CHAIR WILLIAMS: So the first units of
9 some kind from this New York/New York IV will be end
10 of 2017 beginning of 2018?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: During FY17.

12 CHAIR WILLIAMS: During FY17 but will
13 have the tail end of New York/New York III coming
14 online.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In addition to the
16 scattered sites from this new initiative.

17 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Has the administration
18 consult with advocates regarding what populations
19 will be served?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As I noted in the
21 testimony there are we're blessed in New York City
22 with a very effective and forceful advocacy
23 community.

24 CHAIR WILLIAMS: I was not aware.

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I was unaware myself
3 as you know. And I think it's fair to say that they
4 spent a great deal of time certainly since I've been
5 in... in a here in the Commissioner since the Mayor's
6 been in office laying out the need and presenting the
7 populations for which this is a critical need and so
8 the plan very much takes in account very effective
9 and comprehensive input from the advocacy community.

10 CHAIR WILLIAMS: And what do you believe
11 the optimal contribution from the state should be?

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well as I've said
13 and I think you've heard me say this before, were
14 hopeful that will be working with our State partners
15 in the coming session to prioritize additional
16 supportive housing and everyone contribution will be
17 determined as part of that process.

18 CHAIR WILLIAMS: So you don't have
19 particular optimal amount of units or amount money?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think we've been
21 very focused on the moral imperative of taking action
22 now and responding to the situation now and so been
23 very focused on what the City can do right now and
24 therefore we've acted as the Mayor laid out
25 yesterday.

2 CHAIR WILLIAMS: And as of my hat of... of
3 part of a body that balances the budget, I did have
4 some budget questions so I was trying to understand
5 it look like most of the capital funds from what you
6 said are already part of the Mayor's housing plan and
7 about 300 all but \$380 million have been budgeted so
8 where will the other \$380 million come from and said
9 the remaining cost approximately 1.6 will be offset
10 with low income, so it looks like 380 million we have
11 to account for a in the capital.

12 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's correct.

13 CHAIR WILLIAMS: So where would that come
14 from? And also it looks like there's approximately 96
15 million in net operating so that looks like those are
16 the operating cost.

17 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's correct,
18 that's the net operating cost.

19 CHAIR WILLIAMS: And where would that
20 come from?

21 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's going to have
22 to be part of our budget that we'll be presenting,
23 these are expenditures though and priorities that we
24 wanted to make it clear that were going in this
25 direction. The housing New York Plan always had a

2 prioritization for supportive housing and the
3 additional funds that we need for capital funding is
4 to continue beyond the... the remaining at years of
5 that 10 year plan because this is a 15 year plan and
6 to get the additional units and the operating cost
7 are cost that we will be putting into our proposed
8 budget.

9 CHAIR WILLIAMS: So for this to work the
10 basically the Council has to commit \$380 million in
11 capital funds which I assume is the one cost and then
12 \$96 million in operating funds each year that's it's
13 in effect?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well the \$96 million
15 in operating funds is over the, over the financial
16 plan years and again those are net cost so were very
17 focused on... on the financial plan as the primary
18 document for the cost and you know as you know the
19 Council's been a terrific partner with the
20 administration and these kinds of priorities and so
21 you will see the dollars reflected in our budget
22 documents we will be presenting to the Council.

23 CHAIR WILLIAMS: So 96 is the overall and
24 so it's starting at \$8.8 million for the first year.

25 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

2 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Ok.

3 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

4 CHAIR WILLIAMS: I just wanted to make
5 sure that Council gets it due credit in our
6 partnership here that we have to approve this budget
7 and we also are very excited and we want to make sure
8 we get our due credit in this partnership.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: As I've said we
10 certainly value the partnership and we know this has
11 been a priority for the Council so we're... we're very
12 pleased to be able to work with you to make it a
13 reality for New Yorker who needs this supportive
14 housing.

15 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Also the a my last line
16 of questioning, one the Morris Manor site in my
17 district is also very beautiful, it was a great
18 antidote about no more luxury housing. It is a great
19 building, and I just want to make note, we have had
20 no complaints about that building or any of residence
21 there since it's been put up. I think it's a
22 testament to the work that's being done. I do know
23 there always (inaudible) concerns and then there are
24 concerns that some of the placements are
25 oversaturated in the communities. What are you, what

2 is the plan to make sure that you account for any
3 oversaturation?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think that
5 supportive housing has a very strong track record of
6 coming (inaudible) as a result of the excellent work
7 of community based organizations and not for profits.
8 There the organizations that come forward with
9 particular sites that they want to develop and
10 particular sites they want to involved in and there
11 at the grass roots of the community level and there
12 just selecting sites such as the one you mentioned,
13 the one that Council Member Levin mentioned that are
14 fitting in with the community and so the process here
15 were not opening shelters, this is permanent housing.

16 CHAIR WILLIAMS: So one Morris Manor is
17 run by CAMBUS, I want to give them credit for that.
18 I don't know if all of them are run as well but I did
19 want to just drill down a little bit. Is there a
20 plan to look at and make sure there's oversaturation
21 even if it is run very well the officer in
22 communities that have these types of housing put a
23 lot where there's homeless shelters/supportive
24 housing which we definitely need so I'm going to make
25 sure that is put out there. I have some of my

2 district as well which are needed, I just want to
3 make sure there's a plan to look at where they're
4 being placed and make sure it's evenly spread around.

5 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I understand what
6 you're saying I just want to emphasis again this is
7 permanent housing, this is as if a client was able to
8 rent an apartment on the open market but were making
9 it impossible for the client to rent that apartment
10 because of the rental support that they're getting or
11 the congregate unit development that's been supported
12 with capital dollars, so it's not a plan to open a
13 shelter in a particular neighborhood, it's a plan to
14 work with not for profit organization to do the same
15 great work that they've done in New York/New York I,
16 II, and III to identify locations and to make them an
17 integral part of the community in the way that I
18 think the supportive housing in your district has
19 been shown to be and it's a, it's a way to avoid the
20 use of shelter that would otherwise be necessary to
21 deal with the homeless needs in the City.

22 CHAIR WILLIAMS: And I... I agree I think
23 permanent housing is definitely the way go. I do
24 know that there's a large amounts of residence in New
25 York City and some Council Members that probably

2 would like to hear even if it's permanent housing
3 that there some kind thought process being done to
4 make sure that all of it isn't in one district, so
5 I'm hoping that there is.

6 STEVEN LEVIN: Of course there's a
7 thought process I just want to keep making sure that
8 for anyone who maybe listening on cable television or
9 elsewhere, were talking about permanent housing here
10 as oppose to a shelter plan.

11 COMMISSIONER KATZ: I think that there's
12 also there tends to be a miss conception that
13 supportive housing is specifically concentrated in
14 certain neighborhoods. The Mayor made his
15 announcement yesterday at the Time Square Hotel which
16 is the largest supportive housing project in New York
17 City and probably anywhere. It's a 650 unit
18 supportive housing development that's right in prime
19 midtown Manhattan, so we do have a substantial amount
20 of supportive housing units that are in prime
21 neighborhoods such as in Council Member Levin's
22 district and we are very.. very proud of our track
23 recording in making sure that these projects are
24 distributed throughout the City because we think our

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2 residences deserve to live in every neighborhood in
3 New York.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean it's just to...
5 to take that a little further, many of the most
6 celebrated supportive housing units are actually in
7 former welfare hotels in midtown Manhattan on 23rd
8 street other locations that were reclaimed, they use,
9 they were in the 80s, there were shelters in which
10 the City put families and the Holland, the Time
11 Square, the Kenmore, they're number of these
12 initiatives that really are literally saving lives
13 right in the middle of Manhattan.

14 CHAIR WILLIAMS: I think the 45th district
15 although not the same definition is also a prime, is
16 a prime district to welcome anyone to come live there
17 again I just want I do want to reiterate it could be
18 the way some of them are run as oppose to some
19 others, again the one's in my district are great, no
20 problems but I just I think as we move forward it
21 just would who the administration and the us to just
22 take into account whether it's perceptions and some
23 of them might be actually based on ones that weren't
24 run properly, that there are some thought going into

25

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2 making sure that were looking at the communities of
3 where there going in.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Of course your point
5 is well very well taken.

6 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Thank you very much.
7 Will put a, will put 5 minutes on the clock now for
8 each of Council Members and we have Richards, Wills,
9 Menchaca, Miller and Johnson.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you
11 Chairs and thank you Commissioner it's an amazing day
12 for New York City for our homeless population and
13 obviously a population that is very vulnerable and I
14 applaud the administration certainly for taking a
15 very bold steps to ensure that we can find permanent
16 housing for many of our families. So I am going to
17 go into and I just want to circle back because you
18 going here this from myself at least all the
19 Southeast Queens Council Members. You're probably
20 going to hear the same thing so forgive us if we
21 sound like a broken record. So we are definitely
22 supportive of the efforts to ensure permanent housing
23 is in place but one of the things that I think in
24 Council Member Williams raised is a concern that we
25 do have about oversaturation in particular in boards

2 12 and boards 14 and we are, we always will open our
3 arms to certainly helping people and we've done that
4 our track records speaks for itself. We have the
5 bulk of it in Queens. So I'm interested in knowing
6 the administration strategy around working with
7 communities in particular where you plan on putting
8 supportive housing on so communities and housing is
9 not necessarily, it's a very obviously it's a most
10 critical step but it's not the only step in terms of
11 ensuring that this population can succeed right. So
12 they're communities that have poor transportation,
13 not enough school seat, no afterschool programming or
14 need more afterschool program. I'm interested in
15 hearing how the administration is going to work with
16 these communities to ensure as a this housing is put
17 in place what are the capital and expense strategies
18 that are going to be implemented to ensure that we
19 can have well rounded community as we move forward.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean we also want
21 to work with you on in these areas, it's important
22 also to focus on the fact that the very majority of
23 the units will be for adults without children so in
24 terms of the issues that you are raising which I

2 understand are concerns, those would be minimized
3 and.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Well I don't
5 think job placement, I don't think.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No I was focusing on
7 the schools.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Transportation
9 those are all universal issues so I'm interested in
10 certainly hearing.

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, I understand
12 that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: A little bit
14 more around the strategy around that.

15 COMMISSIONER BANKS: No, I understand
16 that I just want to focus I know they got issue that
17 have risen in terms of schools and aftercare and so
18 forth and I just want to again for anyone that might
19 be listening make it clear the population that were
20 talking about. But look this is part of a
21 partnership that we've go with community groups that
22 are going to be developing and providing the
23 services. It's different then the city identifying a
24 unit, a particular site to turn into a shelter. This
25 is about working with community groups to find the

2 best possible locations in which people can have
3 permanent housing. But I hear the points you're
4 raising and I heard the points that Council Member
5 Williams is raising and we'll certainly be open to
6 have a conversation with you as we proceed. I
7 understand the... the great desire to focus on some
8 these details, let's also remember the ink is just
9 dry from the announcement yesterday and it is
10 something that is been universally called for so now
11 were here and we certainly will want to consult with
12 you as we move forward. The bidding process for
13 bringing forth units is an open one, it's a public
14 securement process in which we call for request for
15 proposal and people submit them and as we proceed
16 with that it would certainly be reporting to you and
17 others in the Council.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So forgive me
19 if I'm a little jaded because then I know we're
20 moving to permanent housing but in the past you know
21 there have been organization that certainly have
22 promised they were going to provide certain services
23 or perhaps healthcare would... would come into play in
24 certain areas in particular I can speak of one
25 situation in Rockaway even though it's a shelter but

2 the same thing, will we, will they bid on a RFP and
3 commit to doing something and then not do it. So
4 the, so what I'm trying to get at is what oversight
5 and I know we will play an oversight role but what
6 oversight are is the administration prepared to do to
7 hold peoples feet to the fire?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think the data for
9 supportive housing shows the actually the success of
10 providing the kinds of services that are you
11 appropriately concerned about. So 85% of the people
12 remain house who are put in this put in supportive
13 housing, that's what the data shows, so the kinds of
14 support services that you're, you and I are both
15 concerned about are the services that are being
16 provided historically will be supervising the
17 contracts, overseeing the contracts, we want our
18 clients to succeed in the housing and to remain in it
19 and not have to return to the shelter, system or the
20 streets. But the data shows that is actually the
21 success story in supportive housing.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: All righty I
23 hear you loud and clear but I just want to make sure
24 and I know the chairs will do this that there is
25 definitely accountability in place and checks and

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2 balances with a lot of these nonprofits that are
3 coming into place and I just want to add that you
4 know once again we are more than we've shown that
5 we're open to working with... with the people.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We appreciate that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: From all
8 backgrounds of life because we can be there ourselves
9 any day but I just want add that you know all
10 communities should do their fair share and you know I
11 know Brad was here, Park Sloops (sp) should certainly
12 have their fair share you know there parts of
13 Manhattan that you know have services much better
14 services than other areas of the City and we want to
15 ensure that there's equity in everybody doing their
16 fair share as we move forward so. Want to thank you
17 and once again commend you, this is a great day but I
18 just want to underscore that services, services,
19 services and accountability needs to be in place.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: You make a very
21 important point and we're going to be very focused on
22 the accountability point you're making and making
23 sure that the services are actually provided.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you
25 Chairs, thank you Commissioner. Oh I, there's nothing

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2 left to say but I just want to add, fair shares, if
3 I... I can say that through 30 seconds; fair share,
4 fair share, fair share, fair share, fair share, thank
5 you.

6 CHAIR WILLIAMS: So at my colleagues
7 request I was going to do a two rounds, my colleagues
8 requested instead of two rounds of 5 minutes they get
9 one round of 7 minutes so we will put the clock at
10 that request for 7 minutes for my colleagues. And I
11 want to give a message from Council Member Lander
12 that he welcomes more and additional supportive
13 housing in his district. Council Members Wills,
14 Manchaca, Miller and Johnson.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Thank you Mr.
16 Chair, Commissioner I first want thank you for all
17 the great work that you have done. You know I'm a
18 fan of your work and the work that you're doing with
19 us with the Fathers out in Southeast Queens. With
20 that being said I also want to thank my colleagues
21 Council Member Richards for the work that he's done
22 with this fair share out in Rockaway and Council
23 Member Daneek Miller dealing with one of the issues
24 he has to deal with now and Hollis and that takes us
25 to the perception that Council Member Richards and

2 Jumanne Williams had already spoken about. You know
3 in, we know that in 2008 there was a study by the
4 Firmen (sp) Center that dealt with the prevailing
5 belief throughout Southeast Queens that the creation
6 of supportive housing de-values community districts.
7 That study conducted tried to discredit that notion
8 and suggested that the CD property values appreciate
9 during the period after such housing has been
10 created. What I want to do I focus my question on
11 whether there's any demonstrable benefit deciding
12 supporting housing developments in community
13 districts where lower land values and higher poverty
14 rates exist? You made mention to the stellar
15 programs that they have in mid-town that use to be
16 welfare hotels and they were taken back and put into
17 the supportive housing program but there is a
18 definite substantial course difference when you
19 dealing with something that is already on the roles
20 of HRA compared to something that is now being newly
21 created, so how is it going to effect the program if
22 you're having a certain amount of money, it's a
23 (inaudible)money and it's a great notion to put
24 forward but how does that affect it when we actually
25 have to look at the real estate values when coming up

2 with these programs? If you go to somewhere in
3 midtown Manhattan the real estate values are sky high
4 compared to property values in Jamaica so that would
5 have to have some type of impact on how many housing
6 units you can make? That's the first question.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We're going to have
8 to keep looking at the data that you're... you're
9 citing as we go forward but I wanted to also make for
10 the record just for some data that HPD has on the
11 record. The data showing the distribution of
12 supportive housing loan program units by a Borough is
13 I think pretty instructive of where we are with
14 respect to supportive housing. 51% of the units are
15 in Manhattan, 25% of the units are in the Bronx, 23%
16 of the units are in Brooklyn, 1% of the units are in
17 Queens. That supportive housing, so I want to keep
18 emphasizing there may, there may be criticism that
19 are being raised which I'm not discounting at all I
20 just want us to focus on the actually program that's
21 at work here.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Right but, what...
23 what we're dealing with in Southeast Queens is that
24 the fact Southeast Queens is specialty community
25 board 12 gets a higher rate of and we know that this

2 is not the same program, this is DHS but we get a
3 higher rate of homeless shelters and different
4 programs like that which are now going to be flipped
5 into this program the same segment of our vulnerable
6 population. So we have to look at it, I know Council
7 Member Richards said that were going to sound like a
8 broken record but that's because the record has been
9 broken from every administration dealing with
10 Southeast Queens and communities like ours, so then
11 we just want to put some stats forward, I would like
12 to just read a letter from our Chairperson and
13 community board 12 why it says; Queens community
14 board 12 does not oppose the right to any individual
15 to be provided with fair and adequate housing we
16 firmly believe this provision must be appropriately
17 shared throughout the Borough of Queens. Although
18 there has been some movement towards equity via new
19 housing proposal in Elmhurst, Historia and Glendale,
20 the vast strain on resources in our community due to
21 the lack of impartiality where such housing is
22 concerned continues to take it's toll and is
23 consistently appears that community board 12 have
24 been singled out as a default choice for supportive
25 housing that other communities do not want. New York

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2 City Planning Department data shows that 32% have
3 housing for problem populations in Queens are within
4 the boundaries of community board 12. Community
5 board 14 has the next highest rate with 12% and 10
6 community board district 5, I mean 10 has less than
7 5%. As of the beginning of 2015 of the 18 identifies
8 supportive housing facilities in the 14 community
9 districts of Queens, 10 of them are located in
10 community board 12. So we definitely have the stats
11 to show that there is a definite impact that deals
12 with the equity of the siting of these and if were
13 talking about purchasing or having new land come
14 online to deal with this then it would only make
15 since from an economic point of view that the lower
16 the land value, the more, the more pieces of property
17 you can develop. So we really really need you to
18 and I know I'm a fan of your work, we really need you
19 to make sure that this is not something that is going
20 to again come in to minority communities like
21 community board 12 and others around the City and
22 impact us more than it impacts everyone else. Because
23 even though your program is something that is not new
24 but it's being created from you and the Mayor, it's
25 still would now go have to go ahead with other

2 programs that are negative land impacts in our
3 communities.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I understand your
5 point and as I said to Council Members, I know a long
6 time we'd be happy to work with you and see if we can
7 try address your concerns even as we proceed forward
8 with this very important imitative.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: All right what the
10 MWBE procurement prioritize for any of the City
11 agencies that awards contracts for development or
12 rehabilitations of supportive housing, will there be
13 any prioritization for MWBE in any of these awards?

