

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

----- X

May 25, 2022
Start: 10:08 a.m.
Recess: 9:28 p.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 1)

B E F O R E: Justin L. Brannan,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Speaker Adrienne E. Adams
Diana Ayala
Charles Barron
Gale A. Brewer
Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
Tiffany Cabán
David M. Carr
Amanda Farías
Kamillah Hanks
Crystal Hudson
Rita C. Joseph
Ari Kagan
Farah N. Louis
Francisco P. Moya
Chi A. Ossé
Keith Powers
Pierina Ana Sanchez
Marjorie Velázquez
Julie Won

A P P E A R A N C E S

Maria Barbara Lopez
District 38 Community Leader in Sunset Park

Steven Maldonado
Interpreter

Sarai Rodriguez
Mobile Food Workers Program

Mark Cannizzaro
President of Council of School Supervisors and
Administrators

Henry Garrido
Executive Director District Council 37

Michael Mulgrew
United Federation of Teachers President

Shirley Aldebol
Vice President SEIU 32BJ

Michael Yee
Local 3 IBEW

Beth Cheverie
Testifying on behalf of the Laborers Union Local
79's Business Manager, Mike Prohaska

Oren Barzilay
President Local 2507

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Deborah Allman
President Local 1930 DC37

Joe Puleo
President of Local 983

Michael Burke
Grievance Rep Local 983 DC37

Vinny Musillo
President of DC 37's Local 1508

Marlena Giga
PEP Officer for over 20-years

Faith Behum
Senior Advocacy and Policy Advisor at UJA
Federation of New York

Kevin Jones
Associate State Director for Efficacy at AARP New
York

Bill Meehan
Sage

Vic Benson
Testifying on behalf of Jeanette Estima

MJ Okma
Sage

Daniel Patrick Clay
Neighborhood Gardener in Prospect Park

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Rosa Chang
Cofounder of Brooklyn Bridge Manhattan

Cory Hassin testifying on behalf of Lynn Kelly,
the Executive Director of the New York
Restoration Project

Marisol Durain
Proud Bronx Native and Community Volunteer

Elvira Uribe
Organizer for CASA

George Sotiroff
CASA

Julie Colon
Tenant Organizer with the Northwest Bronx
Community and Clergy Coalition

Wanda Martinez
Tenant Leader with the Catholic Migration
Services

Mercedes Escoto
CASA

Anya Mukarji-Connolly
Associate Director of Policy at Brooklyn Defender
Services

Brendan Cheney
Director of Policy and Communications at the New
York Housing Conference

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

James Davis

Professional Staff Congress at CUNY

Luisa Rodriguez

Member of a Til Coalition

Tierra Labrada

Supportive Housing Network of New York

Monsignor Kevin Sullivan

Rockeya McVay

Member of DSA's New York City Chapter

Katherine Clad

Member of DSA's NIC Chapter

Tami Lin-Moges

Nature Conservancy

Aaron Sanders

Natural Areas Conservancy

Adam Ganser

New Yorkers for Parks

Randi Levine

Policy Director at Advocates for Children of New York

Salimatou Doumbouya

CUNY University Student Senate

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Andrea Parker
Gowanus Canal Conservancy

Carol Verdi
Heartshare Human Services of New York

Christopher Treiber
Interagency Council Developmental Disabilities
Agencies

Gregory Brender
Day Care Council of New York

Jeanne Alter
Kennedy Children Center

Leonie Haimson
Class Size Matters

Jane Selden
350 NYC

Maggie Clarke
Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board

Sharon Silbermann
Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board

Rachel Brown
Western Queens Community Land Trust

Will Spisak
New Economy Project

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Valerie Reyes-Jimenez
New York City Community Organizer for Housing
Works

Jordyn Rosenthal
Advocacy Coordinator at Community Access

Seth Pollack
Ending the Epidemic Community Coalition

Greg Mihailovich
Community Advocacy Director for the American
Heart Association here in New York City

Christopher Norwood
Executive Director of Health People

Michael Hernandez
Community Strive and Recovery

Joneé Billy
Director of Strategic Partnerships and External
Affairs for PowerPlay

Quadira Coles
Deputy Director of Policy at Girls for Gender
Equity

David Cruz
Speaking on behalf of Rachel Gasdick with New
York Edge

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Potriankamanis Queano Nur
Campaigning for budget for AAPI and culture and
mental health

Mary Cheng
Chinese American Planning Council

Terry Collins
Chinese American Planning Council

Vanita Yogeshwar
Chinese American Planning Council

Benice Mach
Chinese American Planning Council

Darren Mack
Freedom Agenda

Eileen Maher
Vocal New York and Freedom Agenda

Cristina Rodriguez-Hart
New York City Queens Resident and a Member of
DSA's NYC Chapter

Alice Bufkin
Citizens Committee for Children of New York

Kenny Mineya
Make the Road New York

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Katie Bravo

Trans Immigrant Project Make the Road

Kimberly George

President and CEO of Project Guardianship

Michelle Neugebauer

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation

Sophia Harrison

Founder and Executive Director of Arts House

Schools of Music, Dance, and Fine Arts

Janice Monger

Staten Island Museum

Lucy Sexton

New Yorkers for Culture and Arts

Ariel Herrera

Research and Advocacy Manager for Dance NYC

Donna Schneiderman

Domestic Worker Employer and a Member of Hand and Hand

KC Wagner

Domestic Worker Employer and a member of Hand and Hand

Lisa Bernstein

Domestic Worker Employer, member of Hand and Hand, Domestic Employers Network

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Tatiana Bejar
New York City Lead Organizer at Hand and Hand,
the Domestic Employers Network

Ben Fuller-Googins
Carrol Gardens Association

Rosemary Martinez
National Domestic Worker Alliance

Salua Baidya
Hand and Hand, the Domestic Employers Network

Jim Dill
Executive Director of Housing and Services Inc

Luisa Pineda
College Retention Specialist at the College
Access and Success program at Queens Community
House

Merble Reagon
Executive Director of the Women's Center for
Education and Career Advancement

Alyssa Figueroa
Coalition Coordinator of the Urban Youth
Collaborative

Paul Nagle
Executive Director of Stonewall Community
Development Initiative

Mateo Guerrero Tabares
Trans-Immigrant project Make the Road

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Chauvet Bishop
Audre Lorde Project

Elana Lancaster
Ackerman Institute for the Families Gender and
Family Project

Dr. Lisa Sloan
Pride Center of Staten Island

Kayt Tiskus
Director of Legislative Strategy and Special
Projects at Bowen Public Affairs Consulting

Ivette Ayala
Sheltering Arms

Lorenzo Brooks
Case Manager at Urban Pathways

Natasha Connor
Sheltering Arms

Nicholas O'Toole
Advocacy Associate at Urban Pathways

Nora Moran
Director of Policy and Advocacy at United
Neighborhood Houses

Bryan Fotino
University Settlement

Felipe Vargas
Senior Vice President of Programs at the Doe Fund

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Alex Martinez

Kings Bridge Heights Community Center

Catherine Mykytiuk

Kings Bridge Heights Community Center and KHCC

Emily Miles

Executive Director of the New York City Alliance
Against Sexual Assault

Brian Trezevant

Program Director at Dwyer Gardens Community
Center

Chan Henry

Housing Specialist at Urban Pathways

Christopher Bromson

Executive Director of the Crime Victims Treatment
Center

Carlos Castel Croke

New York League of Conservation Voters

Lonnie Portis

We Act for Environmental Justice

Carlos Castro Croke

Associate for New York City Programs of the New
York League of Conservation Voters

Allison Guardi (SP?)

Family Healing Ambassador, a Parent Guardian and
Volunteer Position created during the pandemic

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Jennifer Vasquez
District 10 Healing Ambassador

Tory Kaso
Campaign Director of Carbon Free and Healthy
Schools

Kathleen DiPerna
Director of Government Relations at Rethink

Nicholas Buess
Food Bank for New York City

Lisa Gilday
Chief Operating Officer at Birch Family Services

Crystal Rodriguez
Mom of Five from the Bronx, Speaking on Behalf of
Erika Gonzalez

Jolene Gunther-Doherty
Director of the Guild for Exceptional Childrens
Preschool 4410 program

Jennifer Choi
Special Education Advocate at Special Support
Services

Maggie Moroff
Arise Coalition

Chantal Hinds
Policy Entrepreneur at Next100

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Joy Cambe
Program Coordinator for Empire Liver Foundation

Saaif Alam
Student from John Jay College

Gary English
Executive Director of Get it Get it

Sharone Kaufman
Deputy Attorney in charge of the Immigration Law
Unit at the Legal Aid Society

Rosa Rodriguez
President of 7981 Post Avenue Tenant Association

Jose Martinez
Harm Reduction Associate for National Harm
Reduction Coalition

Jamal Westmoreland
Registered Nurse employed at Woodhall Hospital in
Brooklyn

Jeannette Miller
CAMBA Legal Services

Shane Correia
Deputy Director of Government Partnerships at the
Center for Court Innovation

Lee Sessions
New York City resident and a member of DSA's NYC
Chapter

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Pablo Estupiñan
Coalition Coordinator for the Right to Counsel
New York City Coalition

Nicholas Navarro
Volunteer with the New York Civil Liberties Union

Patrick Boettcher
Veteran of the Army a King Student

Savannah Millard
Volunteer with the NYCLU

Christine James-McKenzie
Jobs First NYC

Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez
Deputy Director of the Street Vendor Project

Andy Bowen
New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives\

Hannah Towfiek
Middle Eastern and North African Member Organizer
at the Street Vendor Project

Mohamed Attia
Director of the Street Vendor Project

Jackie Del Valle
Coordinator of Stabilizing NYC at Take Root
Justice

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Rumi Akong

Trans Justice Program Coordinator at the Audre
Lorde Project

Priscilla Alexander

Healing Ambassador for PS 199 in the Bronx

Lily Liang

NYC Organizer of National Asian Pacific American
Woman's Forum

Ravi Reddi

Associate Director of Advocacy and Policy at the
Asian American Federation

Lloyd Feng

Policy Coordinator at the Coalition for Asian
American Children and Families CACF

Mohamed Amin

Founder and Executive Director of the Caribbean
Equality Project

Julian McKinley

Senior Director of Democracy at Work Institute

Jonathan Robinson

Communications Director for Marine Park Alliance

Daniela Contreras

Organizer at the National Domestic Workers
Alliance

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Stephanie Glass
Against the Strategic Response Group

Victoire S.
Against the Strategic Response Group

Jessica Marshall
Adjunct Professor

Cheryl Warfield
In support of an additional \$100 million in
funding for Arts and Culture

Eleni DeSiervo
Senior Director of Government Relations at the
Lincoln Center

Jessica Chen
Artistic Director and Choreographer of JChen
Project

Francine Garber-Cohen
President of Regina Opera

Taryn Sacramone
Executive Director of Queens Theater and Chair of
the Cultural Institutions Group

Nathaniel Evans
member of Freedom Agenda

Zachary Katznelson
Executive Director of the Lippman Commission

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Shalonda Curtis-Hackett
Parent of Three at Community-Based Doula

Shania Morris
Youth Leader at Make the Road New York and the
Urban Youth Collaborative

Akeria Adams
Youth Leader at the Urban Youth Collaborative

Aji Gaye
Freshman at High School in the Bronx

Laura Jean Hawkins
Advisory Board Chair of Astoria Queens Sharing
and Caring

Meghan Chappell
Program Manager at Empire Liver Foundation

Debra Ack
Board Member of the East New York Community Land
Trust

Beverly Pabon
Officer of 2 East on 27th Street Tenant
Association

Gigi Verkaik
Senior Director of Development at Encore
Community Services

Boris Santos
East New York CLT

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Stephani Espinal
Organizer with Family Immigration Services based
in Queens

Karen Asner
Volunteer President of the Friends of St.
Nicholas Park

Rachel Barkley
Law Student at Benjamin and Cardozo School of Law

Sarah Williams
Executive Director of Green Guerillas

Suzette Simon
NY Laughs

Michael Pope
Executive Director of Youth Represent

Amanda Porch
Community Organizer who dedicates a lot of time
to helping the houses community

Ari Silver
New York City Resident asking to defund the
Strategic Response Group from the police budget

Chauncey T. Young
Director of the Parent Action Committee

Rasheedah Brown Harris
Legal Services NYC LSNY

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Crystal Rodriguez
Mom of Five from the Bronx

Chris Langfield
Member of the New York City DSA

Dahlia Forte
Member of DAC's NYC Chapter

Indira Martinez
In Vivamente Opposition to Mayor Eric Adams
Executive Budget

Benjamin Spierman
General Director of Bronx Opera and a Board
Member of the New York Opera Alliance

Carlye Eckert
Representative of Dance Parade

Scott Daly
New York Junior Tennis and Learning, NYJTL

Kimberly Olsen
Executive Director of the New York City Arts and
Education Roundtable

Athena Bernkopf
East Harlem El Barrio Community Land Trust

Cassandra Warney
Corporation for Supportive Housing

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Lisa Gitelson
CEO of the Fresh Air Fund

Shannon O'Neill Fonseca
Senior at Hunter College

Annette Robinson
Harlem's Community Board 9's Housing Land Use and
Zoning Committee

Darlene Jackson
Member of Freedom Agenda and the Parent Leaders
Live Action Network

Grace Ortez
Member of Freedom Agenda

Jeff Lau
Director of the Adult Literacy Program at the
Chinese American Planning Council

Justice Laboy
CBC Extension Project Reach

Ethan Cyrus
Member of the Youth Food Advocates

Faith Catherine Jones
9th Grader at Brooklyn Technical High School and a
Member of Youth Advocates

Leslie Gomez Rivera
Senior in High School

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Katelin Wong

Liz Accles
Speaking on Cafeteria Enhancement

Shavani Shah
Junior at Stuyvesant High School and I'm a member
of the Youth Food Advocates

Ameer Ahasser
Junior at Stuyvesant High School

Anna Lilla Araiza
Director of Youth Leadership at Community Food
Advocates

Ashley Liu
Junior at Brooklyn Technical High School

Tracey Fu
Member of DSA's New York City Chapter

Yuni Kavalerchik
Member of the DSA's New York City Chapter

Jennifer Jones

Kay Gabriel
Member of DSA and I'm an Adjunct Instructor at
NYU

Melissa Kagle
Member of DSA's New York City Chapter

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Araceli Espejel Mena

Steven Maldonado
Interpreter

Rob Katz

Kevin Wolf
Senior Government Affairs Manager at the Center
for New York City Neighborhoods

Benjamin Holda
Diverting Funding from the SRG Unit of the NYPD

David Jenkins
Union Member and a Member of NYC DSA

Marlowe Boettcher
A Member of DSA

Zade Haobsh
Member of DSA's NYC Chapter

Brian Kepple

Malat Seyoum
Worker Co-op Policy Advocate for the New York
City Network of Worker Cooperatives

Martha Larson
Member of DSA

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Eric Seligman

Economics Professor at CUNY's John Jay College of
Criminal Justice

Madeleine Jackson

In support of Section 9

Mimi Shelton

Black transgender woman and a New York resident

Willie Dean

Entertainer/Producer

Deigo Brown

Real Estate agent in the town Manhattan

Charaya Hardy

Recording Secretary for the CEC

Joy Clarke

Amy Tsai

Parent Leader of the New Settlement Parent Action
Committee

Jazzy Rivera

Family Healing Ambassador of PS123 and the
District Healing Ambassador of District 32

Judith Bautista

Alma Rocha

Member of the National Alliance Domestic Worker

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Deborah Humes Jordan
Leader of National Domestic Workers Alliance

Denise Frederick
National Domestic Workers Alliance

Harnet Mugwuji
Leader of the National Domestic Workers Alliance

Jacque Ori

Marissa Senteno
National Domestic Workers Alliance

Dave Tallivan

Gloria Manzano
Family Healing Ambassador for District 31

Namrata Pradhan
Organizer at Adhikaar

Kieran Clarke
Member/Leader of the National Domestic Workers
Alliance

Gail Haywood
Member with the National Domestic Workers
Alliance

Jennifer Downes
Asking to remove the funding of the NYPD's
Strategic Response Group

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Ryan Chavez
Program Director of the Basement Apartment

1

2 SERGEANT POLITE: Recording to the Cloud all set.

3 SERGEANT LEONARDO: Good morning and welcome to
4 today's Remote New York City Council Hearing for the
5 Committee on Finance. At this time, we ask that
6 Council Members and Staff turn on their video for
7 verification purposes. To minimize disruptions,
8 please place all cellphones and electronic devices to
9 vibrate or silent. If you have testimony you wish to
10 submit for the record, you may do so at
11 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again, that is
12 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

13 We thank you for your cooperation. Chair, we're
14 ready to begin.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Sergeant.
16 [GAVEL] Good morning everyone and welcome to the
17 public portion of the Executive Budget hearing
18 process. Today is May 25, 2022. My name is Justin
19 Brannan and I am privileged to Chair the Committee on
20 Finance in the City Council and I proudly represent
21 the 43rd Council District which encompasses Bay
22 Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bath Beach and Bensonhurst in
23 the area where I grew up.

24 Over the last ten days, this Committee has heard
25 from more than 20 agencies, authorities, offices and

1
2 boards. We've held the Administration to task to
3 ensure that city dollars are spent wisely,
4 effectively and fairly.

5 As we turn to budget negotiations, we'll work
6 towards a balanced budget that is guided by fairness
7 and equity to every single New Yorker. We'll work to
8 ensure that our city's post COVID recovery reaches
9 all segments of our society and all corners and zip
10 codes of our five boroughs. COVID-19 has adversely
11 impacted our students, seniors, immigrant community,
12 small business owners, those with mental health
13 issues, single parents, people living in temporary
14 housing, incarcerated youth, incarcerated adults,
15 caregivers. In other words, every single resident of
16 this city has been impacted by COVID and is
17 struggling in their own way.

18 The challenges are large and the recovery is
19 slow. As we begin our new normal following an
20 unprecedented two years, it is the duty of this
21 legislative body and of all 50 of my colleagues on
22 this City Council to ensure that this budget and the
23 budgets to come spend every dime of taxpayer money to
24 achieve positive lasting change and to reverse the
25 losses suffered from the COVID pandemic.

1
2 A budget is a reflection of the values one holds.
3 It is a statement by government of what it holds most
4 important. And for this city budget, we need to
5 ensure that those who need the most help get it. We
6 need to ensure that every neighborhood receives the
7 same level of city services and attention regardless
8 of zip code. We need to undo the years of neglect
9 and unfairness. We have more than 400 people
10 registered to testify today and I look forward to
11 hearing from each and every one of you.

12 I want to hear the challenges you face, the
13 causes that you're fighting for and how you think our
14 city budget dollars should be spent. Over the past
15 ten days, we've heard from over 20 authorities and
16 agencies and boards and offices but today is arguably
17 the most important day when we hear from the people
18 of this city. To hear from what you want to see in
19 our city budget this year.

20 I want to thank the Council Finance Division,
21 Malcolm Butehorn and my special Advisor Jon Yedin for
22 riding along with me for the past couple of weeks
23 during these budget hearings. We've got a very long
24 day today. It's important that we hear from
25 everybody. It's important that we respect each

1
2 other's time. We'll be here long through the night,
3 so it's important that the time is kept in check
4 early on so that people who are testifying at nine
5 o'clock tonight still have enough time and get the
6 attention that they deserve.

7 I'll now turn to Committee Counsel to review
8 logistics and to begin calling panels. Thank you so
9 much.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Brannan.

11 Good morning and welcome to the public portion of the
12 Fiscal Year 2023 Executive Budget hearings. My name
13 is Malcolm Butehorn and I am Counsel the Finance
14 Committee. As of right now, we have more than 500
15 registrants for today. We also have received more
16 than 50 requests for panels in special timeslots. We
17 have tried to accommodate many of those requests but
18 many were received late or persons registered late.
19 Therefore not all requests may be met. We have done
20 our best but not every request will be met simply due
21 to the fluid nature of public hearings. Everyone
22 will receive two minutes to speak. The Sergeant at
23 Arms will let you know when two minutes has
24 concluded.

1
2 We ask in fairness to everyone waiting after you
3 to speak that when that happens, to please wrap up
4 your comments. Written testimony may be as long as
5 you wish, please submit it by emailing to
6 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Council Members present,
7 if you have questions, you may ask it at the
8 conclusion of the panel. Please use the raise hand
9 function in Zoom and I will call on you in the order
10 with which it was raised. You will have two minutes
11 to speak. You will be permitted to ask your question
12 at the conclusion of a panel. We have given you the
13 ability to unmute yourselves, please do not abuse
14 that privilege. I will now turn to calling panels
15 and we first have Maria Barbara Lopez. And Steven, I
16 know you're going to be interpreting for her. So, if
17 you could just let her know, she now has two minutes
18 to speak. She is on the Zoom.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 MARIA BARBARA LOPEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 6:13-
21 6:28].

22 STEVEN MALDONADO: Hello, my name is Maria
23 Barbara Lopez. I am a District 38 Community Leader
24 in Sunset Park. I am here to ask the Borough Council
25

1
2 to approve a budget that is favorable for all New
3 Yorkers. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 6:43].

4 MARIA BARBARA LOPEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 6:45-
5 6:52]

6 STEVEN MALDONADO: The pandemic has left us all
7 in a crisis and the raised rents has left us all with
8 fears of ending up homeless. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH
9 7:00].

10 MARIA BARBARA LOPEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 7:02-
11 7:12]

12 STEVEN MALDONADO: The Mayor awards the rich and
13 the powerful with all these cutbacks on all kinds of
14 services for health, cleaning, maintenance, education
15 and housing. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 7:23].

16 MARIA BARBARA LOPEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 7:24-
17 7:38].

18 STEVEN MALDONADO: I ask to fight against this
19 abuse. It is a crime all these cutbacks. There
20 should be financing and investments into housing done
21 more strongly to help our workers have homes to live
22 in permanently. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 7:59].

23 MARIA BARBARA LOPEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 8:00-
24 8:12].

1
2 STEVEN MALDONADO: The Council should reject this
3 abuse and all these cutbacks in public education and
4 we need more. We require more counseling for mental
5 health social workers. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 8:27].

6 MARIA BARBARA LOPEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 8:28-
7 8:49].

8 STEVEN MALDONADO: We also need because of these
9 two crisis's that we are confronting with including
10 the environment and overdosing, we require better
11 plans of better health plans with quality for our
12 lives because we are all first line workers. We need
13 better schools, so that we could save the five
14 boroughs. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 9:16].

15 MARIA BARBARA LOPEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 9:18-
16 9:27].

17 STEVEN MALDONADO: We are workers that struggle
18 for the city every day and everything has increased
19 two-fold. How can you diminish or reduce this budget
20 for all New Yorkers? [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 9:40].

21 MARIA BARBARA LOPEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 9:42-
22 9:55].

23 STEVEN MALDONADO: We do jobs that others won't
24 do and we are essential workers and we are the ones
25

1
2 that are helping to protect your communities and the
3 city. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 10:06].

4 MARIA BARBARA LOPEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH
5 10:07].

6 STEVEN MALDONADO: That is all. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we are
8 going to turn to Sarai Rodriguez.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 10:19-
11 10:29].

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Steven, you can tell her that
13 it's her time to testify please.

14 STEVEN MALDONADO: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 10:33-
15 10:36].

16 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 10:37.
17 Okay?

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 STEVEN MALDONADO: Okay. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH
20 10:42].

21 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 10:50-
22 10:53].

23 STEVEN MALDONADO: Good day. My name is Sarai
24 Rodriguez.

1
2 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 10:56-
3 11:04].

4 STEVEN MALDONADO: I am from the program of
5 Mobile Food Workers.

6 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: One second.

7 STEVEN MALDONADO: One second.

8 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 11:32-
9 11:39].

10 STEVEN MALDONADO: I'm a member of the Street
11 Vendor Project.

12 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 11:42-
13 11:47].

14 STEVEN MALDONADO: It's an organization that
15 defends the rights of street food vendors. [SPEAKING
16 IN SPANISH 11:42].

17 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 11:53-
18 11:57].

19 STEVEN MALDONADO: And we fight to improve
20 working conditions. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 12:00].

21 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 12:01-
22 12:08].

23 STEVEN MALDONADO: I would like to thank
24 President Brannan and the whole Committee for the
25

1
2 opportunity to give testimony today. [SPEAKING IN
3 SPANISH 12:14].

4 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 12:16-
5 12:29].

6 STEVEN MALDONADO: I've been working for six
7 years as a street vendor and the major problem is
8 that there isn't enough licenses for working.

9 [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 12:36].

10 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 12:37-
11 12:43].

12 STEVEN MALDONADO: We have to run around and get
13 very expensive permits just so we can work.

14 [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 12:48].

15 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 12:50-
16 12:56].

17 STEVEN MALDONADO: The program gives the
18 organization gives the support so we could fight
19 against this injustice. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 13:02].

20 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 13:06-
21 13:20].

22 STEVEN MALDONADO: As member of the Street Vendor
23 Project -

24 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 13:26-
25 13:30].

1
2 STEVEN MALDONADO: I ask for respectfully for
3 some financing from the City Council of New York.

4 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 13:38-
5 13:45].

6 STEVEN MALDONADO: To expand the key two programs
7 that are very necessary for street vendors.
8 [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 13:49].

9 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 13:51-
10 13:54].

11 STEVEN MALDONADO: Which are the smallest
12 businesses in the City of New York. [SPEAKING IN
13 SPANISH 13:58].

14 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 14:00-
15 14:05].

16 STEVEN MALDONADO: One, a program for education
17 and outreach, for community outreach. [SPEAKING IN
18 SPANISH 14:10].

19 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 14:11-
20 14:15].

21 STEVEN MALDONADO: Two, a program for small
22 business, for small businesses, for teaching small
23 businesses. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 14:22].

24 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 14:23-
25 14:30].

1
2 STEVEN MALDONADO: These programs would help
3 backup a recuperation project for economic
4 recuperation in New York. [SPEAKING IN SPANISH
5 14:38].

6 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 14:39-
7 14:45] -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 14:47-
10 14:48].

11 STEVEN MALDONADO: And for providers that include
12 me, so we can push forward with our businesses.
13 [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 14:54]. Okay.

14 SARAI RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
16 hear from Sonia Perez followed by Catalina Chaplain.

17 STEVEN MALDONADO: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 15:07-
18 15:11].

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 STEVEN MALDONADO: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 15:14].

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I do not see Ms. Perez
22 on the Zoom.

23 STEVEN MALDONADO: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 15:22-
24 15:24].

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Nor do I see Catalina
3 Chaplain.

4 STEVEN MALDONADO: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 15:27-
5 15:30].

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We're now going to turn to
7 our next panel. So, Steven, we will let you know if
8 we have more translation needed.

9 STEVEN MALDONADO: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH
10 15:37:40].

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next panel
12 that we are going to hear from will be Henry Garrido,
13 Executive Director District Council 37, Mark
14 Cannizzaro Council of School Supervisors and
15 Administrators President, Michael Mulgrew United
16 Federation of Teachers President.

17 The panel following that will be Shirley Aldebol
18 Vice President SEIU 32BJ, Michael Yee Local 3 IBEW,
19 Beth Cheverie Laborers Union Local 79, Oren Barzilay
20 President Local 2507, and Deborah Allman President
21 Local 1930 DC37. We'll first start with Henry
22 Garrido.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, not seeing him, we're
25 going to turn to Mark Cannizzaro, President of CSA.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

MARK CANNIZZARO: Good morning and thank you Chair Brannan and distinguished members of the City Council for conducting this hearing today. My name is Mark Cannizzaro, President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators.

We have testified before the Budget Committee already, the Education Budget Committee, I apologize. And nothing is more important than keeping our schools safe and with that, I would just like to take a moment to reflect on the tragic loss of the lives in Texas yesterday. It seems as if these things are just coming too often and it is heartbreaking every time we hear of something of that magnitude.

For quite some time, we've been calling for you know an Assistant Principal in every school. Our contract calls for an Assistant Principal in every school but sadly there are approximately 70 schools in New York City whose budgets do not permit them at this time from hiring an assistant principal. It is our position that the department should be funding those AP's anyway but we call on the Finance Committee to just back us on that proposal and make sure that adequate funding is set aside.

1
2 We also are calling for a restoration of the
3 almost 1,000 school safety agents that – positions
4 that are currently vacant in order to make sure that
5 every school is adequately staffed with safety
6 agents. And furthermore, we are in discussion with
7 the Chancellor regarding uhm, uh, making sure that
8 school buildings are locked. Front doors are locked
9 during the school day.

10 As you know, we've also asked for funding for our
11 professional development group ELI and we have
12 submitted testimony on that. As well as our
13 longstanding fight for a pay equity for –

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 MARK CANNIZZARO: For our early childhood
16 educators. These folks have been working for years
17 in the early childhood area. They are seasoned
18 professionals with all the credentials of our
19 Department of Education colleagues and they are
20 severely underpaid, earning approximately 50 percent
21 of what their colleagues in the Department of
22 Education make.

23 Uhm, as I'm out of time, I will stop there but
24 you do have my written testimony. Thank you all so
25 much.

1 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mark Cannizzaro.

2
3 Next, we'll turn to Michael Mulgrew from the United
4 Federation of Teachers.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you all so much and I
7 want to thank Justin Brannan, the Chair of Finance
8 Committee, as well as the Chair of the Education
9 Committee Rita Joseph and I was very, very happy to
10 hear Justin Brannan's remarks about how this City
11 Council is going to hold the task that taxpayers
12 money is actually going to be spent on the things
13 that it's supposed to be spent on, which is the
14 people and the children of New York City. As well as
15 holding each agency to task.

16 When it comes to the things that we've asked you
17 to fund, I won't go through them, you have that list.
18 I can guarantee you that you are holding us to task
19 and all of that money is being spent on the children
20 of New York City. As well as additional millions of
21 dollars coming from union members' dues to help with
22 all sorts of different programs that help the
23 children of New York City.

24 Now, the biggest challenge that I have heard from
25 what Chair Brannan said in the beginning is, he is

1
2 going to hold every agency to task. Well, when it
3 comes to the Department of Education, they are
4 undefeated at not being held to task by any City
5 Council. And they have figured out ways for years
6 and decades to continue to waste taxpayers money. To
7 continue to finance a massive bureaucracy that is not
8 helping the children of New York City.

9 As we talk right now where the budget is going is
10 in the opposite direction, despite the fact that we
11 received \$7.6 billion from the federal government.
12 \$5 billion of which is still not allocated and the
13 fact that the state of New York has now put an
14 additional \$1.3 billion.

15 So, when we ask the question about the basic
16 issue that every parent and teacher wants in terms of
17 class size, the Department of Eds response to us is,
18 well, the state needs to give us more money or why
19 don't you pay for it. Well, it's time for us to say
20 enough is enough with their garbage and we need to
21 all come together to hold them accountable. If not,
22 they will continue to just spin and spin and spin and
23 it is the children of New York City who they are
24 cheating and it is time for -

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 MICHAEL MULGREW: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Michael.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Uh, and for the
5 record, we've been joined by Council Members Brannan,
6 Farias, Louis, Kagan, Hudson, Joseph, Barron, Sanchez
7 and Carr.

8 The next panel that we're going to call up
9 Shirley Aldebol, Michael Yee, Beth Cheverie, Oren
10 Barzilay, Deborah Allman. The panel following will
11 be Joe Puleo, Michael Burke, Daniel Patrick Clay,
12 Dilsy Ben(SP?), Vinny Musillo, Marlena Giga. We will
13 first start with Shirley Aldebol.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 SHIRLEY ALDEBOL: Good morning Chairman Brannan
16 and members of the Committee. My name is Shirley
17 Aldebol, I'm Executive Vice President of SEIU Local
18 32BJ. As you are aware 32BJ is the nation's largest
19 property services union with 85,000 members in New
20 York.

21 I'm speaking to you today on behalf of over 5,000
22 cleaners and handy persons employed by New York City
23 School Support Services represented by 32BJ to call
24 on the City Council to fully fund our city schools,
25 including funding for schools cleaning and

1
2 maintenance. These hard working men and women
3 employed by NYSIS, work under contract with the
4 Department of Education to provide school facility
5 cleaning and maintenance services.

6 Since the outset of COVID-19 pandemic, these
7 essential workers have been cleaning uhm, have been
8 providing services to the community and putting
9 themselves at risk in order to keep students and
10 staff and the community at large healthy and safe.

11 While schools were closed to students and
12 teachers, they became a resources and childcare
13 centers for children of first responders. They
14 became food distribution hubs, COVID testing sites
15 and more. The schools facility staff made sure that
16 the schools could remain healthy and safe places for
17 our communities.

18 The hiring freeze in 2020 and 2021 led to a
19 staffing shortage of nearly 750 workers citywide.
20 Since the reopening of New York City public schools
21 last fall, workloads have increased and maintenance
22 staff has had to work overtime to deal with the
23 staffing shortages as well as enhance cleaning and
24 disinfection protocols. As we determine our budget
25 for next year, spending to ensure that New York

1
2 City's public school buildings are clean and safe
3 should be a top priority. Funding NYSIS represents a
4 small portion of DOE's annual spending. However, it
5 has an outside impact on the welfare of our school
6 community. This includes not only students and
7 teachers but also NYSIS workers themselves. We
8 cannot afford to reduce maintenance or cleaning in
9 New York Schools in the midst of an ongoing crisis.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we're
12 going to turn to Michael Yee from Local 3 IBEW.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 MICHAEL YEE: Good morning Chair Brannan and
15 Council Members. My name is Michael Yee and I am the
16 Director of the Educational and Cultural Trust Fund
17 of the Electrical Industry. And a 35-year member of
18 Local Union number 3 of the International Brothers of
19 Electrical Workers.