14 COMMISSIONER KATZ: Yes HPD is currently
15 in the process of making our MWBE processes more
16 robust and actually one of the first things I'm doing
17 in the next couple of months as I return to work is
18 to, is to do a training for the new class of MWBE
19 business trainee to bring more MWBEs into the fold of
20 HPD development.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Ok and my last
22 question is, is there collaboration underway
23 currently or do you foresee is there or will there be
24 a collaboration with the Department of Education or
25 any faith based coalitions to make sure that as

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2 Council Member Richard and I'm sure Council Member
3 Richards will speak to that those populations are
4 made sure we that we are provided for. Extra
5 afterschool programming, spaces for people to have
6 the faith based institutions as points of confidence
7 and things like that?

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean we've had
9 partnerships with faith based organization in terms
10 of providing the services here and they've been
11 excellent partners again let me emphasize in terms of
12 the school issue the numbers of people that will be
13 receiving the supportive housing units are
14 predominantly adults.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Ok. Commissioner
16 Banks once again we are a fan of your work and
17 because of your record we have a little more trust in
18 you than we've had with other that have become before
19 the Council, so I do want to put that out there and
20 we are eager to work with you and I will yield the
21 rest of my time. Thank you Mr. Chair.

22 CHAIR WILLIAMS: The rest of your time.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: The rest of my
24 time Brooklyn. Fair share Brooklyn, fair share.

25

2 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Thank you before I'm
3 going to pass the mic back to my Co-Chair, we've been
4 joined by Council Member Rosenthal. I appreciate the
5 statistics you gave, I'd love to know the statistics
6 also, I know we said Manhattan but often times Harlem
7 and East Harlem play a special role in Manhattan so
8 I'd like to know what those numbers are outside of
9 that and I think the other point is, it's not just
10 supportive housing stats but the other types of
11 housing that often go into these communities but I
12 want to pass it back to you, my Co-Chair.

13 CHAIR LEVIN: Ok Council Member Carlos
14 Menchaca.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you.
16 Thank you Chairs. Hello Commissioner, thank you
17 again for testifying and I know were in mode of trans
18 or celebration but I have some questions on LGBT
19 specifically the LGBT component of this plan.
20 Specifically runaway homeless youth. From what I
21 understand the definition for the proposal for the
22 youth doesn't change from 3 to 4, is that right?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's... that's
24 correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Ok and however

3 I just kind of looking at... at this the definition

4 leaves out another kind of homeless population

5 specifically the runaway homeless youth population so

6 trying to figure out if you can figure out who are

7 primarily these the youth runaway homeless youth are

8 essentially served by DYCD specifically how without a

9 carve out how... how does this plan kind of speak to

10 this particular population?

11 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well there are in

12 within all the population categories there's an

13 emphasis on clients that have mental health needs and

14 we can certainly work with you in see how we might

15 address the concerns you got within the, within the

16 population definitions that we already have.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: So this would

18 be more of a, of a tailoring the definition

19 conversation, so tell me how that plays out?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean honestly we

21 have to, we have to see what the numbers look like in

22 terms of what you're asking us to take look at and

23 see how those numbers might fit within any of the

24 other categories we've already got. The categories

25 that we have as I said reflect the prioritization of

2 people with mental health needs and I think that runs
3 through all the categories but as I said we're happy
4 to sit down and talk with you and see how the
5 concerns you got can be addressed. I don't, I don't
6 know whether they can or not but I'm happy to talk
7 with you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Great and this
9 is part of the like on a larger effort obviously and
10 the education pieces for our public as we understand
11 how this is going to eventually fall into our, into
12 our communities and especially effect some of the
13 most vulnerable people in our communities and real
14 excited to see the true color in the Bronx program
15 highlighted in the testimony. It's a huge win on so
16 many levels. It creates a model and I've been kind
17 of following that for a while, it's been a long time
18 coming in a lot of way. How can we tell people at
19 home that are listening how can we tell communities
20 and organization to get involved in this kind of
21 model so we can replicate it? Is there a way that we
22 can kind of articulate that today?

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well I think that
24 you'll, people will see in the RFP process what it is
25 that we are rolling out, I know that the General

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2 Welfare Committee held the hearing on our implement
3 plan (inaudible) papers and so I know that there's a
4 lot of opportunities for Council oversight of what
5 we're doing that will provide an opportunity when
6 there's more detail to make those details known.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Ok so next I
8 don't know if you wanted to answer on that?

9 COMMISSIONER KATZ: I would, I would just
10 add that part of the reason why we're happy to be
11 here is because we really do need the partnership of
12 the Council Members in order to move that forward, so
13 True Colors in the Bronx is the 2nd of partnerships
14 that HPD has had with Westin Intergenerational (sp)
15 and were very excited to do both of those building
16 and to do more with them. It was created
17 specifically out of an recognition that within the
18 population under New York, New York for homeless
19 youth, LGBT youth were vastly over represented and we
20 really needed to create an environment that was
21 specifically affirming and welcoming of.. of those
22 kids. So we, were very excited about that in terms
23 of educating people about what these programs are, I
24 think as you've heard on the panel today, there's
25 typically a lot of questions and a lot of concerns

2 prior to the building opening and when there sort of
3 in the concept phases but once the building open
4 there gorgeous and there or they're nondescript and
5 nobody notices that they there, so I think one of the
6 best things that the Council Members can do to move
7 this process forward is to help us engage community
8 members to take a tour of a building in your district
9 so you can really see who are, who are tenants are,
10 what our are building are, who are providers are so
11 that it loses some of the fear factor that way.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Got it and.. and
13 I think right now as we kind of go back to our
14 communities, go back to our districts, our churches,
15 our community boards were going to want to talk about
16 this and so. My last question is really about
17 education and whether or not the administration has
18 put some form of funding for this kind of outreach
19 and communication about what the program is. A
20 billion dollars is a lot of money, multiple billions
21 of dollars is a lot of money so we want to make sure
22 that were kind of equipped. In Sunset Park we are
23 kind of working through a quick turnaround, around a
24 shelter that's coming in on 49th Street. It took
25 over a manufacture a hotel within a manufacturing

2 district. It was a lot of questions about that, ^¾
3 housing we just found out is in the neighborhood and
4 a lot of question and so you earlier said
5 Commissioner this is permanent housing, this is not
6 shelter how does it compare to ^¾ housing and how does
7 this announcement really affect the use of the other
8 tools like ^¾ housing and shelter systems and does
9 this really kind of decrease the need for shelters
10 and can you talk a little bit about what... what that
11 looks like as we, as we see this roll out in our
12 communities?

13 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean I think the
14 reason why you see such a strong voice from the
15 advocacy community and from the Assembly Members and
16 from the Senators and from all of you in favor of
17 supportive housing is, it is focused on exactly the
18 impact that... that you're articulating very well which
19 is it's design to address the needs of people to
20 avoid the use of shelter. Historically in periods of
21 time when there was supportive housing provided, the
22 shelter system stabilized and even was able to be
23 reduced. So again as I said earlier in the testimony
24 the situation were at didn't happen overnight but
25 this is part of the pathway forward to make the

3 progress that everybody wants to see made on this
4 issue to actually provide permanent solutions to
5 reclaim lives and to give people an opportunity to
6 rebuild their lives. In terms of $\frac{3}{4}$ housing, remember
7 $\frac{3}{4}$ housing is a kind of housing that develops at an
8 almost submarket and the administration after many
9 years of other administration not wanting to address
10 it took this on as a very direct initiative to
11 inspect the buildings and to address overcrowding and
12 to provide rental assistance to people who have been
13 removed now. We do have some people who are in
14 temporary hotels because you know they were in the
15 same plight as someone if there were a fire in their
16 building or someone if there was a vacator in their
17 building, the building was dangerously overcrowded
18 and so they were removed for safety and put in a
19 hotel locations at various places in the City just
20 like happens when there's a fire and but were
21 providing them with rental assistance so that we can
22 move them into permanent housing. So the $\frac{3}{4}$ problem
23 is reflective of the housing market problem and the
24 Mayors New York Program, this initiative, the
25 prevention initiative, the rental assistance
initiative are all designed to making progress

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2 against the problem that had been ignored for many,
3 many years of which $\frac{3}{4}$ house is just one piece of it.
4 So the administration is putting forth 100% City
5 funded rental assistance to deal with un-
6 overcrowding, dangerously overcrowded condition in $\frac{3}{4}$
7 housing and the individuals who were... were taken out
8 for safety reason are going to benefit from that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Great and then
10 if you can, I'm done with my time but on education
11 and whether or not this announcements comes with
12 robust outreach program for us to work with our
13 organization to get the word out.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean we want to
15 encourage the broadest, the broadest possible
16 participation in with groups that want to develop
17 supportive housing, there are terrific groups with a
18 track record of doing great supportive housing but
19 there always room for new groups to emerge and make
20 good proposals and will certainly want to be
21 reporting with you talking with you about how to make
22 sure that everybody's aware that this is happening so
23 that we get the very best proposal that I think you
24 raised a good point.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you.

2 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you Council Member
3 Menchaca. Commissioner I just had a quick question
4 with regards to youth in foster care, youth aging out
5 of foster care. So I know in New York/New York III
6 there is a set aside of a few hundred units and there
7 will be in this proposed plan as well set aside for
8 youth aging out of foster care. One challenge that I
9 am concerned about for that population is that they
10 may need some assistance with... with getting... getting
11 all the paperwork done, making sure that everything
12 is kind of squared away in order to have access to
13 those units. Around 700 youth age out of foster care
14 every year and what we've seen and it's a big concern
15 for us is... is that there's not enough supportive
16 services for them once they age out and in a lot of
17 ways the City you know kind of cuts them off and the
18 program that they, the foster care programs that
19 there were associated with during their time in care
20 don't necessarily provide those services once they
21 age out so it's not as if you can, you might have,
22 you might luck out and have good case worker or good
23 social worker that you were working with that could
24 help you but it's not as if those programs you know
25 have an obligation to do that and often they don't.

2 So can you talk a little bit about what, how we can
3 best support those young people because they should
4 have access to, they do have access they should make
5 sure that their taking full advantage of that access.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: In ACS is an
7 important partner in the overall City wide effort to...
8 to address supportive housing needs and this an
9 unprecedented amount of supportive housing being
10 provided so part of the implementation will have to
11 look at access and how we precede so again I think
12 you raise a good point and we will work with ACS and
13 with you to try and address the problem you're
14 identifying.

15 CHAIR LEVIN: Because yes were I mean
16 obviously were concerned about those young people
17 falling through the cracks and all too often they do.
18 Thank you. Will call on Council Member Daneek
19 Miller.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you Chair
21 and as well as Chair Williams and Commissioners thank
22 you so much for coming out. I also applaud the
23 administration announcement of this funding
24 initiative of our supportive housing and the general
25 census is a great idea to and a great investment for

2 our City but I too have some concerns. Obviously my
3 colleagues attempted to drill down on the service
4 equity issue for a number of reasons, whether or not
5 one community or the other was been
6 disproportionately impacted, I know you said that and
7 you threw out a number 1% so I know that in Southeast
8 Queens the total deliveries of supportive from all
9 the agency's that are providing far exceed 1% and the
10 fact that more than 50% of all the services being
11 delivered in the Borough of Queens are being
12 delivered through 13 and 12. So and if you were
13 talking specifically about HRA, I wouldn't know that
14 because the terms and agreements that were passed by
15 this body here has not been complied with by HRA so
16 in the near future I hope that we can receive those
17 numbers.

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I think if you're
19 asking for numbers of shelters the HRA run the
20 shelters for survivors of domestic violence and for
21 people with HIV/AIDS and were prohibited by State law
22 as we've said in the terms and conditions from
23 providing any information that locations of those two
24 kind of shelters.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I am interested
3 in any supportive service and I believe that, that's
4 what the terms and agreement that this body voted on
5 says.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: But I want to say.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Effectively
8 provided.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I want to say were
10 prohibited by State law from disclosing locations of
11 domestic violence shelters or shelter in which
12 someone with HIV/AIDS is living.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: We... we recognize
14 that but we didn't receive anything, we didn't
15 receive any of.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Those are the only
17 shelters we have and prohibited by State law from
18 giving it to you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: And we're, I
20 don't want to turn this into something else but were
21 talking about supportive services. Any supportive
22 services that are being delivered.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right but HRA does
24 not run shelters other than domestic violence
25 shelters and shelters for people with HIV/AIDS.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So you talked
3 about and we also want supportive housing and... and
4 each of you talked about the brilliance of the
5 services being delivered in Midtown Manhattan and in
6 Downtown Brooklyn (inaudible)so I want to talk
7 specifically about my district and some of in fact
8 not just my district but some of the things that I've
9 witness throughout the City and delivery of those
10 services. Certainly they are not sparring new
11 buildings that they are quite often there rundown
12 buildings with no oversight, the clients are often
13 not being serviced and being supported in a way that
14 we think are necessary that... that our tax dollars are
15 being spent in that way, that it is often a deterrent
16 on communities that we have seen. I hope that we're
17 getting better but I will submit to you that what I
18 have witnessed in a particular I'm going to talk
19 about a particular area that I know it has and in
20 fact tomorrow were going to be hopefully doing our
21 second walkthrough of a facility in the Hollis area
22 which we were unable to get to though to in the past.
23 And so because of that I... I would hope that in this
24 process that there is a mechanism in place that we
25 are not as a City complicit in perpetrating what

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2 we've seen in ³/₄ housing and all the bad things that
3 we have seen throughout the city and I will tell you
4 that we continue to see in Southeast Queens that
5 there is a mechanism in place that we don't deal with
6 some of the folks who are providing supportive
7 housing throughout the City currently now and
8 reaching out in terms of RFPs and continually trying
9 to attempting to do business with the City when they
10 have already been fined and sighted for overbilling
11 and not providing supportive services that they were
12 contracted to do. Also doing business with folks who
13 have been indicted and settled with the Federal
14 Government for predatory lending in these same
15 communities of color. We want to make sure that the
16 people that are coming into this City providing
17 services are just in their attempts to make a better
18 quality of life for those who really need it and that
19 they're just not coming in here to make a buck on the
20 backs of people who are down trying. And is there
21 anything in place to ensure that these folks who have
22 a track record of doing that because I know on HPD
23 side when... when and others when... when developers are
24 bad developers, there on a list and they are not

25

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2 allowed to do business, is there such, do we have
3 such a list at HRA?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I mean again
5 remember this is a multi-agency approach to
6 developing supportive housing that has a many year
7 track record and so the process for the developers to
8 develop a congregate supportive housing, it goes
9 through the same HPD process in terms of who the
10 City's going to do business with. In terms of the
11 scattered sites that would be through RFP process
12 with HRA and other agencies. In order to
13 successfully bid you have to go through vindex
14 process to see what your business dealing are and to
15 see what your underlined track record is, so it's a
16 process whether it's on the development state of
17 congregate housing through HPD or the RFP stage for
18 scattered site and which there are a number of checks
19 and balances built in.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So... So and I
21 appreciate that but in this one particular
22 organization had 144 shell companies before we found
23 out who they were and that they were involved and I
24 understand that there is a dire need to provide
25 services and there may not be the due diligence done

2 beyond that second layer, are we willing to peel back
3 and ensure that we're not doing business with folks
4 such as this in the City of New York? And not just
5 because of... of the past their past it's kind of
6 indicative of the services that they will be
7 delivering, do we have something in place to ensure
8 that this won't happen?

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I don't know the
10 specific of what you're talking about but the process
11 that both HPD have and the other City agencies have I
12 think do pierce what you're concerned about.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So ok I'll leave
14 it on this because I know that had written to you
15 when we spoke about to each individual agency about
16 these particular folks that are doing business a
17 number of folks that are doing business throughout
18 the City, so I think that while you may not have it
19 on hand now I would hope that we as we move forward
20 that we really look into this because we don't want
21 people speculating on the grief of other folks and
22 creating a business model around that which appears
23 to what has been done which is why, which is a recipe
24 for disaster while we (inaudible) ^¾ and other things
25 that we continue to see perpetrated in certain

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2 communities throughout the City and we don't want
3 that to happen here.

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Happy to work with
5 you and look into whatever entity you're concerned
6 about and make sure that HPD and HRA and other
7 agencies are focused on that entity.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLR: I appreciate that
9 Commitment and we will forward over whatever we have.

10 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Ok great thank you
11 very much.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you.

13 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you Council Member
14 Miller, Council Member Helen Rosenthal.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you
16 very, thank you so much Chairs Williams and Levin for
17 holding this hearing. Thank you Commissioner Banks
18 and Assistant Commissioner Katz, it's so great to see
19 you back.

20 COMMISSIONER KATZ: Thanks.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You've been
22 missed, so I expect you to come to the next rest in
23 house meeting, I'm just kidding, I'm just kidding.
24 You guys have been here for a long time so thank you
25 and I'm going to keep this short and sweet. I'm so

2 excited and so delighted for the City that the City
3 has made this decision together, the Council, the
4 Mayor to move forward with more supportive housing.
5 Jessica as you know from the time when I was Chair of
6 community board 7, I'm a huge fan because what... what
7 people and who you know on the street needs is
8 supportive housing and I would just ask that HPD in
9 particular to look into whether or not it would be
10 possible to identify space in the New Riverside
11 Center where we've said you know we set aside I think
12 it was 20% of affordable whether or not some of that
13 space could be identified for supportive housing. I
14 think the northern part of my district is saturated
15 and I... I... I mean I guess you might say that there are
16 SROs that could be purchased and turned into
17 supportive housing. I would encourage us to look
18 farther south, I think there's opportunities there
19 and I'm determined to work with you to make that
20 happen. So thank you so much for the work that you
21 do. It's gotten better with Lantern, it really has.
22 I mean the trick. Well actually can I make a quick
23 little suggestion that I think the reason
24 Commissioner Banks there's a supportive housing unit
25 in my district that has had a history of it not going

2 well and now it's gotten better, the provider has
3 gotten better and what the community who has
4 supported the clients in there and just felt that the
5 clients were not getting the services they needed
6 which was why they were so angry about the building.
7 Is measurable outcomes for setting up transparent
8 identifying what is the appropriate information that
9 should be transparent for the community to see and to
10 track over times and I think to the extent you get
11 out ahead of it, that's where your success will lie.
12 At least that was the case in the upper Westside. So
13 thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's very good
15 advice. Thank you.

16 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Thank you Council Member
17 Rosenthal and last on the list Council Member
18 Cabrera.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so
20 much to both of the Chair, Commissioner welcome. I
21 want to commend you and the administration for such a
22 bold step and creating and getting ready to create
23 15,000 units, that's just simply amazing. I wanted
24 to ask you kind of a marcel question just indulge me
25 here for a second. Do you, do you see supportive

2 housing being a more strategic way to dealing with a
3 homeless program than affordable housing?

4 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well supportive
5 housing is affordable housing but it's also part of a
6 continuum of... of different solutions to homelessness
7 that have been demonstrated to work over the years.
8 It's a combination of affordable housing for people
9 who don't need supportive services. Supportive
10 housing for those who need supportive services,
11 prevention, rental assistance legal assistance, all
12 of those are elements of... of the administrations
13 initiative. There are things that have been shown to
14 work in the past and there being implemented now to
15 address a very you know the situation that were
16 confronted with.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: But there are,
18 they're affordable housing that get no support
19 services?

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Correct.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And it seems
22 like a better way to go with supportive housing.

23 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well for the people
24 that hit the kinds of vulnerable populations in
25 client groups that were talking about but you know

2 for others homelessness is all about economics, it's
3 about minimum wage that doesn't enable people to
4 cover rent, it's about the public assistance shelter
5 allowance which doesn't enable people to pay for
6 rent, it's about housing costs and problems that are
7 built up over the years in terms of the loss of rent
8 stabilized units because of problems in the
9 application of that law over the years. So it's a
10 number of factors that have got us to the present
11 position but supportive housing is clearly part of
12 the solution.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I wanted to ask
14 you I heard from some of the advocates, I wanted to
15 get your point of view that what we really need to
16 address the overall problem, we need about 30,000
17 units, how do you see it from where your standing?

18 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well there's a,
19 there's a bipartisan group of Assembly Members led by
20 Assembly Member Hevesi and a group of Senators in
21 which Senator Golden from New York City has played a
22 leadership role, that has called for 30,000 units as
23 a coalition in New York/New York IV focused
24 coalition, coalition IV New York/New York has called
25 for 30,000 units. The administration the City is

2 doing it's part and as the Mayor said very elegantly
3 yesterday, we are doing our part to address this
4 problem and were going to do everything that we can
5 to address our part.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: So we need
7 essentially the State to step in.

8 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well were very
9 hopefully that our State partners will prioritize
10 supportive housing in the coming session.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Beautiful. The
12 last question that I have for you, it's come to my
13 understanding and if you can give me this is just for
14 informational and I think it a it would just
15 accentuate that your approach is the very strategic
16 approach that we need. But in the very last day of
17 the Bloomberg administration a report came out that
18 basically stated that we will have a savings on an
19 average of \$10,000 for those who move out of the
20 shelter system to supportive housing system. Do you
21 know anything about this report and if so what kind
22 of a savings are we looking to have with this 15,000
23 units?

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Right, the savings
25 has been amplified by a report that the City

2 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene did, it's
3 been amplified in a number of the advocacy reports
4 that the coalition of supportive housing, the
5 coalition of homeless, other organizations have
6 focused on the savings as I think I said earlier in
7 hearing the significant portion the savings in order
8 to the State in term of Medicaid dollars and savings
9 in psychiatric care and institutions. But there's a
10 City savings as well in terms of averted shelter
11 cost and averted public assistance cost because
12 supportive housing also have a track record in which
13 the services help people get federal supplemental
14 security income benefits in place of local State and
15 City public assistance benefits of which the City is
16 essentially paying 71% of those dollars, the State
17 pays 29% so there's a whole range of savings I think
18 the report your referring to put them all together
19 but were very conscious to the fact that there are
20 savings for our, on our expenditures and terms of
21 cost avoidance and also saving for the State but in
22 the end were talking about human being and the social
23 and addressing the very real human needs of providing
24 supportive housing for New Yorkers.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Last question
3 cause I have basically have run out time, some of us
4 including my district which is the 5th (inaudible)
5 district in New York City. We had seen a flood of
6 supportive housing come into a district and I'm sure
7 you have heard it from Council Members and community
8 boards, you know where is the equity and I get the
9 piece that a lot of the housing basically follows
10 where land is inexpensive relative to other
11 districts, what's going to be the approach moving
12 forward, is it more of the same from the past or is
13 there a way to have more balanced approach?

14 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Well as you know as
15 we said earlier in the hearing the percentage of
16 units actually developed are 51% of them are in
17 Manhattan but I think what's most important here is
18 that we have terrific not for profit partners that
19 have a proven track record of identifying sites and
20 providing services such that 85% of the people who
21 are in there, in their units remained housed and that
22 it's important to keep focused that this permanent
23 housing that were talking about, it's not sheltered
24 development, it's a, it's a permanent initiative and
25 we want to work with communities, we want to work

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2 with there not for profit partners to make sure that
3 the terrific proven track record continues and
4 believe it will.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Indeed. Thank
6 you so much and I think part of that is going to
7 education because sometimes people get them confused.
8 Thank you so much.

9 COMMISSIONER BANKS: That's true, that's
10 true.

11 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for
12 spending some time with us today. What would be
13 great if we can get a, I know you said you can't get
14 specifics of where the housing is but any kind of
15 breakdown that you could give.

16 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I'm sorry I just, I
17 just didn't hear the question Council Member. Any
18 breakdown of.

19 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Oh, where your
20 supportive housing is, you said because you said 50%
21 in Manhattan if there's anything we can do in terms
22 of neighborhoods or community boards that do not
23 violate the law you referring to would also be
24 helpful.

25

2 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I just want to make...
3 make it clear there's two different things that work
4 here one is where supportive housing and supportive
5 housing isn't necessarily for domestic violence
6 survivors or people with HIV/AIDS, I think the issue
7 was a term and condition and for the City to provide
8 to identify where facilities are but that's
9 consistent with laws what the term and condition says
10 and so facilities for domestic violence survivors and
11 people with HIV/AIDS we cannot reveal but in terms of
12 what you're asking for in terms of distribution of
13 existing supportive housing we will look into, we can
14 provide but I think the large facilities that we both
15 refer to in welfare tells that's why substantial
16 numbers of the units are in Manhattan because they
17 were put in very large facilities in contrast to the
18 facility that the permanent housing units that
19 Council Member Levin and Council Member you are
20 referring to in your districts those are relatively
21 small permanent housing building compared to the
22 buildings in Manhattan.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: All right well
24 thank you we know, I don't know if this announcement,
25 I'm not sure how much this deals with our housing

2 crisis right now but I'm excited that we are doing it
3 and hopefully with the ones that coming online will
4 hopefully begin to address that but thank you so
5 much. If you have comment you want to say on that.

6 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I just want to say
7 again how much we appreciate the leadership of both
8 you and all your Committee and the Speaker, Councils
9 is a very important partner for us and we wouldn't be
10 at the point where were at now with this bold
11 initiative from the Mayor without your support and
12 partnership and we look forward to continue to work
13 with you and made a number of commitments to keep
14 talking with you and I intend to keep them.

15 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you Commissioner as
16 well and you know I just want to commend you and the
17 Mayor, the first lady and everyone in the
18 administration that's been working on this HPD and...
19 and I know that this is not necessarily an easy thing
20 to do but this was very much the right thing to do
21 and it showed I think unequivocally that this
22 administration is tackling the difficult issues. The
23 thorny issues head on and making a commitment to
24 making a real difference in people lives. This is a
25 you know, this announcement yesterday was an

2 unprecedented number. No administration in the City
3 of New York has ever made a commitment of that size
4 and scale and that needs be I think made very clear
5 that... that we know that this you know things are not
6 perfect in this City and we have challenges that are
7 going to be going on for many years to come but you
8 have to look at those head on and address them with
9 real resources and so I commend you for that. I was
10 just looking up the Schermerhorn which is in my
11 district not far from my district office. 217 units
12 as I said not a single complaint in the almost 6
13 years, at least none that I ever heard and if you
14 want to do more supportive housing developments in my
15 district, please I welcome them. This has been a,
16 this is a real joy to work with this particular site
17 and the not for profit partners and so you know if
18 they're any other sites in downtown Brooklyn,
19 Greenpoint or ever we welcome it.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: We appreciate that,
21 we won't have specific RFP for the 33rd but will
22 definitely welcome that, thank you.

23 CHAIR LEVIN: Thanks a lot.

2 CHAIR WILLIAMS: I did want to say
3 welcome back to Commissioner Katz and
4 congratulations.

5 COMMISSIONER KATZ: Thank you so much and
6 that's my que.

7 CHAIR LEVIN: She's needed.

8 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Right on que.

9 CHAIR LEVIN: We are going to call up
10 Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, representing Senator Leroy
11 Comrie, Derrick Davis and Former Council Member
12 Archie Spigner. Queens is well represented. Whoever
13 would like to begin.

14 ARCHIE SPIGNER: Mr. Chairman and members
15 of the Council, Council Miller, Council Williams,
16 ladies and gentlemen and friends. Thank you for the
17 opportunities to speak on one of the most important
18 and complex issues we face. Supportive housing to
19 combat the ever increasing dilemma of homelessness in
20 our City which now I'm told about 66,000. I can
21 remember when it was much smaller than that.
22 Conceivable that in our time we can see homelessness
23 reach 100,000 not an astounding number but it's a
24 possibility. While discussion were centered on the
25 proposed plan and the need to negotiate a new New

2 York pack a so that funding is made available. I
3 will speak from the aspect of the community and the
4 affects transitional housing could have on the
5 standards of conduct of these communities exist
6 under. No one is against supportive housing.
7 There's not one of us who does not know someone who
8 is homeless or about to enter that status or who
9 could enter that status. As the former Council
10 Member for the 27th Council district Southeast Queens
11 I have seen elderly homeowners about to lose their
12 homes because of age or unexpected expense. These
13 are everyday tragedies. But there also unexpected
14 tragedies occur as a result of the administration
15 siting shelter without concern about fair share
16 criteria in communities that already have more than
17 their share. And this includes our communities.
18 Community board 12 has the overwhelming majority of
19 all the shelters in Queens. I learned this morning
20 that DHS is to change the approval process for
21 shelters. The 45 day notice which is hardly enough
22 time to prepare the community but this also does not
23 apply to emergency shelters. Our community is
24 currently focused on a property on 202nd street on
25 Hollis Avenue. A site close to schools, churches,

2 parks and it's owned by the Bluestone Group that has
3 been sited and paid fines of \$3.5 million for unfair
4 mortgage sales to minorities. With 70 court cases
5 filed against them, there hardly a worthy sponsor for
6 supportive housing. What is DHS criteria for
7 choosing sponsors? I'm also concerned about the
8 absences of advanced planning and community input for
9 supportive housing and what that housing that was
10 advocated and is part of the City 1989 charter. I
11 can go back to times of the Springfield Garden
12 Shelter, this was on Guybrew (sp) Boulevard in 1987
13 of the Breyerwood(sp) Shelter which was directed in
14 1992. When the community and very supportive
15 committees had ample time to prepare the schools and
16 other facilities for shelter residences all benefited
17 these shelters had been a part of our community not
18 disruptive and if you weren't aware what they were
19 maybe you wouldn't even know they were there. The
20 figures Council Member Miller gave and others will
21 give to you ask to mild distribution of shelters
22 speak to the moment. The abandonment of fair share
23 criteria and equity by DHS is created a crisis that
24 is unfair to those who want to maintain strong
25 communities with a benefit of all New Yorkers

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2 including our homeless and I must add DHS does not
3 take into consideration the presence of federal and
4 State programs that add pressure to the daily lives
5 of our residence. As long as New York City is under
6 a mandate, a court mandate to house and shelter any
7 and every one in need of housing, there are going to
8 be these pressures. We fair distribution and how
9 these projects and programs are maintained and
10 operated is the question that is a great concern to
11 all of us, thank you.

12 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you Council Member.

13 DERRICK DAVIS: Good afternoon, Senator
14 Comrie regrets that he couldn't be to date, here
15 today to offer testimony. My name is Derrick Davis,
16 I'm his Chief of Staff and I will be reading
17 testimony on his behalf. Good afternoon Chairmen
18 Levin, Williams, and distinguished members of the
19 Committees on General Welfare and Housing and
20 Buildings. Thank you for this opportunity to speak
21 today before you.