20 Local 3 represents 28,000 workers in New York
21 City, engaged in electrical construction, maintenance
22 and manufacturing. Local 3 is a member of the
23 Climate Jobs New York Coalition and I'm here today to
24 speak on the coalitions carpentry and the Healthy
25 Schools Initiative. The city is at an inflexion

1
2 point. The pandemic exacerbated deep inequality. We
3 are running out of time to act on climate change and
4 working families are getting hit hard by inflation
5 and rising costs of living.

6 Climate Jobs New York has a concrete plan that
7 would address all of these issues. This plan works
8 to solve the climate crisis and create jobs that
9 benefit workers and their communities and presents a
10 roadmap for New York City to fight the climate
11 crisis, make New York City safer and address racial
12 and economic inequality by investing in proworker
13 renewable energy transition. The city would
14 prioritize the transition to carbon free and healthy
15 schools, ensuring these buildings are safe for the
16 students and staff who occupy them and for the
17 surrounding communities. In a way that promotes
18 equity and creates job, good union jobs in
19 traditionally overlooked and under resourced
20 neighborhoods.

21 Investing in to retrofit and transform all public
22 K-12 schools to be carbon free by 2030, New York City
23 would create over 62,000 good union jobs in the
24 communities that need them most. While making
25 schools healthier for over 1.2 million students,

1
2 teachers, administrators and staff, reduce emissions
3 by the equivalent of taking 154,000 cars off the road
4 and save millions annually in energy costs. Money
5 that would be reinvested into schools.

6 Many New York City school buildings are in need
7 of basic repairs and upgrades.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and folks when time
10 is called, you know just if you have a sentence you
11 just want to wrap up, you know feel free to just give
12 a sentence to wrap up. And I apologize if I'm
13 messing up anybody's names. Believe me, I go through
14 it myself with my own.

15 Next, we're going to hear from Beth Cheverie,
16 Laborers Union Local 79.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 BETH CHEVERIE: Thank you. I hope everyone can
19 hear me.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

21 BETH CHEVERIE: My name is Beth Cheverie, you
22 pronounced it right and I'm here on behalf of the
23 Laborers Union Local 79's Business Manager Mike
24 Prohaska.

1
2 Local 79 represents over 8,000 members working in
3 construction in New York City and we also sit on the
4 Executive Board of Climate Jobs New York. Climate
5 Jobs New York is calling for the city to make public
6 schools and housing carbon free by 2030 and as you
7 know, we're running out of time.

8 The Carbon Free and Healthy Schools Initiative is
9 a concrete plan that would help the city tackle its
10 climate crisis, create good union jobs that will
11 employ workers for the community. This initiative
12 will address economic inequality by investing in the
13 neighborhoods that have been overlooked in the past.

14 The city needs to prioritize the transition to
15 carbon free schools to ensure these buildings will
16 create a healthy learning environment for the city's
17 1.2 million students and staff. By retrofitting all
18 K-12 public schools to be carbon free by 2030, the
19 city would create over 62,000 good paying middle
20 class union jobs that will revitalize the local
21 community. Over time, the conversion is projected to
22 save millions annually in energy costs, which could
23 be reinvested into our school systems. And many of
24 the city's school buildings are currently in need of
25 these basic repairs and maintenance.

1
2 By making the investment in carbon free schools,
3 the city has the opportunity to create a model on
4 decarbonization that can be replicated on other
5 private and public buildings. Thank you for your
6 consideration.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
8 turn to Oren Barzilay President Local 2507 DC 37.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 OREN BARZILAY: Good morning. Good morning
11 Committee Chairperson and honorable Council Members.
12 My name is Oren Barzilay. I'm a 25-year veteran of
13 FDNYMS and the President of Local 2507.

14 I'm here today to speak on behalf of more than
15 4,000 uniformed EMT's, paramedics and fire
16 inspectors. Our agency is budgeted to over \$2
17 billion. Yet, there's no pay parity for EMT's,
18 paramedics and fire inspectors compared to other city
19 first responders.

20 EMT's and paramedics through the past year have
21 gone through hell. Three of my men and women have
22 committed suicide, yet there's not many mental health
23 options or any sort of mental therapy for our men and
24 women. This issue needs to be resolved immediately
25 as this crisis is escalating across our nation. Our

1
2 EMT's and paramedics on a daily basis get assaulted,
3 beat down, sometimes hospitalized and are placed on
4 long-term medical leave to recoup from their
5 injuries. Yet there's no solutions or any help on
6 how the department will deal with the ever ongoing
7 increasing assaults.

8 Our call volume is through the roof. The Bronx
9 residents are the ones who are mostly suffering as
10 units across the boroughs from Manhattan and Queens
11 get redeployed on a daily basis to assist the
12 residents of the Bronx. EMT's, paramedics, need more
13 resources out there to be able to provide an
14 essential service to the public. I think it's time
15 that the Fire Department has implemented a serious
16 solution to all these problems. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
18 turn to Deborah Allman, President Local 1930 DC 37.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 DEBORAH ALLMAN: Good morning. I'm Deborah
21 Allman, President of New York Public Library Guild
22 1930. Chairman Justin Brannan and fellow Committee
23 Members, thank you for giving me an opportunity to
24 testify on behalf of all the patrons and employees of
25 the Brooklyn Public Library, the New York Public

1
2 Library and Queens Public Library. We are united in
3 our request for the City Council to help our public
4 libraries.

5 On July 1, 2021, the City Council and Mayor
6 acknowledged all the amazing work library workers
7 performed for our city. Your constituents joined the
8 first year of this tragic pandemic and gave the three
9 New York City library systems budgets that allow us
10 to continue our excellent work.

11 In the beginning of this current fiscal year, our
12 city was still struggling, yet we have hope because
13 we had a vaccine. Library Branches started opening
14 up, offering more services. Our customers with job
15 and a bit trepidation started coming back. In
16 December and January, the COVID surge spread
17 throughout the city and the library systems for the
18 safety of their staff and customers wisely curtailed
19 our opening plans.

20 As case diminish we continued expanding our
21 physical operations, our customers are true to have
22 their in-person programs, newspapers, books. Even
23 though our physical buildings are open, we still have
24 to maintain our virtual infrastructure presence that
25 we don't the previous year.

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

3 DEBORAH ALLMAN: Honestly, we struggle to keep
4 our libraries open. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I will now call
6 panel four but before I do, I will let panels five
7 and six know who they are. Panel five will be Faith
8 Behum, Breanna Pardon Williams, Kevin Jones, Bill
9 Meehan, MJ Okma, and Jeanette Estima.

10 Panel six will be Rosa Chang, Kay Webster, Lynn
11 Kelly, Marisol Durain and Mark Harren(SP?) But I
12 will now turn to panel four Joe Puleo, Michael Burke,
13 Daniel Patrick Clay, Delcie Ben(SP?) Vinny Musillo,
14 Marlana Giga. And we'll start with Joe Puleo,
15 President Local 983 DC 37.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 JOE PULEO: Thank you. Good morning. Good
18 morning Chair. Good morning City Council. For those
19 of you who don't know me, my name is Joe Puleo, I am
20 President of Local 983. I am also Vice President of
21 DC 37 and also on the DC 37's Parks Committee along
22 with Delcie Bens.

23 I'd like to begin by saying that we have been
24 going through a struggle for the last 20-years to
25 allocate one percent of the Parks Budget to excuse

1
2 me, one percent of the city's budget to Parks. That
3 would enable us to stop begging every time there are
4 cuts being faced as they are now.

5 One percent would cover all of our needs you know
6 moving forward. We have never recouped from the
7 Fiscal crisis of the 1970's when it comes to work
8 shortages throughout the parks. During the pandemic,
9 the parks were horrendous. Everybody was going to
10 the parks. We didn't have enough personnel in the
11 parks until we got money from the federal government
12 under the City Corpse program and we were able to get
13 thousands of workers to clean our parks. They have
14 been employed since then. The money is going to run
15 on this Fiscal Budget. If we don't have restoration
16 for these people, these people who actually go these
17 jobs because they were probably laid off from their
18 other previous jobs will now be laid off and possibly
19 become homeless as a result.

20 We're asking that we at least get the \$40 million
21 to band aid us till next year. So, these people can
22 continue to work, put food on the table and pay their
23 rent. We also ask that our Urban Park Rangers right,
24 be renewed for another year. These workers have
25 worked - during the pandemic, they gave out PPE, they

1
2 gave out gloves, masks, they were essential during
3 the whole time that the pandemic -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 JOE PULEO: Alright thank you. Thank you all for
6 having me and please restore the funding. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Puleo and we've
8 also been joined by Council Member Brooks-Powers.
9 We'll next turn to Michael Burke, Grievance Rep Local
10 983 DC37.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Burke?

13 MICHAEL BURKE: Hello, good morning.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Go ahead.

15 MICHAEL BURKE: Council people, I just want to
16 say thank you very much Joe Puleo. To continue with
17 what Joe Puleo was saying, the Play Fair Urban Park
18 Rangers were requesting their renewal. Again,
19 throughout the pandemic, they were out there, they
20 were first responders, they were handing out PPE. In
21 addition, they were performing public programs in the
22 hardest hit COVID areas. They spent time, they spent
23 hours and then last fiscal year, they were released.
24 A lot of people lost their jobs and now we're back to
25 the same situation.

1
2 We're requesting that the city refund these urban
3 park rangers for another year. These urban park
4 rangers are from a lot of the local community
5 neighborhoods that you folks are representing and
6 they're serving these same communities. They are
7 there. They are doing programs. They are helping
8 the public. They are going ahead; they are doing
9 animal rescues. They're doing above and beyond what
10 they were asked to do and they still don't know if
11 they are going to have a job after September 30th.

12 So, with all of your consideration please keep
13 these people in mind, our city workers. Thank you
14 very much.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
16 turn to Daniel Patrick Clay.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, not seeing him on the
19 Zoom. We will turn next to Delcie Ben.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will turn to Vinny
22 Musillo.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 VINNY MUSILLO: Good morning Finance Chair
25 Brannan and all Council Members. My name is Vincent

1
2 Musillo, President of DC 37's Local 1508, which
3 represents administrative park and recreation
4 managers and park supervisors. I would like to speak
5 on behalf of all parks workers and New Yorkers that
6 will be effected if New York City does not come
7 through on their promise of one percent of the budget
8 for March maintenance. Since the start of the
9 pandemic, it was parks that former Mayor Bill de
10 Blasio urged New Yorkers to visit. It was the place
11 of refuge and solace for hundreds of thousands of New
12 Yorkers during extremely trying times. And during
13 these times, it was park staff comfortably known as
14 parkies that showed up day in and day out to clean,
15 maintain and safeguard all of the parks they were
16 responsible for. At a time when many were given an
17 option to work from home, our dedicated parkies that
18 work down in the field were not.

19 We were deemed essential in the fight against
20 COVID. Field workers stood up to the challenge and
21 did their best to keep New Yorkers visiting the
22 always beautiful green space and playgrounds
23 throughout the city. Proudly, we arrived at work
24 every day knowing at any moment we could victim to
25 COVID or a loved one could do the same.

1
2 Parkies were lost. Loved ones were lost.
3 Despite all of this, we continue to do our job as
4 parkies. Many of these workers have established
5 themselves within the community they were assigned.
6 When a city park worker or a city seasonal aid is
7 fixed post at the same location, they take these
8 playgrounds in as their own. The community can put a
9 smiling face to the playground they visited for the
10 last two and a half years. If the budget for one
11 percent for parks does not pass, this will end. The
12 effect it will have on the children and families will
13 be enormous. And this pales in comparison to the
14 workers themselves. After the long, hard road of
15 working in unknown conditions throughout this
16 pandemic and deemed essential, the thank you they may
17 receive is a pink slip, determination letter. How
18 much more demoralizing can an individual feel if they
19 put their heart and soul to serve New Yorkers to be
20 told, hey, thanks for the hard work.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 VINNY MUSILLO: But your time with parks is over.

23 Thank you very much.
24
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
3 turn to Marlana Giga, Secretary Treasurer of Local
4 983.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 MARLENA GIGA: Hi, my name is Marlana Giga and
7 I've been a PEP Officer for over 20-years. This past
8 weekend, the temperatures were high and we had about
9 20,000 patrons at Orchard Beach with only six
10 officers assigned to that Beach. The crowd was
11 overflowing. Our officers were barely able to keep
12 the traffic flowing and one of the vehicles was ran
13 by a patron that didn't want to wait to get out.

14 Our offices are very short staffed. They're
15 responding to about 18 calls a day. They're not even
16 able to do regular patrol because of the amount of
17 calls. They're actually working eight days straight
18 and they're overwhelmed.

19 Also, our city seasonal aids, they do security
20 and they also do maintenance work. We'd like to keep
21 them working. A lot of them have been working
22 through the pandemic and they are in dire need of
23 keeping their job and we also need them because
24 everybody is utilizing the parks now more than ever

1
2 and we just want to keep everybody working. We want
3 to keep the park safe.

4 Also, our APSW employees, their maintenance
5 workers, we would like to see more of the work being
6 done by them. It's currently about \$3,000 to plant a
7 tree. Our APSW's can do this work. Stop outsourcing
8 the work to private companies. Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
10 panel four. We'll now turn to panel five but I will
11 just re-announce panel six and also seven and eight.
12 Panel six was Rosa Chang, Kay Webster, Lynn Kelly,
13 Marisol Durain and Mark Herrin.

14 Panel seven, Elvira Uribe, George Sotiroff, Julie
15 Colon, Mercedes Escoto, Wanda Martinez, Anya Mukarji
16 -Connolly. And panel eight, Brendan Cheney, Ryan
17 Chavez, Luisa Rodriguez, Alex Roak(SP?), Tierra
18 Librada, and Monsignor Kevin Sullivan. But we'll
19 turn to panel five starting with Faith Behum.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 FAITH BEHUM: Good morning Chair Brannan and
22 members of the Committee on Finance. My name is
23 Faith Behum and I am Senior Advocacy and Policy
24 Advisor at UJA Federation of New York. Established
25 more than 100-years-ago, UJA is one of the nation's

1 largest local philanthropies. UJA supports a network
2 of nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those
3 that are most vulnerable and in need of programs and
4 services. UJA urges the Council to increase the
5 investments in the LE We Sell Holocaust Survivors
6 initiative to \$5 million.
7

8 Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond,
9 social workers funded through the Survivor initiative
10 have continued to provide this specialized care the
11 survivors require due to the trauma they experienced
12 during the holocaust. The \$5 million investment will
13 support case management services that provide access
14 to including but not exclusive to, mental health
15 services, trauma informed care, crisis prevention and
16 emergency financial assistance. It is crucial to
17 provide specialized care and support programs for
18 survivors to enhance their quality of life and allow
19 them to live out the remaining years with dignity.
20 UJA is a member of the Just Pay Campaign, which is
21 dedicated to increasing wages for human services
22 workers. These workers are the backbone of the
23 nonprofit to provide essential services to their
24 communities. Unfortunately, they are some of the
25 lowest paid workers in New York's economy.

1
2 To combat this, UJA requests the city establish,
3 fund and enforce an automatic cost of living
4 adjustment on all human services contracts, set a
5 living wage floor of no less than \$21 an hour for all
6 city and state funded human services workers.
7 Create, fund and incorporate a comprehensive wage and
8 benefit schedule for government contracted human
9 services workers comparable to the salaries made by
10 city and state employees in the same field.

11 I thank you for the opportunity to testify. The
12 entirety of UJA's budget request can be reviewed in
13 our submitted testimony.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And next, we'll
15 turn to Breanna Padden Williams.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll turn to Kevin
18 Jones from AARP New York.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 KEVIN JONES: Good morning, my name is Kevin
21 Jones. I'm the Associate State Director for Efficacy
22 at AARP New York. Thank you for allowing me to be
23 here and advocate for better services for New Yorkers
24 50 plus including for our 750,000 New York City AARP
25 members.

1
2 Older New Yorkers built this city and made it
3 great and now it's time to make sure they can
4 comfortably and safely retire in the homes and
5 communities they love. First, the Department for the
6 Aging is responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of
7 older adults, particularly most vulnerable. For that
8 reasons, we respectfully request no PEG for DFTA.

9 Older adults can't afford rising housing costs
10 either. They deserve better. They need an increase
11 reimbursement rate for senior affordable rental
12 apartments and 1,000 new units of affordable senior
13 housing per year. We also need to ensure that they
14 receive the services to stay in their home safely.

15 We're grateful for the City Council for their
16 pledge to invest \$7 million to clear the homecare and
17 case management wait lists. It's what the 50 plus
18 deserves. We're also grateful to the City Council
19 for wanting to increase funding for the Get Food
20 Recovery Meals Program but we need significant
21 funding to meet the demands for weekend and holiday
22 meals because New Yorkers 50 plus deserve food on
23 their tables.

24 They also deserve to have their mental health
25 needs addressed. The City Council has proposed

1
2 increasing the budget for mental health services and
3 we thank you for it but the city budget also must
4 expand the geriatric mental health program and this
5 is crucial as the 50 plus continue to recover from
6 the isolation and trauma of the pandemic.

7 We hope we can count on the City Council to fund
8 the programs and services that New Yorkers 50 plus
9 deserve. I'll be submitting additional details in my
10 written testimony. So, thank you for your time and
11 I'm happy to take any questions.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
13 turn to Bill Meehan from Sage.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 BILL MEEHAN: Good morning. Numbers are
16 important and at a budget meeting, they are very
17 important. But often their cold and faceless.

18 I'm Bill Meehan, an actual person reflected in
19 Sage's numbers and I'm here to talk about the
20 importance of the LGBTQ Senior Services in every
21 borough initiative. After no longer being able to
22 afford an apartment in my long time neighborhood in
23 Jackson Heights, I now live in Stonewall House, an
24 LGBTQ affordable older housing development in Fort
25 Greene. Here I help run the Stonewall House Tenants

1
2 Association and I'm an active participant in Sage
3 Center Brooklyn, located on the ground floor of this
4 building. Through the Sage Center, I became involved
5 in a writers group which has pushed me back to
6 blogging, not to everyone's happiness. I attend a
7 gay men's group that facilitates discussion not only
8 on our past but helps direct our future activities.
9 And I'm not able to march as I used to. I
10 participate in a political discussion group, making
11 sure that my voice is heard.

12 The Stonewall house offered an opportunity to
13 find housing proudly without fear of discrimination.
14 I was not sure how I would be able to adjust to this
15 but Sage Center helped build more connections to the
16 community.

17 The Sage Centers staff and services helped me and
18 many others on a daily basis in a setting that is
19 safe, and affirming. This is extremely helpful in
20 addressing social isolation which is prevalent among
21 seniors and has greatly increased due to COVID. The
22 LGBTQ Senior Services Initiative in every borough has
23 had a tremendous and positive effect on LGBTQ seniors
24 and I ask the City Council to not only continue but
25 to enhance this initiative to meet the demands for

1
2 safe and competent aging services in Brooklyn and
3 across –

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 BILL MEEHAN: And across the city. Thank you for
6 your time and support.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
8 turn to MJ Okma, also from Sage.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 MJ OKMA: Hi, good morning. My name is MJ Okma
11 with Sage. The countries first and largest
12 organization dedicated to improving the lives LGBTQ+
13 and HIV affected older people. Over the past two
14 years, Sage has become the onsite service provider
15 and New York's first LGBTQ+ welcoming elder housing
16 developments, located in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

17 Having a history of trauma and systemic
18 discrimination has deeply impacted LGBTQ+ elders
19 creating health disparities and unequal access,
20 particularly among housing. Countless LGBTQ+ older
21 people like Bill, who you just heard from, find
22 themselves being priced out in neighborhoods that
23 they've lived in for years due to raising rents and
24 financial security as they age. Communities like
25 Stonewall House and Catriona Pride House not only

1 help fill this direct need for stable housing, they
2 also serve as an entry point for LGBTQ+ competent
3 aging services for residents and community members.
4 The onsite Sage Centers bring much needed LGBTQ+
5 services to neighborhoods that lack such support and
6 Sage is reaching elders who have previously been
7 isolated in services. This includes many elders who
8 struggle with mental illness, substance abuse, food
9 insecurity and homelessness. And require intensive
10 care management and social services support.
11

12 Over the past several years, there has been a
13 growing demand for the services and supports provided
14 at these locations and our other four adult centers
15 across the city. This is due to new elders that
16 we're now able to reach through these housing
17 developments. The growing demand for mental health
18 services, wider access to services under a hybrid in-
19 person and virtual delivery model and the
20 disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on LGBTQ+
21 elders. Due to high levels of underlying health
22 conditions and thin support networks.

23 Because of this demonstrated growing need for
24 services, we are asking the Council for an
25 enhancement of \$300,000 to the LGBTQ+ Senior Services

1
2 and every borough initiative. This enhancement would
3 maintain Sages funding under the initiative as well
4 as directly fund the work for Griot Circle. New York
5 City's only staffed community-based organization,
6 specifically serving LGBTQ+ elders of color. Thank
7 you so much for your time and support.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. For the record,
9 we've also been joined by Council Members Moya, Ossé
10 and Powers. Next, we'll turn to Jeanette Estima.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 VIC BENSON: Good morning and thank you for the
13 opportunity to testify. I'm here on behalf of City
14 Meals on Wheels. My name is Vic Benson, I'm the
15 Senior Programs Associate, Jeanette couldn't make it
16 right now.

17 City Meals works in partnership with the city and
18 the network of home delivered meal providers to cover
19 the cost of delivering meals on weekends, holidays
20 and emergencies to homebound older adults. These are
21 meals that are not included in DFTA's contracts with
22 HDM providers. For the new clients transitioning
23 from recovery meals, we believe there will be more
24 than 3,000 older adults in need once DFTA's
25 assessment is finished.

1
2 Many though have chosen not to go through with
3 the assessment because they find it intensive and
4 invasive. We believe these people will try to make
5 due on their own and find that they can't. So, we
6 continue to ask for the \$30 million that was included
7 in the Council's response. Though I'd like to add
8 one caveat, that amount did not include funding for
9 weekend and holiday meals.

10 We estimate that for every 1,000 new clients in
11 the system, City Meals has to raise \$1.1 million and
12 it's just not possible for us to raise millions of
13 new funding overnight. I want to be very clear about
14 this because without an allocation for weekend and
15 holiday meals that are provided by City Meals,
16 thousands of people will not receive meals on 115
17 days out of the year. So, we ask for your support in
18 ensuring that there is enough funding to cover a meal
19 for every day for every person who will transition
20 into HDM.

21 Moreover, the system was already strained beyond
22 capacity. The number of more recipients has been
23 increasing over the years along with costs for food,
24 labor and capital needs such as truck repairs or food
25 storage. In order to maintain the current level of

1
2 services outside of the new clients transitioning
3 from recovery meals, we also request an investment of
4 \$12.7 billion in the HDM program with \$3 million
5 earmarked for City Meals to continue providing
6 weekend, holiday and emergency meals.

7 And finally, we ask that the Council includes \$1
8 million in senior centers, programs and enhancement
9 initiatives for our emergency meals program. Thank
10 you again for the opportunity.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
12 turn to Daniel Patrick Clay.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 DANIEL PATRICK CLAY: Hi there everybody. It's
15 Dan, your friendly neighborhood gardener here in
16 Prospect Park out here with a couple of our mighty
17 volunteers and General, General Slocum too.

18 Just doing the best we can knocking down these
19 absolutely relentless weeds and I just wanted to give
20 my regular reminder to everybody that there's so much
21 to do. There's so much work out here all year long.
22 You think of us gardeners as planting some flowers
23 and watering. But there's so much heavy stuff to be
24 done and I'm really, really just hoping that you guys
25 can do the best you can by us boots on the ground and

1
2 baseline the seasonal workers, the 50 gardeners and
3 the 100 SPW's so that these parks efforts can be
4 worthwhile and not look so – sometimes they just look
5 so meager.

6 So, thanks in advance and I'll see you guys
7 around.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And just for
9 folks on the Zoom, the raise hand function is only
10 for Council Members if they have questions. Please
11 do not use the raise hand functions. Panels are not
12 permitted to ask questions of other panelists. So,
13 if you do raise your hand a staff member will lower
14 it. We're now going to turn to panel six. Rosa
15 Chang, Kay Webster, Lynn Kelly, Marisol Durain and
16 Mark E. Herrin. We will first start with Rosa Chang.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 ROSA CHANG: Thank you for your time. I'm Rosa
19 Chang, Cofounder of Brooklyn Bridge Manhattan, a
20 grassroots community led nonprofit working to build a
21 new nine acre public park underneath the iconic
22 Brooklyn Bridge. The escalating crisis of gun
23 violence and mental illness and drug addiction are so
24 complex, but I do know one thing. While we must
25 address these issues in the immediate crisis, we must

1
2 also address these issues with an eye to permanent
3 change. This cannot go on.

4 It was Mayor Adams who introduced me to a quote
5 by Desmond Toto. "There comes a point where we need
6 to stop just pulling people out of the river." We
7 need to go upstream and find out why they are falling
8 in. Jails are downstream. Building strong,
9 supportive communities is how we address these crisis
10 upstream.

11 Communities are not built on our sidewalks and
12 inside our apartments. They are built in our shared
13 common spaces. Communities are built in parks. A
14 straight line exists between our failure to
15 sufficiently fund our parks and the crisis we find
16 ourselves in today.

17 We need to correct that fundamental error today.
18 Where we choose to spend our money is a crystal clear
19 indicator of our priorities. Let's fund our money
20 upstream or stop pretending to be surprised when we
21 keep pulling people out of downstream. Every
22 resident of New York City should have equitable
23 access to green space but as we all know; this is not
24 the case. Brooklyn Bridge Manhattan represents the
25 unheard voices of Chinatown and the lower east side.

1
2 Within a half mile radius of the Brooklyn Bridge
3 there are 47,000 residents, 64 percent of whom
4 identifies BIPOC, 20 percent seniors, 20 percent of
5 our families are below the federal poverty level.

6 This TRIE neighborhood is one of the city's most
7 densely populated areas and one the area's most
8 heavily impacted by the pandemic. Since 2010, there
9 has been only \$16 million in open space capital
10 investment in our surrounding communities and we have
11 only 20 percent of the city median of open space.

12 The Brooklyn site just finished a \$370 million
13 publicly funded park.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 ROSA CHANG: This extreme – can I keep speaking?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If you can just wrap up with
17 a sentence.

18 ROSA CHANG: I would love to invite every single
19 one you on a tour of Brooklyn Bridge Manhattan. We
20 would love your support because we believe that the
21 best use of the nine acres underneath the landmark
22 Brooklyn Bridge is not as a parking lot but actually
23 as a park. And we desperately need your help to get
24 that to happen. Thank you for the opportunity to
25 testify.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
3 turn to Kay Webster.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kay Webster? You're unmuted
6 if you would like to begin your testimony. There are
7 two minutes allotted.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, let's move on.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next we're going to
10 call Lynn Kelly.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 CORY HASSIN: Hi, I'm Cory Hassin(SP?). I'll be
13 testifying on behalf of Lynn Kelly who actually has a
14 board meeting right now.

15 Good morning and thank you Finance Committee
16 Chair Justin Brannan for convening this hearing to
17 discuss the FY23 Executive Budget. My name is Lynn
18 Kelly and I'm the Executive Director of the New York
19 Restoration Project. NYRP is the only land
20 conservancy operating in all five boroughs of New
21 York City, especially in under resourced
22 neighborhoods.

23 For over 25-years, NYRP has planted trees,
24 renovated gardens, restored parks and transformed
25 open space for communities throughout New York City.

1
2 NYRP brings private resources to spaces that are
3 under served by municipal support. These communities
4 have been the victims of decades of disinvestment.
5 Parks serving low income communities of color are
6 generally smaller, serve more people per acre, and do
7 not receive private funding.

8 Decreased private donations compounded with
9 budget reductions from the last year had a
10 devastating effect on parks in low income
11 neighborhoods. Even as park visitation increased to
12 unprecedented levels as a result of the COVID-19
13 pandemic.

14 As one of the 400 plus organizations in the Play
15 Fair Coalition, NYRP implores the Committee of
16 Finance to help fight to secure raising park funding
17 from 0.6 percent currently proposed in the Executive
18 Budget to one percent of the total operating budget.
19 One percent for parks is necessary for adequate
20 staffing, maintenance and park planning to ensure our
21 public parks are equitable, safe, clean and
22 accessible for all New Yorkers.

23 The current budget as proposed translates to a
24 net reduction in agency staff. By the end of the
25 month, the Parks Department will lose roughly 1,800

1
2 members of the cleanup corps that help beautify our
3 parks during this unprecedented pandemic by keeping
4 them clean and safe.

5 Parks workers have been frontline workers during
6 the pandemic and deserve the resources needed to help
7 support their work. Parks that serve low income
8 communities would desperately benefit from one
9 percent for parks. New York City must commit to a
10 higher standard of maintenance across all five
11 boroughs. It's time for us to end environmental
12 injustice and reinvest our green spaces. Urban green
13 space is not a luxury.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 CORY HASSIN: But a necessity. We urge our
16 partners in City government to prioritize one percent
17 for parks in this year's budget. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
19 to Marisol Durain.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 MARISOL DURAIN: Good morning. I come before you
22 all as a proud Bronx Native and Community Volunteer.
23 Unfortunately, my local park Crotona Park faces many
24 challenges. Some of the challenges relate to Crotona
25 Park not having an administrator and Council Members

1
2 lack of funds for capital projects in Crotona Park.
3 Our parks are not equitable or thriving because
4 Crotona Park has not had an administrator for many
5 months.

6 Also, the Lands Park Administrator was not
7 involved when the decision to convert parks of the
8 park for nonpublic use were being discussed and voted
9 by the local community board. Many people in my
10 community find the timing of the proposal to convert
11 parts of Crotona Park for nonpublic use disturbing.
12 During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and
13 [INAUDIBLE 1:01:45], free to community board members
14 at a private parking area for nonresidents would
15 benefit the community because a nonprofit offer free
16 programs for young people.

17 Even though these few board members think their
18 decision was appropriate, they do not acknowledge
19 that residents were left out of this important
20 decision. Community member did not know or were
21 available to express their concerns to this proposal.
22 Many of my neighbors were struggling with the highest
23 number of unemployment, hospitalization and deaths.

24 Also, many people in my community struggle to
25 afford the internet or keep a mobile phone in

1
2 service. In my humble opinion, the local community
3 board was desperate for funding that it approved a
4 proposal, not fully thinking of the residents. I
5 have started a petition on change.org with almost 200
6 signatures raising awareness of this problem in
7 Crotona Park. Please take a look at it to help us
8 address this problem.

9 The second challenge, my community confront is
10 the disproportionate number of do dog runs in our
11 borough. In fact, constituents of District 16 do not
12 have a nearby dog run. Manhattan, Brooklyn and
13 Queens residents have enjoyed dog runs for many years
14 because they either have the funding or support of
15 their elected officials. The problem residents
16 living nearby Crotona Park is that the park may fall
17 under two Council Members Districts. District 17 and
18 District 15.

19 Also, even though Crotona Park –

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 MARISOL DURAIN: Is not in District 16 – just one
22 more sentence. In some Crotona to be more equitable
23 and thriving if there's funding to employ a park
24 administrator who cares about the park for present
25 and future generations. Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
3 to Mark E. Herrin.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, that concludes panel
6 six. Just so folks know, I will announce panels nine
7 and ten. Panel nine will be Salimatou Doumbouya,
8 James Davis President of PSC CUNY, Jeremy Gong,
9 Rockeya McVay.

10 Panel ten will be Devery Dulman, Valeed Kabir,
11 Jennifer Downs, Jessica Simal, and Katherine Clad.
12 And we've also noted that there were people on the
13 Zoom who do not have a little mic button next to
14 their name. If that's the case, you will not be able
15 to speak when we call on you, so you may want to log
16 out of the Zoom and log back in. But we will now
17 turn to panel seven, starting with Elvira Uribe from
18 CASA.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 ELVIRA URIBE: Hi, my name is Elvira, I'm an
21 Organizer for CASA. So, uhm, for the time I have
22 been working at CASA, I've gotten to see firsthand
23 how important it is for New York City tenants to have
24 access to organizations like CASA.

1
2 Information is power. It's a phrase that I
3 always here but now I get to experience it. When
4 organizers goes to a building and let tenants know
5 about their right to live in safe apartments and
6 about the right to have a free attorney in housing
7 court, they gain changes. You see how they get
8 empowered and they start fighting for their rights.
9 Now more than ever is vital. The tenants learn about
10 the rights they have.

11 In the pandemic, the pandemic left thousands of
12 tenants at risk for eviction. They need to know they
13 are not alone. So, that's why it is important that
14 Local Law 53 supports organizers will work to ensure
15 that tenants know about their right to counsel and
16 feel supported using it.

17 More tenants will be prepared to defend harms
18 against eviction and fight for the right to a safe
19 affordable home. The right to counsel have proven to
20 stop evictions in New York City but many tenants who
21 are eligible for right to counsel don't know about it
22 or are too afraid to use it. When tenants don't know
23 or use their rights, they are more easily harassed
24 out of their apartments. This led to the
25

1
2 displacement of mostly poor Black and Brown New
3 Yorkers. Yeah, uhm, thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
5 turn to George Sotiroff, also from CASA.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 GEORGE SOTIROFF: Thank you. My name is George
8 Sotiroff and I thank you for the opportunity to
9 testify today. What is oh, what is a Hooverville? A
10 Hooverville is a shantytown built by unemployed and
11 destitute people during the early years of the Great
12 Depression of the 1930's.

13 John Steinbeck and his Pulitzer prize winning
14 novel, the Grapes of Wrath, features a California
15 family which lived in a Hooverville. Hooverville's
16 posed health risks to their inhabitants and to those
17 nearby. Mainstream media has been reporting the rise
18 of modern day Hooverville's ever since the collapse
19 of 2008. Recently Hooverville's of significant size
20 have been identified in Oregon, California and
21 Florida. The right to counsel is a bullwork against
22 the plague of Hooverville's, but only if it is
23 adequately funded and seriously implemented. I urge
24 the Committee here today to implement adequately and
25 fully, Local Law 53 and to work with the courts to

1
2 insure that no case move forward without a right to
3 counsel attorney.

4 We were told that the city had allocated \$3.6
5 million towards this bill and was going to release it
6 in November of last year. To date, we have seen none
7 of it. The city is now out of compliance with its
8 own law. If we don't find and enforce the courts to
9 - if we don't fund and then force the courts to
10 implement the right to counsel. Then, I can only
11 imagine New York City, the live of the world, the
12 citadel of all nations, suddenly collapsing into a
13 single overwhelming Hooverville, complete with all
14 the chaos and depression that is sure to follow. So,
15 I'm urging adequate funding for Bill 53. Thank you
16 very much for allowing me to testify.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, Julie
18 Colon, Right to Counsel New York City Coalition.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 JULIE COLON: Oh, thank you. Sorry about that.
21 Hi, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to
22 testify today. My name is Julie Colon, I am a Tenant
23 Organizer with the Northwest Bronx Community and
24 Clergy Coalition and we are also a part of the Right
25 to Counsel Coalition which led and won the Campaign

1
2 to Establish a Right to Counsel for Tenant Space and
3 Eviction. We are really proud of New York City's
4 groundbreaking Right to Counsel legislation and we do
5 applaud the City Council, the Mayor and the Office of
6 Civil Justice for its dedication to making the Right
7 to Counsel available to all New Yorkers during this
8 pandemic.

9 The law had a tremendous impact in just the few
10 years it was passed. 84 percent of tenants who had
11 right to counsel won their case and stayed in their
12 homes. Landlords are suing people less and community
13 groups are actively using the right to counsel as a
14 powerful tool to protect and advance tenants' rights.
15 Right to counsel had also helped to develop a body of
16 more than just case law, lower tenants rents,
17 restabilize apartments and enforce landlords to make
18 repairs.

19 As we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic,
20 right to counsel is more important than ever before
21 and we know that evictions in housing instability
22 have a disproportionate impact on people of color,
23 especially women and children of color. Evictions
24 and housing instability also have significant impact,
25 not just on peoples housing but on peoples education,

1
2 employment, family relationships, physical and mental
3 health and so much more.

4 New York City's right to counsel moves us closer
5 to achieving economic gender and racial justice. So,
6 we are here today to urge this Committee to
7 immediately and fully implement Local Law 53 and to
8 work with the courts to ensure that no case move
9 forward without a right to counsel in turn. The
10 expansion of right to counsel to work with and fund
11 community organizing groups to do the necessary
12 education and outreach work of Right to Counsel Local
13 Law 53 is so incredible. We know the mayoral City
14 Council administrations take time to transition but
15 with the expiration of the eviction protections of
16 cases moving forward, we can't wait. The city is now
17 out of compliance with its own law and it needs to be
18 implemented now. Thank you.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
21 turn to Mercedes Escoto also from CASA.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 MERCEDES ESCOTO: Hi there, my name is Mercedes
24 Escoto and I really want to make sure that the Right
25 to Counsel continues because in my personal

1
2 experience, the landlord gave me an eviction notice
3 in 2019. When I went to court, it was like I didn't
4 know where I was at. It was like I was in a shark
5 tank. I didn't know how to proceed. You know that
6 situation stressed me out. I live with my mother who
7 is 84 years old. She is disabled and right now I
8 just retired two months ago. I'm on a very low
9 income. So, for me, if I don't have the right to
10 counsel, I would not have had the help that I needed.
11 They helped me to get the republication - they
12 applied for me. They took me through all the steps
13 on how to get that going. Otherwise, I would have
14 been in the streets. The right to counsel is a very
15 important program for as people with low income. Now
16 I'm in a fixed income, I just retired. I would
17 appreciate it if that program is not eliminated.
18 Please don't do it. Do us a favor and let us live
19 you know a better life. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll hear
21 from Wanda Martinez, Catholic Migration Services.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 WANDA MARTINEZ: Good morning. My name is Wanda
24 Martinez and thank you for the opportunity to testify
25 today. I'm a Tenant Leader with the Catholic

1
2 Migration Services, a nonprofit leader services
3 provider and community based organization actively
4 engaged in tenant organizing. As an active member of
5 the Right to Counsel Coalition, we are proud of the
6 cities groundbreaking right to counsel legislation
7 and applaud the City Council, the Mayor, and the
8 Office of Civil Justice for its dedication to making
9 the right to counsel available to all New Yorkers
10 during this pandemic.

11 The law has had a tremendous impact in just a few
12 years since it passed. 84 percent of tenants who
13 have right to counsel won their case and stayed in
14 their home. Landlords are suing less people and
15 community groups are actively using the right to
16 counsel as a powerful tool to protect and advance
17 tenant rights.

18 In Queens for example, as tenants learn about
19 their right to counsel, they are more encouraged to
20 form tenant associations, fight over charges, fight
21 quality of life conditions and harassment among other
22 things like I'm currently doing in my building. I'm
23 here today to urge this Committee to immediately and
24 fully implement Local Law 53 by working with the
25 courts to ensure that no case moves forward without a

1
2 right to counsel attorney. The intent of the law is
3 clear to fund trusted tenant organizing groups
4 working in low income communities of color, to lead
5 outreach and education efforts through community
6 meetings, workshops, tenant association meetings and
7 more.

8 This vital work of tenant organizers ensures that
9 tenants are informed of right to counsel and
10 supported through - prior to an eviction being filed.
11 For us tenants, to exercise our rights, we need to
12 have them, to know that we have them. With hundreds
13 of thousands of -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 WANDA MARTINEZ: One more, can I just one more
16 thing? Uh, okay, to meet the needs of the tenants
17 across the city, this law must be implemented now.
18 As tenants representing Queens residents, I urge the
19 Committee to work with the necessary officers to
20 release the RFP, so that tenant organizing groups can
21 do their work to educate and organize tenants across
22 New York City during this incredibly scary time. I
23 urge the Committee to call on Mayor Adams to fully
24 fund and implement Local Law 53. Thank you very
25 much.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We just remind
3 everyone when time is called, please just wrap up
4 with a sentence. Next, I'm going to call on Anya
5 Mukarji -Connolly, Brooklyn Defender Services.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 ANYA MUKARJI-CONNOLLY: Hi, can you hear me?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

9 ANYA MUKARJI-CONNOLLY: Hi, my name is Anya
10 Mukarji-Connolly and I'm the Associate Director of
11 Policy at Brooklyn Defender Services. Thank you to
12 the City Council Committee on Finance and Chair
13 Brannan for this opportunity to testify about our
14 work and the importance of funding for indigent
15 defense providers in New York City.

16 BDS is a public defense office whose mission is
17 to provide outstanding representation and advocacy
18 free of cost to people facing the loss of freedom,
19 family separation and other serious legal harms by
20 the government. We represent approximately 25,000
21 people each year who are accused of a crime facing
22 the loss of liberty, their home, their children or
23 deportation.

24 In my oral testimony today, I'd like to briefly
25 flag for this Committee our three budget priorities

1
2 for Fiscal Year '23 and our discretionary budget
3 requests. First, we're asking the City Council and
4 Mayor to fully fund family defense representation in
5 Article 10 cases in family court. BDS receives
6 funding from MOCJ for our family defense contract,
7 but this level of funding is insufficient to sustain
8 our representation model at our current intake
9 targets. The city family defense providers are
10 currently funded at 50 percent of what they need to
11 meet the state statutory and constitutional mandates.
12 The City Council should demand that the Mayor's
13 budget be amended to increase funding for family
14 defense contracts immediately.

15 Second, we call on City Council to preserve the
16 city's commitment to the New York Immigrant Family
17 Unity Project Initiative and fully fund it. This
18 groundbreaking City Council funded initiative remains
19 the national model for universal representation for
20 immigrants facing deportation.

21 Third, the Right to Family Advocacy Initiative is
22 a two-year old initiative that provides critical due
23 process representation and advocacy services to
24 parents and families who cannot afford to hire an
25 attorney during an ACS investigation. And in

1
2 hearings before the State Office for Children and
3 Family Services.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 ANYA MUKARJI-CONNOLLY: Lastly, I want to quickly
6 uhm, uhm mention our other request that include the
7 Immigrant Opportunities Initiative, which is funding
8 for our affirmative immigration services, pandemic
9 relief funding, our civil justice practice support,
10 as well as alternative to incarceration and DOVE
11 funding for comprehensive legal services. Uhm, thank
12 you to this Committee on Finance for the time to
13 testify today and to the City Council for your
14 ongoing support of Brooklyn Defender Services. Thank
15 you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we'll turn
17 to panel eight, Brendan Cheney, Ryan Chavez, Luisa
18 Rodriguez, Alex Roque, Tierra Labrada and Monsignor
19 Kevin Sullivan. We will first turn to Brendan Cheney
20 from the New York Housing Conference.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 BRENDAN CHENEY: Good morning, my name is Brendan
23 Cheney. I'm Director of Policy and Communications at
24 the New York Housing Conference. For the past two
25 years, we've led United for Housing, a Coalition of

1
2 more than 90 organizations working together to fight
3 the housing crisis. We released a report last year
4 and our main recommendation was for the city to
5 double housing capital spending to \$4 billion per
6 year.

7 We really appreciate the City Council's support
8 and advocacy for this housing investment. Make no
9 mistake, \$4 billion per year for housing is fiscally
10 responsible. The city is well under the benchmark of
11 debt service being no more than 15 percent of total
12 taxes, by our calculation it would rise to no more
13 than 14 percent with the added housing spending.

14 Eric Adams supported this recommendation during
15 the campaign, calling on a smart ask but he has yet
16 to deliver on that promise. His proposed \$5 billion
17 for housing capital for over ten years, roughly \$500
18 million more per year is insufficient to meet the
19 crisis.

20 For HPD the new funding will mostly cover rising
21 interest rates and construction costs. For NYCHA,
22 the added funding goes to PACT projects and WYKOFF
23 and Gowanus Houses, as agreed to in the Gowanus
24 rezoning. It will not assist any of the 110,000
25 units not slated for PACT.

1
2 While the NYCHA Preservation Trust would assist
3 these units and we hope City Council members will
4 support legislation in Albany for the trust, more
5 funding is needed and the city and state must do
6 their part and provide \$1.5 billion per year each in
7 capital funding.

8 We also remain concerned about the staffing
9 crisis at HPD and related agencies. We were
10 encouraged to hear HPD leadership address the issue
11 in budget testimony but there are further steps the
12 city can take to hire and retain staff, which we have
13 outlined in a forthcoming report including increase
14 staff, pay in workplace flexibility, decreased
15 bureaucratic oversight and fine flexibility within
16 and outside the civil service system.

17 Finally, this month, we released a New York City
18 housing tracker showing housing stats by City Council
19 District. We found that all districts in
20 neighborhoods need to build more affordable housing
21 but some districts are not doing their fair share and
22 must support more affordable housing.

23 We hope you will take a look at the tracker and
24 use the data to support the need for more affordable
25 housing in all neighborhoods. Thank you -

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

3 BRENDAN CHENEY: For the opportunity to testify.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
5 turn to Ryan Chavez, Cypress Hills Local Development
6 Corporation.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I will turn to
9 Luisa Rodriguez.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 LUISA RODRIGUEZ: Hi, my name is Luisa Rodriguez.
12 Thanks to the Finance Committee for holding this
13 public hearing and give us the opportunity to express
14 our needs.

15 I'm a tenant of a tall building 615 West 150
16 Street in Manhattan. Member of a Til Coalition
17 organized by Pa'lante Harlem(SP?). Since your
18 committee works to make sure that taxpayers dollars
19 are used wisely, effectively and fairly, and to
20 achieve positive, lasting change, the purpose of my
21 testimony is to bring to your attention the need to
22 include in this year's budget funding for the long
23 awaited reallocation of buildings in the Til program,
24 instead of funding the ANCP third-party program that
25 HPD is pushing this Til buildings into.

1
2 The Til Program was created in the 70's at a time
3 when the neighborhoods in which these buildings were
4 located experienced impoverishment and depopulation.
5 A time when no one wanted to get into these areas. A
6 time when no developer was interested in investing a
7 penny to restore dilapidated buildings and revive
8 these trace neighborhoods. That's when the city
9 through HPD created the Til program and presented it
10 to the tenants of those abandoned dilapidated
11 buildings as an opportunity for them to be able to
12 own their apartment.

13 The agreement was that if the tenants could
14 manage their buildings for a number of years, not
15 decades, the city will then restore the buildings
16 with governments funds and then will sell to tenants
17 their units for \$250 after creating a cooperative
18 HDFC. The tenants and the City of New York enter
19 into that agreement and the tenants have done their
20 part and have been patiently waiting for HPD to
21 deliver on their part of the agreement. However,
22 after decades in which still tenants have taken care
23 of their buildings and cleaned up their communities,
24 HPD is transferring now the Til buildings to third-
25 party programs to the ANCP program -

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

LUISA RODRIGUEZ: Okay, one more thing. In my written testimony I will clarify many of the things that HPD is doing with the Til buildings.

Now, I just want to tell you, you have the power. You can undo the years of neglect to Til buildings by transferring funding from the ANCP third-party program to the Til program. To fund the reallocation of Til buildings. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we will call on Alex Roque, Ali Forney Center.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we're going to turn to Tierra Librada.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

TIERRA LABRADA: Hi Chair Brannan and members of the Council. My name is Tierra Labrada and I'm here representing the Supportive Housing Network of New York. Supportive Housing is a proven affordable housing model with wrap around support services for people with a history of homelessness who may need support to maintain independent housing. We are making the following recommendations for the FY23 budget. A more detailed testimony will be submitted.

1
2 One, continue to push for affordability and
3 annually in affordable and supportive housing. Two,
4 continue to support Just Pay and insist the mayor
5 include a \$5.4 percent COLA in the adopted budget and
6 to establish, fund and enforce an automatic cost of
7 living adjustment.

8 Three, match the states investment in older,
9 underfunded DOHMH scattered site contracts, which are
10 operating at a deficit leaving tenants in poor
11 housing conditions without the services they need and
12 deserve.

13 Four, improve NYC 15/15 by reallocating the 50/50
14 split between congregate and scattered site to a
15 75/25 split respectively and create new units for
16 people leaving jail, prison and long-term hospitals
17 stays who are currently ineligible for the program.

18 Five, dedicate HPD capital service and operating
19 funding to holistically preserve 300 units of
20 supportive housing per year. Six, expand mobile
21 treatment teams specifically for supportive housing
22 residents who need a higher level of care than what's
23 currently being funded in older, underfunded
24 supportive housing residences.

1
2 Seven, match the federal financial investment
3 into the coordinated assessment and placement system
4 and encourage stronger collaboration. Collaboration
5 between DHS, HRA, NYCHA and HPD to streamline the
6 housing process. Eight, continue to put pressure on
7 the Administration to increase staff capacity at HRA
8 and HPD and create an Ombuds person at City Hall to
9 conduct interagency coordination, fast tracking
10 necessary approvals for supportive housing projects.
11 Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
13 turn to Monsignor Kevin Sullivan.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 MONSIGNOR KEVIN SULLIVAN: Thank you for the
16 opportunity. I will save a little time because let
17 me just echo what Brendan said Tierra said and just
18 put a little exclamation point. We need more capital
19 funding for affordable housing but we also need the
20 infrastructure for the very city agencies to be able
21 to actually process good projects quickly.

22 So, that is a critical need. The other item in
23 terms of affordability, there are a lot of programs
24 which provide various types of rental assistance. We
25 need to establish a New York City policy which says,

1
2 any New Yorkers, any New York household at less than
3 50 percent of the AMI should not be rent poor, and
4 should only have to pay 30 percent of their income
5 for housing.

6 And therefore I suggest the Council do a
7 supplemental voucher program for those New Yorkers
8 who fall between the cracks. Let me punctuate again,
9 the need for better just pay for human service
10 workers that is built into contract escalation;
11 critically important.

12 And the final area, which I want to speak to, is
13 the need for efficiency, accountability and
14 flexibility in funding. The way that contracts are
15 funded; they sometimes do not target the most
16 important needs of people but because of the forced
17 categorization of the spending of funds, the best use
18 of the money is prohibited. So, I would encourage
19 the Council accountability, flexibility and
20 efficiency in the funding of human service of New
21 York. Thank you so much for the opportunity to
22 testify before you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Monsignor. Before
24 I call panel 9, I will announce panels 11 and 12.
25 Panel 11 Tami Lin-Moges, Terri Carta(SP?), Aaron

1 Sanders, Adam Ganser, Andrea Parker. Panel 12, Randi
2 Levine, Carol Verdi, Christopher Treiber, Gregory
3 Brender, Jeanne Alter and Leonie Haimson. I will
4 first turn to Panel 9, Salimatou Doumbouya, the CUNY
5 University Student Senate followed by James Davis,
6 President of the Professional Staff Congress at CUNY,
7 Jeremy Gong and Rockeya McVay. But we'll first turn
8 to Salimatou Doumbouya.
9

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: Good morning Chairperson
12 Brannan and honorable members of the New York City
13 Council. My name is Salimatou Doumbouya and I serve
14 as the 37th Chairperson of City University of New
15 York University Student Senate, serving the nearly
16 500,000 students total in CUNY. I also am the only
17 student of the University of New York Board of
18 Trustees, President of the New York City College of
19 Technology, Student Government Association where I
20 pursue my bachelors in architecture. I have a
21 liberal arts degree for the Borough of Manhattan
22 Community College. The Preliminary Executive Budget
23 proposal which includes a three percent overhead
24 spending reduction for most of the agencies would
25 result in around \$14.6 million in critical funding

1
2 dollars being cut from the City University student
3 budget. This would have a significant impact on
4 CUNY's community college which receive the majority
5 of their funding from the city and need 128 full time
6 faculty positions unfulfilled. A 2019 report
7 purchased by the New York City Comptroller's Office
8 found that CUNY graduates contribute to \$4.2 billion
9 to the state's economy and at the same time, the
10 Department of Labor has routinely recommended
11 investing in community colleges as available and
12 effective pathway to decrease incarceration and
13 recidivism.

14 Missing the chance to invest in CUNY is the
15 chance to benefit from CUNY's track record of being
16 an upward college mobility agent. On behalf of the
17 nearly 500,000 students at CUNY, I ask you to support
18 fully funding the following initiatives: This would
19 include operational funding for immediate investment
20 at the University such as expanding ASAP
21 availability, mental health services, hiring new
22 full-time faculty. We also ask you to support a co-
23 allocating funding for our disability services. It's
24 really important for us that you fund \$4 million for
25 expansion of our childcare services, \$2 million for

1
2 increasing graduation rates by funding remediation
3 and \$500,000 for CUNY diversity incubators. You will
4 see more details about what us CUNY students are
5 asking for –

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 SALIMATOU DOUMBOUYA: In my submitted testimony.

8 Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we'll turn
10 to James Davis from the Professional Staff Congress
11 at CUNY.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 JAMES DAVIS: Good morning. I'm James Davis,
14 President of the Professional Staff Congress. We
15 represent 30,000 faculty and staff at the City
16 University of New York. Thank you Chair Brannan,
17 members of the Finance Committee for the opportunity
18 to testify today and for your passage of the Council
19 resolution in support of the new deal for CUNY state
20 legislation in March. As you know, support for
21 higher education in Albany reached stark levels this
22 year with over \$200 million in additional funding.
23 This year's value of public higher education
24 resonated because our members came together with CUNY
25 students and community allies to amplify our message

1
2 to the governor and the legislature in Albany and now
3 CUNY needs this level of support from New York City
4 budget as well.

5 We're counting on you to build off the work done
6 in Albany and deliver for our members and our
7 students. We're asking for an additional \$62.6
8 million above last year's budget. An investment in
9 students, workers, and communities will uplift New
10 York in its continued recovery from the pandemic. As
11 Salimatou just alluded to, our labor union as well as
12 opposed to the Mayor's assistance on leaving 128
13 faculty positions at CUNY vacant in order to achieve
14 a \$14.6 million PEG cut. The Governor and the state
15 legislature just invested in new faculty for the
16 first time in recent memory and the Mayor's cut would
17 serious impede CUNY's ability to replenish the full-
18 time faculty that we've lost to attrition and
19 retirement.

20 Our community colleges were already struggling
21 before the pandemic. Federal stimulus funds have
22 helped but they have not made CUNY whole and they are
23 not expected to. I could tell you many, many stories
24 and these are not extras or embellishments. We're
25

1
2 talking about fundamental services that go to the
3 core functions of the university.

4 CUNY already lacked sufficient full-time faculty
5 and staff before the pandemic. A report by our
6 university faculty senate last fall showed -

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 JAMES DAVIS: Thanks, I'll just finish up. It
9 showed that colleges that serve students of color are
10 less likely than colleges with a Whiter student body
11 to have access to full-time faculty which deepens
12 racial inequities.

13 So, as you'll see in my written testimony, we've
14 outlined five areas where we're requesting additional
15 operating support as well as \$33 million in CUNY's
16 capital request. Your support and advocacy is
17 critical especially to helping our communities
18 overcome the life defining racial disparities and as
19 you know, CUNY is an economic engine mobility for the
20 city. Thank you again for the opportunity to be here
21 with you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Our final two panels. First,
23 we'll turn to Jeremy Gong.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I had my hand raised.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Barron, we're doing
3 Council Member questions at the conclusion of the
4 panel.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Oh, okay.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So, I'll call on you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hmm, hmm. Jeremy Gong.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, not seeing him on the
11 Zoom. Rockeya McVay.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 ROCKEYA MCVAY: Hi, uhm, my name is Rockeya
14 McVay. I'm a New York City resident and a member of
15 DSA's New York City Chapter. I am here to voice my
16 opposition to Mayor Eric Adams Executive Budget and
17 to call on the City Council to pass a budget that
18 meets the needs of all New Yorkers.

19 Two years into the pandemic, working class New
20 Yorkers are in crisis. COVID-19 cases are surging.
21 Landlords are raising rents and families struggle to
22 stay in their homes. But the Mayor continues to
23 favor the wealthy and powerful over every day New
24 Yorkers. His budget makes devastating cuts to vital
25 city services like housing, healthcare, sanitation

1
2 and education, while leaving the NYPD's \$10 billion
3 budget intact.

4 Today, I urge the Council to fight against the
5 Mayor's program of austerity and punishment. Instead
6 of cutting funding for housing, the Council must
7 invest \$4 billion into permanent affordable housing
8 including \$1.5 billion for NYCHA and \$2.5 billion for
9 HPD. The Council must also reject Adam's cuts to our
10 public education system by investing \$122 million
11 into CUNY and expanding the ASAP program to include
12 all community colleges.

13 Finally, the Council must reject the Mayor's
14 regressive return to law in order. I urge the
15 Council to reject the proposal to add hundreds of new
16 CO's for solitary confinement, a practice the UN
17 defines as torture. I also urge the Council to
18 demonstrate their commitment to racial justice by
19 cutting failed NYPD criminalization programs like the
20 ineffective and violent plain closed units. The so-
21 called Subway Safety Plan and the ending for all NYPD
22 response to mental health cause.

23 Thank you Council Members and Committee Chair
24 Brannan for hearing my testimony. Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and Council Member
3 Barron, on this panel, you have Salimatou Doumbouya
4 from the CUNY University Student Senate, President
5 James Davis of the Professional Staff Congress and
6 Rockeya McVay. Council Member Barron.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I just wanted to say very
9 quickly to Salimatou and to Rockeya, I really
10 appreciate your testimonies. You all sound like me
11 in the City Council but I want to caution all of you
12 today that unless you organize, because it honestly
13 compels me to tell you, the way this this thing is
14 going, it appears that a lot of the City Council
15 Members are going to go for this Mayor's Budget.
16 There are some of us that are fighting it but I think
17 that it's going to take an uprising from the 500,000
18 students in CUNY and the 4-500,000 people in NYCHA
19 because sometimes Council Members, they get Chairs
20 and they get little programs for their communities
21 and then the Speaker appoints them to things and the
22 next thing you know it, they'll be justifying some
23 meager increases in things but this budget for your
24 information; and I'm only saying this because I got
25

1
2 to leave and I'm going to come back to hear more
3 testimony.

4 This budget, a \$99.7 billion budget, \$94.5
5 billion capital budget; that's just the expense
6 budget and they have \$6.3 billion in a reserve fund
7 and then another \$3.2 to \$5.0 billion that came in
8 unexpectedly this year. So, they have about \$11
9 billion to work with. If you talk to OMB and the
10 City Council Finance Division or you speak to IBO,
11 they may have some different figures but they have
12 \$9-\$11 billion. There should be no PEGs to no
13 agencies and there should be a re-enhancement to all
14 of the agencies and plus, the money that's going to
15 run out from the federal money is going to be a
16 conservative austerity budget.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, I just wanted to say
19 I'm with you and I'll stop there but you're going to
20 have to organize because these Council Members, the
21 way it's heading, I'm really concerned about how many
22 of them will be committed to the things they said to
23 you when they asked for your vote.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Council Member
25 Barron and we've also been joined by Council Members

1
2 Brewer, Velázquez and Ayala. I will now turn to
3 Panel Ten, Devery Doleman, Galib Kabir, Jennifer
4 Downes, Jessica Semmel and Katherine Clad. We'll
5 first start with Devery A. Doleman.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will turn to Galib
8 Kabir.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'm not seeing them on the
11 Zoom. Jennifer Downes.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will turn to Jessica
14 Semmel. Next on list is Katherine Clad.

15 KATHERINE CLAD: Hi, thank you Council -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 KATHERINE CLAD: Op, I'm sorry. My name is
18 Katherine Clad, I'm a New York City resident, a
19 member of DSA's NIC Chapter and the mother of a first
20 grader in the public school system. I'm here to
21 voice my opposition to Mayor Eric Adam's Executive
22 Budget to call on the City Council to pass a budget
23 that meets the needs of all New Yorkers.

24 Two years into the pandemic, working class New
25 Yorkers are in crisis. COVID cases are surging.

1
2 Landlords are raising rents at obscene rates and
3 families struggle to stay in their homes. But the
4 Mayor continues to favor the wealthy and powerful at
5 the expense of every day New Yorkers. His budget
6 makes devastating cuts to vital city services, like
7 housing, healthcare, sanitation and education, while
8 leaving the NYPD's \$10 billion budget intact.

9 I strongly urge the Council to fight against the
10 Mayor's program of Austerity and Punishment, instead
11 of cutting funding for housing, the Council must
12 invest \$4 billion into permanent affordable housing
13 including \$1.5 billion for NYCHA and \$2.5 billion for
14 HPD. The Council must also reject Adams's cuts to
15 our public education system by investing \$122 million
16 into CUNY and funding DOE mental health counselors
17 and social workers, rather than filling police
18 vacancies in schools.

19 I also urge the Council to act on two deadly
20 crisis facing our city climate catastrophe and the
21 overdose epidemic. We need \$3.1 billion for the
22 Streets Plan, \$1.8 billion for the Green Public
23 Schools, \$250 million for Fair Fairs and \$10 million
24 to expand lifesaving save consumption sites to all
25 five boroughs.

1
2 Finally, the Council must reject the Mayor's
3 regressive return to law in order. I urge the
4 Council to reject the proposal to add hundreds of
5 UCL's for solitary confinement. I also urge the
6 Council to demonstrate their commitment to racial
7 justice by cutting failed NYPD criminalization
8 programs like the ineffective and violent plain
9 closed units, the so-called Subway Safety Plan and
10 ending all NYPD response to mental health calls.

11 Thank you Council Members and Committee Chair
12 Brannan for hearing my testimony.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and now we'll turn
14 to Panel 11, Tami Lin-Moges, Terry Carta, Aaron
15 Sanders, Adam Ganser and Andrea Parker. We'll first
16 start with Tami Lin-Moges from the Nature
17 Conservancy.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 TAMI LIN-MOGES: Hi, thank you so much. My name
20 is Tami Lin-Moges and I am the Deputy Director of the
21 New York City program at the Nature Conservancy. The
22 Nature Conservancy is the world's largest
23 conservation organization. In New York State alone,
24 we have 90,000 members, 35,000 of whom reside in New
25 York City. The Nature Conservancy in New York is a

1
2 member of the Play Fair Coalition and we're also a
3 leading member and convener of Force For All NYC. A
4 coalition of over 50 organizational members. Force
5 for All NYC works to increase the investments in the
6 urban forest and to expand the tree canopy cover from
7 22 percent to 30 percent citywide by 2035 in an
8 equitable manner. I'm here today to express support
9 for growing the New York City Parks budget to one
10 percent of the total city budget and to increase
11 funding to the urban forest.

12 Thank you to Chair Brannan and the Finance
13 Committee for the opportunity to speak about the need
14 for funding parks and the urban forest. The urban
15 forest provides many benefits. It cleans the air and
16 cools the city. Trees and parks also provide health
17 and quality of life benefits. Our urban forest and
18 its care is a matter of environmental and social
19 justice. Low income communities and communities of
20 color tend to have less tree canopy, a key factor in
21 heat vulnerability.

22 Fully funding the urban forest means planting
23 more trees in areas that need it the most to make our
24 city more equitable. It also means protecting and
25 maintaining existing trees that provide huge benefits

1 today. Investments in the urban forest will create
2 jobs and help make the city more livable and climate
3 resilient. To support the care and growth of the
4 urban forest, New York City Parks needs consistent,
5 sufficient baseline funding for both capital and
6 operations expenses. Further details can be found in
7 our written testimony which also include signoffs
8 from 31 Force for All NYC organizations. Thank you
9 again to Chair Brannan and the Finance Committee for
10 considering the benefits of parks and the urban
11 forest to New Yorkers as they continue to work on the
12 next city budget.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
15 turn to Terry Carta from the Brooklyn Greenway
16 Initiative.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on my list, I have Aaron
19 Sanders Natural Areas Conservancy.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 AARON SANDERS: Good afternoon. My name is Aaron
22 Sanders and I am the Associate Director of Advocacy
23 and Policy at the Natural Areas Conservancy.

24 Thank you Chair Brannan for the opportunity to
25 testify about the proposed Fiscal Year '23 budget.

1
2 The Natural Areas Conservancy is a nonprofit
3 organization founded in 2012 with the goal of
4 increasing capacity for New York City Parks and its
5 partners to restore and manage 10,000 acres of
6 forest, wetlands and 300 miles of trails under the
7 agencies jurisdiction.

8 Today, I represent our organization, the Forest
9 for All Coalition and the Play Fair Coalition. I am
10 testifying to highlight the importance of New York
11 City's urban forest, wetlands and natural areas but
12 to also advocate for one percent baseline funding for
13 New York City parks.

14 New York City's urban forest provides a multitude
15 of benefits. They mitigate extreme heat, improve air
16 quality and provide other myriad of benefits. A
17 signature project of the Natural Areas Conservancy is
18 the forest management framework for New York City,
19 which we released in partnership with New York City
20 Parks in 2018. This plan includes ecological and
21 social metrics for the care of the city's natural
22 areas forest and calls for an investment of \$385
23 million over 25 years to protect natural areas.

24 In order to ensure that New York City's urban
25 forest including natural areas thrives and provides

1 continued benefits to residents now and in the
2 future. New York City needs at least one percent of
3 the city's total funding. Currently, natural areas
4 receive .7 percent of the total expense budget for
5 forest care. If the New York City Council commits to
6 one percent funding for parks, \$4 million of that
7 funding would be appropriated to support the forest
8 management framework.
9

10 I want to say that I'll submit more robust
11 testimony later but I want to reiterate my support
12 for one percent for parks and our care for forests,
13 the urban forest system in New York City and again, I
14 want to thank the City Council and fellow advocates
15 for your time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
17 turn to Adam Ganser, New Yorkers for Parks.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Ganser, it's your time to
20 testify. Okay, we're going to turn to Andrea Parker
21 from the Gowanus Canal Conservancy.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 ANDREA PARKER: Thank you for the opportunity to
24 testify this morning. I'm Andrea Parker, Executive
25 Director at Gowanus Canal Conservancy where we

1
2 advocate and care for ecologically sustainable parks
3 and public spaces in the Gowanus lowlands while
4 empowering a community of stewards.

5 We are also a proud member of Forest for All NYC
6 Coalition and the Play Fair Coalition and are here
7 today to ask this Council to fight for a budget that
8 prioritizes equitable management of our shared public
9 realm. In particular, we need to see full capital
10 and expense funding for the urban forest, increase
11 funding for the Parks Equity Initiative and we need
12 Council to hold Mayor Adams to its commitment to
13 dedicate one percent of the city budget for parks.

14 As Tami and Aaron just detailed, our seven
15 million trees provide critical ecosystem services to
16 New York City residents. Services that are becoming
17 all the more important as our climate changes. Here
18 in Gowanus, 670 young trees installed over the past
19 decade are growing to help fill a neighborhood wide
20 gap in the urban canopy.

21 When mature, these trees will provide critical
22 benefits of flood management, cooling, shade and they
23 will also absorb storm water before it pollutes our
24 canal. But surviving to maturity depends on adequate
25 maintenance and protection. From the Parks

1
2 Department, from local organizations like us and from
3 volunteers.

4 In Gowanus, we empower our network of volunteer
5 key stewards who water, weed, prune and remove litter
6 and debris. The Parks Equity Initiative has provided
7 essential support for this work as it does for
8 thousands of volunteers across the city and this
9 initiative should be increased in order to cultivate
10 social and ecological infrastructure. But street
11 trees also need maintenance that cannot be done by
12 volunteers, such as structural pruning, stump
13 removal, sidewalk repair and species control.