22 As the State Senator representing
23 District 14 in Queens, I am greatly concerned about
24 the fourth incarnation of the New York/New York
25 agreement to create permanent supportive housing. I

2 speak to this specifically in reference to an as yet
3 undeveloped property located on Hollis Avenue between
4 202nd and 204th streets and I have the block and lot
5 number listed in the testimony. While I agree that
6 social and supportive services are vital component to
7 the health and well-being of our City. I vehemently
8 oppose the further saturation of our residential
9 neighborhood with shelters and will be fighting to
10 see that this site is particular is developed
11 responsibly with direct input from our community. I
12 also have commitments from my colleagues in
13 government, Congressman Gregory Meeks, Assembly
14 Member Barbara Clark and Council Member I. Daneek
15 Miller to support the community's efforts to ensure
16 that the site is developed in a way that doesn't
17 negatively impact the several surrounding schools,
18 day care center, houses or worship, senior facilities
19 and many long-time homeowners' property values.

20 Council Member I. Daneek Miller has or is
21 in the process of submitting legislation which
22 requires that investors and City agencies provide
23 information on facilities usage to the New York City
24 Council in advance so that the community can have a
25 voice in what comes into their neighborhoods. I will

2 also be advancing similar legislation on the state
3 level. We are putting these legislative measures in
4 place to help fairly balance the playing field in
5 terms of responsible and sustainable development and
6 the community's need along with the need to provide
7 long-term affordable supportive housing for our
8 City's most vulnerable populations.

9 As cited by community board 12, based on
10 statistics from the New York City Department of City
11 Planning, data shows that 32% and 10% of housing for
12 supportive populations in Queens are located within
13 the boundaries of Community Boards 12 and 13
14 respectively, within my Senate District. In fact, of
15 the 18 identified supportive housing facilities in
16 Queens community boards, 10 are located within the
17 confines of CB 12. This oversaturation and deep
18 concentration within our community lends to the
19 difficulty of embracing the proposal and subsequent
20 implementation of the New York/New York IV. The
21 disparity of distribution grows even more alarming
22 when examining the inequality of the distribution of
23 supportive service facilities throughout the Borough
24 of Queens; CB1, 10%, CB2, 2%, CB3, 5%, CB4, 5%, CB6,

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2 4%, CB7, 4%, CB8, 4%, CB9, 5%. CB10, and community
3 board 11, 0.

4 For these reasons I must stand in
5 opposition to this proposed New York/New York IV
6 proposal. There is no question that veterans,
7 seniors, the homeless and those with mental health
8 issues and other challenges desperately need
9 supportive housing along with the services that will
10 help them remain functional and self-sustaining, but
11 community input must be factored into the equation
12 when making the determination of location. My office
13 and other stakeholders will be convening a community
14 task-force that would be happy to work with the
15 administration, the City Council and other civic
16 organizations to identify areas where supportive
17 housing facilities would not result in a negative
18 impact on the character and integrity of existing
19 neighborhoods.

20 I thank you for your time and
21 consideration of my testimony, yours in service
22 Senator Leroy Comrie.

23 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you Mr. Davis.
24 Assemblyman Hevesi.

25

2 ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI: Good afternoon,
3 Chairman Levin, Chairman Williams and my friends and
4 colleagues in the Assembly I'm actually very honored
5 to be on this panel, particularly with Councilman
6 Spigner. Who's record has you know is one that young
7 elected official should aspire to and Mr. Davis as
8 well. Thank you for the opportunity, I am feeling a
9 tab uncomfortable. I have been an elected official
10 for 10 years and I am a Chairman of Committee as
11 well, so in an effort to make myself I'd ask you all
12 to raise your right hand and affirm that everything
13 you say will be the truth the whole truth, I can't
14 get one of these from... from the crowd? So I'm here
15 to talk about a very serious issue, the proposal for
16 supportive housing. I will tell you how we got to
17 this state and it's a good story with a good result
18 and I don't want to cause any more trouble within the
19 ranks of the Council but I do have to acknowledge
20 that the best Council person in history is in the
21 room and that's my Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz so
22 I'm sorry you guys are probably very good but she's
23 much better. So let me, let me firmly address the...
24 the problem with homelessness is as serious as it can
25 get. We have the worst homeless crisis since the

2 1930s. The numbers have fluctuated but we've gotten
3 up to close to 60,000 individuals, 24,000 children
4 who are homeless. Every one of us is on the exact
5 same page that supportive housing is the answer. Now
6 my colleagues including Councilman Miller raised some
7 absolutely legitimate points about siting and I would
8 like to address those. But I will tell you that we
9 are all onboard with fulfilling the State
10 constitutional article 17 mandate that the aide, care
11 and support of the needy are public concerns and
12 should be provided by the State and such of it's
13 subdivisions including the City. With that in mind
14 with this homeless crisis there have been action by
15 the City that no elected official would want,
16 including in my district and my district and my
17 district has not been hit hard by the homeless
18 crisis. But there is a shelter that has been cited
19 for in my community in Glendale, my community is
20 enraged by it and as much as I would love to say
21 there should be no more housing for homeless in my
22 area, this is my turf the answer is no, we don't have
23 that luxury anymore with the crisis of this magnitude
24 we are all going to have to pull together. Now let
25 me answer the next poet which is absolutely

2 legitimate with several of my colleagues including
3 Councilman Spigner has raised. There is a
4 oversaturation issue in many communities. Absolutely
5 true and I will tell you in a few minutes about how I
6 got 133 of my Assembly colleagues many of them, some
7 of them from the district that you are talking about
8 to sign on to the supportive housing New York/New
9 York agreement but your absolutely right and I will
10 tell you that Southeast Queens has been hit hard. I
11 will tell you that there are neighborhoods in the
12 Bronx that have been hit harder and these
13 representatives are absolutely right that because of
14 the lower property values that the quick response,
15 the cheaper response is to put these shelters in
16 their area and it's not just the City, the City is
17 doing what they have to do to meet their legal
18 mandate to house and shelter the needy but it's also
19 the State and it's the Feds, so there are issues your
20 absolutely right. And here's what I've said to my
21 colleagues, your right and we can do our best to
22 build into this New York/New York IV agreement a
23 better system but there a real chance that, that
24 patter of oversaturation I'm not going to sit here
25 and tell you it's going to stop what I will tell you

2 is there is a distinction that every New Yorker has
3 to recognize that supportive housing is the different
4 model, it has nothing to do with shelters or ³/₄
5 housing which have been an embarrassment until the
6 Mayor cleaned them up. This is an absolutely
7 different model and I will vouch for this model and I
8 will also tell you that I have worked so closely with
9 the advocates that if there's a problem in your
10 communities coming forward with the supportive
11 housing you can come to me and I have the coalition
12 for the homeless and the supportive housing network
13 and I take responsibility as the member who is lead
14 this charge in the State Assembly that you can come
15 to me and I will do everything I can to fight for you
16 to make sure that supportive housing provider is
17 doing right because this is the only answer long term
18 to our homeless crisis and most of them have an
19 outstanding track record. I will take responsibility
20 and I will stand with you to do our best to make sure
21 that your communities are not hit with the bad
22 shelters, the bad actors and the shelters that cost
23 money and waste taxpayer money. I take that
24 responsibility on gladly. I will tell you a quick
25 story I don't want go on to long, by the way the shot

2 clock is a great idea, I think we should implement
3 that in the State Assembly for our hearings. So a
4 quick story, as Chair of Social Services I decided
5 that it was important to make the distinction to most
6 my colleagues in the State of the Assembly that
7 supportive housing is just a different model, it's
8 just different on a number of levels, one is
9 permanent housing, #2 it has the on-site services all
10 the things that you know. But there was confusion as
11 to the distinction between that and every other type
12 of housing and mental health shelter and mental
13 health unit across the state. As a result of sitting
14 and talking with my colleagues for the better part of
15 I'd say 2 or 3 months, 133 of them has signed on and
16 that's the bulk almost vast majority of every City
17 member. I will tell you that we have Republicans and
18 Democrats from every corner of the State. We have
19 Republicans who are so Republican that they don't
20 like government but there on board and the reason is
21 because this saves taxpayer money. This is how you
22 save taxpayer money. They are on board. I will now
23 tell you our coalition proudly is going to be
24 blustered by a colleague of yours from Brooklyn,
25 Senator Republican Senator Marty Golden has taken the

2 lead and we had a great day yesterday with the 15,000
3 units and the Mayor and Steve Banks and their team
4 should be credited for doing a phenomenal job dealing
5 with a horrendous crisis and the Mayor to his credit
6 has dealt with it with strength and compassion and I
7 know if you read publicly you'll hear sometimes oh
8 the Mayor been really bad with homelessness. I'm on
9 the social services piece of homelessness; I will
10 challenge anybody to debate at any time about what
11 this Mayor could have done more. Now he has 15,000
12 units of supportive housing on the table. When he
13 realized that domestic violence victims were the
14 second leading reason of homelessness, he doubled the
15 beds for domestic violence victims. He went after
16 runaway and homeless youth because he knows that
17 those kids are particular susceptible to sexual
18 exploitation if they're not housed properly. He
19 increased money for legal assistance, he increased
20 the LINK programs so rental subsidies to stop the
21 flow of homelessness. The Mayor has done an
22 outstanding job. Now the reason why I'm here is to
23 thank you my colleagues in the City Council for your
24 leadership and your help and to tell you what the
25 path is forward. The path is we have a coalition now

2 of faith based leaders, your leadership, the Mayor of
3 the greatest City of New York, the only thing we have
4 missing is our Governor and I will tell you that the
5 Governor and I are not close but here's a reality
6 about Governor Cuomo and this another thing I will
7 debate with anybody at any time. Governor Cuomo is
8 the best elected leader that I have ever seen in a
9 crisis. Now you may not like the way he handles
10 things but when he steps in you know that the
11 machinery of government is going to start working and
12 that he's going to do his best to serve the people of
13 the State of New York. He's done it time and time
14 again. He has a command presence, he comes in and
15 take charge and it is that type of leadership that we
16 need here, we are in a terrible crisis. Now the
17 Mayor has come forward with 15,000 units, that's
18 15,000 individuals some of them kids, some of them
19 with families that will have permanent housing.
20 Every study that we've seen show that, that is less
21 than half of what we need State wide. That is half
22 of what you need in the City, you need 30,000 but you
23 need 35,000 State wide. We are now going to ask the
24 Governor to do what he does best and come in a lead
25 us all to get to the 35,000 threshold so we can end

2 this crisis and help the people who are being cycled
3 in and out of the brutal cycle of homelessness that
4 we can no longer tolerate. So I call on my colleague
5 Governor Cuomo to do what he does best and lead us
6 and I will proudly stand behind him and give the
7 credit that he deserves for leading us and I thank
8 you all for your time here today and I look forward
9 to working with you in the future.

10 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much
11 Assemblyman Hevesi, Mr. Davis, Council Member
12 Spigner. I just want a quick question just in terms
13 of the number of Assembly Members you've said that
14 you gotten how many Assembly Members have signed on
15 in support?

16 ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI: Out of 150, 133
17 throughout the State.

18 CHAIR LEVIN: So that's, I guess there's
19 a few from maybe up State or whatever that, does that
20 account from, is that every member from the City?

21 ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI: Were close.

22 CHAIR LEVIN: Ok.

23 ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI: I couldn't get one
24 or two but I'm going to catch out back and work them
25 later so, but were very close.

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2 CHAIR LEVIN: And how many Senators?

3 ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI: Senators we have 26

4 but that number is still growing and what's important
5 about the Senate numbers is it's lead by Senator
6 Marty Golden, the Republican from the City but as
7 important as that is Republican Chairwoman of the
8 Housing Committee is also onboard, several of their
9 Republican Senators. We have IDC members and
10 Democrats, this is as bipartisan as it gets.

11 CHAIR LEVIN: I wish you good luck and
12 fortitude and pressing the case up in Albany where we
13 need to see you know, you know to be honest the Mayor
14 has now come to the table with half which is more
15 than the City ever done before, so you know the
16 Governor could round it out pretty easily and really
17 meet the need and this is what the advocates have
18 been calling for, it's 30,000, 35,000 State wide,
19 30,000 here in New York City and that's... that's a now
20 an achievable number but the State's got a come to
21 the table.

22 ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI: And we look forward
23 to driving towards that goal. Thank you Sir.

24 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you to this panel
25 very much, thank you.

2 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Wait, thank you very
3 much. Thank you Assembly Member for your leadership,
4 Derrick and Council Member. I had a question, I know
5 in the Council Member, Senator Sander, Senator
6 Comrie's testimony it referred to a lot of shelters
7 and I assume that might be a lot of what is there. I
8 wanted to hear from both of you and the Councilmen if
9 it is now supportive housing does that alleviate any of
10 the concerns the Commissioner made a point to note
11 that it was supportive housing. I think some of
12 those concerns might still be there but I wanted to
13 hear from you two if they alleviated any of the concerns
14 that you have?

15 ARCHIE SPIGNER: I was at a community
16 board meeting last evening where this matter was
17 discussed and there seems to be little distinction
18 between the concern for supportive housing and any
19 other type of housing that takes in special category.

20 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Whether or not it's
21 permanent.

22 ARCHIE SPIGNER: There was just a fact if
23 I can recall there were out community is feeling the
24 threats of the oversaturation and very concerned
25 about any impossible new housing coming in to the

2 area we have the feeling that, we have more than our
3 share.

4 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Thank you.

5 DERRICK DAVIS: I concur with those
6 sentiments.

7 ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI: Would it be possible
8 for me to just chime in and the Senator is a great
9 friend of mine and colleague and I will have a
10 conversation with him and I will only speak for my
11 district but on the same note, we have a shelter that
12 is being cited right now and if the alternative for
13 the 300 beds that they're looking to put into my
14 community is supportive housing I will do cartwheels
15 even though I'm getting old. That is fantastic so
16 yes, the answer for me in my community would be
17 permanent.

18 ARCHIE SPIGNER: It been so dramatic.

19 ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI: Yes I know.

20 ARCHIE SPIGNER: We're traumatized.

21 ASSEMBLYMAN HEVESI: You're right and
22 that community and multiple other communities are
23 right they've been oversaturated but in for my
24 experience and my community I would argue that yes I
25

2 would prefer the permanent housing as opposed to the
3 temporary housing.

4 CHAIR WILLIAMS: Thank you very much and
5 I apologize I'm going to have to depart for a meeting
6 but I want to thank you for coming testifying and all
7 people here.

8 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much to this
9 panel, thank you. Next up we have Samantha Rauer
10 from MFY Legal Services, Kristen Miller from CSH,
11 Vinay Krishaum from Housing Works and Laura Mascuch
12 from Supportive Housing Network of New York. We're
13 going to set the clock at 3 minutes for testimony
14 because just so everybody knows we are due to be out
15 of this room by 4pm. If the hearing runs longer we
16 can go next door, the committee room should be open
17 but (inaudible) because we do have a lot of testimony
18 we're going to ask that you keep it to 3 minutes.
19 Thank you. Thanks for your patience I know this has
20 been a long afternoon.

21 KRISTEN MILLER: No problem, thank you.
22 Thank you Council Member for inviting us to testify
23 today and thank you for this fabulous resolution
24 that's before us. My name is Kristen Miller and I'm
25 Director of the New York Program at the Corporation

2 for Supportive Housing. CHS's mission to advance
3 solutions that use housing as a platform to deliver
4 services, improve the lives of the most vulnerable
5 and build health communities. We've been in New York
6 City for 24 years working with innovation and
7 investment in New York City. Leading demonstrations
8 projects, analyzing data and assisting in the
9 creation of over 15,000 units of permanent supportive
10 and affordable housing units across New York. We are
11 deeply committed to sustaining and increasing access
12 to permanent housing solutions. We strongly support
13 City Council Resolution 0504-2014 for the partnership
14 it implies, calling upon the Governor and the Mayor
15 to approve a 4th New York/New York agreement and
16 together fully fund a supportive housing initiative.

17 I am excited to be here today and really
18 thank the Council and the Mayor for the unprecedented
19 commitment to supportive housing in New York City.

20 We as the people have been kind of talking about
21 earlier we don't need any more shelters in New York,
22 we need more permanent housing with services to
23 support New York's most vulnerable people, to
24 strengthen neighborhoods and save our city money.

2 This action isn't a moment too soon. As
3 we all know the homeless numbers have increased
4 tremendously both in the New York City and throughout
5 the State. CHS's has recently released report called
6 Real Supportive Housing Need in New York State. As
7 Statewide Supportive Housing Needs Assessment
8 provides the foundation from which to build the
9 strategic planning and resource allocation necessary
10 to increase supportive housing supply. This study
11 estimates that over 36,000 homeless households were
12 in need of supportive housing in New York State in
13 2013 and nearly 32,000 supportive housing units must
14 be created just to meet this pressing need.

15 Problems of this scale need equally
16 matched solutions. New Yorker are unified in their
17 support of New York/New York supportive housing
18 agreement as the solution and our champions have
19 organized. The City Council, the Mayor, the Assembly
20 and the Senate.

21 Homelessness is not unique to New York.
22 In fact, very recently the City of Los Angeles
23 declared a State of emergency on homelessness calling
24 it a shelter crisis. This is not a shelter crisis.
25 This is a housing crisis. We are thankful to have a

2 City Council and a Mayor that are setting an example
3 for the rest of the country in funding permanent
4 supportive housing, a proven solution to ending
5 homelessness. Thank you.

6 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you, right on time.

7 Good afternoon, thank you for holding
8 this hearing and for the opportunity to talk about
9 this important topic. I was thrilled to hear the
10 announcement from the City yesterday and I'm pleased
11 to be here today. My name is Samantha Rauer and I am
12 staff attorney at MFY Legal Services. MFY provides
13 free civil, legal services across all five Boroughs
14 and our mental health law project represents
15 thousands of clients with mental illness every year.
16 My full statement on behalf of MFY can be found in my
17 written testimony but there are a few points that I'd
18 like emphasis today.

19 There simply is not enough affordable
20 housing for people living with mental illness in New
21 York City. Public housing is extremely limited and
22 people with disabilities are typically on a fixed
23 income of SSI or SSD benefits and simply are unable
24 to afford private housing. As already been mentioned
25 expansion of supportive housing is cost effective.

3 Stable housing reduces hospitalization, incarceration
4 and unnecessary institutionalization. Studies have
5 found that public investment in supportive housing
6 leads to long terms savings. I'd like to briefly
7 talk about two common alternatives for New Yorkers
8 with mental illness who do not have access to stable
9 housing, adult homes and $\frac{3}{4}$ houses. Adult homes often
10 have a majority of residence with mental illness and
11 the adult home industry in New York City has been
12 frequently criticized for being overly expensive and
13 abuses. Residences who enter these homes from
14 hospitals or nursing homes often could live
15 independently but instead become stuck at adult homes
16 where they receive services they don't want or need
17 and have little to now freedom. $\frac{3}{4}$ houses are
18 unlicensed houses that hold themselves out as
19 transitional residences for people coming out of
20 prison, jails and substance abuse programs. They
21 typically are drastically overcrowded and rights with
22 housing code violations, harassment and illegal
23 evictions. Expansion of supported housing would
24 allow more New Yorkers to afford staff, stable
25 housing and ultimately save taxpayer dollars. My
written testimony also lays out several suggested

2 changes to the supportive housing program. These
3 include making the application process more
4 accessible for people with disabilities and expanding
5 the targeted priority population to include people
6 with mental illness, spacing, interment homelessness,
7 not just those who already are homeless as well as
8 people with a criminal justice history such as most ³/₄
9 house residence. In addition, leases for supported
10 housing should be required in the name of resident.
11 Based on our experience the lease is often in the
12 supported housing provider name. Not only does this
13 mean that the residence are not afforded the same
14 right as other tenants but also landlords can subvert
15 the goals of written stabilization laws because in
16 New York a landlord can refuse to renew a lease with
17 a corporate entity such as a supported housing
18 provider, thereby allowing them to turn over the
19 apartment every two years. Thank you.

20 CHAIR LEVIN: You can wrap it up.

21 SAMANTHA RAUER: All right, again more
22 details about these issues and MFYs work are in my
23 written testimony. Thank you for holding this
24 hearing and for your commitment to expanding
25 affordable housing for New Yorkers.

2 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you and I just want
3 to take one moment to thank MFY, my office and MFY
4 work together on a $\frac{3}{4}$ house in Greenpoint on Place
5 Street and just for the record that facility was a
6 hell hole. It was, it was didn't have a lock on the
7 front door, it there was the showers weren't working,
8 the windows were knocked out, there were fires
9 weren't, there was rooms that had fires that hadn't
10 been cleared out, the people that were living in that
11 facility were subjected to inhumane housing and
12 treatment and if we could have gotten supportive
13 services in a supportive housing program in that
14 facility, it would have been an entirely, entirely
15 different situation and those individuals would have
16 had a lot more support and I would have welcomed it
17 with open arms but I want to thank MFY for working on
18 addressing the $\frac{3}{4}$ house issue as diligently as you
19 have been and continue to do.

20 SAMANTHA RAUER: Thank you so much.

21 Thank you all for the opportunity to
22 speak this afternoon, my name is Vinay Krishman and
23 I'm here today representing Housing Works. A healing
24 community of people living with and affected by
25 HIV/AIDS.

2 Housing Works supports the City Councils
3 resolution. We applaud Mary de Blasio's historic
4 announcement yesterday to create 15,000 new
5 supportive housing units in New York City over the
6 next 15 years. We call on Governor Cuomo to match
7 this investment by creating 15,000 additional units
8 housing in New York City and to create an additional
9 5,000 units in the rest of the State for a total of
10 35,000 units statewide.

11 Over the past decade, Housing Works has
12 relentlessly worked to provide homeless and unstably
13 housed New Yorkers with stable housing and health
14 care. And we have long proven that housing is
15 healthcare. Expanding supportive housing can do more
16 than combat the homelessness crisis. It can also
17 greatly improve public health and even help end New
18 York's HIV/AIDS epidemic. Governor Andrew Cuomo
19 released and endorsed a Blueprint for Ending the AIDS
20 Epidemic, which sets a goal of reducing the number of
21 new HIV infections in New York State from
22 approximately 3,000 this year to 750 or fewer by the
23 end of the year 2020.

24 Currently an estimated 6,000 people with
25 HIV in New York City are homeless or unstably housed,

2 including 700 to 1,000 people with HIV who use New
3 York City shelters each night. In addition over
4 1,900 people with HIV with advanced HIV disease are
5 relegated to inappropriate commercial single room
6 occupancy hotel. HIV housing supports are even more
7 limited upstate and on Long Island, leaving an
8 additional 4,000 to 6,000 people with HIV homeless or
9 unstably housed.

10 A comprehensive study just published in
11 the American Journal of Public Health reviews 152
12 peer reviewed articles on the association between
13 housing status, medical care and health outcomes
14 among people living with HIV. The findings reviewed
15 provide overwhelming evidence that a lack of stable,
16 secure, adequate housing is a significant barrier to
17 consistent and appropriate HIV medical care, access
18 and adherence to antiretroviral medications,
19 sustained viral suppression, and transmission risk
20 reduction. As the report explains, housing comprises
21 more than just physical shelter. Where we live is
22 where our personal, social, and economic lives come
23 together. People who lack stable, secure, adequate
24 housing lack a protected space to maintain physical
25 and psychological wellbeing.

2 This review also confirms our
3 understating of the impact of housing supports on the
4 health of people with HIV. Improved housing status
5 for people with HIV is strongly linked to reduced
6 viral load and better health outcomes and has been
7 found to reduce avoidable health care spending on
8 emergency and inpatient care. Improving housing
9 status is also independently linked to reduced risk
10 of ongoing HIV transmission, which prevents
11 infections and leads to significant savings in
12 avoided lifetime treatment costs.

13 Constructing a fourth New York/New York
14 agreement then would decrease homelessness, support
15 efforts to end the AIDS epidemic, and save money for
16 the City and the State. We stand ready to become the
17 first jurisdiction in the world to end its AIDS
18 epidemic, but to do that, we will need significant
19 investments in housing supports. We applaud the
20 Mayor's bold action and call on the Governor to
21 complete a New York/New York IV agreement through
22 which the City and the State can invest in housing,
23 optimize healthcare and work towards an AIDS free
24 America. Thank you so much for your time.

25 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you. You're up.

2 LAURA MASUCH: Ok thank so much. Thank
3 you Council Member Levin for all of your support and
4 I know the other Council Members had to go but to
5 Jumaane Williams and Brad Lander and your show today
6 at our little rally on the steps of City Hall is
7 amazing. Good afternoon my name is Laura Masuch, I'm
8 the Executive Director for the Supportive Housing
9 Network of New York. I'm here today to testify in
10 support of a new City State agreement for supportive
11 housing. The Supportive Housing Network is a
12 statewide membership organization. We have over 200
13 nonprofits that own and operate supportive housing.
14 We have over 50,000 units statewide, 32,000 of them
15 are in the City. We'd like to of course thank Mayor
16 de Blasio for this historic announcement yesterday
17 committing to the City to create 15,000 units of
18 supportive housing over the next 15 years. We would
19 like to urge the Council to pass this resolution and
20 amend it's language to call on Governor Cuomo to
21 match and extend New York City's historic commitment
22 of 15,000 units and to bring 30,000 supportive units
23 to New York City to meet the need. I think everyone
24 understands the current crisis of homelessness that
25 we are facing. While not everyone who is homeless

2 needs supportive housing, it's the proven long term
3 solution for individuals with that are chronically
4 homeless and living with special needs, it saves
5 lives.

6 Each year New York City as we've heard
7 from Commissioner Banks have over 20,000 applications
8 for which only one in six applicants are available to
9 have a bed. Have an apartment of their own. Over
10 the last 25 years Governors and Mayors have come
11 together to fund supportive housing and all these
12 three packs have resulted in 14,000 units. New
13 York/New York III has been a tremendous success.
14 It's bought together 10 City and State agencies to
15 serve over 9 populations. Those are diverse
16 population. Youth aging out of foster care,
17 individuals with mental illness, recovering from
18 substance abuse, veterans, grandparents. It has
19 grown the stock of affordable housing, 40% of the
20 units are affordable, it's an very important.

21

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23

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2 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you everybody for
3 making the move. We are here in the Committee room;
4 it's five to four on Thursday, November 19th. Next
5 panel, Giselle Routhier of Coalition for the
6 Homeless, Beth Hufmeister, Legal Aid Society, Joe
7 Rosenberg, Joseph Rosenberg, Catholic Community
8 Relations Council and Freddie Cox from CUCS. Whoever
9 wants to begin may proceed.

10 GISELLE ROUTHIER: Hi thanks so much for...
11 for having me and thank you Council Member for
12 hosting this hearing. I submitted written testimony
13 and I forgot I have it right here. I'm not going to
14 read the whole thing but I just have a few key
15 points. Yesterday Mayor de Blasio made history by
16 announcing a plan to create 15,000 units of
17 supportive housing in New York City over the next 15
18 years. This is the largest commitment to supportive
19 housing made by any Mayor and it's importance cannot
20 be overstated. Supportive housing works to end the
21 trauma of homelessness for our most vulnerable New
22 Yorkers. The Major's announcement comes at a time, a
23 critical juncture. New York City is currently facing
24 an unprecedented homelessness crisis. There are
25 currently over 59,000 men, women and children

2 sleeping each night in the City's municipal shelter
3 system. Including an all-time high of over 13,500
4 single adults. At the same time currently four out
5 of every five persons found eligible for supportive
6 housing are not able to receive it because a lack of
7 units. Yesterday the Mayor presented a major
8 commitment to filling this needs gap. But there's a
9 second crucial step that needs to be filled, it's the
10 support and partnership of Governor Cuomo. He needs
11 to match Mayor De Blasio 15,000 for a total of 30,000
12 supportive housing units in New York City. A number
13 no less than 30,000 is really critical to match the
14 current scale of need in New York City. Over 300
15 organizations have signed on to the campaign for
16 30,000, including 133 members of the New York State
17 Assembly. As you have heard 26 members of the New
18 York State Senate and hundreds of faith leaders all
19 recognizing the dire need for 30,000. Now Mayor de
20 Blasio has made an unprecedented commitment to this
21 30,000 and it's time for the Governor to step up and
22 match that. And we'd just like to wanted to
23 reiterate that, the need for the Governor to step up
24 and we'd like to thank the Council for their support
25 on this incredibly important issue and including

2 Chairs Levin and Williams and we look forward to
3 working together in the coming weeks to focus our
4 attention on the Governor. Thank you.

5 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you and thank you to
6 the coalition for all your hard work on this.

7 JOSEPH ROSENBERG: And good afternoon
8 Chairman Levin, I'm Joe Rosenberg, Director of the
9 Catholic community Relations Council representing the
10 Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn.
11 I here today to testify in strong support of this
12 resolution urging the State and City to create a
13 fourth New York, New York agreement.

14 Everyone in New York City understands we
15 have been facing a critical housing crises for
16 decades. The New York, New York program is important
17 component of the State and City's effort in tackling
18 this crisis, and one particularly focused on
19 supportive housing.

20 We strongly support Mayor de Blasio's
21 plan to produce 15,000 of these much needed units.
22 We especially applaud the focus on reserving this
23 essential housing for the most vulnerable population
24 in our City which include not just homeless families
25 and homeless single adults but also victims of

2 domestic violence, homeless veterans, young adults
3 leaving foster care and individuals receiving nursing
4 home care who can make the transition, with the
5 assistance of supportive services, to independent
6 living.

7 Permanent supportive housing has long
8 been shown to be a successful and cost effective
9 model to combat homelessness and to provide
10 affordable housing for individuals with substance
11 abuse, mental health issues and other challenges.

12 Although many programs have been developed to provide
13 housing for the homeless, none have been as
14 productive as New York, New York.

15 The Catholic Church and its affiliates
16 have developed and preserved thousands of units of
17 affordable housing throughout the City. This
18 continuing focus on constructing and preserving
19 affordable housing, supportive housing and housing
20 for the homeless remains and absolute priority of the
21 Church consistent with its long standing mission of
22 administering to the poor and the need. Hundreds of
23 supportive housing units have been developed by the
24 Church, much of it through New York, New York.

2 It is not only important, however, that
3 the program be continued and expanded. It is crucial
4 that the fourth New York, New York agreement receive
5 adequate capital funding to construct these units as
6 well as sufficient operating subsidies to cover the
7 supportive services and daily expenses required to
8 successfully run this program and work toward ending
9 the cycle of homelessness.

10 Our humanity, compassion and benevolence
11 are called upon to assist and provide for people in
12 need. There are many challenges, both economic and
13 social, in trying to find remedies and assistance for
14 the homeless population of our City. The New York,
15 New York program has proven to be one of the
16 successful tools in addressing the needs of the
17 population by providing homes and essential services
18 through the creation of permanent affordable
19 supportive housing. We can move forward by extending
20 and expanding this far reaching and crucial
21 initiative. Thank you.

22 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much.

23 FREDDIE COX: Good afternoon my name is
24 Freddie Cox and I live in supportive housing and I've
25 been in there since 1991 and I can tell you

2 supportive housing works you know. When I got there
3 I was homeless for 2 ½ years you know. Living on the
4 street, catching pneumonia you know, living in a lot
5 of fear because really your sleeping but you're not
6 sleeping you know and I went into a detox center
7 because I was drinking very heavily you know and I
8 had substance abuse to. So I went there and a from
9 there they put me in a halfway house and a after I
10 completed the halfway house they sent me on a lot of
11 interviews you know but I picked Breaking Ground
12 because they had the support that I know I needed you
13 know. Having a roof over my head, that was only a
14 little part of the problem with me you know. I had
15 the substance abuse, the drinking, medical, I had an
16 operation on my pancreas because that's how much I
17 drink you know. And the psychiatric part, they had
18 all of them services there you know. I didn't use
19 them right away because I didn't trust no body.
20 Living on the streets you learn how to put a wall
21 around yourself. So I didn't trust no body but they
22 didn't give up on me you know. I gave up on myself
23 because I thought I was worthless, hopeless and
24 everything else but the case workers there that they
25 had at CUCS, they didn't give up on me. And

2 eventually they broke through to me you know because
3 I had the psychiatrist on site, I started letting her
4 getting all of the garbage and fear and anger out of
5 me you know. And I know if I was in a regular place,
6 a regular apartment I wouldn't got them services on
7 my own you know. And now I do volunteer work at
8 Breaking Ground. I work for an organization called
9 PPOH, that's Psychiatric Project on Homelessness you
10 know. We give half fares, we tell a psychiatrist how
11 to help you know homeless people and one thing I
12 brought to the board as a consumer is you got to
13 treat the whole person you know. And supportive
14 housing and it did it for me you know so I know it'll
15 do it for others and thank you ok.