14 This Council must end the long-term underfunding
15 of the Parks Department and the workers who care for
16 these trees and hold Mayor Adams accountable for
17 baseline funding of one percent to parks, to ensure
18 that our young trees are able to provide critical
19 services to neighborhoods across New York City.
20 Thanks for the opportunity to testify.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We're going to
22 try Adam Ganser one more time from New Yorkers for
23 Parks.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, folks, for everyone
3 listening, if I call on you and you do not speak,
4 uhm, we are going to move on. Just so everyone's
5 aware there will be a catch all statement at the very
6 end of this hearing. Anyone that did not get a
7 chance to speak will be able to but we are going to
8 be keeping moving things along.

9 So, next, I'm going to call on Panel 12. Randi
10 Levine, Carol Verdi, Christopher Treiber, Gregory
11 Brender, Jeanne Alter and Leonie Haimson. We'll
12 first start with Randi Levine, Advocates for
13 Children.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 RANDI LEVINE: Thank you for the opportunity to
16 speak with you. My name is Randi Levine and I'm
17 Policy Director at Advocates for Children of New
18 York. Given the needs we see as we help thousands of
19 families navigate the school system and the historic
20 levels of federal and state education funding, the
21 city should be increasing and certainly not
22 decreasing supports to students including in the
23 following areas, and we're pleased that the City
24 Council included a number of these priorities in your
25 response to the preliminary budget.

1
2 First, in 2020 nearly one in four English
3 language learners dropped out of high school and few
4 schools provide the support recently arrived older
5 immigrant ELLs need. The city should invest \$2.1
6 million for programs to support older ELLs at
7 existing transfer schools and \$12 million to hire 120
8 school based ELL instructional specialists.

9 Second, two years ago, the city increased
10 salaries for Pre K general education teachers at
11 CBO's but excluded preschool special education
12 teachers. The city should invest \$30 million to
13 increase salaries for teachers and staff at preschool
14 special education programs to address the shortage of
15 these programs.

16 Third, the DOE announced it would launch the
17 first team focused on students in foster care but
18 only 4 of the 11 promised positions have been posted
19 and none has been filled. The city should fully
20 staff this team and also invest \$5 million to
21 guarantee bus service to students in foster care so
22 they can stay in their original school as per their
23 legal right.

24 Fourth, 60 percent of students living in shelter
25 are chronically absent from school. The city should

1
2 invest \$12 million to hire an additional 100 DOE
3 shelter-based community coordinators to help ensure
4 students can get to school every day and get needed
5 support.

6 Fifth, too often students who are struggling are
7 met with exclusionary school discipline and policing
8 practices. The city should invest \$118 million for
9 citywide expansion and implementation of school-wide
10 restorative justice practices. I also want to
11 highlight two critical programs where the Council was
12 instrumental in securing funding last year. Both
13 programs were funded for only one year and unless
14 extended will expire in June.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 RANDI LEVINE: \$5 million for the mental health
17 continuum, the first ever collaboration between DOE,
18 H&H, and DOHMH to help students with significant
19 mental health challenges at 50 high needs schools and
20 \$4 million for immigrant family communication, to
21 help ensure immigrant families get needed
22 information.

23 We urge the Council to ensure these programs are
24 funded in the adopted budget. Thank you for the
25 opportunity to testify.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
3 to Carol Verdi, Heartshare Human Services of New
4 York.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 CAROL VERDI: Good morning. My name is Carol
7 Verdi. I work for Heartshare Human Services. I'm
8 here today to speak about teachers who work in 4410
9 schools which serve New York City public school
10 children and who are the lowest paid teachers in New
11 York City. When pay parity was put in place in 2019,
12 4410 teachers were left out. 4410 schools are
13 experiencing teacher vacancies in record numbers. We
14 went from a 34 percent vacancy rate in October to 46
15 percent as of April of 2022 and this is as per IEC
16 data. 4410 programs serve 88 percent of preschool
17 students with disabilities in New York City. 87 out
18 of 119 approved classrooms have been closed due to
19 the inability to hire teachers due to salary
20 inequity. The 4410 programs have lost 102 teachers
21 to higher paying jobs. This year for the first time
22 in 40 years, Heartshare has eight dark classrooms due
23 to the inability to hire teachers, yet children wait
24 with calls every day for placement.

1
2 We are facing a dire situation which we fear will
3 get worse as we approach September, where we
4 historically lose many teachers to the DOE. It
5 appears that 3K and 4K for All is really only for
6 some and the most vulnerable students are being
7 excluded because of the fact that we cannot hire
8 teachers. Please put \$30 million into the budget for
9 our 4410 teachers to receive what they should be
10 entitled to. The same credentials that are required
11 for public school teachers are required for our
12 teachers and these students deserve to have an
13 education in the greatest City of New York and we're
14 letting them down.

15 So, we really implore you to help us be their
16 champions, help us hire teachers so our students get
17 what they need.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 CAROL VERDI: Thank you for the opportunity.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
21 turn to Christopher Treiber, Interagency Council
22 Developmental Disabilities Agencies.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 CHRISTOPHER TREIBER: Good afternoon Chair
25 Brannan, Chair Joseph and members of the City

1
2 Council. My name is Christopher Treiber, I'm the
3 Associate Executive Director for Children's Services
4 with Interagency Council.

5 I'm testifying here today to advocate for salary
6 parity for the early childhood teachers in special
7 education programs. I'm here today to speak on
8 behalf of preschool children with developmental
9 disabilities and their families.

10 You will receive a full copy of my testimony but
11 I want to share some numbers with you. Carol, I
12 think shared some of these numbers with you already.
13 I think it's important to remember that these
14 numbers, while overwhelming at times, represent
15 preschool children with disabilities. And they are
16 our youngest children in the city with the highest
17 levels of need.

18 17 percent, 17, that was the vacancy rate for
19 preschool certified special education teachers in
20 2016-17 and like Carol Verdi just said, based on our
21 new data, 46 percent is the average vacancy rate
22 currently in ISE preschool special education
23 programs. The New York City DOE in November of 2021
24 projected that they would need 900 preschool special
25 education seats in spring of 2022. I'm here to tell

1
2 you that currently right now, 119 approved preschool
3 special education classrooms are closed because we
4 don't have teachers.

5 The numbers I shared with you documented the
6 devastating impact of excluding 4410 teachers from the
7 Early Childhood Salary Parity Agreement and the
8 impact it's had on our preschool children with
9 disabilities and their families. I'm here to ask the
10 Council today, how can New York City continue to
11 justifying paying early childhood teachers for
12 children with disabilities substantially less than
13 all of the early childhood teachers in New York City.
14 You have the opportunity this year to correct the
15 critical failure of previous administration to
16 address the injustice and to commit salary parity to
17 early childhood preschool special education teachers
18 in New York City.

19 We implore you to include the \$30 million in the
20 city's final budget for salary parity for these
21 teachers and to send a clear message to the parents
22 of children with disabilities -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 CHRISTOPHER TREIBER: In New York City that the
25 city values their children and will guarantee that

1 every child has access to a certified preschool
2 special education teacher. Thank you.

3
4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
5 turn to Gregory Brender from the Day Care Council of
6 New York.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 GREGORY BENDER: Thank you Chair Brannan and
9 members of the City Council for the opportunity to
10 testify. My name is Gregory Brender, I'm here on
11 behalf of the Day Care Council of New York. We are a
12 membership organization of early childhood education
13 providers who are serving children in all five
14 boroughs of New York City.

15 We are so grateful for the Council's leadership
16 in early childhood education. I just want to go
17 through some of the key priorities for this year's
18 budget. First, I want to start with the workforce.
19 We recognize the Council has been a leader in moving
20 towards salary parity. The work of salary parity is
21 really unfinished. We urge the Council to invest \$21
22 million in line with the Council's response to the
23 preliminary budget for program director salaries.
24 Community-based organizations are losing their
25

1
2 directors at a high level and these are essential to
3 keeping programs going and keeping them high quality.

4 Second, we urge the Council to raise the minimum
5 wage for all support staff to at least \$21 per hour
6 in line with the demands of the Just Pay Campaign.

7 And third, as you've heard from many other speakers
8 on this panel, we urge the inclusion of \$30 million
9 which the Council also supported in the Preliminary
10 Budget Response for the teachers in the 4410 special
11 ed preschools.

12 Finally, the 2019 salary parity agreement never
13 included longevity increases for any staff including
14 teachers. We urge the city and the Council to work
15 with the Administration to ensure that for teachers,
16 directors and support staff, longevity increases are
17 included in the early childhood salaries.

18 We also wanted to talk just a bit about the
19 utilization of state funding. The state has made a
20 historic commitment this year, increasing the funding
21 it provides to New York City to support early
22 childhood education programs. We urge the city to
23 use this funding one, to work with community-based
24 providers but particularly to ensure that there's
25 increased access to extended day, extended year

1
2 programs. Programs that are longer than the school
3 day that PreK and 3K provide, as well as programs for
4 infants and toddlers.

5 Finally, we support and are part of –

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 GREGORY BRENDER: Just one more thing, the Care
8 for All Campaign, asking for \$10 million for
9 undocumented children who have been excluded from
10 childcare. Thank you and sorry for running over
11 time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
13 turn to Jeanne Alter from the Kennedy Children
14 Center.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 JEANNE ALTER: Hi, good afternoon officially and
17 thank you for the opportunity to address the City
18 Council on the crisis facing the early childhood
19 special education programs in New York City.

20 As my colleagues have already told you, in the
21 30-years that I have been working with New York City
22 programs and families and children in New York City,
23 I have never seen things as bad as I see them right
24 now. Since July 1, 2021, I have lost 50 percent of
25 my staff. 50 percent of our staff have left our

1
2 school to work at higher paying jobs in the New York
3 City Department of Education. We have three
4 classrooms like my colleague Carol told you. She has
5 eight or smaller agency, we have three classrooms of
6 children sitting at home who are three and four-
7 years-old with autism, with developmental delays who
8 deserve to be in school. They are New York City
9 public schools children.

10 In addition, many of our children are now
11 receiving speech and occupational therapy because
12 there is a shortage of staff there as well. Because
13 again, they leave to go to the Department of
14 Education. Simply rehiring or hiring inexperienced
15 or not fully certified staff is not the answer. We
16 are cheating children of an education that they
17 rightfully deserve. And make no mistake about this,
18 this does affect the quality of education. This
19 means this effects that child trajectory to
20 kindergarten to high school.

21 44 programs like us provide these services, as
22 Carol Verdi already told you, using the same exact
23 certification and licensure. There's no difference
24 between a 4410 special ed teacher and a DOE 4410
25 special ed teacher. The difference is the PEG.

1
2 Why should our staff make any less money than DOE
3 staff for doing the exact same work with the exact
4 same credentials. It's discrimination, it's unfair.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 JEANNE ALTER: And those who have been in the
7 field, we've seen this for a long time. The lack of
8 funding and support for staff like ours is to blame
9 for this crisis and it's a problem that's been
10 simmering for decades; the pandemic has made it
11 worse. You have the power to make this change. I
12 appreciate your time and thank you for this.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
14 turn to Leonie Haimson from Class Size Matters.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 LEONIE HAIMSON: Good afternoon Chair Brannan and
17 members of the City Council. My name is Leonie
18 Haimson, I'm the Executive Director of Class Size
19 Matters. A nonprofit organization that advocates for
20 smaller classes in New York City public schools.

21 The budget cuts proposed to school budgets of
22 \$375 million over the next three years are projected
23 to lead to a loss of over 3200 teaching positions. I
24 urge you to prevent these cuts from being imposed or
25 this will likely cause the largest increase in New

1
2 York City class sizes since the great recession. And
3 the quality of our schools will fall further behind
4 being able to provide children with a better
5 opportunity to succeed. The DOE euphemistically
6 caused these proposals right sizing school budgets or
7 enrollment adjustments, instead they reflect wrong
8 sizing school budgets and keeping them handcuffed to
9 an outmoded system, called Fair Student Funding
10 devised 15-years-ago by Joe Klein. A man who did not
11 believe in small classes and did everything he could
12 to prevent them from happening.

13 As a survey undertaken by the Fair Student
14 Funding Task Force revealed, nearly 80 percent of
15 principals identified their large classes as a
16 consequence of this formula. Our analysis reveals
17 substantial decreases in average class size this year
18 citywide, especially in the early grades due to
19 enrollment decline and more than 187,000 students are
20 still in classes of 30 or more and sharp disparities
21 exist across school districts.

22 I'm including a PDF with charts with the relevant
23 data along with my submitted testimony. Yet, instead
24 of seizing on this decline in average class size and
25 moving forward to make it more equitable across the

1
2 city, the Administration seems intent on undoing this
3 progress, however inadvertent and moving backwards.

4 While the DOE often claims there is not the space
5 to lower class sizes to accepted levels, at the same
6 time, the SCA proposes to slash new capacity by \$1.5
7 billion or 19 percent compared to the adopted five
8 year capital plan. This would include cuts of more
9 than \$11,000 new seats with especially large
10 reductions in both the Bronx and Queens. Though the
11 SCA has now substantially lowered their classroom
12 capacity standards -

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 LEONIE HAIMSON: At the same time, they
15 counteracted that change by eliminating the classroom
16 efficiency ratios, which means that they expect all
17 classrooms, whether specialty rooms or general
18 classrooms to be filled 100 percent of the day in
19 middle schools and high schools, which reflects
20 magical thinking. I urge you to restore the cuts to
21 schools and to the capital plan and to resubmit
22 Intro. 2374, which would phase in smaller classes by
23 amending the administrative code.

24 As you know the original bill last session had
25 the support of 41 out of 50 Council Members last

1 session including Chair Brannan but never came to a
2 vote. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you
3 today.
4

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and now, I will
6 call the next few panels, so people know where they
7 are. The next panel we're going to hear from is Anna
8 Sax, Eric Goldstein, Jane Selden, Maggie Clarke,
9 Sharon Silberman. That is Panel 13. Panel 14,
10 Rachel Brown, Boris Santos, Hannah Anousheh, Zoria F
11 and Will Spisak.

12 Panel 15, Valerie Jimenez, Jordyn Rosenthal,
13 Loretta Fleming, Seth Pollack, Greg Mihailovich,
14 Christopher Norwood and Michael Hernandez. I will
15 first turn to Panel 13 Anna Sax.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on my list is Eric
18 Goldstein, Natural Resources Defense Council.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Not seeing him in the Zoom.
21 Next, I am calling on Jane Selden.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 JANE SELDEN: Good morning and thank you for
24 giving me the opportunity to speak today. My name's
25 Jane Selden, I'm testifying on behalf of 350 NYC. As

1
2 a climate activist group, 350 NYC recognizes the
3 critical role organic waste recycling plays in
4 meeting the city and states greenhouse gas reduction
5 goals and we would like to thank the City Council, in
6 particular Chairperson Nurse and City Council Speaker
7 Adams for recommending restoring funding for New York
8 City's community composting programs and for
9 expanding the composting programs to all of the
10 city's public schools in the next year's budget.

11 However, we know that this is not enough. It's
12 been seven years since the city made the zero waste
13 to landfill by 2030 pledge, yet the recycling rate
14 for organic waste has never exceeded 1.5 percent.
15 This means that over one-third of the way stream is
16 still ending up in landfill where it produces methane
17 or greenhouse gas over 80 times more potent than CO2.
18 The City now spends \$193 million a year exporting
19 organic waste and this figure doesn't factor in the
20 human costs. The damaging health effects experienced
21 by frontlines communities living near landfills,
22 incinerators and the city's waste transfer stations.

23 It makes no sense to treat organic materials
24 waste rather than the valuable resource it actually
25 is. Instead of ending up in the giant trashcans that

1
2 crowd our streets where it's feeding our thriving rat
3 population, it can be enriching the soil of local
4 parks community gardens, urban farms and street
5 trees. And as the city faces the threat of rising
6 sea levels, composts can play a vital role in flood
7 mitigation efforts because of its ability to retain
8 many times its weight in water.

9 To make zero waste to landfill by 2030, more than
10 a slogan, we need to codify this pledge into law by
11 passing Intro.'s 274 and 275. And in order to
12 achieve this zero waste goal, the City Council must
13 pass Intro. 244 which will -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 JANE SELDEN: Organics and curbside collection to
16 every community. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
18 turn to Maggie Clarke, Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory
19 Board.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 MAGGIE CLARKE: Thank you. Uhm, sorry. Maggie
22 Clarke, representing the Manhattan Solid Waste
23 Advisory Board. We recommend that the Mayor and the
24 City Council restore funding to redesign the organics
25

1
2 program to ensure as phased in, a citywide mandatory
3 universal equitable curbside program.

4 Today, according to the IBO, we mix organics,
5 which represent 41 percent of our exports with
6 garbage to be burned and buried, causing preventable
7 environmental and social harm. Half of our
8 recyclables are also exported due to poor separation.
9 Therefore, almost 70 percent of what we send to
10 landfills and incinerators is recyclable or
11 compostable, costing us \$400 million in Fiscal Year
12 '23. The city must reallocate this export funding to
13 redesign and optimize organics collection and a
14 participation in enhancement programs, via education
15 and enforcement.

16 Redesign includes moving from inconvenient opt in
17 and drop-off to universal curbside collection, as
18 well as redesign of the city's education and
19 enforcement program into an enlightened multiapproach
20 system with targeted outreach.

21 Currently, the trucks do not come back full, due
22 to chronic underfunding of inconvenient programs and
23 poorly designed education. We should learn from
24 model cities. For example, Austin has achieved 85 to
25 95 percent participation by funding education costing

1
2 \$12 per household per year compared with New York
3 City's \$0.86 per person per year. Both Seattle and
4 San Francisco spend \$3.00 per person per year.

5 Finally, the Council must update the city's
6 recycling law so that organics are part of it -

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 MAGGIE CLARKE: Recycling program made mandatory
9 and universal. The same as it is for our other
10 recyclables and we've developed a list of provisions
11 that must be included in any successful organics and
12 zero waste laws.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
14 turn to Sharon Silbermann, also from the Manhattan
15 Solid Waste Advisory Board.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 SHARON SILBERMANN: Hello everyone. I would
18 mimic Maggie's comments. I had the same script in
19 front of me and I urge the City Council, who I thank
20 very much for being here and listening to us today to
21 reexamine our organics and zero waste programs as
22 suggestions that will be in our written testimony.
23 And to expand our programs rather than abandon or
24 defund them because we should be recycling and
25 composting everything that we can. We need to

1
2 dedicate that funding to education and enforcement
3 and to increase our participation and it only makes
4 sense given the climate crisis that we do this and
5 that we invest in it now, which will reduce costs due
6 to inflation over time. And we will benefit from it
7 environmentally, in regards to social justice. We
8 need to expand our organics programs to NYCHA housing
9 and to all buildings, including high rises. Not just
10 two and three story buildings as a recent organics
11 bill has been proposed.

12 I thank you very much for your time and invite
13 your questions.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and now we will
15 turn to Panel 14. Rachel Brown, Boris Santos, Hannah
16 Anousheh, Zoria F, and Will Spisak. We will start
17 with Rachel Brown.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 RACHAEL BROWN: Good afternoon Committee Chair
20 Brannan and members of the Finance Committee. Thank
21 you for the opportunity to testify. My name is
22 Rachel Brown and I'm on the steering and outreach
23 committees for the Western Queens Community Land
24 Trust.

25

1
2 We're a nonprofit organization made up of
3 community members who fight for a democratic and
4 equitable land use in Western Queens. The Western
5 Queens CLT is part of a citywide community land trust
6 initiative that seeks to develop CLT's and
7 permanently affordable housing, commercial and
8 community spaces in all five boroughs of New York
9 City, CLT's are organizing in Black, Brown and
10 immigrant neighborhoods across New York City to
11 stabilize housing, combat speculation and ensure a
12 just recovery from the COVID pandemic.

13 I'm here today to urge the Committee and the
14 Counsel to support full funding of \$3 million for the
15 citywide CLT initiative in the 2023 budget. We
16 further urge City Council to ensure the final budget
17 includes robust capital funding for the construction
18 and preservation of affordable housing to prevent
19 budget cuts to HPD, DSS and DHS that would threaten
20 the housing security of thousands of New Yorkers.

21 The speculative real estate market doesn't just
22 affect housing, it affects small businesses that make
23 Queens and New York City the unique and diverse place
24 it is. The Western Queens CLT has recently released
25 a feasibility report detailing how our CLT would turn

1
2 a city owned building in Long Island City into the
3 Queens Borough people space.

4 Our community vision for this public building
5 would house hundreds of jobs in industries and
6 sectors that have historically excited in Long Island
7 City but have been pushed out. For example, our
8 vision includes storage space for street food vendors
9 and a commissary kitchen where they can prep food.

10 This is why we need City Council funding. The
11 Western Queens Community Land Trust will do the work
12 to create permanently affordable housing and
13 commercial spaces in Western Queens to keep our
14 borough a place where immigrants and working class
15 folks can live, own and operate businesses. Thank
16 you so much for the opportunity to testify today.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
18 turn to Boris Santos from East New York CLT.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I will turn to Hannah
21 Anousheh.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 HANNAH ANOUSHEH: Hi Council Members.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hannah, your Zoom is frozen.
25

1
2 HANNAH ANOUSHEH: I'm on staff at Cypress Hills
3 Local Development Corporation. I'm here today to
4 request that you provide the \$3 million for the
5 Community Land Trust Initiative. The East New York
6 Community Land Trust is one of 18 emerging or
7 existing CLT's around New York City and the East New
8 York CLT was actually founded during the – in March
9 2020. And since our founding, we've grown enormously
10 with very little resources. We're really relied on
11 the City Council funding you know for our one staff
12 person myself –

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hannah, your uhm, Hannah,
14 your Zoom keeps freezing. You may want to turn off
15 your video.

16 HANNAH ANOUSHEH: Thank you. Sorry about that.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: It's okay.

18 HANNAH ANOUSHEH: With the funding from previous
19 years, we've been able to build out the
20 infrastructure of our community land trust, write our
21 laws through a democratic process, create our
22 membership structure and you know really set
23 ourselves up to acquire land. There's a real, real
24 need to grow the community land trust in East New
25 York. You know we're heading into a serious, serious

1
2 foreclosure crisis and we really need the tools to
3 address this crisis and we really need the tools to
4 address this crisis in East New York. So, we're
5 really asking that you provide the funding for the
6 CLT initiative to grow. Thank you so much for your
7 time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
9 to Zoria F.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list Will
12 Spisak from the New Economy Project.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 WILL SPISAK: Good afternoon. My name is Will
15 Spisak, I'm a Senior Program Associate at New Economy
16 Project, a citywide organization that works with
17 community groups to build a just economy that works
18 for all. Among our activities, New Economy Project
19 is a founding member and co-coordinator of the New
20 York City Community Land Initiative. A citywide
21 coalition working to promote community land trust or
22 CLT's as a strategy to address the city's
23 affordability crisis and ensure equitable community
24 led decision making over land use in New York City.
25 New Economy Project and 19-partner organizations are

1
2 part of the Community Land Trust Initiative that's
3 seeking \$3 million in City Council discretionary
4 funding. So, we are urging the Committee and the
5 Council to support full funding of \$3 million for the
6 CLT Initiative, as well as urging the Council to
7 ensure the final budget includes robust capital
8 funding for the construction and preservation of
9 affordable housing, including deeply and permanently
10 affordable housing.

11 New York City faces unprecedented threats of
12 speculation and displacement in the wake of the
13 pandemic, holding reportedly massive amounts of cash,
14 global private equity firms are expected to pounce on
15 vulnerabilities in the real estate market. And this
16 feeding frenzy could lead to an unparalleled level of
17 displacement at a time when tenants, homeowners, and
18 small businesses are at greatest risk. This is why
19 the Council needs to invest in community land trust,
20 which permanently take land off of the speculative
21 market and democratize the ownership and stewardship
22 of land and housing. In order to prevent
23 displacement and fight speculation, CLT's need access
24 to capital for development. We also need access to
25 land for acquisition. So, we're also pushing policy

1
2 changes like the Community Opportunity of Purchase
3 Act, Public Land Disposition that will prioritize
4 CLT's and the replacement of the predatory tax lien
5 sale. But we can't really take advantage of any of
6 these policy changes if we don't have adequate
7 funding for the ongoing -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 WILL SPISAK: Community organizing that CLT's
10 need to do. So, please make sure CLT's are fully
11 funded in Fiscal Year '23. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
13 turn to Valerie Jimenez from Housing Work - oh,
14 before I call Valerie, that's Panel 15, let me
15 announce Panel 16, 17, 18 and 19 so people can be
16 ready.

17 Panel 16 will be Betty Garger, Joneé Billy,
18 Martha Camber, Quadira Coles, Rachel Gasdick. Panel
19 17, Potriankamanis Queano Nur, Mary Cheng, Terry
20 Collins, Vanita Yogeshwar, Benice Mach.

21 Panel 18, Darren Mack, Eileen Maher, Mon.
22 Christina Rodriguez Hart, and Stuart Stout.

23 Panel 19, Alice Bufkin, Kenny Mineya, Luba
24 Cortez, Katie Bravo, Kimberly George, Soroya Friedman
25 Gonzales, and Michelle Neugebauer.

1
2 I will now start with Panel 15. We will start
3 with Valerie Jimenez from Housing Works.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 VALERIE JIMENEZ: Hi, my name is Valerie Reyes-
6 Jimenez, I'm the New York City Community Organizer
7 for Housing Works and uh Housing Works is a founding
8 member of the End AIDS New York Community Coalition
9 and we fully support each of the additional New York
10 City investments for the FY 2023 Budget. Although I
11 want to stress that although the city and the state
12 has made significant progress implementing the 2015
13 ending the epidemic blueprint and we have begun to
14 bend the curve for the data showing that over
15 progress is not reaching every community and
16 unacceptable HIV disparities persist in the HIVs
17 impact of New York City Black, indigenous and people
18 of colors BIPOC communities and in the key
19 populations including young men who have sex with men
20 and transgender women.

21 The COVID pandemic has further exacerbated these
22 inequalities to pressing HIV prevention, testing in
23 connection to care and there has been a steep
24 increase in premature mortality among people with HIV
25

1
2 due to heightened vulnerability and severe COVID-19
3 disease.

4 We need continued support of organizations funded
5 through the New York City Ending the Epidemic
6 Initiative. We are asking for an increase of \$8.7 –
7 from \$8.7 to million to fund additional services. We
8 ask the Council to mitigate the anticipated loss of
9 \$1.7 million in New York City federal HOPWA funds
10 Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS. The
11 grant to make sure that no HIV housing provider is
12 defunded. We urge the Council to sustain your
13 current \$1.4 million in support for the delivery of
14 range of farm reduction services by four proposed
15 overdose prevention center operators.

16 We fully support the Council's call for at least
17 \$10 million annually in New York City support of
18 OPC's and make sure that there is at least one OPC
19 operator –

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 VALERIE JIMENEZ: In each borough and our
22 testimony will be submitted and thank you for your
23 time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and just reminding
25 everyone, testimony can be submitted or emailed to

1
2 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Next, we'll turn to
3 Jordyn Rosenthal, Community Access.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 JORDYN ROSENTHAL: Hi, everyone I'm so sorry, I
6 was in a meeting before. Is it possible to switch my
7 time?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uhm -

9 JORDYN ROSENTHAL: Okay, no.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yeah, sorry, it's now.

11 JORDYN ROSENTHAL: I wasn't fully -

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry.

13 JORDYN ROSENTHAL: I was in a meeting right
14 before this. So, hi everyone. My name is Jordyn
15 Rosenthal. I work at Community Access and I am the
16 new Advocacy Coordinator. I'm here today to
17 represent Community Access and the CCIT NYC
18 Coalition.

19 Uhm, the CCIT NYC Coalition and really what we're
20 asking for right now is to change the Be Heard model.
21 The Be Heard Model is not pure lead and we need a
22 pure lead crisis response. The core components of
23 CCIT NYC are the removal of police responders calls
24 routed to a call number other than 911, specifically
25 the 988 number that will be rolling out nationally

1
2 this July. Response teams that are made up of
3 trained peers and emergency medical technicians that
4 are not affiliated with the police and peer
5 involvement in all aspects of planning,
6 implementation and oversight, specifically nothing
7 about us without us. Expanded development of
8 noncoercive mental health services, training teams to
9 use a trauma informed approach, response times
10 comparable to those of other emergency services and
11 24/7 operating hours and oversight by an advisory
12 board of 51 percent or more peers from impacted
13 communities.

14 Be Heard does not incorporate any of those. In
15 the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget, we ask that you enact
16 into legislation, the CCIT NYC proposal to create a
17 non-police response that peer driven and allocate
18 \$112 million annually to fund the CCIT NYC proposal.
19 I will be submitting a full piece of testimony to the
20 testimony website. Thank you so much.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next on our list
22 is Loretta Fleming.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Loretta, I see you in our
25 attending, you are calling in, you should see an

1 unmute request on your phone. Okay, we will continue
2 Panel 15, circle back to Loretta at the conclusion of
3 Panel 15. So, next, we've going to call on Seth
4 Pollack from Ending the Epidemic Community Coalition.
5

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 SETH POLLACK: Hi, good morning and thank you to
8 the Finance Chair Brannan for making this time
9 available. I'm Seth Pollack speaking on behalf of
10 the Ending the Epidemic Community Coalition, which
11 represents tons of community-based organizations
12 across New York City and stated committed to ending
13 the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

14 We've made important strides toward ending the
15 epidemic we refer to as ETE but approximately 130,000
16 New Yorkers are still living with HIV. We have bent
17 the curve in recent years by reducing new HIV
18 infections per year. We've improved health outcomes
19 for people living with HIV and AIDS but we need key
20 investments to continue this progress. I'll mention
21 some highlight here and of course we'll send our full
22 request to the Chair. We're asking the Council for
23 \$10 million for its ETE initiative in order to
24 provide community-based HIV prevention and care
25 services to ensure continued progress toward the

1
2 city's ETE goals. These services are essential to
3 overcome continued barriers to engagement that have
4 been presented by COVID-19. We're also asking for
5 \$1.4 million to support the harm reduction services
6 provided by a projected four overdose prevention
7 center operators. The overdose epidemic is claiming
8 lives at a shocking pace. In the first two quarters
9 of 2021, there were 1,233 overdose deaths in New York
10 City compared to 965 overdose deaths during the same
11 period the year before. This crisis is deeply
12 interrelated with the HIV and AIDS epidemic. We're
13 also asking the Council to baseline \$3.5 million for
14 the Check Hep B and Hep C, at patient navigation
15 programs to help eliminate Hepatitis B and Hepatitis
16 C, other deeply interrelated epidemics impacting
17 vulnerable New Yorkers particularly Black and
18 Hispanic or Latino New Yorkers and we're seeking
19 \$200,000 to support routine testing to address
20 congenital syphilis during COVID. Rates of gonorrhea
21 and syphilis among women in New York has soared 23
22 percent. Rates of STI testing have fallen.
23 Congenital syphilis can be fatal in utero and to
24 infants. This funding could launch a new DOHMH
25 program to help implement routine syphilis testing

1
2 among all people who are or could become pregnant and
3 who present in emergency departments. This is just a
4 partial overview of the Council. The other request
5 of the Administration and with your help and a
6 relatively modest investment, we can continue
7 critical -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 SETH POLLACK: Progress we made toward ending HIV
10 and AIDS for the generational advocates have fought
11 for and too often given their lives. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Loretta Fleming,
13 it appears you have no audio. So, you may want to
14 log out of the Zoom and log back in. We still have
15 more to go on Panel 15. Next we're going to turn to
16 Greg Mihailovich from the American Heart Association.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 GREG MIHAILOVICH: Okay, thank you Chair Brannan,
19 members of the Council Committee on Finance. My name
20 is Greg Mihailovich, I'm the Community Advocacy
21 Director for the American Heart Association here in
22 New York City.

23 You know, as the nation's oldest and largest
24 voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart
25 disease and stroke, American Heart Association

1
2 prioritizes a lot of different policies to kind of
3 address health and equity and better cardiovascular
4 health. And the written testimony I'm submitting
5 goes into a little more detail but I'm going to take
6 my two minutes to highlight one of them, mainly CPR
7 in schools. Each year, more than 350,000 out of
8 hospital cardiac arrests occur in the U.S. with 70
9 percent happening in homes and when a person has a
10 cardiac arrest, survival depends on immediately
11 receiving CPR from somewhere nearby.

12 About 90 percent of people who suffer out of
13 hospital cardiac arrest die and CPR, especially
14 performed immediately can double or triple the
15 changes of survival. People who need CPR less likely
16 receive it. People from primarily poor, Hispanic,
17 African neighborhoods are more likely to need CPS,
18 less likely to get it.

19 It's part of the reason why since 2015, New York
20 State requires that all high school students receive
21 CPR training as a graduation requirement. You know
22 the thinking is that the children trained in CPR
23 contribute significantly to the number of adults
24 trained in CPR in the community and increasing the
25 likelihood that somebody receives CPR when they need

1
2 it. Now, that graduation requirement was waived for
3 the 2019-2020 school year due to COVID-19 concerns
4 but even prior to that, we were hearing stories about
5 schools not having manikins, not having staff, doing
6 chest compressions on uninflated basketballs or piles
7 of gym towels. We applaud the ingenuity of teachers
8 to get it done but if we want our students to be able
9 to act when somebody nearby suffers a cardiac arrest,
10 we need to provide them with the materials and
11 equipment they need for effective CPR training.