16 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much Mr.
17 Cox. Maybe I can make a suggestion that.. that you
18 become an ambassador for supportive housing so that
19 in communities maybe where where folks could learn
20 more about the positive benefits of... of supportive
21 housing, how that a that you know that you can tell
22 your story because it's a very moving and very
23 effective story so.

24 FREDDIE COX: Thank you.

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3 CHAIR LEVIN: And I want to thank you
4 very much for taking the time to come down here
5 today.

6 FREDDIE COX: Thank you.

7 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you. Next panel Liz
8 Hoffman from CCC, Sandra Mitchell, Homeless Woman
9 Plaza Next Steps Shelter, Sandy Brower and Richard
10 Gibbs from Jamaica NAACP, Nicole Bramstedt from Urban
11 Pathways. Calling Richard Gibbs once more. Ok.
12 Whoever wants to begin. Sorry I don't know if your
13 microphone is on.

14 ELIZABETH HOFFMAN: Bird children got me.
15 CCC is a 72 year old independent, multi-issue child
16 advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every
17 child is healthy, housed, educated and safe.

18 I'd first like to thank Chair Levin,
19 Chair Williams and the other members of the
20 Committees that were here for holding this important
21 hearing and for your support on resolution 504. We
22 are very grateful for the City Council's long-
23 standing support for supportive housing and the
24 development of additional units of supportive housing
25 to help homeless New Yorkers secure permanent
housing.

2 CCC is pleased that the City is committed
3 to creating 15,000 additional supportive housing
4 units over the next 15 years. We hope this
5 commitment is the spring board needed to ensure New
6 York City has enough supportive housing to meet the
7 growing demand for units. However, we respectfully
8 request the de Blasio administration take the
9 following steps. Urge the State to commit to creating
10 15,000 additional supportive housing units in New
11 York City and 5,000 in the rest of the state and also
12 to ensure the new supportive housing units once again
13 include units specifically for families with children
14 and youth aging out of foster care. Thank you for
15 the opportunity to testify.

16 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you Ms. Hoffman.

17 SANDRA MITCHELL: Good afternoon, my name
18 is Sandra Mitchell. I'm grateful to be able to speak
19 before the Council this afternoon. Although I am the
20 Chairperson for the Disability Committee and the
21 National Action Network, I'm here today representing
22 the women at the Plaza Next Steps Women Shelter in
23 Washington Heights. I'm also a resident there. I'm
24 also a mental health and substance abuse crisis and
25 trauma form care. I'm kind of nervous, service

2 provider and it's hard being on the other side of the
3 table, not being able to do anything but I'm usually
4 the caregiver. At this shelter we are having a hard
5 time trying to find housing even though a lot of us
6 have the link 4, link 5 and link 6 vouchers. A lot
7 of our women are formerly incarcerated, their
8 grappling with their substance abuse issues, mental
9 illness, separation from family and a lot of our
10 staff are new and their learning their jobs, so it's
11 a real great challenge to find housing. I have a
12 link 4 voucher and it is a great tool for me to be
13 able for me find housing but because of the shelter
14 and the stigma of the shelter where a lot of the
15 women are formerly incarcerated, it's, there's a
16 stigma with trying to find us housing. So I'm here
17 today to just ask if there should be, if there could
18 be some type of help in helping our housing
19 specialist and administration there to locate
20 sustainable and affordable and appropriate housing
21 for us there for the women there. We have one person
22 who is hearing impaired, we have another person who
23 just left, she was blind. I'm a concur; I like to
24 say of five mini strokes. Wrong diagnosis, wrong

2 medication, suffered every side effect. We really
3 do need your help. Thank you.

4 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much for
5 your testimony.

6 SANDY BROWER: Hi my name is Sandy Brower
7 and I never ever ever thought I'd be homeless but
8 then I have a bunch of advocates that are helping me.
9 I'm a domestic violence survivor and also people that
10 have problems with sexual assault and all should not
11 be put in this shelter. The first shelter I went in
12 turned me away. A friend of mine went with me with
13 the metro card. I went to another shelter, that one
14 I asked them to hold my medicine, they almost forgot
15 to give it to me. They were telling me I was going
16 to go to another shelter but they couldn't tell me
17 what time. When I finally got to that shelter, there
18 was such abuse just because I talked loud one person
19 pushed me but then we became friends because one of
20 my other friends was just going to come over there
21 and tell her off. Then another person just because I
22 forgot to hold the elevator for her said she going to
23 "F me off" each time I'd go to, I'd go to security
24 and then another person in my room was in three rooms
25 and she was giving everybody a hard time so finally I

2 had to get her bumped out. A shelter is no place for
3 anybody that has a mental condition even though this
4 place had a place to lock up your medication or that
5 have domestic violence issues or sex abuse issues
6 because it can trigger them badly. I'm happy to say
7 now I have housing with supports and hope to one day
8 get my own apartment. And thank you Mayor de Blasio
9 because if you run for Mayor again we would
10 definitely get my vote. Thank you very much.

11 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much for
12 your testimony. Usually we don't allow.

13 SANDY BROWER: And I've been sending
14 people, I've been helping people to get housing.
15 There was a guy that I know that I met in the
16 hospital that he remembered me from somewhere and I
17 didn't and I went to a there's a person in Brooklyn
18 at Boltic (sp) Street that helps me you know, he's
19 been a good friend and if it wasn't for him I
20 wouldn't know about the housing that I got and I
21 helped this guy get temporary housing and now he's in
22 permanent housing because I told his worker about
23 that and were going to have the house warming party
24 but I've been sick and now were going to have one and
25 now were like really good friends and I've been

2 telling people to go to the coalition the homeless
3 and just found out the other day that they train
4 people and that you can go there like at 8:30 in the
5 morning for an emergency care and I've worked with
6 the coalition of the homeless before when I was in a
7 clubhouse but now there are pro's program which I
8 don't go to anymore but that's ok. But I want to
9 help and volunteer and this guy from Brooklyn is
10 going to help me and teach me how to do the 2010E so
11 I can become a service coordinator and help all the
12 homeless. Thank you very much.

13 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you, thank you very
14 much for your testimony and for your story.

15 NICOLE BRAMSTEDT: Good afternoon Council
16 Member Levin and the rest of the Committees, my name
17 is Nicole Bramstedt. I am the Director of Policy for
18 Urban Pathways. Urban Pathways is a 40 year old
19 supportive housing social service provider. We
20 provide a continuum of services for mainly single
21 homeless adults. I'm gone to of course thank the
22 Committees for holding this hearing as you know you
23 are leadership and support on this issue and the
24 opportunity to testify. I give a copy of my written
25 testimony. I'd just like to emphasis a few points

2 which haven't too much been addressed today. Just
3 developing some operating supportive housing. We
4 operate seven supportive housing units throughout New
5 York City. In Queens, Manhattan and the Bronx and it
6 does have it challenges. Unfortunately we do
7 encounter resistance when cite supportive housing.
8 Too often those in opposition they harbored the same
9 concerns about supportive housing as they do a
10 homeless shelter, however, we (inaudible) supportive
11 housing is not homeless shelter. The residents,
12 tenants sign and lease or enter into an occupancy
13 agreement with the goal to become members of the
14 community. They participate in the community, get
15 jobs, they vote, attend community board meetings,
16 etc., (inaudible) community prescient meetings etc.
17 And supportive housing is it's Council Member Well
18 pointed out to us front and center it does improve
19 neighborhoods over time. The 2008 studies reveal the
20 steady growth in property values for building
21 neighboring supportive housing. And unfortunate, the
22 fortunate thing is as a result of the opposition much
23 to the detriment of bringing our individual of our
24 mission to bring individuals inside we too often
25 devote increasing amounts of time to respond to this

2 legislation instead of doing what we do best and it's
3 to provide a home to single adult homeless New
4 Yorkers. One other challenge we have faced is
5 inadequate government investment. They really
6 complicate service delivery and staffing.
7 Insufficient investment comes in the form of City
8 contracts with supportive housing providers that are
9 devoured of rent escalations. Particularly this
10 present challenges for our scattered sights units
11 which are in the market rate apartment subject to the
12 tight housing market and inadequate investment also
13 exist in the form of low wages for those staffing
14 supportive housing. Accordingly our staff often or
15 may seek the same services as their clients even
16 though they have full time jobs and are clients being
17 occurred multiply case managers much to the detriment
18 of their path to self-sufficiency and just based on
19 these things add a couple of recommendations first to
20 educate communities on supportive housing to admonish
21 the association of supportive housing with shelters.
22 Also include rent escalation clauses in City
23 contracts with non-profits, renting the scattered
24 (inaudible) to supportive housing. And then also to
25 continue to invest in those staff whose staff

2 supportive housing, the City's done a great job this
3 year in term of the human services non-profits sector
4 with the 2.5% cost of living adjustment, the 1150
5 wage (inaudible), the 5 million investments in the
6 career ladder. Would like to keep moving that to 15
7 and also there's a State effort to 15 and funding for
8 the State to increase investment in the human
9 services non-profit sector. Thank you.

10 SANDY BROWER: Can I just say one thing.

11 CHAIR LEVIN: Sure.

12 SANDY BROWER: I went outside the
13 Governor's office and got one of these shirts and I
14 got another one at a forum. We had 500 people at
15 this forum ok. Now I'm not going to stop until we
16 get homelessness to be zero.

17 CHAIR LEVIN: There you go.

18 SANDY BROWER: All right.

19 CHAIR LEVIN: All right.

20 SANDY BROWER: So we need 35,000 homeless
21 I mean units, supportive housing units. But I know
22 it's going to take time but I know with Mayor de
23 Blasio is help, your help and Cuomo's, we can all do
24 it and the advocates.

2 CHAIR LEVIN: It's going to be a fight
3 but we're going to do it, with your help.

4 SANDY BROWER: Thank you.

5 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you. Thank you so
6 much to this panel for your testimony and for taking
7 the time and for your patience and I know it's been a
8 long day but thank you so much.

9 SANDY BROWER: It was worth the wait.

10 CHAIR LEVIN: Next Tori Lyon from the
11 Jericho Project, Jim Dill, HIS, Mark Greenberger,
12 Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing,
13 Carla Rabinowitz, Community Access, let's see Anthony
14 Rivers, People for the Neighborhood. Ok this panel
15 can begin.

16 JIM DILL: I'm Jim Dill, Executive
17 Director of Housing and Services. We are not for
18 profit that provides permanent supportive housing.
19 Five hundred fifteen units in Manhattan and 100 units
20 scattered sight contract. We are very happy to
21 testify today. We thank you for the opportunity. We
22 are thrilled by yesterday's press conference about
23 the Mayor and the City's commitment. We hope that
24 our testimony today will help the City Council in
25 affirming the Mayor's decision and help for voices

2 for the push for the State to match that
3 contribution. So in terms of how we look at... at New
4 York, New York for the big idea is do the right thing
5 and save lots of money. The three under pinning's to
6 that are basically permanent supportive housing is
7 the most programmatically effective way and chronic
8 homelessness. Permanent supportive housing is the
9 most cost effective way of... of ending homelessness.
10 Permanent supportive housing is the most human way of
11 ending homelessness. Why is permanent supportive
12 housing work? Because it's a model that provides
13 affordable housing with on-site social services. It
14 is not shelters. It basically it is permanent people
15 have leases, they have on site services to address
16 the issues that drove them to homelessness to begin
17 with. It's been well documents in many other
18 testimonies that about the success rate, success rate
19 or go for the HRA, the 85% of people stayed in
20 permanent supportive housing stabilized. It's the
21 most cost effective way right down New York City is
22 off loading the cost of homelessness on other City
23 institutions that don't address mental illness. The
24 it's prisons, it's the emergency rooms, it's the all
25 the other interventions. Rikers is the most dramatic

2 example of basically of how you could be spending
3 multiple times at what it cost in permanent
4 supportive housing. To absolutely no effect to very
5 bad result. In terms of the (inaudible) I can take a
6 long view on a short view that basically over the
7 past 50 years that I've been in this City, the
8 supply, the number of people afflicted by mental
9 illness has stayed the same in the population but the
10 opportunities for housing have decreased
11 significantly. The 35,000 units is (inaudible).

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much Mr.

14 Dill.

15 CARLA RABINOWITZ: Hi my name is Carla
16 Rabinowitz and I am the Advocacy Coordinator at
17 Community Access. Community Access is a 40 year old
18 nonprofit housing provider and I invite any of you to
19 visit one of our sites. We operate 22 supportive
20 housing sites. We're grateful for the Mayor's
21 announcement. Supportive housing breaks the cycle of
22 homelessness, hospitalizations and prison. It helps
23 people to lead productive lives.

24 As a community organizer for 10 years, I
25 know that the number one concern of mental health

2 recipients is housing. I get so many calls from
3 people in ³/₄ housing, people in shelters, people in
4 adult homes, people in the street, people on the
5 trains. There is just a lack of housing. Community
6 Access is great housing site but like others are
7 permanent housing to get in if you're not already in,
8 you have to wait 10 years. So that give you an idea.
9 We mix low income families without a diagnosis with
10 mental health recipients. Once people come to
11 Community Access they get a home of their own, they
12 get a back yard, a lobby, front desk staff, free
13 computers and internet, career services, employment
14 training, a 24 hour reception. One tenant ran one of
15 the only black owned manufacturing companies in
16 Brooklyn. His business fell on hard times. He went
17 bankrupt, lost his business, started drinking and
18 lost his apartment. He was homeless for 10 years on
19 and off. Since living at Community Access for 10
20 years he got his CASAC back and helps others with
21 drug addiction.

22 I just want to also mention that people
23 who've become homeless aren't could be anyone. They
24 were former cooks, business owners, nurse aides,
25 teachers, theatre workers, any profession you could

2 become homeless. In one building the tenants wanted
3 a bus stop near their home. We create a since of
4 community in the building. So 10 tenants all
5 attended their community board together. They all
6 waited two hours to speak. They all spoke in unison.
7 One tenant in the building who is a mental health
8 recipient spoke so elegantly, he was approached by a
9 member of the community board. One month later the
10 tenants woke up to find a bus stop in front of their
11 door. These are the types of housing, permanent
12 housing with supports that are needed or in short
13 supply. So I urge you to pass a modified resolution
14 of 504. Thank you so much.

15 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much both
16 for your testimony and for doing, for doing the work
17 the work that you do. You know, you're not just
18 advocates but you're out there working on the front
19 lines. We greatly appreciate, I like you know I like
20 to say that you know Government can't do the... the
21 Government can't accomplish the goals that we set out
22 to accomplish on our own. We need the our the
23 network of social service agencies and not for
24 profits throughout New York City that are out there

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2 on the front lines and so we greatly appreciate we
3 support the work that you do. Thank you.

4 CHAIR LEVIN: Next Anthony Rivers, People
5 for the Neighborhood, Joann Floyd-Whitehead, People
6 for the Community, Community Unity and Ruthie
7 Campbell, Community Unity.

8 ANTHONY RIVERS: Thank you. I won't say
9 good afternoon but it's almost evening time.

10 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you.

11 ANTHONY RIVERS: My name is Anthony
12 Rivers and I come before the Council today to express
13 the Neighborhood concerns for Community Board 12. I
14 would like to state for the record that we are not
15 against homelessness nor supportive housing but I
16 myself I live in the confines of Community board 12.
17 It has come to my attention within the board lies a
18 disproportionate amount of supportive housing. To be
19 exact Community Board 12 accounts for 68% of all
20 supportive housing in the Borough of Queens, that
21 includes group homes, drug rehabilitation centers,
22 transient housing. 68% of all supportive housing in
23 the Borough of Queens. I don't understand how this
24 has happened, but it must stop.

25

2 Bluestone Group a private investment firm
3 is currently leasing six building on Hollis avenue
4 202 street to 204 street. Bluestone group has
5 remained ambiguous as to what their intentions for
6 these properties are, but their known for turning
7 such properties into some sort of supportive housing.
8 The problem with this group is they do not have the
9 management involved with the supportive housing. How
10 is this happening? Queens's community board has more
11 Department of Homeless services facilities than any
12 other community board in the Borough. The above area
13 I speak of referring to the buildings on Hollis
14 Avenue ok. On the east side of those buildings, on
15 each side of those buildings you have a, I just lost
16 my place here. Let me just start over. On the above
17 area that speak of. On the west side of those
18 buildings you have a daycare center on one side,
19 adjacent to the buildings you have a church and a
20 library. Public School 134, which is grades 1-5,
21 lies one block north. On the other side of the above
22 listed buildings, the east side, you have a City park
23 which is attached to two schools, Intermediate School
24 192 and Charter School Pathways to College. There is
25 an untold amount of children who pass through the

2 corridor on a daily basis to travel to schools and
3 the library. To place these children in harm's way
4 for the sake of Bluestones gain would be
5 unimaginable. It is insulting to our community, that
6 a developer of this magnitude would consider
7 revitalizing the above buildings with the intentions
8 of placing supportive housing at this location. Why
9 would a corporation as large as Bluestone Group
10 consider such a task? I say bluestone doesn't care.
11 Bluestone is simply after profit. If Bluestone Group
12 cared, they would have done a simple survey of the
13 area long before they leased the property. The
14 Bluestone Group, If Bluestone Group cared, they would
15 have consulted the neighborhood via community board.
16 There were several vacant buildings on Hillside
17 Avenue sitting on acres of land where old Creedmoor
18 Mental Institution once thrived. Why didn't
19 Bluestone choose this location to revitalize? Now
20 Bluestone wants to cry foul ball, Bluestone has begun
21 to lobby some of the very politicians in this room
22 earlier to help their cause. I want to reiterate,
23 that Community Board 12 already has 68% of all
24 supportive housing in Queens. The Council must hold
25 every neighborhood accountable for supportive

2 housing. How is it that neighborhoods like Bayside,
3 Whitestone, Little Neck, Douglaston have little, or
4 no supportive housing. This is becoming a greater
5 issue. If the City of New York continues to allow
6 this to happen in south east Queens, the City will be
7 held liable on a federal level. Homeowners such as
8 myself, will sue the City for a disproportionate in
9 placement of supportive housing in minority
10 neighborhoods compared to Caucasians neighborhoods.
11 We ask all neighborhoods take their fair share of
12 supportive housing. The City has allowed
13 corporations like Bluestone Group to arbitrarily
14 place supportive housing where ever they want simply
15 for the sake of profit. Corporations like these have
16 unfairly targeted minority neighborhoods. The
17 administration is either asleep or simply does not
18 care. Ultimately it is the City who will end up
19 liable. The people for the neighborhood are not
20 against homelessness or people in need, but we are
21 against the disproportionate placement of these
22 facilities in south east Queens. Thank you for your
23 time.

24 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much for
25 your testimony.

2 JOANNE FLOYD-WHITEHEAD: Ok my name is
3 Joanne Floyd-Whitehead, I'm here for people for the
4 community, for the community unity, for the basic
5 residents and for the daycare center that's nearby.
6 I would like to acknowledge all the Council people
7 who are hosting this meeting and I think that housing
8 is a crucial issue in New York City that we need to
9 address. I am concerned about the manner in which it
10 is being done. You know there was, got to find my
11 glasses. When people started talking earlier today,
12 when you start talking about the supportive housing.
13 Housing such as The Schmerhorn (sp) House or the
14 Morris House, etc, were highlighted. When those
15 houses were being highlighted there was talk of the
16 special services there. The fact that there are
17 houses for artist and things of that nature and
18 that's good, that's very good, however, when you
19 start really looking at the housing as it is being
20 spoken about, you're talking about housing for people
21 who are and I have it right here; supportive housing
22 is for mental illness, addiction involving the
23 criminal justice etc. Now once again we have no
24 problem with people who are, who need a second chance
25 or need a first chance, which ever it might be,

2 however, these are two separate entities. When we're
3 talking about housing that's supportive for an artist
4 and housing that's supportive for a person that needs
5 supportive services, truly need supportive services,
6 there are two separate things. So I'm hoping that
7 you're not going to be talking about those entities
8 as a way of ushering in low level supportive housing
9 and that's what we tend to find within our
10 communities. Ok, I'm here to discuss the horrendous
11 supportive housing that represent the bulk of the
12 projects that are the areas of south east Queens.
13 Because we're not talking about the supportive
14 housing that you were mentioning or that had been
15 mentioned in highlighted before. Additionally, if
16 we're talking about the fact that we tend to get
17 these houses because there are lower property values
18 then I would be pun to submit that if a certain
19 amount of money is being allocated for those housing
20 developments and you have to pay less to construct it
21 because the property values are less, then there
22 should be extra money for services not less money for
23 services, so therefore there once again should not be
24 less services. So I would like to submit that there
25 is something wrong with the way they're being laid

2 out if the ones that are least costly to build are
3 the ones that are also leased costly maintained in a
4 least costly fashion. Ok so then I would also like to
5 say that while it is necessary to deal with housing
6 immediately and I am sorry but I'm going to continue,
7 that we look at things at a more pre-emptive as
8 opposed to response warehousing of people. Because
9 when we do things that are warehousing of people, it
10 is detrimental to the people as well as to the
11 community and neither one of those are justifiable
12 when we're talking about a City that uses the amount
13 of money that it does use. Then I would also just
14 like to read because we had more than 2,000 letters
15 that were signed by community residence. About 750
16 had been delivered to several people throughout the
17 City and I'm just going to read it so that it's
18 understood that we have those if anybody wants to see
19 them and additional ones. It was written to our
20 Councilman who has been working with us in this
21 behalf and it says: I am writing this letter to
22 alert you to community concerns about a group of
23 structures at hat are being renovated in this
24 neighborhood. The structures are two story buildings
25 that are on the south side of Hollis Avenue between

3 202 and 204 street. These structures are literally
4 across the street from a day care center, two
5 schools, a park, a library and houses of worship.
6 Also, it is a block away from another school and
7 three blocks from a future school.

8 I have taken the time to detail the
9 proximity of facilities in the community that service
10 young children and seniors because there is a concern
11 that these structures will be the site of either a
12 homeless shelter or a supportive housing complex of
13 more than 70 units.

14 While there is always a concern for the
15 welfare of the needy, a facility of this nature
16 requires support services that we do not have. Thus,
17 the placement of another such facility in this
18 community would be harmful to the occupants of the
19 buildings and the community at large. This community
20 is already the site of supportive housing units
21 approximately one block from the buildings being
22 discussed. The lack of oversight from regulatory or
23 supervisory agencies at the site can at best be
24 described as negligent. The community is trained to
25 maintain itself already. To add another such
facility would be scandalous.

2 Saturating our community with these types
3 of facilities is creating unsafe conditions for all
4 residents but specifically our children and seniors.
5 The proximity to schools, a park and all sides, on
6 all sides require young children and seniors
7 accompanied and alone to frequent the immediate area
8 of these building from early morning to late in the
9 evenings and it's check by people from all different
10 walks of life considered; citizen, residents, people
11 who are employed, senior citizens, ministers, voters
12 and things of that nature, so we would just like for
13 you to understand that this is not a matter of having
14 an issue with people who are homeless, anyone can be
15 in that position but the manner in which they are
16 treated and how it impacts the community is our
17 concern. We would like for you to take that in
18 consideration when you vote on that because we are
19 the people who vote for you. Thank you.

20 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much and
21 just quickly, I just I the.. The Schrmerhorn building
22 that's the supportive housing in the district I
23 represent, it is according to their website, it's a
24 217 unit facility with 100 studio apartments were
25 will be given to, I'm reading from their website, to

2 eligible individuals from Community Board II who... who
3 are from Community Board II in Brooklyn and in the
4 performing arts. The remaining apartments which will
5 be 117 housed formally homeless individuals living
6 with HIV and AIDS or mental health needs with on-site
7 social services provided by CUCS which a resident of
8 their program testified earlier, so there is, there
9 is a regular supportive housing that not set aside
10 for individuals in the performing arts as part of the
11 development as well.

12 JOANN FLOYD-WHITEHEAD: And I appreciate
13 what you're saying, my major concern is that you, not
14 you, but that building has services and on site and
15 the supportive housing that comes to our community
16 unfortunately where ever the support is I can't find
17 it.

18 CHAIR LEVIN: This is something that I
19 would love to talk to you further... further about you
20 know one of the things that I think, one of the
21 reason why the model does have it successes is
22 because of the on-site supportive services that... that
23 are a part of the.

24 JOANN FLOYD-WHITEHEAD: We not privy to
25 those things and that's our concern.

2 RUTHIE CAMPBELL: Hello my name is Ruthie
3 Campbell, I'm here representing Community Board 12
4 and Community Unity. I'm speaking to specifically for
5 south east Queens but I'm sure this is a City wide
6 issue. We have never received proper notification of
7 supportive housing coming into our community. For
8 over 40 years the community have been pleading with
9 the owner of the abandoned building on Hollis Avenue
10 in Queens. To do something with the property or to
11 resell the property to community members who wanted
12 develop housing. For years we were ignored, so it's
13 our surprise coming home one day from work, we seeing
14 renovations happening but we don't know what's going
15 on and we hear rumors from our neighbors, no official
16 letter, no official notification from any City
17 agency. We're hearing rumors from our neighbors that
18 the owner had leased the property to Bluestone Group,
19 which is developing, which is developing in property
20 for the City to provide supportive housing but like
21 again we've never received a letter, not even a phone
22 call from any City agency let us knowing what's going
23 on in our own backyard. The Community has been, it's
24 been over a year now, the community have been asking
25 for answers and still to this day we still have not

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2 received a formal letter as to what's going to,
3 what's happening and these... these buildings but the
4 renovations are still going on and again the
5 community have not received any proper notification
6 from any City agency as to what's going on and what's
7 going to happen in our community. And this is
8 unacceptable, as a community board member and as a
9 graduate school organization member, we haven't
10 received notification either and were not asking for
11 anything special were just asking for the same
12 respect that's given to other communities such as
13 (inaudible), Douglaston and Glendale to get proper
14 notification as to what's going on in our community
15 and what's coming into our community. And also were
16 asking for the City to also find out what are needs
17 are for the community as well. Thank you.

18 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much for
19 your testimony. Council Member do you want to add
20 anything.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Yeah I just want
22 to say that I think that there was, there was during
23 throughout the testimony that we've heard today that
24 we've heard had some clarification about what
25 services are and I think that the Council Member has

2 indicated that, that were going to have a meeting and
3 that we can kind of drill down on what these services
4 are and then so that we can find some accountability
5 for those that are listen, we know that we have this
6 Bluestone issue right, but we also know that right
7 around the corner there, from there in Hollis Court
8 there are real issues which is the reason why the
9 community is up at arms about potentially bringing
10 another unit of supportive housing when we have a
11 very similar garden apartment which has first of all
12 taken all of the affordable housing off the market.
13 Most of them 2/3 of cluster units and there is no
14 support whatsoever. My office spends a lot of time
15 and resources dealing with these folks over here. We
16 can't get in to do they type of proper walkthroughs
17 that need to be done with... with management. It's...
18 It's... It's maintained really poorly but the service
19 is more importantly that are supposed to be delivered
20 to these folks, there are no (inaudible) and I want
21 talk about the individuals that are there, that the
22 type of folks that are there but I will tell you that
23 they're not getting the services and the community
24 has been feeling and experiencing this for the past
25 decade so just the rumor that additional type housing

2 is coming in has really caught them really caused
3 them to be up in arms. And so I the reason why I... I
4 invited them and really wanted them to be there
5 because I needed the council, the City and the Admin
6 to really know what they are going through, what our
7 community is going through and the fact that we
8 certainly are at front, up front in providing
9 services doing our fair share of providing not just
10 housing but whatever services, City services are
11 being delivered. We want to make sure that there
12 being done equitably and when they do come into our
13 community that they, that there the same services
14 that are being delivered in other places. So I'm
15 thankful for them coming out and delivering that
16 message but I'm more hopeful from the information
17 that came out today, I think that some of the
18 collaborations that can be done and really support
19 that can be given around what real supportive housing
20 is. I think first of all there's a misnomer about
21 that, that I even had right out what supportive
22 housing and the data that has been delivered and so
23 forth. Certainly we have a lot of it in community
24 but I am, I am the one thing that I think that were
25 going to be able to do here from aside from address

2 the Bluestone issue but is to first address those who
3 were already there and hold them accountable for the
4 tax dollars that they're receiving on a consistent
5 basis and not delivering those services to the people
6 that they are contracted to deal with so, and a lot
7 of times I think I profited my testimony by saying
8 that there many bad actors here and here and my
9 office has actually been working with advocates over
10 the last few weeks to drill down on how do we weed
11 out those bad actors and be supportive of those who
12 are really in this to... to provide services to those
13 in need. So I'm thankful for this but I'm... I'm more
14 thankful for the opportunity that this hearing is
15 going to present to... to all the advocates in the
16 future.

17 ANTHONY RIVERS: I would like to just add
18 one thing. I found it particularly disturbing that
19 Senator Hevase (sp) would kind of suggest that the
20 reason why our community is subject to more
21 supportive housing than maybe some communities on the
22 north side of Queens is because of the property
23 value. You must have a different criteria beside
24 property value for placing these types of facilities
25 in our neighborhood. It still must be done on a fair

2 and equitable basis. It just can't be done strictly
3 because if you believe it cheaper to build in a
4 particular area, especially in Community Board 12,
5 it's insulting and if we really think about it, it is
6 almost rhetorical if you continue to dump these types
7 of facilities into our neighborhood, how in the world
8 is our property value ever going to go up. Because
9 these things are always perceived as being negative.

10 CHAIR LEVIN: I absolutely I represent
11 Community Board 1 in Brooklyn and Community Board 1
12 in Brooklyn along with Community Board 12 in Queens
13 and 2 Community Boards in the Bronx. I handle
14 between the four of those community districts 80% of
15 the Waste Transfer Stations in the City of New York
16 and I have legislation Intro. 495 that seeks to bring
17 more fair share when it comes to Waste Transfer
18 Stations but you know the Community Board want in
19 Brooklyn for sure handles more than it's fair share
20 so I'm very sensitive to a to the concerns that you
21 are raising here and in addition I want to thank you
22 for, for bringing up the issue of I think that it's
23 important to have standards across the board in terms
24 of support services on-site. This plan calls for ½
25 of the units to be in new congregate on-site

2 facilities and then and then another ½ for scatter
3 site model, which... which presents a separate
4 challenge because it's not on-site all the time and
5 there are providers, the providers that I'm familiar
6 with that I've worked with do a fantastic job in both
7 settings. But the setting of not having on-site
8 does... does present a different set of challenges and
9 additional set of challenges and so I thank you very
10 much for, for bringing that to this community
11 attention.

12 ANTHONY RIVERS: Thank you.

13 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much. Thank
14 you Council Member Miller. Nicholas Gifford from
15 ICL, Larnell Johnson, ICL, Catherine Trapani from New
16 Destiny Housing, Michael Czackes from GMHC. Whoever
17 wants to go ahead and thanks, thanks to this panel to
18 the previous panel for your patience obviously this
19 has been a long afternoon.

20 LARNELL JOHNSON: My name is Larnell
21 Johnson. I live in supportive housing. I came here
22 today and I thank you for this opportunity. I came
23 here today because I want to be the face of
24 supportive housing.

25

2 CHAIR LEVIN: You have to continue to
3 speak into the mic but you can stand that's fine.

4 LARNELL JOHNSON: I want to, I want to be
5 the face supportive housing, I'm standing up because
6 I want you to see me, I want you to see all of me.
7 I'm the face of supportive housing. Without
8 supportive housing I probably would be dead now. You
9 know, I was on drugs, I was homeless, you name it
10 I've been there. I've been to the top but you know
11 with hustling and all of that. I've been way way to
12 the bottom and I've been everywhere in between sir.
13 And without supportive housing I'm just one apartment
14 away from being homeless you understand so if you get
15 rid of supportive housing, I'm homeless. I need
16 supportive housing in order to live here in the City.
17 Now I hear people complaining about supportive
18 housing and in their neighborhoods, bring it on
19 because we need it. It think the only difference,
20 there's no, there's no affordable housing, there's
21 either high rent, there's either expensive housing or
22 supportive housing. There aint no more in-between.
23 You understand. So we need the affordable housing
24 that I mean the a housing to live. I can't afford, I
25 can't afford to pay rent, the rents that's in my

2 neighborhood. I live in downtown Brooklyn. You see
3 all the, you see all the cranes in downtown Brooklyn?

4 CHAIR LEVIN: I know, I work with them.

5 LARNELL JOHNSON: Without affordable
6 housing I would be out of downtown Brooklyn in a
7 minute you know so. I thank the Mayor, I thank this
8 panel and I thank any, I wish I could have spoke
9 earlier to everybody you know. To let them know that
10 theirs people out there that need you and they need
11 your help and I appreciate you doing this today and I
12 appreciate the opportunity to be here to speak to
13 you. And to show you the face of... of... of what was
14 homeless, homelessness and helplessness you know.
15 That now I think I'm a valuable part of society you
16 know and I want to stay that way so keep it coming
17 ok. Thank you.