12 We ask the Council to set aside \$1 million in the
13 next budget to ensure that New York City high school
14 students receive the proper CPR and ADD training to
15 fill their graduation requirement. Thank you. We
16 appreciate everything the Council does to keep New
17 York City safe and we —

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 GREG MIHAILOVICH: Continue to be your partner in
20 the health and wellbeing of New Yorkers.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
22 turn to Christopher Norwood, Health People.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 CHRISTOPHER NORWOOD: Oh, okay, thank you. Thank
25 you City Council and Chair. I'm Christopher Norwood,

1
2 Executive Director of Health People and also Co-
3 founder of Communities Driving Recovery. The Council
4 may not; we are asking the Council to keep pursuing
5 its proposed \$50 million in public health funds. The
6 Council may not fully realize that what the DOH is
7 calling the Public Health Corp was formed for
8 millions of CDC funds. The RFP that the city put out
9 for those funds had stipulations that I have never
10 seen before in any city RFP, which fundamentally
11 barred smaller neighborhood organizations from
12 applying.

13 Moreover, DOHMH completely ignored community
14 requests, include Recovery and Wellness programs in
15 those funds and in large the focus from vaccination.
16 Meanwhile the T2 or Trace and Trace Corp, the some 35
17 mainly smaller CBO's who were the first out there and
18 have relentlessly promoted COVID prevention and
19 vaccination giving the city the highest vaccination
20 rate in the United States of any large city, will be
21 totally cast aside and defunded at the end of the
22 month.

23 We wonder why communities are in despair. Those
24 who risk their lives and help make an enormous
25 success get cast aside first. But with the Public

1
2 Health Corp funding, the City Council has asked for,
3 these organizations and their very local staffs can
4 go forward and start the real wellness that we need,
5 such as chronic disease prevention and self-
6 management programs.

7 That brings me to diabetes. Please pursue
8 diabetes education funding. That has been our most
9 widespread epidemic for 20 years and during that
10 time, DOHMH has not spent one penny, not one penny of
11 city tax levy funding on the kind of education that
12 can help people prevent diabetes and is also proven
13 to bring down complications, costs, amputations, when
14 they have diabetes. Please, let's end this 20-years
15 and keep your -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 CHRISTOPHER NORWOOD: Diabetes education money in
18 the budget. Thank you very, very much.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
20 turn to Michael Hernandez.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 MICHAEL HERNANDEZ: Hello and thank you very
23 much. Good afternoon Chair Justin Brannan and
24 members of the Committee on Finance. Thank you for
25 this opportunity to speak with you. My name is

1
2 Michael Hernandez and I am offering testimony on
3 behalf of Community Strive and Recovery.

4 We are requesting continued funding for New York
5 City Test and Trace partners to finish the task that
6 we were asked to do, which is protect vulnerable
7 populations from COVID-19. We know city leadership
8 prioritizes keeping all New York City residents safe,
9 protecting those who are the most vulnerable,
10 building health equity for all and reducing health
11 costs.

12 Furthermore, we realize managing a city's budget
13 is not an easy task. You were asked to make smart
14 choices that will maximize return on investment.
15 Funding T2 CBO's is not only a smart decision but
16 also the best solution to ensure our city can
17 effectively recover from COVID-19. We are the best
18 investment the city can have and maximize ROI.
19 That's on building health equity, reducing health
20 costs and saving lives.

21 City R is a citywide coalition of community
22 groups, community-based organizations and faith-based
23 organizations, many of whom were brought together by
24 the New York City's Test and Trace Corp Initiative to
25 battle the COVID-19 epidemic. Together with the New

1
2 York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and
3 New York City Health and Hospitals, we, the T2 CBO's,
4 help keep our city safe during every stage of the
5 COVID-19 pandemic, from Stop the Spread to Vax for
6 All.

7 We place ourselves at the frontlines to protect
8 our city's most vulnerable populations and built an
9 infrastructure that is uniquely suited to help with
10 the recovery. Simply put, we are the city's best
11 asset to COVID-19 recovery.

12 As trusted members and messengers, we are
13 positioned to bridge the gaps to critical services
14 and programs needed to bring health equity to all New
15 Yorkers. We know all too well the systemic
16 inequities that prevent members of our communities
17 from accessing good health and we are here to help
18 the city address these barriers to continue to impede
19 health equity for all and stymie the road to
20 recovery.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 MICHAEL HERNANDEZ: Simply put, we ask the
23 Council to include the \$50 million in this proposed
24 budget for community public health support and call
25 on the Adams Administration to incorporate the

1
2 proposal into the city's final budget. Thank you so
3 much for your time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and we will try
5 Loretta Fleming on Panel 15 one more time.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we are going to turn to
8 Panel 16. Betty Garger, Joneé Belly, Martha Camber,
9 Quadira Coles and Rachel Gasdick. We will first
10 start with Betty Garger.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list was
13 Joneé Billy.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 JONEÉ BILLY: Hello, good afternoon. My name is
16 Joneé Billy and I serve as Director of Strategic
17 Partnerships and External Affairs for PowerPlay. I
18 will also be advocating on behalf of the Sports
19 Training and Role Models for Success Citywide Girls
20 Initiative for which PowerPlay serves as the lead
21 agency.

22 Thank you Chair Brannan and Committee Members for
23 taking your time to hear our testimony today.
24 Powerplays mission is to advance the lives of girls

1
2 through sports, helping them grow physically,
3 emotionally and academically stronger.

4 Through our structured sports and social,
5 emotional learning curriculum, we build girls
6 confidence and resilience and create safe spaces
7 where girls can learn from each other and from strong
8 female role models. PowerPlay offers opportunities
9 for girls where they would not otherwise exist.
10 Furthermore PowerPlay serves as a lead agency for a
11 coalition of ten New York City nonprofits known as
12 STARS CGI.

13 As a collective, we support the healthy
14 development of over 6,000 girls in gender
15 nonconforming youth of color overcome barriers to
16 success and develop as leaders in their communities.
17 Specifically, STARS develops the lives and leadership
18 skills of New York City youth through afterschool and
19 summer sports, academic enhancement, STEM, college
20 prep and the arts. Because of the Council's generous
21 support for nearly a decade, the cohort of ten
22 partners have collectively served nearly 50,000 girls
23 of color and gender expansive youth. Many immigrants
24 and first generation college bound across all five
25 boroughs and in all 51 Council Districts.

1
2 We have done so with life changing outcomes from
3 one of the city's most vulnerable populations. STARS
4 persist in our fight for girls and women causes that
5 have remained severely underfunded. On behalf of
6 girls and gender expansive youth of color across New
7 York City, we thank the Council for its generous
8 support of nearly \$10 million over the course of our
9 history and we look forward to our continued work
10 together ensuring the social, emotional wellbeing of
11 our communities. The STAR CGI Coalition respectfully
12 seeks total funding of \$2 million for FY23, inclusive
13 of the restoration of \$1.4 million.

14 I thank you for your time and the opportunity to
15 testify before you today.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
18 turn to Martha Camber.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list is
21 Quadira Coles, Girls for Gender Equity.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 QUADIRA COLES: Good afternoon Chair Brannan and
24 members and staff on the Committee of Finance. My
25 name is Quadira and I the Deputy Director of Policy

1
2 at Girls for Gender Equity and I apologize for not
3 being camera today. But it makes sense to refocus
4 some of my old testimonies because here we are again
5 demanding now a new Council to prioritize police free
6 schools and invest in students education with healing
7 and restorative services, programs and support
8 despite our unwavering advocacy over the past years.

9 I want to be clear that students are still
10 feeling the pandemics two year impact. We are
11 currently living through a nationwide mental health
12 crisis with the general consistence among students
13 themselves and adult allies at their emotional and
14 mental wellbeing is and should be at the top priority
15 right now. We can't ignore that.

16 Funding to the School Safety division, which
17 fosters harmful policing tactics and surveillance
18 takes away from areas within our education system
19 that needs adequate and sustainable fiscal support,
20 such as staff retention, restorative and extra-
21 curricular programming.

22 During the pandemic, students have access to
23 their school buildings, peers and teachers and had to
24 rapidly address to new routines and new methods of
25 learning that has exposed a multitude of educational

1 inequities within New York City school system. This
2 has brought a tremendous amount of stress in mental
3 health issues that students are constantly uplifting.
4 Neither school communities nor students were prepared
5 for this and we are still trying to play catch up.

6 So, the plan to replenish school police officers
7 in the school safety division seems absurd
8 considering the many other things that need
9 investment and that will truly ensure holistic safety
10 for students. And as we begin to see rollbacks on
11 the progress the city has made to undo pathways to
12 harm and abuse by the NYPD in our own communities, we
13 must ensure that we cut more than \$500,000 million
14 out of the school policing budget. This includes
15 money for police, school police as well as police
16 officers and the city calls youth coordination
17 officers who are essentially tasks with surveillance
18 of students in and outside of school.

19 This kind of tactic never works. There are
20 enough research to show that the outcomes of youth
21 interactions with police are negative. Students do
22 not -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.
24
25

1
2 QUADIRA COLES: Need more antagonizing
3 surveillance in the disguise of mentorship from
4 officers who are also being told to bring back heavy
5 handed policing tactics on a quest to allegedly get
6 tough on crime, which disproportionately targets
7 Black and Brown youth.

8 Furthermore, we, and that includes our fellow DSC
9 advocates and students here demand that the city hire
10 2,000 New Yorkers to strengthen schools, invest \$75
11 million to hire restorative justice coordinators in
12 500 schools and \$45 million to implement restorative
13 justice practices. Direct \$350 million to new
14 funding to grow school climate supports and baseline

15 -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

17 QUADIRA COLES: \$5 million to sustain Mental
18 Health Continuum Initiative. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
20 turn to Rachel Gasdick from New York Edge.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 DAVID CRUZ: Good afternoon everybody. I am
23 David Cruz. I am here on behalf of Rachel Gasdick
24 with New York Edge. Chair Brannan and members of the
25 Committee, I am here today to ask you to prioritize

1
2 New York Edges' Fiscal '23 citywide funding request
3 of \$1.2 million under the Council's After School
4 Enrichment Initiative.

5 Our request represents an increase of \$200,000
6 over our Fiscal '22 allocation from the Council and
7 would be our first increase in 14 years. We are the
8 largest provider of free afterschool and school-based
9 remote programming, summer programming and NYC, and
10 have partnered with the Council for the past 30-years
11 in bringing these programs to all five boroughs to
12 youth and families.

13 We are a leader in the afterschool community,
14 well regarded for our evidence-based approach to
15 after-school programming grounded in social,
16 emotional learning and one of the city's largest
17 providers of college access programs. Our mission is
18 to help bridge the opportunity gap among students in
19 underinvested communities. Our entire student
20 population is 90 or more African American or
21 Hispanic, with an approximately equal number of male
22 and female.

23 More than 85 percent of these students we serve
24 come from low-income households eligible for Title 1
25 free or reduced price lunches. Students need healthy

1
2 minds, bodies and relationships as well as creative
3 outlets to thrive and our programs help to develop
4 these students in all four of those areas.

5 With funding under the Councils Afterschool
6 Enrichment Initiative, we annually impact tens of
7 thousands of students in grades K-12 from over 100
8 sites across the city through our school year and
9 summer programs. Programs run before or after the
10 day school year round and include Saturday's, over
11 the summer and holiday periods. Our core components
12 in our programs include academic and steam education,
13 social emotional learning, sports and wellness, arts,
14 including visual and performance.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 DAVID CRUZ: College and career readiness, summer
17 camps and learning labs. With your continued support
18 and the increase of the \$200,000, we would be able to
19 service and keep providing the strong program that we
20 have for the past years. Thank you for your support
21 and thank you for listening to me today.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. That concludes
23 Panel 16. Before I turn to Panel 17, I will announce
24 Panels 20 and 21 before announcing 18 and 19.

1
2 Panel 20 will be Lauren Miller, Sophia Harrison,
3 Janice Monger, Lucy Sexton, Ariel Herrera. Panel 21,
4 Donna Schneiderman, Casey Wagner, Lisa Bernstein,
5 Tatiana Bejar, Ben Fuller Googins and that's it,
6 okay.

7 Now, turning to Panel 17, we will start with
8 Potriankamanis Nur.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 POTRIANKAMANIS NUR: Good morning everyone. My
11 name is Potriankamanis Queano Nur, I am the Artistic
12 Director and Founder of a 30-year-old cultural
13 interdisciplinary group called [INAUDIBLE 2:44:17]
14 and very much supported by DCLA.

15 So, today I'm accompanying for budget for AAPI
16 Community Support Initiative at \$6 million in order
17 to fund community programming including mental health
18 support, racial literary hate crimes intervention,
19 gender-based violence intervention and prevention,
20 youth programs and other culturally response services
21 needed to be of long-term care and healing for our
22 Asian American Pacific Islander New Yorkers during
23 difficult times.

24 Access Health NYC to \$4 million to sustain the
25 Citywide Initiative that funds community-based

1 organization to provide an education, outreach and
2 assistance to all New Yorkers about total access to
3 healthcare and coverage. Communities of color and
4 nonprofits stabilization fund to \$7 million the first
5 New York City Council fund to its kind aim to yield
6 the capacity of NYC non-for-profit the recognition of
7 the fact that organization led by people of community
8 are best equipped to meet the needs of the community.
9 CCNSF also intended to promote learning among CBO
10 leaders. Also, I would like to speak for the
11 cultural sector requesting a total of \$1 million
12 investment from NYC for Fiscal Year '23 to augment
13 NYC economic recovery and create an inclusive sector
14 growth towards a future focused and equitable
15 economy. Investing in culture means investing in the
16 long-term financial health of our city.

17
18 The \$100 million request presents .24 percent of
19 city total budget and a commitment to our ultimate
20 goal of reaching one percent for culture. \$50
21 million in CID-

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 POTRIANKAMANIS NUR: Uhm, thank you very much and
24 as I said, I'm campaigning for budget for AAPI and
25 culture and mental health. Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
3 turn to Mary Cheng from the Chinese American Planning
4 Council.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 MARY CHENG: Thank you for the opportunity to
7 testify today. Again, my name is Mary Cheng from
8 CPC. CPC's SCC early childhood and school age
9 centers are critical safety nets for thousands of
10 working class AAPI and immigrant families, in
11 addition to providing childcare for low-income
12 families.

13 CPC's childhood development services staff are
14 instrumental in supporting the growth of children of
15 color with disabilities. We are contracted to serve
16 New York City's children under the same capacity, to
17 educate with the same curriculum, credentials,
18 assessments and requirements but yet, CPO's, FCC's
19 and DYCD programs are still funded disproportionately
20 to the counterparts within DOE. It is unethical and
21 discriminatory in that the DOE still does not invest
22 in equitable benefits and salary parity to the staff
23 they considered essential during this pandemic.
24 Support staff without longevity are paid a mere \$0.30

1
2 above the minimum wage due to the contract negotiated
3 with the city.

4 We are seeing an exodus of staff from the
5 childcare system, due to the disparity, many of the
6 support staff have left for substitute positions
7 within the DOE which pays a rate of \$33 an hour. The
8 exodus of staff truly compromises the quality of
9 programming our children deserve. CPC calls for
10 equitable investments towards pay parity of the staff
11 within all childcare centers and center-based
12 organizations and further investment towards the
13 increase of childcare rates for home-based and
14 childcare providers.

15 As we head into another year of COVID, we
16 continue to see an increasing number of children with
17 disabilities requiring so many services. The lack of
18 services that is really unethical at this point, the
19 systematic inequities impacting the low-income
20 children of color and children with disability and
21 immigrant CBO's such as language accessibility,
22 digital disparity -

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 MARY CHENG: And the cultural competence of
25 supporting the teachers. CPC calls for an equitable

1
2 investment in community led childcare services and
3 the integration of intentional community outreach for
4 families with digital and linguistic barriers and
5 provision of trainings for the school guidelines for
6 community-based organizations.

7 There is more to the testimony but I do want to
8 stress one more thing. I really think that families,
9 especially low income families all deserve and –

10 SERGEANT AT ARM: Time expired.

11 MARY CHENG: One thing that has been missed was
12 undocumented children to get subsidized care in the
13 city. Uhm, really want to stress that the Mayor, the
14 City Council needs to ensure that the Mayor invests
15 \$10 million into the New York City's FY23 budget to
16 ensure undocumented children have access to the same
17 early childcare and education programs for the new
18 Care for All Families Campaign. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we'll turn
20 to Terry Collins from the Chinese American Planning
21 Council.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 TERRY COLLINS: Okay, good morning, good
24 afternoon. My name is Terry Collins. I am an alumni
25 of Project Reach, a satellite outreach program of

1
2 CPC. CPC does not only service the Chinese American
3 Community but through project reach, we're able to
4 unite and service youth from across all five
5 boroughs. For well over 40-years, we have provided a
6 safe haven drop in center and social services for
7 underserved youth from a multitude of racial,
8 cultural, sexual orientation and gender identities as
9 well as ethnic communities, undocumented youth and at
10 risk gang violence youth through conversation and
11 dismantling prejudices using sensitivity and
12 diversity workshops to combat discrimination in
13 everyday life. We are currently rolling out a
14 training program to combat anti-Blackness and anti-
15 Asian violence in the city, using historical racist
16 imagery to demonstrate the common history of media
17 biases that plagues both communities. Our trainings
18 are always inclusive of the Me Too Movement, Black
19 Lives Matter, Transphobia, antisemitism, Islamiyah
20 phobia and all the other communities.

21 We are also partners with the American Indian
22 Community House, because we are all on stolen land
23 and we always fail to acknowledge indigenous people
24 and native people.
25

1
2 A little bit about me. I came to Project Reach
3 as a young person when Director Don Cal facilitated
4 an anti-discrimination workshop in my high school in
5 2002 and I have been involved ever since. I come
6 from the upper Caribbean neighborhood of Flatbush
7 Brooklyn and I'm a living testament of Project
8 Reaches legacy and teaching anti-discrimination to
9 everyone that is in presence. Thank you City Council
10 for your time.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Terry. Next, we'll
12 turn to Vanita Yogeshwar, also from CPC.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 VANITA YOGESHWAR: Good afternoon everyone. I do
15 not have a testimony, which has been canned and
16 written down. I speak from my heart because this
17 journey of mine has been very personal. It is about
18 my son Max who was born to me as a daughter and at
19 the age of 14 he identified himself as a transgender
20 mail. And as a parent coming from a conservative
21 Indian salvation background, this was as you can
22 imagine whoever are parents in this group probably
23 know what a shock it is to absorb this much
24 information so quickly.
25

1
2 But I had a choice to make, either I get with the
3 program, help my child out and have him succeed in
4 life no matter what choices he makes or what he
5 identifies as or lose him and become a parent bereft
6 of a child. So, I work for health and hospitals and
7 I'm very proud. I've been working here for 20-years.
8 Through the resources at Health + Hospitals, they
9 connected me with the CPC Project Reach. And as
10 Terry identified, so many wonderful things that
11 Project Reach does, Max was able to get the help that
12 he required. He graduated from high school from the
13 Staten Island Technical Institute and moved on with
14 an admission to Syracuse University where he studies
15 international relations and with a focus on social
16 justice. So, seeing the direct effect of how Project
17 Reach gave him the power of knowing oneself to be
18 able to give him the courage to face live and to face
19 the difficulties that come with being a transgender
20 male. Max has, I'm very happy to report this summer
21 he is graduating from Syracuse University and from
22 the Maxwell School of International Relationship. He
23 is such a powerful young man now. He works as -

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 VANITA YOGESHWAR: Thank you and he also is
3 focusing on working in the future with Project Reach
4 and making us all very proud to be New Yorkers.
5 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my
6 story.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next our final
8 panel no Panel 17, Benice Mach also from the Chinese
9 American Planning Council.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 BENICE MACH: Good afternoon. Thank you so much
12 Chair Brannan and members of the Finance Committee
13 for the opportunity to testify today. My name is
14 Benice Mach and I work as a Project Coordinator at
15 CPC. AAPI hate crimes have served more than 339
16 percent nationwide last year and CPC's community
17 members have increasingly mentioned their fears of
18 going outside.

19 While some of our community members may call for
20 policing, many of them also know that increased
21 policing does not necessarily equal safer cities or
22 decreased crime rates. If anything severe mental
23 health symptoms and poverty are unjustly
24 criminalized, especially in Black communities and
25 other communities of color.

1
2 NYC must address persistent disparities in access
3 to health and mental health services amongst our most
4 vulnerable communities. CPC urges the City Council
5 to invest in preventative safety measures and address
6 root causes such as housing and education for our
7 communities instead of increased policing and
8 incarceration.

9 Investing in our communities is healthcare
10 justice and we'll open up the conversation for
11 increased mental health access and decreased stigma.
12 CBO's are best situated to offer long-term solutions
13 and more direct community engagement to address and
14 prevent hate violence. We have four asks. One,
15 expand funding for CBO's working in the community
16 like the NYC Against Hate Coalition, which includes a
17 diverse group of organizations representing
18 communities across the city to coordinate responses
19 to incidents of hate violence.

20 Two, to increase funding for the AAPI Community
21 Support Initiative to \$6 million to directly support
22 AAPI led and serving organizations that offer
23 critical programming.

24 Three, to fully fund non-policing approaches to
25 hate violence through the Office of the Prevention of

1
2 Hate Crimes Partners against the Hate Initiative at
3 \$10 million with the renewal of the same grantee
4 cohort.

5 And four, raise wages for all human services
6 worker through Just Pay Campaign, which sets a living
7 wage floor of \$21 per hour and includes a cost of
8 living adjustment.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and now, we will
11 turn to Panel 18. We will start with Darren Mack
12 from Freedom Agenda.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 DARREN MACK: Thank you so much. Thank you Chair
15 Brannan and Finance community members. My name is
16 Darren Mack, I'm a Co-Director at Freedom Agenda.
17 I'm also a member of the Commission of Reinvestment
18 in the Closing of Rikers Island, established by Local
19 Law 193. This Commission is charged with ensuring
20 significant reinvestment recommendations are made in
21 vulnerable communities disparity and historically
22 impacted by mass incarceration. And the Commission
23 just released its first report.

24 So, research and data have shown a significant
25 percent of the individuals impacted by the criminal

1
2 legal system reside in historically under resourced
3 communities, neighborhoods and throughout New York
4 City. As a Co-Chair of the Youth Subcommittee in the
5 Commission, our mission is to identify that
6 investments that will prevent or remove young people
7 from the criminal justice pipeline. The question
8 remains, where will city get the funding from?

9 New York City Department of Correction has the
10 highest DOC budget in the country. The proposed
11 Fiscal Year 2023 DOC budget is \$2.679 billion. We
12 spend the most money in DOC in the country and get
13 the worst results. We, to be clear, we want the
14 programs and services that the people held in
15 pretrial detention rely on to continue to be funded
16 to meet their basic needs, however, we urge City
17 Council to reject increase in DOC's headcount, which
18 already has the largest DOC staff in the country and
19 instead, reinvest those resources to fund the
20 Commission recommendations.

21 Lastly, the Board of Corrections, which serves as
22 an independent oversight board that monitors New York
23 City's jail system should be fully funded to serve
24 its purpose more efficiently. The Boards budget is
25 only 0.2 percent of the Department of Corrections

1
2 budget compared to the Civil Complaint Review Board
3 whose budgets set at one percent of the NYPD's
4 budget. With the country looking on -

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 DARREN MACK: With the country looking at our
7 city, due to the human rights crisis at Rikers
8 Island, this is the best time to increase the Board
9 of Corrections budget. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
11 turn to Eileen Maher from Vocal New York and Freedom
12 Agenda.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 EILEEN MAHER: Okay, uhm, good afternoon. Thank
15 you for allowing me to testify. I'm Eileen Maher. I
16 am Civil Rights Union Leader of Vocal New York and a
17 member of Freedom Agenda and the Justice for Women
18 Taskforce. I am also a survivor of Rikers Island
19 where I spent over 420 unnecessary days as a result
20 of a criminalized domestic violence situation.

21 Right now, we have a civil rights catastrophe
22 going on. [OUTSIDE NOISE] Excuse me, sorry about
23 that. Right now, we have a civil rights catastrophe
24 going on at Rikers Island that has been instigated
25 and sanctioned by COBA. The officers and employees

1
2 have been staging blue days that are organized by
3 COBA and given a silent blessing by the employees
4 that do show up. In addition to this, this has
5 caused not only five deaths this year and 22 deaths
6 in the past year, it has caused an uptick in violence
7 on behalf of the officers who instigate most of the
8 violence as well as excessive sanitary issues. Such
9 as people urinating in bags, being locked in their
10 cells without medications, such as insulin, mental
11 health medicine and methadone, and women having to
12 utilize torn up clothing instead of having adequate
13 sanitary protection during their monthly periods.

14 And right now, all the Mayor wants to do is pack
15 the cells and dorms and more. He and the COBA want
16 to send more children to jail, rather than invest in
17 community services. This is not keeping anyone
18 safer, not our communities and not our homes.

19 Locking away the so-called alleged problem
20 indefinitely does nothing to help anyone. So, I beg
21 the City Council to ignore Mayor Adams when deciding
22 on this budget and his punitive abuse of an
23 ultimately murderous ideas to curb a -

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 EILEEN MAHER: Non-existent increase in crime. I
3 just have like two more sentences. We need to
4 maintain the course with bail and discovery reform.
5 We need to implement community services such as
6 increase education, domestic violence, and I
7 apologize. Increase domestic violence services,
8 services for the unhoused, job training, supportive
9 housing, summer youth employment, and affordable
10 grocery stores that stock healthy foods in
11 underserved neighborhoods. We don't need people
12 being locked and caged.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

14 EILEEN MAHER: We don't need people not receiving
15 those services.

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, thank you Eileen. Th
17 Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
19 turn to Mon.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on my list is Cristina
22 Rodriguez-Hart.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 CRISTINA RODRIGUEZ-HART: Hi, my name is Cristina
25 Rodriguez-Hart and I am a New York City Queens

1
2 resident and a member of DSA's NYC Chapter. I am
3 here to voice my opposition to Mayor Eric Adams
4 Executive Budget and to call on the City Council to
5 pass a budget that meets the needs of all New
6 Yorkers.

7 Two years into the pandemic, working class New
8 Yorkers are in crisis. COVID-19 cases are surging,
9 landlords are raising rents and families struggle to
10 stay in their homes. But the Mayor continues to
11 favor the wealthy and powerful over every day New
12 Yorkers. This budget makes devastating cuts to vital
13 city services like housing, healthcare, sanitation
14 and education while leaving the NYPD's \$10 billion
15 budget intact.

16 Today, I urge the Council to fight against the
17 Mayor's program of austerity and punishment. Instead
18 of cutting funding for housing, the Council must
19 invest \$4 billion into permanent affordable housing,
20 including \$1.5 billion for NYCHA and \$2.5 billion for
21 HPD. The Council must also reject Adams cuts to our
22 public education system by investing \$122 million
23 into CUNY and funding DOE mental health counselors
24 and social workers. Rather than filling school
25 police vacancies.

1
2 I also urge the Council to act on two deadly
3 crisis facing our city climate catastrophe and the
4 overdose epidemic. We need \$3.1 billion for the
5 streets plan, \$1.8 billion for green public schools,
6 \$250 million for Fair Fares and \$10 million to expand
7 lifesaving, safe consumption sites to all five
8 boroughs.

9 Finally, the Council must reject the Mayor's
10 regressive return to law in order mentioned by many
11 of the people in this hearing. I urge the Council to
12 reject the proposal to add hundreds of new correction
13 officers for solitary confinement, a practice the UN
14 defines as torture. I also urge the Council to
15 demonstrate their commitment to racial justice by
16 cutting failed NYPD criminalization programs like the

17 -

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 CRISTINA RODRIGUEZ-HART: And violent plain
20 clothes unit, the so-called Subway Safety Plan and
21 ending all NYPD response to mental health calls and
22 Be Heard, as already discussed needs to be improved
23 because it's failing us. Also disband the SRG.

24 Thank you very much.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
3 hear from Stuart Stout.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will go ahead and
6 turn to our next panel. Alice Bufkin, Kenny Mineya,
7 Luba Cortez, Katie Bravo, Kimberly George, Saroya
8 Friedman-Gonzalez and Michelle Neugebauer. We will
9 start with Alice Bufkin from the Citizens Committee
10 for Children of New York.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 ALICE BUFKIN: Thank you Chair Brannan and
13 members of the Committee for this opportunity to
14 provide testimony. My name is Alice Bufkin and I am
15 the Associate Executive Director of Policy and
16 Advocacy at Citizens Committee for Children. We'll
17 be providing written testimony, but in the time I
18 have, I'm going to briefly touch on some of the key
19 issues needed to support children and families in the
20 budget.

21 First, despite the urgent need to address the
22 children's behavior health crisis, there's simply not
23 enough in the Mayor's budget or the City Council's
24 response to address children's mental health needs.
25 Among other parties, we urge you to fund and baseline

1
2 \$5 million for the mental health continuum. We were
3 grateful that this funding was championed by the
4 state council in last year's budget. The continuum
5 offers an essential opportunity to ensure interagency
6 coordination and provide behavioral supports to
7 students across the continuum of needs. However,
8 progress made through this initiative will end in
9 June if City leaders do not baseline the funding in
10 this year's budget.

11 We also urge you to provide \$28.5 million to
12 increase the number of school-based mental health
13 clinics and expand the capacity of those that already
14 exist.

15 In terms of housing, we urge you to add \$30
16 million to fully fund the City FHEPS program, address
17 staffing shortages at RHA and RPD and hire 150 DOE
18 shelter-based community coordinators to support
19 students in shelter. Turning to early care and
20 education, we urge you to prioritize pay parity for
21 community-based preschool special educators and
22 others left out of the original parity agreement, as
23 well as address teacher and staff longevity and
24 benefits.

1
2 We also ask that you prioritize expanding and
3 aging down the childcare system and work towards
4 universality for infants and toddlers, as well as
5 expanding access to all day year round care for all
6 children birth to five. The central part of COVID
7 recovery is supporting youth and youth programming.
8 We therefore urge you to baseline Fair Futures as
9 well as expand year round youth employment and
10 increase cost per participant rates for Compass and
11 Sonic contracts.

12 Finally, we urge you to support the economic
13 recovery and well-being of New Yorkers by enacting
14 the Mayor's proposal to enhance their local EITC and
15 fully support the Just Pay Campaign, including a 5.4
16 percent COLA to combat inequitable pay among human
17 service workers. This is obviously a long list of
18 priorities but it's really just reflective of the
19 deep needs of children and families in our city and a
20 recognition of the enormous -

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 ALICE BUFKIN: We have to make long lasting
23 investments in communities, have a foundation for
24 resilience and recovery. So, thank you for your time
25 and commitment to children and families in the city.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
3 turn to Kenny Mineya from Make the Road New York.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 KENNY MINEYA: Good afternoon Chair Brannan and
6 members of the Committee on Finance. I'm the
7 Director of Government Affairs and Make the Road New
8 York. As you all know, Make the Road New York is a
9 nonprofit community-based membership organization
10 with over 25,000 low-income members dedicated to
11 building the power of immigrant and working class
12 communities to achieve dignity and justice through
13 organizing, policy innovation, transformative
14 education survival services. We have offices in
15 Jackson Heights, Bushwick and Port Richmond New York
16 City.

17 We will submit comprehensive written testimony
18 but I just wanted to take this time to focus on a
19 couple of proposals that are of concern to us.

20 First, we echo the speakers call for DOE to
21 restore and baseline \$9.16 million for all 52
22 community schools facing cuts. As you all know,
23 community schools have a proven success record that
24 relevance a necessity of only becoming magnified and
25 providing the critical services our city's most

1
2 vulnerable youth need as they struggle to reengage
3 after the pandemic's disruptions. As a nonprofit
4 community-based partner at the Bushwick Campus, we
5 know firsthand the harm that our youth will
6 experience if these proposed cuts at nearly 40
7 percent are implemented.

8 Next, Make the Road echoes and joins the
9 Council's call for DYCD to double the baseline
10 funding for adult literacy programs to \$27 million,
11 including restoration of the \$1.7 million that was
12 cut from the Prelim budget to continue the case
13 manager pilot and calling for an extension of the
14 Adult Literacy Pilot Project for a second year and
15 for that to be expanded to \$5 million.

16 Lastly, we call on the city to cut at least \$1
17 billion from the NYPD Expense Budget and for those
18 funds to be invested in community programs that
19 promote health and real safety solutions. Thank you
20 for your time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
22 turn to Luba Cortez, Trans Immigrant Project Make the
23 Road.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list, I have
3 Katie Bravo, also from Trans Immigrant Project Make
4 the Road.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will turn to
7 Kimberly George. Oh, Kimberly George? Okay, we can
8 go ahead and mute her. Okay, we're going to turn to
9 Saroya Friedman Gonzalez.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 SAROYA FRIEDMAN GONZALEZ: Okay, uhm, good
12 afternoon. My name is Saroya Friedman Gonzalez and
13 I'm the Executive Director of New Yorkers for
14 Children. A nonprofit dedicated to improving the
15 wellbeing of children and families in the child
16 welfare system, with a particular focus on those
17 aging out of the foster care system. We are one of
18 the only organizations in the city with a connection
19 to nearly every single young person who has aged out
20 of the New York City foster care system. And I am
21 here advocating for additional investments and
22 services to support these young people.

23 At New Yorkers for Children, we provide direct
24 educational and financial support to these youth and
25 support other child welfare focused organizations by

1
2 developing new initiatives designed to fill gaps in
3 the system. We do this through our long-standing
4 partnership with the Administration for Children
5 Services, the 26 contracted foster care agencies and
6 many community partners. We know that the need for
7 the services is great because the challenges this
8 population faces are significant. This is true based
9 on our own experiences but this reality is brought
10 out in the data as well.

11 One in four youth in or aging out of the foster
12 care system will not graduate high school. Fewer
13 than three percent will earn a college degree in
14 their lifetime. Even worse, after aging out of the
15 system, 20 percent of people and youth will become
16 instantly homeless.

17 At New Yorkers for Children, we serve about 1,000
18 young people a year and since 2018, we have directly
19 supported more than 3,500 youth as a transition out
20 of the New York City Child Welfare System. Since our
21 founding in 1996, we have distributed \$70 million in
22 total support to these young people when they need it
23 most.

24 Our signature programs help nearly 700 young
25 people go to college each year and as a result of our

1
2 wrap around support, including our scholarships and
3 peer mentoring programs, our participants pose a 78
4 percent graduation rate. We are proud of this work —

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 SAROYA FRIEDMAN GONZALEZ: But we know we can do
7 more. With increased funding, we can deepen our
8 existing programs, which we see greater demand than
9 our current funding allows.

10 With help from the city, we hope to achieve
11 increased well-being for youth in these programs,
12 increased graduation rates, expanding service
13 delivery and creating a smoother continuum of care
14 and reduce wait time for services. Thank you so
15 much for listening to my testimony.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, I'll call
17 on Kimberly George.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 KIMBERLY GEORGE: Good afternoon. My name is
20 Kimberly George. Thank you for the opportunity to
21 testify today. I am the President and CEO of Project
22 Guardianship. Project Guardianship was founded 17
23 years ago as a social justice initiative of the Vera
24 Institute of Justice. Vera launched project
25 guardianship in partnership with the New York State

1
2 Office of Court Administration to fill a gap in the
3 adult guardianship and elder services safety net for
4 New York City residents.

5 In 2020, Project Guardianships went off as an
6 independent non-profit providing comprehensive court
7 appointed guardianship services to hundreds of
8 limited capacity New York City residents. We serve
9 clients regardless of their ability to pay for
10 guardianship services and for some of the most
11 compelling and complex cases in the city. We also
12 share research and recommendations for a better
13 guardianship system and we advocate for more
14 equitable responses to providing services for adults
15 in need of protective arrangements.

16 New York City's population is aging rapidly.
17 One-third of older adults identify as Black, Latinx,
18 Asian or non-White and the number of older immigrants
19 statewide is growing at nearly double the rate of the
20 U.S. borne older adults. And nearly one in seven
21 older New Yorkers is living in poverty. Older lower
22 income adults are at the center of the housing
23 affordability and homelessness crisis, especially
24 older adults of color. These adults are
25 disproportionately impacted by abuse, neglect and

1
2 financial exploitation. Despite increased state in
3 federal investments in care for aging and disabled
4 New Yorkers, too many will be denied the opportunity
5 to benefit from these programs because they are
6 physically and cognitively unable to navigate our
7 complex public benefits and social services.

8 This is where legal guardianship often steps in.
9 Nonprofit guardianship programs work to secure public
10 benefits, housing, healthcare and other supports that
11 this population needs to improve outcomes and promote
12 safety and stability. Our clients include older New
13 Yorkers, those living with serious disabilities,
14 physical impairments, traumatic brain injury and the
15 list goes on.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 KIMBERLY GEORGE: We ask that the City Council
18 continue supporting people who need guardians, put it
19 at the top of the priority list for our local budget
20 and continue championing older adult New Yorkers and
21 funding initiatives like Support our Seniors. Thank
22 you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I'll turn
24 to Michelle Neugebauer from Cypress Hills Local
25 Development Corporation.

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3 MICHELLE NEUGEBAUER: Good afternoon members of
4 the City Council. My name is Michelle Neugebauer and
5 I'm the Executive Director of the Cypress Hills Local
6 Development Corporation. We're a not-for-profit
7 community development organization and settlement
8 house that serves about 11,000 East New Yorkers every
9 year from 21 different service locations. We're also
10 an advocacy organization and fought very hard with
11 Houses of Worship, other CBO's and neighborhood
12 residents in the 2016 neighborhood rezoning of the
13 East New York. We fought for equity, justice,
14 displacement prevention, local hiring and deeply and
15 permanently affordable housing.

16 One of the things the community won was the
17 Basement Legalization Pilot. The city committed to
18 \$12 million for the neighborhood to legalize 40
19 basements into apartments and lay the ground work for
20 citywide basement legalization pilot. Well, that
21 promise was broken and we're depending on the new
22 City Council to keep their promise to the East New
23 York neighborhood.

24 The pilot had just started. 800 homeowners
25 expressed interest. A pandemic hit and the program

1
2 was gutted. Almost all the funding was cut for the
3 program and the remaining nine homeowners who are not
4 six homeowners, were promised that they could go
5 through. That their rehabs would be done. That it
6 would be affordable. That tenants could come back to
7 those basements?

8 Well, now the funding is in jeopardy again. We
9 have no assurances in FY23 that the expense or the
10 capital money is going to be there. We need this
11 City Council to right this wrong that's been done to
12 the East New York community. Basement Legalization
13 means a lot. It's a win-win, both for the homeowners
14 that can now afford rising maintenance costs and for
15 the tenants who can live in safe, healthy
16 accommodations and an affordable regulated grant.

17 I'm going to ask you to take a good look, hard
18 scrutiny at the Basement Legalization Pilot and -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 MICHELLE NEUGEBAUER: And fully fund it or return
21 that money to East New Yorkers. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. That conclude
23 Panel 19. Before going to Panel 20, I will announce
24 Panels 22, 23, 24, and 25, so people can be ready.

1
2 Panel 22 Rosemary Martinez, Yolanda Arthur, Salua
3 Baida, James Dill, Luisa Pineda, Merble Reagon.

4 Panel 23, Acura Adams(SP?), Alyssa Figueroa, Keith
5 Fuller, Kayonna Bernard, Crystal Reyes. Panel 24
6 Paul Nagle, Mateo Guerrero-Tabares, Chauvet Bishop,
7 Elana Lancaster, Lisa Sloan, Kayt Tiskus. Panel 25,
8 Ivette Ayala, Lorenzo Brooks, Natasha Connor,
9 Nicholas O'Toole and Pamela Mosario(SP?).

10 I will now turn to Panel 20, Lauren Miller,
11 Sophia Harrison, Janice Monger, Lucy Sexton, Ariel
12 Herrera and Adam Ganser. I will first turn to Lauren
13 Miller.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on my list, Sophia
16 Harrison.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 SOPHIA HARRISON: Good afternoon. I am Sophia
19 Harrison, the Founder and Executive Director of Arts
20 House Schools of Music, Dance, and Fine Arts.

21 The only cultural institution in Coney Island
22 Brooklyn that serves the artistic and cultural needs
23 for the children and senior citizens in this
24 neighborhood. Our mission is to provide culture in
25 the humanities for the children in the Coney Island

1
2 community while providing them with the opportunity
3 to build self-esteem, self-confidence and develop
4 poise, grace and balance.

5 I am here today to advocate for the culture vibe
6 ask for the FY23 \$1 million request. This ask
7 includes a \$50 million in CGI and at CDF baseline
8 funding, \$45 million in grants for five strategic
9 initiatives, \$15 million for a cultural equity fund,
10 \$10 million for tourism and marketing or cultural
11 across five boroughs, \$10 million for workforce
12 development and program support, \$5 million for
13 access and inclusion of deaf and disabled
14 communities, \$5 million for individual artists and
15 renewal of the city artist program and a \$5 million
16 increase for staffing at DCLA for the agent to
17 provide – the agency to provide efficiency and timely
18 support.

19 The \$15 million ask for the Cultural Equity Fund
20 will create an investment in BIPOC led founded in
21 certain organization like Arts House Schools. All of
22 us are founded to serve the underserved resource
23 needs of the communities we serve. Communities of
24 color, immigrant communities in the mostly low income
25 neighborhoods in the outer boroughs and zip codes of

1
2 New York City. Many of our organizations have two
3 string budgets, living from check to check with
4 budgets under \$250,000 with no full-time paid staff.

5 I, myself, am a full-time volunteer for 17 years.
6 This investment would not only secure the future of
7 our organizations but it will also provide a better
8 quality of life for our staff, many of whom are part-
9 time workers and their families. Since 2006, the
10 different Council Members of the 47th District have
11 supported Arts House Schools -

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 SOPHIA HARRISON: It is the Council that has
14 supported the majority of BIPOC led and serving
15 organizations throughout the City of New York.
16 However, BIPOC led organizations need not only to
17 subscribe but to thrive. We need to - my request is
18 that you support the cultural vibe and the Cultural
19 Equity Fund. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
21 turn to Janice Monger from the Staten Island Museum.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on my list, I have Lucy
24 Sexton from New Yorkers for Culture and Arts.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 LUCY SEXTON: Thank you so much. My name is Lucy
3 Sexton, I lead the Cultural Advocacy Coalition, New
4 Yorkers for Culture and Arts. I'm here to ask you to
5 include an additional \$100 million in the city budget
6 for culture as detailed in the Culture Vibe NYC ask.

7 The Culture sector is united in our ask for
8 cultures visionary investment to build the economy.
9 It calls for equity in every part of the ask. From a
10 \$50 million increase to the Department of Cultural
11 Affairs funding base to adequately serve
12 organizations of all sizes in the citywide cultural
13 ecosystem to the Cultural Equity Fund, which Sophia
14 just talked about. Which at long last begins to
15 address the historic underfunding of BIPOC org
16 serving communities of color.

17 I want to note that we have not had an increase
18 to the baseline funding for DCLA since 2009 despite
19 the fact that the creative economy generates \$100
20 billion in economy activity for the city. It is past
21 time for this \$50 million add to the DCLA baseline.
22 Culture was the first to close and we are still
23 struggling to fully reopen. Federal relief for those
24 of us lucky enough to receive it runs out next month.
25 Meanwhile audiences and other income are still not up

1
2 to pre-pandemic levels. The slower culture takes to
3 recover, the slower the city will take but if you
4 invest this relatively small amount, less than a
5 quarter of a percent of the city's budget into
6 culture now, you will see a robust recovery for every
7 neighborhood. We bring visitors. We bring folks
8 back to offices. We drive traffic to restaurants and
9 local businesses. We improve education outcomes. We
10 improve mental health. We create strong communities
11 and are key to public safety. When youth have places
12 to make music, dance, theater, science. When
13 communities have places to gather and connect. When
14 folks caught with criminal justice system have places
15 to tell their stories, we build strong, safe
16 neighborhoods. Data backs this up.

17 The more cultural assets, the safer the
18 neighborhood. Let's invest in a strong economy -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 LUCY SEXTON: And vibrant city by investing in
21 culture for every New Yorker. Thank you so much for
22 allowing me to testify.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
24 turn to Ariel Herrera.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 ARIEL HERRERA: Thank you for the opportunity to
3 speak to you today. My name is Ariel Herrera and I
4 am the Research and Advocacy Manager for Dance NYC.
5 Dance NYC is the only service organization for the
6 dance industry and they make a powerful New York City
7 area and its actual oriented research and advocacy
8 seek to a percent and advance interest in the dance
9 sector. Dance NYC joint colleague advocates working
10 across creative disciplines and thanking you for your
11 leadership.

12 And I just want to echo my colleague Lucy Sexton,
13 everything that she said but I also would like to
14 reiterate just one more time \$100 million investment
15 in the Department of Cultural Affairs for Fiscal Year
16 2023. An investment that represents 0.24 percent of
17 the city's total budget.

18 In addition Dance NYC is asking a robust
19 investment in Arts Education to the Department of
20 Education and boosting the arts allocation to \$100
21 from \$79.62. The city's budget represents far more
22 than a financial statement. It is a social contract
23 that articulates to the public the values that the
24 Council and Administration place on a specific
25 constituencies and communities including industries

1
2 and workers. The arts and cultural industry is a
3 major economic engine and it counts for 13 percent of
4 New York City's total economic output. \$110 billion
5 in 2017 alone. New York City must invest back its
6 fair share through the arts and culture sector to
7 ensure that it not only survives but thrives. Thank
8 you so much for this opportunity.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we'll turn
10 to Adam Ganser.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 ADAM GANSER: Hi there, can you hear me?

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

14 ADAM GANSER: Fantastic. My name is Adam Ganser,
15 I am the Executive Director at New Yorkers for Parks.
16 We've been around for 100 years advocating for
17 equitable access to parks and open spaces throughout
18 the five boroughs. We are the co-founder of the Play
19 Fair Coalition that's more than 400 organizations
20 across the city focused on parks and open space. We
21 will submit more detailed testimony but we're - I'm
22 testifying today, asking for the Council to hold the
23 Mayor accountable to the promises that he made on the
24 campaign trail for one percent of the city budget for
25 parks.

1
2 We have delivered a letter to the Mayor signed by
3 26 Council Members, 400 organizations across the city
4 asking for that and this is something that has been
5 in the works for 20 years with our organization.
6 It's high time that the city fund parks at an
7 appropriate level.

8 The second thing I want to bring up is that there
9 are roughly 300 positions that are funded by the
10 Council. They're informally called Play Fair
11 positions, CPW's, Pep Officers, gardeners, rangers
12 etc. Those positions are set to expire at the end of
13 this Fiscal Year, along with roughly 1,800 positions
14 of the Cleanup Corp. That is going to put the Parks
15 Department in a really difficult situation. We are
16 not out of COVID, people are spending more time than
17 ever in their parks. We would like to ask the
18 Council to re-up on those positions and again, push
19 the Mayor to fund parks at a higher level than he is
20 right now, which is at .6 percent, .06 percent of the
21 budget. I appreciate your time and thank you for
22 your support.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
24 Panel 20. I will now turn to Panel 21, Donna
25 Schneiderman, KC Wagner, Lisa Bernstein, Tatiana

1 Bejar, and Ben Fuller-Googins. I'll first start with
2 Donna Schneiderman.

3
4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 DONNA SCHNEIDERMAN: Hi there. Hello and thank
6 you very much for hearing my testimony to everybody
7 here on the Council.

8 My name is Donna Schneiderman and I am a Domestic
9 Worker Employer, a founding member of Hand and Hand,
10 the Domestic Workers Network and we're part of the
11 New York City Coalition for Domestic Work.

12 I'm here today to request your support for the
13 Domestic Worker and Employer Empowerment Initiative.
14 A new City Council initiative for FY23 that will
15 provide \$300,000 in much needed funding to support
16 outreach, education, and enforcement supporting over
17 6,000 domestic workers this year.

18 This initiative will enable the outreach and
19 education about domestic workers rights to both
20 workers and employers, support investigation of
21 rights of uses, create referrals to the City
22 Commission on Human Rights, and Department of
23 Consumer and Worker Protection, as well as broaden
24 enforcement of the recently passed Intro. 339, which
25 is also known as Local Law 88.

1
2 I've had the honor of partnering with domestic
3 workers as an Employer Alli and Advocate for many
4 years, since the passage of the New York State
5 Domestic Workers Bill of rights and I've learned over
6 the years that while there are many employers aiming
7 to be fair, despite the lack of standards around,
8 unfortunately there are many employers who actively
9 may take advantage of their employees or who are
10 willfully ignorant at the expense of their employees.

11 I've been involved in this movement for better
12 guidelines and standards because I believe that
13 employers need guidance from the government so we can
14 do what's right. And without the guidelines,
15 employers are left to figure out on our own online or
16 through word of mouth sometimes not accessing the
17 right information.

18 We're so pleased that we are -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 DONNA SCHNEIDERMAN: Thanks, I appreciate the
21 time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
23 turn to KC Wagner.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
25

1
2 KC WAGNER: So, thank you so much to the City
3 Council Members and Committee Chair Brannan. My name
4 is KC Wagner and I am a Domestic Worker Employer and
5 a member of Hand and Hand. And it is my great honor
6 to be partnering with the Domestic Employees Network
7 and the worker centers that are part of it, the
8 National Domestic Workers Alliance and Carrol Gardens
9 and I am a better employer because of my membership
10 in Hand and Hand.

11 Maxine, the caregiver, for my 96-year-old mother
12 has made my work possible. Domestic Workers have
13 made all work possible, as she has provided devoted
14 care to my mother for nine years. Starting with her
15 first hospitalization, then to her independent living
16 facility, assistant living facility, memory care unit
17 and finally at the nursing home where she now resides
18 with dementia.

19 Maxine's commitment to my mother's safety and
20 mental health also include at her disclosing to me
21 the emotional abuse that my mother experienced at the
22 hands of her then partner with whom she was living.
23 Needless to say, our intervention and their
24 separation was immediate but I would not have known
25 about this or done anything without Maxine's

1
2 priceless gift to my family based on her knowledge
3 and expertise.

4 Maxine is invaluable to my family and she alone
5 with all caregivers should continue to be entitled to
6 both the recently one workplace rights and benefits
7 and more that Donna identified and that all of us on
8 this call enjoy. And so, we greatly appreciate your
9 support in getting this word out. The collaboration
10 between employers and domestic workers and the
11 training and education that we are doing in
12 partnership to get the word out to educate domestic
13 workers about what their rights are and to educate
14 employers, so we can do the right thing is
15 invaluable. And so, I thank you so much for your
16 time.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 KC WAGNER: And listening to my testimony.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
20 turn to Lisa Bernstein.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 LISA BERNSTEIN: Lisa Bernstein and I am a
23 Domestic Worker Employer, a member of Hand and Hand,
24 Domestic Employers Network and a part of the New York
25 City Coalition for Domestic Workers. 27-years-ago,

1
2 when I gave birth to my daughter, I actually was the
3 Marketing Director for the What to Expect when Your
4 Expecting Pregnancy Books.

5 And yet, when it came to hiring childcare so I
6 could go back to work, I had no idea what to expect.
7 And now, 27-years later, if my daughter were to have
8 a baby right now, she too would be right in the same
9 place of nobody guiding and telling her what to
10 expect.

11 I am here today to urge you to support the
12 Domestic Worker and Employee Empowerment Initiative,
13 which is the New York City Council Initiative for
14 FY23, that will provide \$300,000 in much needed
15 funding to support outreach, education and
16 enforcement to support, thank you, to over 6,000
17 domestic workers this year.

18 As employers, we need guidance from the
19 government, so we can do what is right. By passing
20 this proposal in the current budget session, our
21 local government will be taking a step in the right
22 direction by acknowledging an investment to ensure
23 domestic workers, the workers who care for our
24 families have the rights and are empowered as workers
25 to negotiate better contracts and will empower

1
2 employers because we would have guidance and the
3 support to be good employers. We pass some great,
4 the city has passed some fabulous laws including the
5 domestic worker bill of rights, paid safe and sick
6 leave and most recently Intro. 339. Many employers
7 know nothing about, nor do employees but as an
8 employer, we're left to figure it out all on our own
9 and not always finding the right information. Some
10 of us are doing the right thing but we now need local
11 government to do the same. This initiative will
12 enable outreach and education about domestic workers
13 rights deal with workers and employers, support
14 investigations of rights abuses, which happen -

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 LISA BERNSTEIN: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
18 to Tatiana Bejar.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 TATIANA BEJAR: Thank you. Uhm, my name is
21 Tatiana Bejar. I'm the New York City Lead Organizer
22 at Hand and Hand, the Domestic Employers Network.
23 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on
24 behalf our membership and also, thank you to our
25 members who just spoke in the last minutes.

1
2 Hand and Hand is a national network of employers
3 of nannies, house cleaners and home attendants, our
4 families and allies. We support domestic employers,
5 improve their employment practices and believe that
6 dignified and respectful working conditions benefits
7 worker and employer alike. We envision a future
8 where people live in caring communities and recognize
9 all of our interdependence. Hand and Hand is a
10 nonprofit organization and one of the major
11 organizations in the country that organizes domestic
12 employers. They are also part of the New York City
13 Coalition for Domestic Work along with the National
14 Domestic Workers Alliance, Adhikaar, and [INAUDIBLE
15 3:35:29] Association.

16 Our coalition has submitted the Domestic Worker
17 and Employer Empowerment Initiative for this budget
18 session to ensure workers note and exercise their
19 rights and employers are guided about their
20 responsibilities and obligations regarding the law.

21 In 2010 Domestic Workers Bill of Rights was
22 passed in New York State. The first ever in the
23 country that provided their own framework and human
24 rights for these workforce, such as minimum wage,
25 basic leave and overtime, among others. Similar

1
2 bills like the basic leave and safe - uh, sorry New
3 York City pay sick and unsafe leave as well as Intro.
4 339 just recently. A bill that ensures human rights
5 protections for domestic workers.

6 So, having said that, we ask the Finance
7 Committee on the budget negotiation team to consider
8 approving this initiative for this Fiscal Year that
9 we provide \$300,000 in much needed funding to support
10 outreach, education and enforcement support to over
11 6,000 domestic workers as well as employer through
12 our city.

13 Yes, I know my time is almost done but again,
14 this is really a very important program. We don't
15 feel like -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 TATIANA BEJAR: And feel the sector is changing.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
19 to Ben Fuller-Googins.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 BEN FULLER-GOOGINS: Good afternoon. Thank you
22 Chair Brannan and Council Members on the Finance
23 Committee for offering me time to speak today. My
24 name is Ben Fuller-Googins, I'm with the Carrol
25

1
2 Gardens Association or a proud member of the New York
3 City Coalition for Domestic Work.

4 Council Member Brannan, it was refreshing to hear
5 in your opening remarks this morning, naming
6 caregivers as one of the impacted groups of people in
7 our city during the pandemic. Unfortunately,
8 caregivers – there's a long history of caregivers,
9 domestic workers being invisibilized, their work
10 undervalued.

11 And so, that's one of the reasons I'm here with
12 fellow members of our coalition that you just heard
13 and other members that you'll hear this afternoon, to
14 urge you to pass our new budget initiative, the
15 Domestic Worker and Employer Empowerment Initiative.
16 This will be amazingly the first time in New York
17 City's history that there is an explicit investment
18 in domestic worker and employer outreach to
19 education. We're asking \$300,000 for Fiscal Year '23
20 and that will be enable us to provide outreach and
21 education, so that we're able to go into the parks
22 and into the libraries and make sure that workers
23 across the city, over 200,000 domestic workers across
24 the city know what their rights are. Know the rights
25 to overtime, the basic time, to Intro. 339, which we

1
2 worked so hard this past year and still, as we just
3 heard from Hand and Hand members, many employers,
4 workers aren't aware. So, we're excited to work
5 together to make this the first investment in
6 domestic workers and employers around the city.

7 Again, we're asking \$300,000 for Domestic Worker
8 and Employer Empowerment Initiative and thank you for
9 your time. And look forward to some of our worker
10 members sharing in this hearing about why this
11 initiative is so critical for them. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
13 Panel 21. I will now turn to Panel 22, Rosemary
14 Martinez, Yolanda Arthur, Salua Baida, James Dill,
15 Luisa Pineda and Merble Reagon. We will start with
16 Rosemary Martinez.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 ROSEMARY MARTINEZ: Hello everyone. Thank you
19 for this opportunity. Thank you Chair Brannan and
20 Council Members. My name is Rosemary Martinez. As a
21 reminder, in correlation from last years comprised of
22 the National Domestic Worker Alliance, NYC Chapter
23 Adhikaar and Hand and Hand, the Domestic Employers
24 Network, and Care Guidance Association, Domestic
25 workers and employers of New York City. I have been

1
2 a domestic worker for six years despite being born in
3 this city due to the lack of opportunity for my mom
4 who has been a domestic worker for more than 30-years
5 and due to the lack of information and respect for
6 her work. I had to grow up away from here. I can
7 say knowingly about the lack of opportunities and
8 now, as a domestic worker, organizer, with CDA, I can
9 see and know about these troubles domestic workers
10 had to go through.

11 I'm here today to request your support for the
12 Domestic Worker and Employer Empowerment initiative.
13 A new City Council initiative for FY23 that will
14 provide 300,000 in much needed funding to support
15 outreach education and support to over 6,000 domestic
16 workers this year. There are over 200,000 workers in
17 New York City and while we have celebrated many
18 transformative wins over the past decade, including
19 the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, Pay Safe and
20 Sick Leave and the most recently Intro. 339.

21 Like, my colleagues say before, we need our city
22 to support us just as we support the family and loved
23 ones. Thank you Council Members and Committee Chair
24 Brannan for hearing my testimony and I hope we can
25

1
2 look forward to working with you where domestic work
3 is valued and dignified.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
6 turn to Yolanda Arthur.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list I have,
9 Salua Baida.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 SALUA BAIDA: Thank you Mr. Butehorn. My name is
12 Salua Baida. Good afternoon from Forest Hills
13 Queens. I'm also a part of Hand and Hand, the
14 Domestic Employers Network and the reason I am
15 speaking today and testifying today is because like a
16 lot of my peers that you just heard from, I am both a
17 person who employs a domestic worker inside of my
18 home and I'm also a Latino lawyer. I'm also the
19 daughter of a now retired house cleaner. And so,
20 like so many of the folks that have spoken already, I
21 find that it's really important for both workers to
22 know what their rights are and what their
23 responsibilities are and for employers to know what
24 the requires of them.

1
2 And so, as we've heard you know the paid and sick
3 bills have passed. Intro. 339, which considers
4 domestic workers to be employees like any other
5 employee. All of these different things, paid and
6 sick leave. All of these different things are
7 wonderful. There we go, wonderful developments that
8 we've all fought for and that are important to keep
9 our city running. At the same time, if both the
10 employees and the employers don't know about them,
11 they can't actually follow those guidelines and they
12 can't make these kind of policies makes New York the
13 best city that it can be.

14 So, in order to that, we got to fund the
15 initiatives that provide outreach, that provide
16 support, the provide enforcement. If we can do that,
17 then this is going to be transformative. So, that's
18 why you've heard my colleagues and you've heard so
19 many of the other people that'll be speaking ask for
20 that funding, that \$300,000, which is completely
21 reasonable to be able to make those outreach and
22 other support efforts actually possible.

23 Thank you so much and muchas gracias. Bye, bye
24 everyone.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 turn to James Dill.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 JAMES DILL: I'm Jim Dill, Director of -
6 Executive Director of Housing and Services Inc. We
7 provide permanent supportive housing to 720 New York
8 City households. We support all of supportive
9 housing networks, advocacy points to this meeting,
10 but I will focus on the immediate and dire need to
11 build HRA capacity for the referral process to
12 permanent supportive housing projects.

13 Due to the lack of HRA capacity, our projects
14 that rely on contracted HRA, DHS shelter referrals,
15 now have vacancy rates in excess of ten percent. I
16 have neither the time today nor the words to describe
17 the human cost of homeless individuals whose shelter
18 stays are being needlessly prolonged by the lack of
19 capacity. However, I can speak to the financial cost
20 of those providers and the city. Our Kenmore project
21 on East 23rd Street has 325 housing units and an
22 annual residential rent flow of approximately \$4
23 million.

24 During the pandemic, it has taken an average of
25 72 days from referral requests to a tenant move in.

1
2 At 72 days for a move in, tenants are leaving a much
3 faster rate than new ones are coming in. In calendar
4 2021, Kenmore's vacancy rate was six percent. For
5 February 2022 was 11 percent. With no solution to
6 the capacity problem, Kenmore's vacancy for 2022
7 could approximate a half million dollars. It is well
8 documented that the city's annual cost for a homeless
9 person in the shelter in excess of \$30,000. These
10 costs are needless and must cured by an immediate
11 investment in HRA capacity. It is truly dismal that
12 the homeless are being driven out of the subway
13 system and encampments while thousands of permanent
14 supportive housing units that they want and need
15 remain vacant.

16 Thank you so much for this opportunity to
17 testify. We will provide detail written testimony.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next I will
19 turn to Luisa Pineda.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 LUISA PINEDA: Good afternoon. Thank you
22 Chairman Justin Brannan and members of the New York
23 City Council Committee on Finance. My name is Luisa
24 Pineda and I have worked in the Human Service Sector
25 for over ten years. I currently work as a College

1
2 Retention Specialist at the College Access and
3 Success program at Queens Community House where we
4 provide individuals and families with the needed
5 tools to enrich their lives and build healthy,
6 inclusive communities. We are a supporter of the
7 Just Pay Campaign.

8 I am thankful for this opportunity to testify on
9 behalf of Queens Community House. Essential human
10 services workers earn one of the lowest wages in New
11 York City economy due to chronic underfunding from
12 New York City government contracts. If we learned
13 anything from the COVID-19 pandemic, is the
14 importance of human services because they are just
15 that, human.

16 Human Services worker make about \$20,000 a year
17 less than a public sector worker with a comparable
18 education. I make 70 percent of what I would make if
19 I worked in government. We need human services
20 workers but it is hard to recruit and retain them
21 when government pays so little. Within the last
22 year, many of programs under Queens Community House
23 have been understaffed, as many leave due to low wage
24 salary. Which means many of us are taking on more
25 work for the same pay.

1
2 New Yorkers across the city rely on me and my
3 team to provide them with broad network of
4 comprehensive services at 34 sites and in 14
5 neighborhoods. I am a dedicated worker and I love to
6 support the community I work – uh, I grew up in. I
7 provide students with the opportunity to increase
8 their academic performance, leadership skills as well
9 as supporting them with college and career guidance.
10 Not only do I support students but I also connect to
11 them and families to internal and external resources
12 such as housing, eviction prevention, immigration
13 services, childcare, the list goes on.

14 I advocate for my students when no one else has
15 the time to, providing them in the guidance they need
16 to move forward and have a better future. I serve
17 the children and youth, the young adults and
18 families, older adults in the LGBTQ population to
19 provide them with my time and understanding and
20 connecting each of them with the resources that will
21 empower them to help them achieve –

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 LUISA PINEDA: We need the city to acknowledge
24 our work and to address crisis in the sector and save
25 jobs of health and human services workers. We are

1
2 asking the city to adapt reforms that save Just Pay
3 Campaign for fighting. Thank you for my time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
5 turn to Merble Reagon from the Women's Center for
6 Education and Career Advancement.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 MERBLE REAGON: Thank you Chair Brannan and
9 members of the New York City Council Finance
10 Committee for the opportunity to speak with you
11 today. My name is Merble Reagon and I am Executive
12 Director of the Women's Center for Education and
13 Career Advancement.

14 I have worked for more than 40-years in nonprofit
15 human services. I support the Just Pay Campaign.
16 Today, I take this time to urge the Committee to
17 factor into its budgetary determinations the factual
18 realities for many of the tens of thousands of human
19 services workers who are providing mandated essential
20 services and earning far less than their government
21 and private sector counterparts. If we don't right
22 this wrong now, then when? This is the right time
23 for New York City to finally address this issue of
24 fairness and wage parity.

1
2 In my written testimony, you will find the link
3 to our New York City self-sufficiency calculator. I
4 invite you to put in your zip code and the ages of
5 the adults and children in your household. In less
6 than two seconds, you will see the numbers that make
7 up your working families break even bare bones budget
8 and the salary you need to cover all your basic
9 expenses.

10 Then, do the same for one of your constituent
11 families headed by a contracted human services
12 worker. Consider the results, then ask yourself, is
13 this not the time to finally build it back better for
14 contracted human services workers who continue to
15 provide the essential services and deserve to be paid
16 fairly for their work. As others have said, we ask
17 you to set an annual cost of living adjustment on all
18 human services contracts. Set a living wage for
19 floor of at least \$21.00 an hour, create and fund a
20 wage and benefit schedule that is comparable to the
21 salaries made by New York City workers doing the same
22 work.

23 Thank you for this opportunity to testify and for
24 your support on all issues impacting –

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 MERBLE REAGON: Our sector.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next is 22.

4 Before going to 23, I will announce panels 26, 27, 28
5 and 29, so people can be ready. Panel 26, Nora
6 Moran, Bryan Fotino, Michelle Feldman, Felipe Vargas,
7 Alex Martinez, Rebecca Cleary.

8 Panel 27, Catherine Mykytiuk, Emily Miles, Brian
9 Trezevant, Chan Henry, Darren Bloch, Christopher
10 Bromson.

11 Panel 28, Carlos Castel Croke, Lonnie Portis,
12 Stephanie Earlick, Fabiola Sierra(SP?), Jennifer
13 Vasquez, Alison Gardy, Korena Garcia, and Tory Kaso.

14 Panel 29, Kathleen DiPerna, Nicholas Buess,
15 Freedom Carado(SP?), Arline Cruz, Doxine Roberts(SP?)
16 and Won Pinzon.

17 I will now turn to Panel 23 Aquira Adams(SP?)
18 Alyssa Figueroa, Keith Fuller, Kayonna Bernard, and
19 Crystal Reyes. We will first turn to Akira Adams
20 with the Urban Youth Collaborative.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I will turn to Alyssa
23 Figueroa.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.
25

1
2 ALYSSA FUGUEROA: Hey Malcom. So, you know Akira
3 Adams, Nia Morris, Kayonna Bernard and Agi Gia (SP?)
4 are students who are currently in school. They are
5 prepared and eager to testify. I ask that you call
6 their names at 4:30 today or after that, so that they
7 can.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: All I can say is I will do my
9 best. I have uh, you know there's - we have 400 some
10 odd people, so we'll do our best. That's all I can
11 promise.

12 ALYSSA FIGUEROA: Thank you. Yeah, they're in
13 school currently, so they can't be on right now.
14 Uhm, so again yeah, Akira and Nia Kayonna and Agi.
15 Uhm, so I'll start my testimony. Hi y'all, my name
16 is Alyssa Figueroa. I am the Coalition Coordinator
17 of the Urban Youth Collaborative, a student led
18 coalition of New York City youth organizing groups
19 fighting to end the school to prison and deportation
20 pipeline.

21 Today, I'm here to talk about school safety. I'm
22 sure that's on the minds of everyone after that
23 injustice that occurred in Texas yesterday. School
24 should be a place where students from all walks of
25 life are safe to learn and grow.