18 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you. Thank you very
19 much Mr. Johnson, I appreciate your very much your
20 testimony and for your patience and want to assure
21 you that your testimony is on the record, it's on
22 video, it's online and it's there for... for everybody
23 to see so I thank you very much for your patience and
24 staying here.

2 NICHOLAS GIFFORD: My name is Nicholas
3 Gifford I'm for the Institute for Community Living
4 (ICL). This is all new to me so you have to sort of
5 bear with me, but I'm try and get the important point
6 across toward the end. Mine is more like a scatter
7 site situation and the background of it, my father
8 died, my mother moved to Connecticut, my brother sold
9 a one family house that they were living in and at
10 the very last moment he said if you want to collect
11 something or furniture or so forth, go to it because
12 we're closing the sale like in two day. So I
13 gathered as much furniture as I possible could and
14 put it in storage knowing that I eligible for a
15 scattered site apartment and I was called in said we
16 can find an apartment for you, if you want to look on
17 your own we can give you some pointers how to go
18 about it, so with their hand me down family car, like
19 a 10 year old family car, I spend two solid months
20 looking for a very, I found it a very nice legal
21 basement apartment in Dyker Heights Brooklyn. Three
22 short blocks from a park and Dyker Beach Golf Course
23 and a few blocks away there are literally mansions,
24 nice safe perfect place so I meet the, it's owned by
25 two a couple a married couple and at that time the

2 wife was a teacher she say's I'll meet you after
3 school and will take a look at the apartment and they
4 had just reconditioned it and it was in the budget of
5 a supportive housing budget. I said I'll take it and
6 were talking and talking and talking and she oh by
7 the way could I ask you where you get your income and
8 I am honest and sort of naive and I said well I've
9 been, I been released from a psychiatric hospital,
10 Kings County of the psychiatric ward there and I'm on
11 SSI and everything just stopped. Now just try and
12 describe it. It was quite clear, it was blatantly
13 obvious the last thing she wanted to do was rent a
14 nice apartment in a nice area to somebody who'd just
15 gotten out of a psychiatric ward and was SSI, it
16 couldn't have been clearer and I was just lucky, I
17 was really lucky. The Doctor of phycology who's in
18 charge of my case voluntarily administered therapy,
19 physiotherapy over a four month period. She really
20 knew me and she gave me her telephone, her
21 professional telephone number as a reference so I
22 said please please before you reach a quick decision,
23 call this number and I gave her the background on it,
24 so they rented the apartment to me. Now this is I
25 have very good relations with the neighbors, I've

2 gone through a revolution with the right help
3 psychiatric help at Downstate, Sueme Downstate (sp)
4 Hospital you know it's at a outpatient. Everything
5 is fine until financial problems in ICL, well not,
6 the financing the supplement for the apartment.
7 Rents are going up and up and up. The vacancy rate
8 is... is almost nil and in my area you can see these
9 are migrants from high income areas they can't, they
10 can't afford the rent. You have this turnover in
11 migrants there, so my... my land, my landlords they
12 know that the apartment is worth much more than their
13 getting for it. But this is the, it was four years
14 ago, 19 years after they first rented it to me. I
15 get a call from the housing program, I go to a
16 meeting, I am told in two weeks you have to be out of
17 that apartment. Psychiatric crisis, I didn't know
18 what to do, I was spending 20 hours a day on
19 searching for apartments. Looking for every
20 possibility and drinking a hell of a lot of alcohol
21 just to calm my nerves down. A true psychiatric
22 crisis and by accident my landlord the husband said
23 I'm checking the drains of people above you how your
24 drains there ok but there's one outside the door, he
25 busted it right outside of the apartment. He says

2 I'll see you there and he sees all the things that
3 I'm ready to throw out in the garbage. He said what
4 is this, what is this all about, he said, so I told
5 him. I had a month ago I was told I had to two weeks
6 to get out, he said do you have a number to call? He
7 literally re-negotiated down his rent in order to
8 facilitate my staying there but he said if the State
9 of New, you're in for another two years but if the
10 State of New York doesn't raise their stipend you
11 better have a place to stay. Well it turns out that
12 was four years ago but I've been living under the
13 sword of you know at some point Nick enough is enough
14 you know so. (inaudible) was saying a few an hour or
15 so ago, one thing about a Governor Cuomo come to a
16 crisis, he's the best. Let me tell you when I'm
17 facing the possibly of having to move furniture, what
18 to do and one solution I got from an organization in
19 New Jersey. We can find an apartment for you no
20 problem, you can have your own apartment. There's
21 one catch, you have to be homeless when you apply for
22 it. Faced with those types of possibly, my message
23 is please Governor Cuomo your great at crisis's,
24 solving crisis's well I'm living under a crisis's you
25 know. Am I going to have to abandon a nice situation

2 and become homeless in order to get an apartment?

3 I'll leave it at that. Please Governor Cuomo.

4 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you Mr. Gifford.

5 Thank you very much for your testimony.

6 CATHERINE TRAPANI: Hi my name is
7 Catherine Trapani and I am the Director of the
8 Housing Link Program at New Destiny Housing
9 Corporation. We're a nonprofit that's been around
10 since 1994 that is dedicated to the long term safety
11 and stability of survivors of domestic violence and
12 others at risk of homelessness.

13 Homelessness continues to be one of the
14 major challenges facing New York and permanent
15 supportive housing in the New York, New York
16 agreement are critical tools for addressing these
17 problems. I would like to thank the Mayor for his
18 commitment to building these units, 15,000 units of
19 supportive housing and urge the state to match that
20 commitment so that the full demand for units can be
21 met across the State of New York.

22 The City and State must pool their
23 resources so we can serve all homeless New Yorkers
24 who need additional support to succeed in permanent
25 housing. We are gratified to see that the Mayor's

2 plan provides City resources for homeless families
3 and specifically for the victims of domestic violence
4 for the first time.

5 New York City's shelter systems houses
6 around 15,000 families, on any given night including
7 25,000 children. Families and children make up the
8 majority of users of the homeless system and
9 according to the Independent Budget Office of New
10 York City, domestic violence is now the second
11 leading cause of homelessness for families with over
12 30% of homeless families in New York City's shelters
13 that are there because of domestic violence.
14 Families are also remaining in shelters longer than
15 ever before with the average length of stay around 14
16 months.

17 So we've heard about the increase in DV
18 in homelessness before and the dedication of new
19 shelter beds for survivors of domestic violence which
20 is a nice stop gap but really seeing that the
21 commitment to housing DV survivors permanently is
22 huge, it's a huge game changer so were very grateful
23 for that. Reducing family homelessness means
24 addressing the needs of low-income domestic violence
25 survivors. Yet, homeless families headed by domestic

2 violence survivors have, in the past not had had,
3 have not had access to permanent supportive housing
4 when they leave the shelters. Without permanent
5 affordable housing victims are at risk for continuing
6 the cycle of homelessness and domestic violence.

7 We've heard earlier about the New York,
8 New York III agreement which created 9,000 units of
9 supportive housing, of which over 1,500 were
10 allocated to families which were around 17% of those
11 units. I want go through all of the different
12 numbers but I will tell you that fewer than 10
13 families from domestic violence shelters were able to
14 utilize housing under the New York, New York III
15 agreement. So less than 10 families exited HRA
16 domestic violence shelters were able to access
17 permanent supportive housing under the New York, New
18 York III agreement. Even though there were 1,500
19 plus units dedicated to families. An estimated 20%.

20 CHAIR LEVIN: I'm sorry, I'm sorry I'll
21 give you a little extra time. Why is that, why?

22 CATHERINE TRAPANI: The system, there was
23 not a separate category for survivors of domestic
24 violence in the New York, New York III agreement and
25 that categorical ineligibility meant that any DV

2 survivors that were going to get in had to qualify in
3 some other way that domestic violence and the trauma
4 associated with it was not sufficient to qualify for
5 housing even though we know it's a driver of
6 homelessness and certainly impacts one's ability to
7 succeed and permanent affordable housing. So that
8 you know basically in I know I'm over time but I just
9 want to say what a big deal it is that DV survivors
10 have been acknowledged and and the Mayors plan and we
11 really urge the the state to... to come to the table
12 and continue this commitment in existing information
13 that we have from the state and their work towards
14 creating supportive housing agreement. DV's been
15 acknowledged there as well. So this is a really
16 wonderful time for the City and the State to work
17 together and were happy to work with the
18 administration to do that, to get to the... the number
19 that we need. So thank you very much for the
20 opportunity to speak today.

21 MICHAEL CZACKES: My name is Michael
22 Czackes and I'm from the Gay Men's Health Crisis.
23 Were the world's first AIDS service organizations and
24 last year we serviced about 9,300 clients and by when
25 speaking about with our clients on in our office.

2 One of the top things that we here is housing issues.
3 There not around issues not as much around issue with
4 access to medication and access to other things, it's
5 access to housing. And we know that as a part of the
6 Governor's Task Force to end AIDS which GMHC is a
7 part of along with Housing Works and Vocal New York
8 and number of other organizations. Housing is key to
9 ending the epidemic. People are in housing are more
10 likely to be able to take their HIV meds, their more
11 likely to in general to be testing the first place
12 and so that's really a bearer to care is not having
13 housing, stable housing and especially supportive
14 housing with services. We know that if done properly
15 supportive housing can offer everything from therapy
16 to medication, substance abuse counseling, but also
17 job training, housing maintenance, building security,
18 things that these individuals have a right to have.
19 We also know that supportive housing in the City
20 overall the last agreement has reduced stays in
21 shelters, hospitals, psychiatric centers and
22 incarceration. So just to keep short GMHC and the
23 task force the Governor's task force are more than
24 happy to start advocating to make sure on the State
25 that this State chips in it's fair share to make a

2 New York, New York IV agreement possible and one that
3 also includes those living with HIV and AIDS.

4 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much to this
5 panel for your testimony in particular I want to
6 thank you Mr. Johnson and Mr. Gifford for... for your
7 courage to come here and tell your story and to stand
8 up for others that are in need of good supportive
9 housing, I want to thank you.

10 LARNELL JOHNSON: Could I just say one
11 thing. The supportive housing, I hear you guys
12 talking about the new stuff that's coming and all of
13 that but my cabinet is about 20 years old.

14 CHAIR LEVIN: Yes.

15 LARNELL JOHNSON: I might need a new
16 cabinet you know what I mean. We need to take care of
17 the stuff that's here to.

18 CHAIR LEVIN: Yes.

19 LARNELL JOHNSON: You understand.

20 CHAIR LEVIN: Oh yes.

21 LARNELL JOHNSON: You know we can't let
22 it run down, you know we got to take care of the
23 stuff that we already have you know like... like... like
24 put in new cabinets, you know give them more than
25 just a paint job you know what I mean.

2 CHAIR LEVIN: Yes.

3 LARNELL JOHNSON: You know do the floors,
4 you know.

5 CHAIR LEVIN: Capital means are there.

6 LARNELL JOHNSON: Refrigerators, you know
7 new washing machine and dry you know stuff like that
8 you know.

9 CHAIR LEVIN: Absolutely.

10 LARNELL JOHNSON: Periodically, let's...
11 let's... let's not loose what we have.

12 CHAIR LEVIN: You got it, absolutely.

13 LARNELL JOHNSON: Thank you.

14 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you, thank you. Ok so
15 were going to call up the following names if anybody
16 is still here you are welcomed to testify. Calvin
17 Hewitt, Calvin Hewitt, Mark Greenberg, Mr. Romel Jean
18 Viel, Jean Viel, Romel Jean Viel, Clayton Brooks,
19 Josie Maldonado and Glen Greenridge. Ok whoever
20 wants to begin. Mics got to be on.

21 CLAYTON BROOKS: There we go, now it's
22 working. Thank you Mr. Chairman, thank you Andrea
23 and everyone else that's here and is waited until the
24 end the day. I also want to thank the City Council
25 for the beautiful music in the other room, it has

2 made the afternoon very pleasant. My name is Clayton
3 Brooks, I'm the Director of Advocacy in Covenant
4 House New York. Since 1972 we've served the homeless
5 youth of this City and any homeless youth who come
6 through our doors. This last year we housed over
7 2,000 young people in our shelter system, in our
8 shelter and in our transitional program we housed 242
9 young people including 39 mothers with children for
10 an 18 month stay. And it's particularly for those
11 young people I come to speak today. Those who have
12 stayed in our program for 18 months and are looking
13 to exit to another place. I know Council Member
14 Levin you spoke earlier about youth aging out of
15 foster care and that's a significant number of the
16 youth that we serve. And we also serve young people
17 who are 18 ¼ and encounter abuse and neglect in their
18 home and are too old to enter the foster care system
19 and nevertheless find our doors in the same way that
20 a young person who's gone through the ACS system
21 would have. We are pushing, I know that Council
22 Member Williams asked Commissioner Banks earlier
23 about the breakdown and populations in the agreement
24 but we are pushing with the group of advocates
25 working on this issue to carve out 1,500 beds for

2 youth, however, we would like to expand the
3 qualifications within that carve out to not simply
4 include youth aging out of foster care and youth with
5 an access to mental health diagnosis but also any
6 young person who is had some terms of stay in a
7 runaway and homeless youth facility. As I mentioned
8 earlier were particular, I'm particularly coming to
9 talk today about the youth who've stayed in our
10 transitional longer term program with us for two
11 years. Part of the requirement to be in that program
12 is part or full time employment but yet we still find
13 upon exit we work through our array of support
14 services to try to equip our young people for self-
15 sufficient after their time with us. And many of
16 them are able to transition into... into market rate
17 apartments but there are significate number about 50%
18 who within six months of exhausted the saving that
19 they've accrued during their time with us and many of
20 whom retuned to the DHS adult shelter system. And
21 it's particularly for those young people that I'd
22 like to come and speak today. I have two stories
23 that I'd like to briefly share about some of the
24 young people who've entered our program. One young
25 woman entered as a result of her mother passing away

2 at the age of 19 and she having no other family in
3 the area. When she entered Covenant House through
4 our Workforce Program she was able to gain a job at
5 Starbucks as a barista which she held for six months
6 in the program but unfortunately lost her employment
7 midway through and was unable to find other
8 employment during her stay with us. Upon exiting
9 the program she unfortunately was stable for a little
10 bit couch surfing with some friends and place when
11 she found us but she now resides in the Franklin
12 Women's Shelter in the DHS system.

13 Another young woman is now couch surfing
14 with her child because of being unable to survive off
15 of the wage that she receives at her job at McDonalds
16 and being under employed. They're a lot of young
17 people that simply fall through the cracks that we
18 serve and they don't fit into the particular
19 categories the New York, New York III agreement but
20 nevertheless end up being a burden for the City
21 through DHS and the adult shelter system we believe
22 that this is a unique opportunity to focus on this
23 population and with some minimal value ads and
24 through supportive housing we can stabilize them to
25

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2 self-sufficient so that they do not remain a burden
3 to the system.

4 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you.

5 CLAYTON BROOKS: Thank you.

6 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much General
7 Welfare and Housing Committee, Co-Chairman Steven
8 Levin. It's a pleasure to be here. My name is Romel
9 Jean Viel. Like the Chairman said earlier I am Mr.
10 Romel Jean Viel and I represent the Coalition of
11 Concerned Citizens for Complete Justice of which I am
12 the founder. While being not expert in either
13 politics or social services and after having heard
14 the previous presentation made in these Council
15 Chambers by such professionals as New York State
16 Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, New York City
17 Commissioner Steven Banks. Supportive housing of New
18 York Executive Director Lowvi Masue (sp), Community
19 Access Executive Coordinator Carla Rabinowitz among
20 other people. I would like to suggest that the New
21 York City Council considers approving resolution 504
22 as soon as feasible. Thank you so much.

23 CHAIR LEVIN: Thank you very much. Thank
24 you to this panel for your testimony and for your
25 patience. It's been a long afternoon after a close

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2 to a four hour hearing and I appreciate you being
3 here for the duration and for staying to testify and
4 we appreciate your input this evening. Thank you,
5 thank you so much. And do any of the other any of
6 the members of the public wish to testify further?
7 Ok seeing none, this hearing is adjourned.

8 [gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS/COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL WELFARE

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 December 6, 2015