1
2 So, it's in times like these that it's more
3 important than ever to push for the many evidence-
4 based solutions to school safety. We know what many
5 of them are and we know that school policing is not
6 one of them. You know the percentage of students
7 nationwide reporting police stationed at their
8 schools, more than doubled after the Columbine
9 shooting. Yet, research shows time and time again
10 that school police do not prevent school shootings.
11 In fact a study of 133 school shootings. In fact, a
12 study of 133 school shootings actually found a higher
13 mortality rate in schools with school police. Yet
14 just this morning, the mayor held a press conference
15 in which he called for among many things, an increase
16 in police presence in schools. This already reflects
17 his executive budget in which he plans to fund \$4731
18 school police positions despite there being less than
19 4,000 school police currently in schools.

20 That means, he plans to spend tens of millions of
21 dollars funding nearly 800 vacant school police
22 positions in order to fill them. New York City
23 already has more and spends more on school policing
24 than any city in the country by far, for comparison,
25 Los Angeles has 20 times less police in their schools

1
2 than we do despite having more than half of New York
3 City's student population.

4 Quarter one data on school policing incidents
5 occurring between January to March 2022, was just
6 released this month. Yet again, the data shows what
7 we've been seeing since data was made publicly
8 available in 2016. That Black and Latinx students
9 make up 90 percent of school police incidents,
10 despite them making up 66 percent of the student
11 population.

12 It's no surprise that when we survey students of
13 color, they overwhelmingly say that school police
14 make them feel less safe.

15 It's time for the city to pass a budget that
16 follows an antiracist, evidence-based approach to
17 public safety.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

19 ALYSSA FIGUEROA: In our schools and communities.
20 I am calling on Council Members to stay on to listen
21 to students testify later today, hopefully around
22 4:30 p.m.. Thank you so much.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we're turning to Keith
24 Fuller.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay and just so everyone
3 knows, the raise hand function is only for Council
4 Members. If they have any questions for any
5 panelists, so if members of the public are using the
6 raise hand function, we will be lowering it. There
7 will be a period of time after all names have been
8 called for those who were not on when we called their
9 name to use the raise hand function. So, everyone
10 will have a second opportunity to speak if they were
11 not available when I called their name.

12 Uhm, the last that was on this list was Crystal
13 Reyes.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I am going to call the
16 next panel. Panel 24, Paul Nagle, Mateo Guerrero-
17 Tabares, Chauvet Bishop, Elana Lancaster, Lisa Sloan,
18 Kayt Tiskus; I apologize if I mispronounce any names.
19 We'll first start with Paul Nagle.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

21 PAUL NAGLE: Hi, my name is Paul Nagle, I am the
22 Executive Director of Stonewall Community Development
23 Initiative.

24 It's LGBTQ older adults welcoming housing they
25 can afford with access to health and mental health to

1
2 meet their unique needs. Our services are available
3 to all New York City older adults. The Housing
4 Innovations and solutions we create are meant to be
5 universal and reputable for all seniors but we know
6 that by centering LGBTQ older adults in the creation
7 and piloting of these models, our needs will not be
8 ignored as so often happens.

9 New York City is facing an unprecedented senior
10 housing crisis as baby boomers age in. A report on
11 the 2010 census for New York City Planning Department
12 projected a 40 percent increase in New Yorkers over
13 65 between 2010 and 2040 from \$1 million to \$1.4
14 million. Where will they live?

15 LGBTQ elders face a number of challenges beyond
16 those of the general older population. A study by
17 the Equal Rights Center published in 2014, conducted
18 intense dates and covered a 48 percent discrimination
19 rate against same sex, older adults, couples and
20 housing increase. And more than likely than our
21 heterosexual counterparts, the lack of support
22 networks, Black family live in poverty, experience
23 increased comorbidities attributed to living lives of
24 anxiety and constantly hostile environments. And

1
2 they experience discrimination or fear of
3 discrimination in housing and healthcare delivery.

4 On the flip side, the LGBT community has elements
5 that uniquely position us to successfully pilot
6 innovative housing solutions. We have a shared lived
7 experience, a history of building networks of support
8 and a deep well of creativity. This here we're
9 seeking support from the speakers initiative for
10 Leave no Veteran Behind, a project we're piloting in
11 the Bronx with a tier grant from the New York
12 Community Trust which will create LGBT welcoming
13 supported home shares for 14 adult veterans.

14 Community-based housing solutions will be
15 critical to meeting the challenges of coming housing
16 crisis for seniors. Please keep your eyes and your
17 attention on innovations emerging from grassroots
18 groups like ours and support them through the budget
19 process. Our budget request information will be
20 included in our written testimony. Thank you for
21 your time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Nagel. Next,
23 we will turn to Mateo Guerrero Tabares from the
24 Trans-immigrant project Make the Road.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hi, good afternoon. I'm
3 actually going to read the testimonies of the three
4 other members who were skipped in Panel 22.

5 So, I'm going to start with [INAUDIBLE 3:59:15].
6 Good afternoon. Thanks everyone for this public
7 safety – for this public hearing. My name is
8 Dulsa(SP?), I'm a member of Make the Road New York
9 and a trans person from [INAUDIBLE 3:59:22]. I'm a
10 resident of Queens and also a sex worker. VICE has
11 criminalized my community for many years, especially
12 my trans sex worker sisters who have been deported
13 for raids and wrongfully arrests made by the VICE
14 squad.

15 I am here to raise my voice and make it clear
16 that New York needs to dismantle the VICE police
17 units. I know that in the recent city budget there
18 was an adjustment that reduces the funding of the
19 city – of the VICE units to \$12 million. But I
20 demand that New York City and Mayor Eric Adams stops
21 providing more money to the VICE units and instead
22 invest in our communities.

23 The rate of discrimination in unemployment, food
24 insecurity, trauma, unstable housing and police abuse
25 are issues that are little heard of. But a reality

1
2 that we face – but as a reality that we face in my
3 community.

4 Many of our community members are an increased
5 risk for anxiety, depression, suicide, low life
6 satisfaction, self-harm, isolation, PTSD, HIV and
7 incarceration. Therefore, it is necessary to invest
8 in programs for our communities and to stop investing
9 in police squads that constantly harass our
10 communities and use racist and sexist tactics to
11 criminalize us and put barriers in our futures.

12 These rates and arrests leads to barriers to
13 obtaining a decent job, housing and being able to –

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Guerrero-Tabares, I'm
15 just going to ask that uhm, that you wrap up your
16 testimony and others will be able to give their
17 testimony, either submitted to testimony at
18 council@nyc.gov, or they will have an opportunity to
19 be on the Zoom later for those who were not on when I
20 called their name. They will have an opportunity to
21 speak when we are done with our panels.

22 MATEO GUERRERO-TABARES: Alright, well what I
23 want to mention to – there are three members who
24 joined that were skipped in Panel 22. Rosalyn, Kathy
25 Rowel and Dulca. Who are sex workers who have been

1
2 consistently being harassed by the VICE units. This
3 is a police unit that instead of providing any
4 support, what they do is traumatize, harass, steal
5 money from community members -

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

7 MATEO GUERRERO-TABARES: Sexually assault sex
8 workers and get away with it. We are demanding that
9 the \$12 million that they still have in the funding
10 are removed and given to the community members that
11 have been impacted by providing health access, legal
12 support as well as housing insecurity for our
13 community members.

14 This behavior from the VICE units and again, from
15 NYPD is terrorizing and only continues to instigate
16 fear in our community. Nearly 93 percent of VICE
17 targets for uhm - 93 percent of VICE targets for sex
18 are Black and Brown or Asian. While 90 percent of
19 those targeted for selling sex are people of color.

20 Almost all the people, VICE officers prey upon
21 our low-income neighborhoods like Jackson Heights,
22 5th Avenue in Brooklyn and under Mayor, prior Mayor
23 de Blasio, New York has spent more than \$1 million to
24 settle false arrest claims for people that were
25 targeted for patronizing. Thank you very much.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next person
3 we're going to call on is Chauvet Bishop from the
4 Audre Lorde Project.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

6 CHAUVET BISHOP: Hello, uhm, my name is Chauvet
7 Bishop with the Audre Lorde Project, we're an LGBTST
8 and TGNC POC organizing center. I'm a member of both
9 the SOS, Safe Outside the System and third space
10 collective. We work to keep our communities safe and
11 educate our communities in de-escalation. We trained
12 over 100 households, people, businesses,
13 organizations so that they do not call police because
14 that has not been safe for our communities that
15 disproportionately people of color, LGBTTST and TGNC
16 folks do not have correct access to things like
17 housing, healthcare, mental healthcare, accessibility
18 to support immigration needs, legal needs. All these
19 things are things that funding could go towards and
20 that organizations are doing for our communities, the
21 most impacted communities and these are the funds
22 that need to be allocated, not to more policing. Not
23 to Eric Adams office. These are not the things that
24 I hope, well, we don't need more rainbows in June.
25 We need our communities to be cared for. To have the

1
2 resources and housing and education and food and
3 safety that we need because you cannot heal without
4 safety. The two go hand and hand. Our communities
5 need to feel safe. They need to be provided for. We
6 do not need these institutions to be further
7 fortified, we need our communities to be fortified
8 everywhere from our youth to our elders and everyone
9 in between need resources, especially for our
10 communities. The LGBTSGNC communities, especially
11 those of color, disproportionately are impacted every
12 day by a lack of healthcare, housing, food,
13 education, the list can go on and I can echo the need
14 to organize and to come together to make sure that
15 these services are provided as many of the people
16 before me have said.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
18 turn to Elana Lancaster from the Ackerman Institute
19 for the Families Gender and Family Project.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

21 ELANA LANCASTER: Good afternoon. Thank you to
22 Chair Brannan, all the City Council members, Council
23 staff and community members here today. My name is
24 Elana Lancaster. I'm the Associate Director for
25

1
2 Training at the Gender and Family Project of the
3 Akerman Institute for the Family.

4 I worked in trans health for a lot of years and
5 so I knew intellectually for a long time what a huge
6 difference it makes when youth have family support.
7 We see this all through the research. It's like the
8 best possible thing you can do for mental health, for
9 physical health throughout the lifespan. And I can
10 quote you all the statistics and you still wouldn't
11 understand the way that I didn't understand until I
12 saw it in a totally different way when I started
13 working with the Gender and Family Project.

14 There's a mom who I spoke to this week who used
15 the description that I've gotten to hear a lot and
16 she said that there were these two moments when she
17 suddenly saw things click. One, she was watching her
18 kid realize for the first time after they came out
19 that they were truly embraced and celebrated by their
20 family for all of who they are.

21 And the second moment was when she watched her
22 kid interact and be surrounded by kids like them for
23 the first time in their life and what she said she
24 saw watching her child's face in those moments was
25 that it was like they had been wondering through the

1
2 dessert thirsty for years and that they've finally
3 been given a drink of water for the first time. And
4 I've heard that story so many times and every kid
5 deserves that. And we've seen that moment with so
6 many families, thanks to the programs that the City
7 Council supports through its trans equity funding.
8 City Council funding has been absolutely crucial to
9 our work, making sure that we can provide family
10 therapy, community support services to families all
11 over the city in English and Spanish. We expanded
12 our services to support trans and gender expansive
13 youth involved with the foster system including
14 everyone they consider family and senior families
15 start in a place of crisis and transform is honestly
16 the closest thing I've seen in real life to magic.
17 We and all of the programs under the trans equity
18 funding are providing direct, vital services that
19 keep our community safe and help us thrive and it is
20 greater than ever both because of the pandemic and
21 because trans people and their families across the
22 country, we are under attack.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

24 ELANA LANCASTER: All over the place. So, this
25 is a moment when more than ever this funding is

1
2 crucial as a way of knowing that New York City is
3 different. That this is a place where we support our
4 kids and support our communities for all of who they
5 are and so, thank you for your continued support for
6 expanding this funding. Thank you for your time.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
8 turn to Dr. Lisa Sloan from the Pride Center of
9 Staten Island.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

11 DR. LISA SLOAN: Good afternoon. My name is Dr.
12 Lisa Sloan and my pronouns are she, her, hers. I'm
13 the Deputy Director at the Pride Center of Staten
14 Island, an LGBTQ plus community center that has
15 received funding through the Trans-Equity Initiative
16 since Fiscal Year 2019. The Trans-Equity Initiative
17 has supported the creation and/or expansion of
18 culturally competent programs and services through
19 transgender and gender nonconforming and nonbinary or
20 TGNC and B individuals and their families across New
21 York City. I am asking for continued support of this
22 initiative.

23 To demonstrate the impact of Trans-Equity
24 supported programs on Staten Island, I want to share
25 a statement from a Latino transgender man who has

1 benefited from Trans-Equity programs and service at
2 the Pride Center of Staten Island. He says, finding
3 the Pride Center has truly done wonders for me. It's
4 a place where I've always felt safe to express myself
5 freely and find community. There aren't many LGBTQ
6 plus safe places in my neighborhood and even fewer
7 places that don't revolve around alcohol use.

9 Finding the Pride Center honestly changed my life
10 for the better. If not for the amazing staff and the
11 programs that they have available, I would be in a
12 very different place in my life. Everyone at the
13 Pride Center has given me the freedom and the space
14 to figure out who I am. To understand my emotions
15 and most importantly, the Pride Center is a place
16 that I feel seen for who I am instead of seen for
17 what others want me to be.

18 It has been a necessary part of my growth and in
19 understanding myself better and for that, I'm always
20 grateful. The transformative services that this
21 transgender Staten Island describes are made possible
22 by the Trans Equity Initiative. I urge you to
23 maintain or even increase the funding associated with
24 the Trans Equity Initiative, so that culturally
25 competent programs and services for the TGNC and B

1
2 individuals and families can continue in Staten
3 Island and across New York City. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Dr. Sloan. Next,
5 we'll turn to is it Kayt Tiskus from Bowen Public
6 Affairs.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You're - oh, hold on. We'll
9 send you the unmute one more time. It should come up
10 saying - asking you to accept. There we go.

11 KAYT TISKUS: Great, uhm, thank you very much and
12 in fact, Kayt Tiskus is the right pronunciation. So,
13 well done there. It's a weird one from both sides.
14 Much appreciated.

15 So, thank you Chair Council Members and all of
16 the staff who are putting this hearing together and
17 also, keeping it clipping along so efficiently when
18 there are so many of us speaking here today.

19 My name is Kayt Tiskus, I am the Director of
20 Legislative Strategy and Special Projects at Bowen
21 Public Affairs Consulting and I'm also a queer woman.

22 Today, I'm here to request that the Committee and
23 Council support a proposed new initiative to help
24 LGBTQIA plus people into union careers, which we're
25 calling the Pride at Work Initiative and we ask that

1
2 the Council fund this proposed initiative at
3 \$561,000.

4 Here is why I love this initiative. It's
5 important, it's impactful and it's cheap. It's
6 important because LGBTQ people, especially people who
7 are also racial, religious, ethnic and cultural
8 minorities in New York City are disproportionately
9 impacted by unemployment, have incomes lower than 200
10 percent of the poverty line at higher rates than
11 other populations and some are from various other
12 forms of long-term economic deprivation.

13 These New Yorkers have taken it on the chin even
14 more disproportionately during the past few tough
15 years. The City Council has done a lot of great work
16 over the last few years with unity workforce program
17 for LGBT plus youth and a manual on LGBTQ plus
18 workplace inclusivity.

19 However, a lot of the work around LGBTQ plus
20 workforce does not adequately focus on adults. And
21 given the poverty rates and unemployment faced by
22 LGBTQ plus adults, it's clear that we need high road
23 employment of the sort that we get from our union to
24 blames.

1
2 So, this initiative is impactful because many
3 organizations have committed to work together if the
4 initiative is created. This will create multiple
5 pathways into unionized jobs for LGBTQ plus New
6 Yorkers. Some of the organizations supporting the
7 project include DC37, SCIU 1199 employment and
8 training fund, Mount Sinai, Pathways to
9 apprenticeship, Nontraditional Employment for Women,
10 Destination Tomorrow, Brooklyn Workforce Innovations
11 -

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

13 KAYT TISKUS: And the Department of Citywide
14 Administrative Services and other labor and LGBTQ
15 partners who want to take part in this initiative
16 will not necessarily seeking Council funds.

17 My last sentence I promise is that the third
18 thing to love in the initiative is cheap. It's only
19 \$561,000 to fund a lean focus program that will have
20 an outsize impact dollar for dollar. Thank you very
21 much for your time to let me testify today.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
23 testimony for Panel 24. Before we go to 25, I just
24 want to remind everyone that if you are not present
25 when your name is called, no one is being skipped.

1
2 There is an opportunity at the conclusion of all
3 panels for those people who have a Zoom link and
4 didn't get to speak to use the raise hand function
5 and I will call on you in the order with which you
6 raised your hand but that is after the conclusion of
7 panels. We've done our best to respond to requests
8 for special times and for certain panels and so, you
9 know again, if you are not on when your name is
10 called, there is an opportunity at the conclusion of
11 all panels to use the raise hand function in Zoom and
12 you will be called on.

13 I will now turn to Panel 25, Ivette Ayala,
14 Lorenzo Brooks, Natasha Connor, Nicholas O'Toole and
15 Pamela Rosario. We will start with Ivette Ayala at
16 Sheltering Arms.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

18 IVETTE AYALA: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you
19 members of the New York City Council Media Finance.
20 My name is Ivette Ayala, I have been working at the
21 Human Service sector for about 12-years. I have
22 worked as a Supervisor at Sheltering Arms in the
23 preventive department. At Sheltering Arms, our goal
24 is to foster a society where every child and family
25 we serve will have the opportunity to succeed and

1
2 thrive. We addressed the fact of social inequality
3 in most challenging communities in New York City. We
4 are a supporter of Just Pay Campaign, which is a
5 racial equality and gender justice campaign committee
6 to end the government exploitations of human service
7 workers by demanding the sector employees on the
8 contract with the New York City and state repair fair
9 wages for their labor.

10 So, essential human service sector workers are in
11 one of the lowest wages in New York City economy due
12 to the chronic underfunding from New York City
13 government contract. So, human services worker
14 generally makes about \$20,000 a year less than public
15 sector workers with a comparable of education and
16 credentials. The sector is facing a high turnover
17 rates and we need human service workers but it's hard
18 to recruit and retain them when the government pays
19 so little.

20 Since the outbreak of COVID pandemic, COVID-19
21 pandemic, while the burden on workers like myself
22 carry out additional work hours, working in person,
23 and virtually with families and other essential
24 services for New Yorkers have grown. And the burnout
25 we feel has increased. New Yorkers across the city

1
2 rely on me and my team to provide them counseling
3 prevention services to increase safety and decrease
4 any risk of child welfare involvement. Yet, I do not
5 make enough to sustain myself in this city. I
6 dedicate - I am dedicated to this work because I know
7 firsthand the values -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 IVETTE AYALA: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
11 to Lorenzo Brooks.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

13 LORENZO BROOKS: Good afternoon Chairman Brannan
14 and members of the Committee. My name is Lorenzo
15 Brooks and I have worked in human services for nearly
16 six years. I am currently a Case Manager at Urban
17 Pathways. A nonprofit that helps homeless New
18 Yorkers get the services and housing they need.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on
20 behalf of my colleagues today. And sector human
21 service workers like me, we are one of the lowest
22 wages in New York's economy due to chronic
23 underfunding from New York City government contracts.

24 As predominant funder of Human Service Contracts,
25 government is the main drive of involving wages.

1
2 Mayor Adams has highlighted safe havens like my
3 implore is an effective model for addressing street
4 homelessness and I couldn't agree more with that.

5 But without funding for our workforce, these programs
6 could not be effectively staffed? The high turnover
7 rate is the primary complaint of our clients who are
8 negatively impacted when they build relationship with
9 the staff member, only to see them leave for a job of
10 higher wages.

11 Human Service workers don't even make about
12 \$20,000 a year less than a public sector worker with
13 a comparable education. Why are these contracted
14 employees so underfunded. It is imperative that a
15 3.4 percent cost of living adjustment for human
16 services workers be included in the city's Fiscal
17 Year '23 budget. The state provided a 5.4 COLA and
18 the city must match it as the first step to moving
19 our workforce towards equitable wages.

20 Despite the challenges, I am passionate about
21 this work. Where for a full- time job I am
22 completing my master's degree in social work, so that
23 I can work more effectively with my clients. While I
24 further my education, I am concerned that this field
25 will not support me without a wage increase, as I

1 have accumulated over \$50,000 in student loan debt.

2 I deserve just pay for my work and wages that allow
3 for a reasonable –

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 LORENZO BROOKS: Lifestyle. Thank you again for
6 giving me this opportunity to testify and for your
7 partnership on the issues impacting our sector.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Lorenzo. Next, we
9 will turn to Natasha Connor from Sheltering Arms.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

11 NATASHA CONNOR: Hello, my name is Natasha
12 Connor. I have worked in the human services sector
13 for five years. I currently work as a Youth
14 Counselor at Sheltering Arms. At Sheltering Arms,
15 our goal is to foster and a society where every child
16 and family we serve will have the opportunity to see
17 and thrive. We address the facts of social equality
18 in the most challenging communities in New York City.

19 We are in support of the Just Pay Campaign which
20 is a racial and gender justice campaign committee to
21 end the government assortment of human services
22 workers by demanding the sector employees under
23 contract with the New York City and state to be paid
24 fair of their labor.
25

1
2 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on
3 behalf of Sheltering Arms and Human Services workers.
4 We appreciate the City Council's partnership and
5 addressing the issues faced by the sectors. Human
6 services workers generally make \$20,000 a year less
7 than a public sector worker with a comparable
8 education. I make 70 percent less than a government
9 worker would make.

10 Since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, while
11 the burden of workers like myself carry out
12 additional work hours, work in person and virtual
13 with families and other essential services for New
14 Yorkers has grown, the burnout refill has had an
15 increase. With all of the challenges provided in
16 these services, some of the sectors workers are still
17 required to work multiple jobs and cover minimal
18 living expenses.

19 The city has relied on the nonprofit human
20 services sectors workers since the start of the
21 pandemic. We need the city to acknowledge our work
22 and address the crisis in the sectors and save jobs
23 of selfless human services workers. We are asking
24 the city to adapt these core reforms that the Just
25 Pay Campaign is fighting for. Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
3 to Nicholas O'Toole from Urban Pathways.

4 NICHOLAS O'TOOLE: Alright, good afternoon Chair
5 Brannan and committee members. My name is Nicholas
6 O'Toole and I am the Advocacy Associate at Urban
7 Pathways. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
8 at today's Fiscal Year '23 Executive Budget hearing
9 for my organization.

10 Urban Pathways like my colleague Lorenzo
11 mentioned is a nonprofit homeless services and
12 supportive housing provider that services over 3,900
13 New Yorkers in need annually. As an organization
14 that has found that drop-in center and safe haven
15 models effective for serving adults experiencing
16 street homelessness, we're happy to see Mayor Adam's
17 investment in the expansion of these services in the
18 Executive Budget.

19 But funding for their expansion must be coupled
20 with workforce investments. Without these, staffing
21 these new programs would be impossible and opening
22 new programs will be untenable. Urban Pathways
23 recently opened a new safe haven and is having
24 extreme difficulty filling necessary positions with
25

1
2 20 out of the total 37 positions still unfilled,
3 after working to hire staff for seven months.

4 We cannot take on another contract that pays our
5 employees poverty level wages with essential jobs
6 starting at a dismal \$15 an hour. Organization-wide
7 we have 26 percent staff vacancy rate, leaving our
8 organization in a constant staffing crisis and a
9 cycle of burnout amongst workers picking up the
10 slack. This is a sector-wide problem impacting human
11 services agencies that hold contracts with city
12 agencies that hold contracts with city agencies.

13 As a first step to combating this issue, the FY23
14 budget needs to include a 5.4 percent cost of living
15 adjustment for human services workers. This would
16 match the states investment, which is especially
17 important for organizations like ours that have both
18 city and state contracts to avoid a disparity between
19 employees doing the same work on different contracts.
20 We are a proud supporter of the Just Pay Campaign, a
21 racial equity and gender justice campaign committed
22 to ending government exploitation of human services
23 workers.

24 In addition to the 5.4 percent COLA, a full list
25 of needed reforms is provided in my written

1
2 testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
3 and for the City Council's support of human services
4 sectors.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
6 turn to Pamela Rosario from Sheltering Arms.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I will now turn to
9 Panel 26, Nora Moran, Bryan Fotino, Michele Feldman,
10 Felipe Vargas, Alex Martinez, and Rebecca Cleary.
11 We'll first turn to Nora Moran with United
12 Neighborhood Houses.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

14 NORA MORAN: Thank you for the opportunity to
15 testify. My name is Nora Moran, I'm the Director of
16 Policy and Advocacy at United Neighborhood Houses.
17 We're a policy organization representing New York
18 City settlement houses. Our written testimony has a
19 lot more comments but I'm just going to highlight
20 three of our budget priorities.

21 The first, you heard about this on the previous
22 panel is that the city must fund a 5.4 percent COLA
23 for human service workers in the FY23 budget. This
24 workforce kept New York City running during COVID and
25 provided essential services when many of us stayed

1
2 home. They haven't seen a COLA in the last two years
3 and their wages have not kept pace with inflation.

4 Furthermore, many of these workers are
5 understandably leading the sector in search of higher
6 wages elsewhere, sometimes in city government. A
7 COLA is the bare minimum of what is right and fair
8 for these workers and must be included in the budget.
9 Furthermore, the city should also set a wage floor of
10 \$21 per hour for all human services workers and set
11 wage scales for fair wages for workers at all levels
12 in the sector.

13 Second, youth service providers also deserve
14 adequate rates in order to operate both summer
15 programs and year round programming. We urge the
16 city to raise summer reimbursement rates for these
17 programs to \$1,848 per elementary student and \$1,410
18 per middle school student. Furthermore, there has to
19 be rate parity for all summer programs, not just
20 one's in DOE buildings but also for those in NYCHA
21 cornerstones and community centers who are doing
22 similar work. This will also be needed to attract
23 staff to run these programs and to avoid the staffing
24 problems we saw in last summer's programs.

1
2 Finally, we urge the Council to fund a \$25
3 million initiative to implement Local Law 11 2022
4 known as the Our City Our Vote Bill, which allows
5 noncitizens to vote in Local elections. Grassroots
6 outreach will be critical to making sure that newly
7 and franchise voters know their rights and are
8 comfortable heading to the poles next year and CBO's
9 are ready and able to do this work as they
10 demonstrated during the 2020 Census.

11 Thank you so much for your time and thank you for
12 keeping everything moving during this hearing.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
14 turn to Bryan Fotino with University Settlement.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

16 BRYAN FOTINO: There we go. So, good afternoon.
17 My name is Bryan Fotino and I have worked at
18 University Settlement for two years. Well, I worked
19 in the human service sector for two years now. I'm a
20 Case Manager at University Settlements. We have 30
21 locations in Brooklyn and Manhattan and the program I
22 work for, Project Home focuses preventing evictions
23 and addressing the root causes of housing and
24 stability. So, the support that I provide along with
25 my colleagues helps New Yorkers stay in their homes.

1
2 University Settlement strongly supports the #Just
3 Pay Campaign, a significant portion of our work is
4 funded by government contracts, however as other
5 people mentioned, these contracts are chronically
6 underfunded and we make some of the lowest wages in
7 the city. According to a Center for New York City
8 Affairs report, annual pay in 2019 and the New York
9 City Core Social Assistance Sector, average only
10 \$34,000. Making it the fifth lowest paid sector in
11 the city's economy.

12 As someone starting out in my career, I chose a
13 lower paying job because I believe in making a
14 difference in people's lives. However, I know people
15 who chose not to go into this work due to the
16 atrociously low pay. Though I am dedicated to this
17 work, I don't know how long I'll be able to stay in
18 the sector. My wages do not match the rising cost of
19 living. Just like the clients I serve, I am
20 struggling to pay rent, to pay food, to pay bills.
21 In my time as a social worker, I have seen qualified
22 caring colleagues leave for higher paying jobs and
23 unless something changes, I may be the next to go.

24

25

1
2 Likewise, we are asking that the city please
3 implement the three reforms of the #Just Pay
4 Campaign.

5 One, an automatic annual COLA or Cost of Living
6 Adjustment. Two, a living wage floor of \$21 an hour
7 for human service workers. And three, a
8 comprehensive wage and benefit schedule comparable to
9 that of city and state employees in the same field.
10 Again, University Settlement strongly supports the
11 Just Pay Campaign. We deserve fair wages, especially
12 for the essential frontline work we do.

13 I thank you for listening and I please ask you to
14 uhm, boost the Just Pay Campaign.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
16 turn to Michele Feldman from Women's Community
17 Justice Association.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I have Felipe Vargas
20 from the Doe Fund.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

22 FELIPE VARGAS: Good afternoon. Thank you to the
23 Committee for having me. My name is Felipe Vargas
24 and I'm Senior Vice President of Programs at the Doe
25 Fund.

1
2 Our organization has been around over 30-years.
3 We provide paid transitional employment, transitional
4 housing, training, educational programming,
5 employment placement and housing placement. We
6 applied for City Council funding for alternatives to
7 incarceration. Currently, we have 659 beds of
8 transitional housing and we place about 300 plus
9 people every year in jobs, placed them in housing,
10 and they're drug and alcohol free. We know that
11 because we test people randomly.

12 In one of our facilities in Brooklyn, we've
13 dedicated that solely to individuals coming out of
14 the New York State Correctional System and
15 unfortunately in this state, for people coming out of
16 the State Correctional system, they recidivate at a
17 rate of two-thirds after three years. Our program
18 has been shown to reduce that recidivism rate by 62
19 percent, which is pretty impressive and significant.

20 We'd like to be able to offer those services to
21 folks at an alternative to incarceration basis.
22 There's been many great reforms in the city, bail
23 reform, less is more legislation, court process and
24 participatory reforms and it had resulted in many,
25

1
2 less people going into the jail and the State
3 Correctional system.

4 We support that because we support the ending of
5 mass incarceration and there's a realization that our
6 system of criminal justice is racially biased. But
7 true racial, economic and social justice, the
8 potential of that, cannot be realized unless the
9 individuals are provided with jobs, with drug
10 treatment, with health services and with housing and
11 our program would be able to do that and we ask you
12 to please support -

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

14 FILIPE VARGAS: Our request for alternatives to
15 incarceration. Thank you and we have a more detailed
16 request as a written submission.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
18 turn to Alex Martinez from the Kings Bridge Heights
19 Community Center.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next we will turn to
22 Rebecca Cleary from Decriminalize Sex Work.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we are going to turn to
25 Panel 27, Catherine Mykytiuk, Emily Miles, Brian

1
2 Trezevant, Chan Henry, Darren Bloch, and Christopher
3 Bromson. And I apologize for butchering names.
4 Also, from the Kings Bridge Heights Community Center,
5 we'll turn to Catherine Mykytiuk.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

7 CATHERINE MYKYTIUK: Uhm, hello. Thank you for
8 allowing me to be here to testify today. My name is
9 Catherine Mykytiuk and I'm here today on behalf of
10 Kings Bridge Heights Community Center and KHCC.
11 We're also here on behalf and in coordination with
12 the Sexual Assault Initiative. KHCC is a
13 multiservice agency with three programs and services
14 across the lifespan embedded in the Bronx with
15 multiple entry points, including our early head start
16 classes, food pantry, housing services and after
17 school programs. As such, we are best positioned to
18 reach and support families impacted by sexual
19 violence that wouldn't otherwise be able to access
20 services.

21 Our Changing Futures Program is one of the only
22 free long-term therapy service providers to
23 specialize in child abuse, child sexual abuse, sexual
24 assault and domestic violence regardless of
25 immigration status and insurance coverage.

1
2 In 2021, our Changing Futures program provided
3 11,671 services to 535 individuals. As a member of
4 the Sexual Assault Initiative KHCC along with four
5 other agencies across New York City elevate voices
6 and advocacy efforts regarding the widespread issue
7 of sexual violence that impacts individuals across
8 all demographics citywide. And tackling it as such
9 is necessary and more powerful than only focusing on
10 our own borough or district. In coordination with my
11 fellow Sexual Assault Initiative Panel Members here
12 and colleagues from KHCC, we are advocating for
13 funding to support and meet the ongoing needs in our
14 communities. Specifically we are experiencing an
15 increased need in our communities for trauma informed
16 care for survivors. Their increased needs to
17 diversify our services, delivery, to accommodate in-
18 person and virtual services for our clients,
19 increased costs are connected to expanded service
20 hours, increased client numbers and increased
21 technology cost.

22 We are also in need of increases in pay and
23 affordable benefits for our staff and support our
24 survivors day in and day out. As you can imagine,
25 our staff are experiencing burnout and vicarious

1 trauma at increasingly high numbers. But it also
2 contributes to staff turnover. Thank you.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
4 to Emily Miles from the New York City Alliance
5 Against Sexual Assault.
6

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

8 EMILY MILES: Hi, my name is Emily Miles and I am
9 the Executive Director of the New York City Alliance
10 Against Sexual Assault. Our mission is to prevent
11 sexual violence and reduce the harm it causes through
12 public education, prevention programming, advocacy
13 for survivors and the pursuit of legal and policy
14 changes.

15 The Alliance is a member of the Sexual Assault
16 initiative, which has been funded by the Council
17 since 2005. SAI, as we call it, is a collaboration
18 between five New York City based sexual violence
19 intervention programs that serve survivors of sexual
20 assault of all ages and across racial, gender and
21 economic spectrums.

22 As a result of the Council's investment in the
23 past year alone, the SAI has served over 6,500
24 survivors with 30,000 plus counseling sessions and
25 over 115 direct support services and reached over

1
2 27,000 individuals and organizations with trainings
3 and technical assistance.

4 Yet despite this good work, the demand for our
5 services is great and has only increased over the
6 course of the pandemic. Resulting in the need for
7 additional resources to provide adequate support for
8 the survivor community. Rates of sexual violence
9 tends to increase during times of emergency and the
10 global pandemic has been no exception. In New York
11 State, 75 percent of programs saw an increase in
12 requests for services and noted higher demand for
13 more complex survivor needs noting longer waiting
14 lists for trauma informed therapy, counseling
15 services and support groups.

16 Similarly, trainings in technical assistance that
17 are provided by the initiative have also seen an
18 increased demand over the past year. Due to the
19 increased demand for services and trainings, the
20 Sexual Assault Initiative is requesting an
21 enhancement of \$2.5 million. For the Alliance, SAI
22 funds and supports our Sexual Assault Forensic
23 Examiner training. Which trains doctors, nurses, and
24 physicians assistants to provide competent,
25 compassionate and prompt care to sexual assault

1 survivors. Many don't know that uhm, training in how
2 to address the unique needs of sexual assault
3 survivors is not part of standard training for
4 medical professionals. With the majority leaving
5 their medical education, having never worked with
6 survivors in any capacity.
7

8 As a result, too often survivors present in a
9 medical setting, seeking care and those on staff lack
10 the knowledge in how to support them during this
11 critical and traumatic time.

12 Our training seeks to change that. Bringing
13 together a multidisciplinary team of experts to
14 provide comprehensive training and evidence
15 collection, injury identification, trauma informed
16 practices, and culturally competent care to child,
17 adolescent and adult survivors of sexual violence.

18 This is only possible due to the ongoing support
19 of the City Council and we appreciate that support
20 for this critical initiative and for your support for
21 survivors across New York City.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
23 turn to Brian Trezevant.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.
25

1
2 BRIAN TREZEVANT: Yes, you said it right. It's
3 Brian Trezevant. Thank you. Hello everyone. Thank
4 you to my elected officials for hearing our
5 testimonies today.

6 My name is Brian Trezevant. I am a Program
7 Director at Dwyer Gardens Community Center and I work
8 for an organization Brooklyn Community Services.
9 Uhm, and I want to tell you a little bit about why
10 I'm here more personally. Uhm, at the beginning of
11 my career here back in 2020, March 2020, even as a
12 newly promoted Assistant Director at that time,
13 facing homelessness and securities. It was hard for
14 me to live day to day because I couldn't afford it.
15 And I'm facing the same problems that we're providing
16 for our community.

17 I couldn't understand that as a Program Director,
18 how am I struggling living pay check to pay check,
19 can't afford a home, sleeping on a mattress floor at
20 my mom's in a one bedroom apartment. It didn't
21 register to me. So, I am here to let you guys know
22 that I am a supporter of and advocate of the Just Pay
23 Campaign, and to let you guys know that we need a 5.4
24 percent COLA or an \$86 million increase to address
25

1
2 the sector crisis. That is my spiel. Thank you for
3 my time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we're
5 going to turn to Chan Henry from Urban Pathways.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

7 CHAN HENRY: Good afternoon and thank you Chair
8 Brannan and members of the Committee. My name is
9 Chan Henry and I've worked in the human service
10 sector for four years. I currently work as a housing
11 specialist at Urban Pathways. A nonprofit homeless
12 service and supportive housing provider.

13 Thank you for this opportunity to testify on
14 behalf of Urban Pathways and human service workers.
15 I recently offered an op-ed featured in the Daily
16 News on May 7th, highlighting the need for increased
17 pay for our workforce in order to provide
18 homelessness. Our staff cannot afford to work in
19 programs that serve New Yorkers in need. Opening new
20 programs alone will prove effective. High turnover
21 rates lead to burnout among the staff that you say
22 who take on extra work.

23 The pandemic has also amplified the challenges
24 our clients already face, increasing the burden on
25 workers like myself. As I help my clients obtain

1
2 stable housing and services. Yet, I do not make
3 enough to sustain myself. As the main funder of
4 human service and thereby the main driver of human
5 service wages, we need the government to do more. My
6 organization cannot fund me itself to fair wages.
7 The inclusion of a 5.4 percent cost of living
8 adjustment in human service workers in the city's
9 Fiscal Year 2023 budget is critical to the health of
10 the sector.

11 The state provided a 5.4 percent need service
12 COLA. As an employee working on the city contract, I
13 am concerned that I will not get a COLA equal to my
14 colleagues working on state contracts. I know that
15 the work that I do – I know the work that I do makes
16 a difference. Seeing people grow and obtain the life
17 that they want is rewarding to witness and that is
18 what drives me to keep going in this field, but I
19 deserve fair wages for my work. Thank you again for
20 providing me with this opportunity to testify on this
21 important issue impacting [INAUDIBLE 4:39:48].

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
23 to Darren Bloch from Greenwich House.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, we will turn to
3 Christopher Bromson from Crime Victims Treatment
4 Center.

5 CHRISTOPHER BROMSON: Hi everybody. Thank you.
6 Thank you to the Committee Members, the Council,
7 Malcom, thank you and the Sergeants who are keeping
8 beautiful time.

9 My name is Christopher Bromson and I'm the
10 Executive Director of the Crime Victims Treatment
11 Center here in New York City. We have been around
12 providing expert treatment to survivors of any type
13 of interpersonal violence since 1977 completely free
14 of charge.

15 I'm here today also as part of the New York City
16 Sexual Assault Initiative, which is comprised of the
17 five leading programs that provide direct services
18 and support to survivors of sexual violence in New
19 York City and the Sexual Assault Initiative funding
20 is the only direct funding that these programs get
21 and that survivors of sexual assault get directly
22 from this city.

23 So, we've been getting funding since 2005, like
24 my colleague Emily said and at CVTC, that allowed us
25 to start New York City's only free program for male

1 survivors of child and sexual abuse, adult survivors
2 of sexual assault and domestic violence. And to
3 them, we provide individual trauma-focused therapy.
4 We provide a number of different support groups and
5 help people heal.
6

7 In 2005, we were serving about a dozen male
8 identified individuals a year. Since that time,
9 thanks to Council funding, now over 20 percent of our
10 overall client population is male identified. So,
11 each of the five programs really focuses on a
12 different population that faces immense barriers to
13 service and seeking healing after sexual assault.
14 We've heard a lot today about how COVID has really
15 reeked-havoc on systems and individuals and sexual
16 assault survivors are no exception to that.

17 The increase for demand in services that we have
18 seen at our one program over the past year and since
19 COVID and since we made everything hybrid, has gone
20 through the roof. The number of people calling in
21 severe mental health crisis has expanded immensely.

22 So, CVTC requests the increase with the Sexual
23 Assault Initiative to meet these needs. And support
24 through this initiative doesn't only make a profound
25 impact on the 6,500 people who come to our offices

1
2 for services. It impacts their families, their
3 friends, their neighborhoods and their communities.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

5 CHRISTOPHER BROMSON: And it's multiplied by the
6 hundreds of thousands of people who are supported by
7 the 21,000 people we train each year with just
8 policies and systems and that's how change happens
9 and supporting this initiative is how the city can
10 make that change. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
12 Panel 27. I'm going to announce a few others in
13 advance so people know if they are coming up. Okay,
14 so, for panel 28, we have Carlos Castel Croke, Lonnie
15 Portis, Stephanie Earlick, Pabiola Sierra, Jennifer
16 Vasquez, Alison Gardy, Korena Garcia, and Tory Kaso.

17 Panel 29, Kathleen DiPerna, Nicholas Buess,
18 Freedom Carado(SP?), Arline Cruz, Doxine Roberts(SP?)
19 and Won Pinzon.

20 Panel 30, Catherine Hoy, Lisa Gilday, Jeanette
21 Farias, Johnathan Diaz, Samsul Hussain, Erika
22 Gonzalez.

23 Panel 31, Jolene Gunther-Doherty, Jennifer Choi,
24 Maggie Moroff, Chantal Hinds, Cal Hedigan, and Joy
25 Cambe.

1
2 So, I will now turn to Panel 28. We will start
3 with Carlos Castel Croke from the New York League of
4 Conservation Voters.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Carlos, you should have a
7 button that says accept to be unmuted. Okay, I'm
8 going to call Lonnie and then I'll come right back to
9 you. So, we will turn to Lonnie Portis from We Act
10 for Environmental Justice.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

12 LONNIE PORTIS: Good afternoon Committee Chair
13 Brannan and Committee on Finance. I'm Lonnie J.
14 Portis, the Environmental Policy and Advocacy
15 Coordinator at We Act for Environmental Justice. We
16 Act is testifying on the need to invest in the city's
17 future by funding environmental and climate policies
18 and programs. We Act in an organization based in
19 Harlem has been fighting environmental racism at the
20 city, state and federal level for more than 30-years.

21 We are in the midst of a worsening climate crisis
22 and the city must do everything it can to reduce
23 emissions to carbonize our building, remediate
24 environmental health hazards and more. All with
25 environmental and climate justice at the foundation

1 of this work. We strongly urge the Committee to make
2 this budget as climate forward as possible, which
3 means bold, necessary investments for the following
4 policies and programs: \$1 million to fund staffing
5 and outreach at the Mayor's Office of Climate and
6 Environmental Justice, fund childhood lead poisoning
7 prevention programs and lead service line
8 replacements, restore the \$47.8 million in Fiscal
9 Year '23 cuts to DSNY budget, investment of \$1.8
10 billion in our school infrastructure through HVAC
11 upgrades, adding solar to roofs and accelerate the
12 transition away from the use of fuel oil number four,
13 commit a minimum of one percent for the budget for
14 the Department of Parks and Recreation to expand the
15 urban tree canopy and increase access to parks and
16 green space at \$6.5 million in the Executive Budget
17 for the 81 positions removed from the Department of
18 Buildings budget in the preliminary plan to ensure
19 the DOB has adequate staffing for equitable
20 implementation of Local Law 97, and provide funding
21 for the implementation of Local Law 120, which
22 mandates school buses be electric by 2035.
23

24 We also want to see the city agencies maximizing
25 all state and federal resources, especially federal

1
2 government funds, including the investment and – the
3 Infrastructure and Investment in Jobs Act that has
4 signed into law in November 2021. If equity was
5 distributed, can bring much needed investments that
6 will begin to address present and legacy still show
7 environmental injustices and improve –

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

9 LONNIE PORTIS: The life's of these communities
10 in New York City. A more detailed written testimony
11 will be provided after this hearing and We Act is
12 looking forward to seeing New York City invest in
13 climate and environmental justice.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Carlos, there was
15 a problem on our end, so you should be able to speak
16 now.

17 CARLOS CASTRO CROKE: Yes, can you hear me?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, sorry about that. Go
19 ahead.

20 CARLOS CASTRO CROKE: Alright, thank you. Good
21 afternoon, my name is Carlos Castro Croke, I'm the
22 Associate for New York City Programs of the New York
23 League of Conservation Voters. NYLCV represents over
24 30,000 members in New York City and we are committed
25 to advancing a sustainability agenda that will make

1
2 our people, our neighborhoods and our economy
3 healthier and more resilient.

4 I'd like to thank Chair Brannan for the
5 opportunity to testify today. Year in and year out,
6 NYLCV has fought for a New York City budget that
7 prioritizes green spaces, public health and climate
8 resiliency. This year is no different. With so many
9 new leaders in government, it is imperative that we
10 set a strong precedent for environmental
11 accountability and climate action in the FY23 budget.

12 We are thankful that the Mayor committed
13 significant dollars to environmental initiatives in
14 the Executive Budget including \$900 million in the
15 New York City Streets Plan and \$600 million for the
16 Parks Department. However, the budget could go even
17 further to fully fund parks, sanitation and building
18 initiatives that help us fight climate change, invest
19 in resiliency and reduce emissions.

20 I'm just going to go into a few of our priorities
21 but I will send a full detailed testimony in for
22 review. For the Parks Department specifically, we
23 have been adamant that no less than one percent of
24 the New York City Budget is significant for keeping
25 our parks safe, clean and accessible.

1
2 Parks are our most valuable environmental assets.
3 They absorb stormwater runoff, keep our neighborhoods
4 cool and cleaner air. Providing one percent of the
5 budget will ensure parks have the money that they
6 need to maintain our green spaces, so that they can
7 effectively provide these crucial environmental
8 benefits.

9 In 2021, Mayor Adams and many city council
10 members committed to one percent for parks because
11 they knew how crucial this funding was for the health
12 of our communities and the green future of our city.
13 We hope that our elected leaders will make good on
14 their promises to help us work towards one percent
15 for parks.

16 Also, making sure that we have money for
17 sanitation, specifically organics recycling programs
18 and the pilot program, it has gone back and forth
19 over the past couple years, is really important for
20 us to reduce our emissions. Budgets express
21 priorities and we have made our priorities clear.
22 Climate change is here and we must be doing
23 everything in our power to fight it and protect New
24 Yorkers.

1
2 While the Mayor and City Council have proven they
3 will invest in efforts to do so, there is still more
4 work to be done.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

6 CARLOS CASTRO CROKE: We look forward to working
7 with elected leaders as they continue to finalize the
8 budget. Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
10 turn to Stephanie Earlick.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I will turn to Fabiola
13 Sierra.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, we have Jennifer
16 Vasquez, Healing Ambassador Program. Okay, next, I
17 will turn to Allison Guardi.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

19 ALLISON GUARDI: Mute. Okay.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You're unmuted.

21 ALLISON GUARDI: Thank you so much. Thank you
22 Chair Justin Brannan and Committee on Finance Members
23 including my wonderful Councilwoman Gale Brewer. I
24 appreciate the amazing New Yorkers who've spoken so
25 far. Your commitment to our city's wellbeing makes

1
2 me proud to be your fellow New Yorker and all of here
3 today are ultimately asking for a culture shift that
4 values our humanity and capacity to care for each
5 other.

6 I'm here as a family healing ambassador, a parent
7 guardian and volunteer position created during the
8 pandemic by the NYC DOE. I request funds for the
9 Family Healing Ambassador program to continue and
10 grow after its first successful pilot year. Like
11 nothing I have ever seen before. This program is
12 positioned to create the culture shift we need to
13 incubate a healthy, productive future for our city.
14 The Family Healing Ambassadors program launched last
15 spring in K12 schools in zip codes hardest hit by
16 COVID-19.

17 Schools elected Family Healing Ambassadors and
18 engaged parent coordinators to that, so that last
19 summer, more than 800 of us received more than ten
20 hours of training to help us recognize trauma in
21 children and address the wellbeing, mental, physical,
22 emotional, social, of students, families and our
23 school cultures. With three children in three
24 different public schools, elementary, middle and
25 high, I was elected Family Healing Ambassador in both

1 District 3 in Manhattan and District 10 in the Bronx.

2 This past year, we've Zoomed regularly with
3 translation in many languages to give each other
4 emotional, creative and strategic support as we each
5 devise programs to help heal our school communities.
6

7 Skilled facilitators ensure that our meetings
8 lift voices that need to be heard and reflect the
9 demographics of our public schools. Our meetings are
10 free of judgement and full of caring. We hear each
11 other's concerns, connect and finally feel united
12 citywide as a parent, guardian community. In a time
13 of division, strife and fear, we need the Family
14 Healing Ambassadors program to have a second year and
15 a long future, so that we can support the recovery,
16 resilience and progress of our children, families,
17 schools and our great city. Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, Jennifer
19 Vasquez, I think we had a problem on our end unmuting
20 you, so -

21 JENNIFER VASQUEZ: Yes.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 JENNIFER VASQUEZ: Hi, I'm here.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay.
25

1
2 JENNIFER VASQUEZ: How are you? Thank you so
3 much. Good afternoon everyone. My name is Jennifer
4 Vasquez and I'm a District 10 Healing Ambassador
5 supporting PSA Isaac Varian in the Bronx.

6 I live in Council District 11 and my
7 representative is Eric Dinowitz. As a former
8 educator, I know he knows how important healing
9 centered schools are. I am absolutely honored to
10 hold this title as District Healing Ambassador as
11 this program has truly changed my life for the
12 better.

13 It has forced me to deal with my own trauma's,
14 insecurities and lack of self-care. It has also
15 empowered me to be a better parent leader, help other
16 members in my school community deal with their own
17 traumas and educate them on a variety of topics, such
18 as self-care, coping with financial stress, managing
19 parental stress, etc. The Healing Ambassador Program
20 is very much needed and supported wholeheartedly by
21 my school leaders.

22 It is also supported not only by parents in my
23 school community but by family members outside my
24 school community and staff members at other schools.

1
2 I truly hope to see this program expand and
3 continue to be funded. We really need the City
4 Council to become our allies and support this program
5 to create a greater impact for all of New York.
6 Thank you all for allowing me to speak today.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Jennifer. Next, we
8 will turn to Korena Garcia.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, we will turn to
11 Tory Kaso from Climate Jobs New York.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 TORY KASO: Hello, thank you Chair Brannan and
14 members of the Finance Committee. My name is Tory
15 Kaso and I am the Campaign Director of Carbon Free
16 and Healthy Schools. An initiative driven by Climate
17 Jobs New York, a coalition of labor unions, many of
18 whom you heard earlier today. Climate jobs recently
19 adopted Climate for Change, a complete climate jobs
20 roadmap for NYC. A report released just last week by
21 Cornell's Labor Leading on Climate Program that lays
22 out a concrete plan that works to solve the climate
23 crisis, create jobs that benefit workers and presents
24 a roadmap for New York City to fight the climate
25 crisis, in which makes the city safer and addresses

1
2 racial and economic inequity by investing in a pro-
3 worker renewable energy transition. This report
4 makes one thing very clear, that New York City is
5 failing on climate. It's climate goals are not
6 ambitious enough and climate work is not happening at
7 scale. Buildings account for 70 percent of all the
8 city's emissions but the city is not thinking
9 strategically about cutting down those emissions.

10 The transition to carbon free and healthy schools
11 will ensure that these buildings are safe for the
12 students and staff who occupy them and for their
13 surrounding communities. By investing in deep energy
14 efficiency retrofits and installation of solar and
15 battery storage at all schools by 2030, the city
16 would create over 62,000 good union jobs in the
17 communities that need them most while making schools
18 healthier for students, teachers, administrators and
19 staff, reducing emissions by the equivalent of taking
20 154,000 cars off the road and saving millions
21 annually in energy costs, money that can be
22 reinvested into schools. The time is now, the city
23 can take a major step forward towards meeting its
24 climate goals by dedicating funding in this year's
25 budget to carbon free and public schools while

1
2 leveraging additional available, federal and state
3 funds. By taking bold action, New York City can
4 serve as a model on decarbonization with policies and
5 incentives that bring good jobs to traditionally
6 disadvantaged communities and adjust in an equitable
7 way. Thank you for your time and attention today to
8 this important initiative.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next that
10 concludes Panel 28. We will now turn to Panel 29
11 Kathleen DiPerna from Rethink Food, we'll turn to
12 first.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 KATHLEEN DIPERNA: Good afternoon Chairperson
15 Brannan and Finance Committee Members. Thank you for
16 the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Rethink
17 Food. My name is Kathleen DiPerna and I'm the
18 Director of Government Relations at Rethink, a New
19 York City based nonprofit with a mission to create a
20 more sustainable and equitable food system.

21 One where every New Yorker has access to
22 dignified and culturally responsive and nutritious
23 food. We seek to support from this Council on our
24 citywide funding requests and they operate in 35
25 Council Districts across all five boroughs and have

1
2 plans to expand 40 Council Districts by Fiscal Year
3 2023. Support in partnership with the Council will
4 be critical to ensuring that Rethink can continue to
5 operate its programs to support the lives of our
6 fellow New Yorkers.

7 Rethink was founded in 2017 operating the Rethink
8 commissary kitchen by transforming access food from
9 restaurants, kitchens and grocery stores into meals
10 delivered to community-based organizations free of
11 charge. A model that can currently tackles food
12 waste and food insecurity. Today, that same kitchen
13 prepares an average of 7,000 to 8,000 meals per week
14 and distributes to eight CBO's in Queens, Brooklyn
15 and Manhattan.

16 Our workers evolve to include another innovative
17 solution to address food insecurity, the Rethink
18 certified restaurant program. Lunched at the height
19 of the COVID-19 pandemic, with food insecurity
20 escalating and restaurants facing widespread
21 closures, Rethink leveraged its experience to partner
22 with restaurants to prepare meals for the community.
23 In exchange we provide grants to support food
24 operating and staffing costs. We had a unique
25 opportunity to distribute meals and help restaurants

1
2 stay open and retain their staff. In 2021, Rethink
3 and its partners delivered nearly 3.3 million meals
4 to 88 CBO's, invested \$15.7 million into 76
5 restaurants, 75 percent of which were minority and/or
6 women owned and recovered nearly 500,000 pounds of
7 excess food.

8 Rethink services are greatly needed now more than
9 ever across the city because nearly one out of four
10 New Yorkers is experiencing food insecurity and due
11 to the COVID-19 pandemic, the existence of up to 50
12 percent of New York City restaurants are in danger.
13 We cannot let our neighbors continue to wonder where
14 their next meal will come from.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 KATHLEEN DIPERNA: Closed and thereby will
17 conduit in their community. Although perfectly
18 edible food is continuing to be wasted. Thank you
19 for the opportunity to testify today and I will
20 expanding on different points in my written
21 testimony.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, just give us one
23 moment everyone. Uhm, next, we're going to call on
24 Nicholas Buess from Food Bank for New York City.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will turn to Freedom
3 Harato(SP?).

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we'll turn to Arline
6 Cruz.

7 ARLINE CRUZ: Good afternoon, can you hear me?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 ARLINE CRUZ: Perfect, thank you. Good
11 afternoon. My name is Arline Cruz, my pronouns are
12 she, her, ya and I'm the Associate Director of Help
13 Programs that Make the Road New York.

14 We thank you for the opportunity to testify today
15 on behalf of the Make the Road New York and our
16 25,000 members in Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island,
17 Long Island, and West Chester.

18 We've reached over 8,000 low-income immigrant New
19 Yorkers through our health access service which we
20 continue to provide via hybrid model. Based on these
21 experiences, we are making the following
22 recommendations for this Fiscal Year 2023 Budget to
23 support the crucial health access services and
24 programs that benefit some of the most marginalized
25 BIPOC communities. We ask the Council to expand

1 funding for Access Health Initiative to \$4 million
2 and allocate \$2.3 million for MCCAP Initiative.

3 These are key programs and some of the few that
4 provide funding for the community-based organizations
5 to conduct outreach and education efforts regarding
6 health access and coverage.
7

8 And other intersecting benefits that address
9 social determinants of health and hope to improve New
10 Yorkers health access. For example, a member
11 Sapora{SP?} who only earns \$50 a day met with
12 Promotoda(SP?) who was able to ease her fears and
13 tensions around public charge to finally access
14 benefits which she and her family qualify for.

15 She was able to enroll not only to SNAP benefits
16 for her citizen children but she was able to get
17 enrolled into NYC Care and connect with a health
18 advocate to help her navigate hundreds of dollars of
19 medical debt from a previous hospital visit. We also
20 ask City Council to maintain \$2 million allocated for
21 the Immigrant Health Initiative and maintain \$7
22 million in funding for the End the Epidemic
23 Initiative. The Administration must continue to
24 fully fund the NYC Care program that with at least
25 one million – \$100 million per year including funding

1
2 for CBO's to conduct outreach, education and direct
3 enrollment into the program.

4 The city should ensure sustainable, municipal
5 funding for community health workers and -

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 ARLINE CRUZ: Expand upon existing models that
8 place CHW's at CBO's while embedding them into
9 hospitals and clinics which help expand immigrant
10 access. And lastly, continue funding for a T2 COVID
11 outreach funding for community-based organizations.

12 Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
14 My name is Brenda McKinney. I'm also a Committee
15 Counsel at the New York City Council. I will be
16 taking over as moderator for a period of time,
17 continuing with Panel 29.

18 So, our next witness is Doxine Roberts. You may
19 begin when the Sergeant calls the clock. Thank you.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll wait just one moment
22 for Doxine Roberts. Okay, I'm going to move to the
23 next Panelist and as a reminder, we will check for
24 anyone that we have inadvertently missed at the end

1
2 of the hearing if we miss you. The next panelist,
3 also on Panel 29 is Won C. Penzone.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll wait one more moment.

6 Okay, not seeing Won Penzone, we will be moving to
7 Panel 30 at this point but we will again check for
8 anyone that we inadvertently missed at the end of the
9 hearing.

10 The next panel is focused on education and
11 childhood, early education. The panelist will be in
12 order on Panel 30. Catherine Hoy, Lisa Gilday,
13 Jeannette Farias, Johnathan Diaz, Samsul Hussain,
14 Erika Gonzalez.

15 I will call you in order and you may begin when
16 the Sergeant calls the clock. The first witness will
17 be Catherine Hoy.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we'll wait just one
20 moment. Thank you for your patience. Okay, we'll
21 move to the next panelist. The next panelist is Lisa
22 Gilday, also on Panel 30. You may begin when the
23 Sergeant calls the clock.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
25

1
2 LISA GILDAY: Good afternoon members of the
3 Finance Committee of the City Council. Thank you for
4 this opportunity to testify. I am Lisa Gilday, Chief
5 Operating Officer at Birch Family Services, a non-
6 for-profit agency. Birch is a leading provider that
7 Special Education Preschool Service under contract
8 with the New York City Department of Education. We
9 offer eight New York State education department
10 approved 4410 preschool programs and provide services
11 to 1,000 preschool student in the least restricted
12 setting.

13 Our students are New York City public students
14 and refer to us because their needs cannot be met by
15 the DOE. For years providers like ours have
16 struggled to recruit and retain certified teachers,
17 teacher assistants and related therapist because of
18 the lack of tuition increases. The result has been
19 our inability to provide competitive salaries to our
20 teachers. As most of you know in 2019, the city
21 reached an agreement to raise the salaries of
22 certified early childhood teachers at DOE contracted
23 CBO's working ten months.

24 There were special education teachers of DOE
25 contracted preschool special education programs, 4410

1
2 programs who work 12-months serving young children
3 with the most extensive needs were excluded from the
4 agreement, perpetuating the problem of salary
5 inequity.

6 The city has not yet committed to salary parity
7 for these educators. Even a shortage of seats in
8 preschool special education classes have left
9 preschools with disabilities without the support they
10 need and have a legal right to receive. According to
11 the DOE's own projections the city's short by more
12 than 900 seats in these classes.

13 Birch Family Services and other providers have
14 indicated that in order for them to open new
15 preschool special education classes, the city needs
16 to address the salary rate disparities that are
17 causing our teachers, teacher assistants and staff
18 members to leave for other jobs.

19 We thank the City Council for recognizing this
20 issue and including us in your preliminary budget
21 response. The need for \$30 million to address
22 disparities in salaries between preschool special
23 education teachers and staff at community-based
24 organizations.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 LISA GILDAY: Please ensure that the FY23 budget
3 includes \$30 million to provide preschool special
4 education teachers and staff with salaries on par
5 with the 12-month UE counterparts. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
7 The next witness will be Jeannette Farias.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Waiting one moment. Okay,
10 the next witness moving on is Johnathan Diaz.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Not seeing Mr. Diaz. I will
13 move on to the next witness. Again, we will call for
14 any witnesses that we have inadvertently missed at
15 the end. The next witness will be Shamsul Hussain.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I will move to the next
18 witness. The next witness on Panel 30 will be Erika
19 Gonzalez.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 CRYSTAL RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon everyone. Ms.
22 Gonzalez wasn't able to attend. Uhm, but my name is
23 Crystal Rodriguez, I am mom of five from the Bronx.
24 I've been an active parent leader on SLT's, PTA's
25 PA's and Title I boards consecutively since 2016.

1
2 In the summer of 2021, I was elected a family
3 healing ambassador for PS146 in District 8 but I also
4 work closely with NMBA and BCA in District 9.

5 Although all the boards I have been a part of, our
6 amazing and do lots of unrecognized and uncompensated
7 work, those positions are already solidified.

8 Today, I approach you all in hopes that you guys
9 will find in the budget to continue funding and
10 supporting our family healing work citywide. These
11 last nine months of doing work of Family Healing
12 Ambassador, I have recognized that now more than
13 ever, our (COUGHS), excuse me. Our work, along with
14 restorative justice practices continue to the entire
15 dynamic of our schools, communities, city, state and
16 maybe one day even globally.

17 Yes, our schools are incorporating SCL into their
18 curriculums but honestly, how much of an impact has
19 this truly made in our schools. As healing
20 ambassadors, we have already done so much work in
21 such a short amount of time. From workshops on
22 testing anxieties, parents and teachers collaborating
23 to recognize and help our students with trauma while
24 healing on their own. To classes of Zoomba, group
25 walks, relay rally races, meditation workshops,

1
2 promoting self-care and those are just to name a few.
3 We're getting parent engagement going again, bringing
4 back hope and getting conversations started again in
5 our communities.

6 We hope to continue to expand our work outside of
7 our schools. I believe that with more time and
8 funding, we can make a huge impact in our school
9 systems, our neighborhoods and our communities. This
10 work has been an inspiration for myself. It has
11 changed my perspective on life and has helped me to
12 begin my own healing journey to become a better
13 parent, a better coach, friend, neighbor, a human
14 being overall.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 CRYSTAL RODRIGUEZ: And I'm sure that my fellow
17 ambassadors would concur. I thank you all for the
18 time to be able to speak today and I truly hope that
19 this movement will continue to be backed with your
20 support because this is history in the making. Thank
21 you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much for your
23 testimony. This concludes Panel 30 and we will now
24 be moving to Panel 31. This panel will also be
25 focused on education and childhood education, as well

1 as education disabilities, foster care and health.
2 The panelist in order as I will read them are Jolene
3 Gunther-Doherty, Jennifer Choi, Maggie Moroff,
4 Chantal Hinds, Cal Hedigan(SP?) and Joy Cambe or
5 Cambe. Please forgive any pronunciation. So, the
6 next panelist will be Jolene Gunther-Doherty and you
7 may begin when the Sergeant calls the clock. Thank
8 you.
9

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 JOLENE GUNTHER-DOHERTY: Thank you. My name is
12 Jolene Gunther-Doherty and I am the Director of the
13 Guild for Exceptional Childrens Preschool 4410
14 program. For over 60 years, the Guild has provided
15 services for preschool students with disabilities.
16 Two years ago, the city reached an agreement to raise
17 the salaries of most certified early childhood
18 teachers at DOE contracted CBO's. But excluded
19 teachers of DOE contracted preschool special
20 education programs. These teachers work 12-months
21 serving young children with the most intensive
22 special needs. The city has not yet committed to
23 salary parity for these educators. Even as the
24 shortage of seats in preschool special education
25 classes has left preschoolers with disabilities

1
2 without the support they need and have the legal
3 right to receive.

4 As you heard in earlier testimony, many
5 classrooms in 4410 schools have had to close. Our
6 school over the past year has had to close four
7 classrooms due to staff shortages. Crime families of
8 children with autism keep calling looking for seats.
9 According to the DOE's own projections, the city is
10 short by more than 900 seats in preschool special
11 education classes.

12 CBO's have indicated that in order to open new
13 preschool special ed classes, the city needs to
14 address the salary disparities that are causing their
15 teachers, teacher assistants and therapists to leave
16 for other jobs where they can earn much higher
17 compensation. The city has a plan to open 800 needed
18 preschool special ed class seats starting next year
19 by offering a contract enhancement to the CBO's that
20 run these classes. But the city is not yet committed
21 to increase staff salaries as part of the contract
22 enhancement.

23 Without increased salaries, the -

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 JOLENE GUNTHER-DOHERTY: The city will be able to
3 open the classes it needs. Please ensure the fiscal
4 year budget includes the \$30 million to provide
5 preschool special ed parity. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.
7 And the next witness will be Jennifer Choi.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 JENNIFER CHOI: Okay, I'm unmuted. Thank you.
10 I'm Jennifer Choi. I am a Special Education Advocate
11 at Special Support Services. I'm also a parent of
12 two students with disabilities in Queens.

13 The New York City Comptrollers Report revealed
14 that the DOE has spent only 12 percent of the \$251
15 million of federal COVID relief funding allocated for
16 students with disabilities. This is unacceptable.
17 To provide the Council with a picture of just one way
18 this can happen, I'll share with you my own child's
19 story. He's an 18-year-old student with dyslexia,
20 autism and ADHD who used to go to every class, every
21 day and attend hours and hours of tutoring to make
22 progress in school.

23 The pandemic changed all that. Zoom school did
24 not work for him. He became addicted to the computer
25 and lost his motivation. I wake up every morning not

1
2 knowing if he will go to school. He cannot fill out
3 college applications. He cannot manage money nor his
4 hiking and now my son is failing and will not
5 graduate with his peers next month.

6 I asked the school to send him to a New York
7 State approved therapeutic boarding school but the
8 school said no, because he'll probably graduate in
9 January. Why do schools still not know the purpose
10 of IEP is not just about getting a diploma? The
11 purpose is to help students with disabilities pursue
12 further education, employment and independent living.
13 My agency just released a survey report on students
14 with disabilities refusing school.

15 57 percent never refused school before the
16 pandemic. 34 percent are expressing self-harm.
17 Today, I request this Council to please add items to
18 the budget to police not our students but instead,
19 the New York City Department of Education
20 Administrators to stop wasting money, stop breaking
21 the law and stop ruining the lives of students with
22 disabilities. Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
24 turn to Maggie Moroff from the Arise Coalition.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 MAGGIE MOROFF: Thank you Malcom. Good afternoon
3 Chair Brannan and all other Council Members here
4 today. I'm here on behalf of the Arise Coalition, a
5 group of parents, advocates and other stakeholders
6 interested in improving experiences and outcomes for
7 students with disabilities in New York City. I want
8 to talk about three things all laid out in more
9 detail in my written testimony already submitted.

10 As you just heard, a recent Comptroller's report
11 revealed that as of March, the DOE had spent only 12
12 percent of the \$251 million in federal COVID relief
13 funding allocated for Fiscal Year '22 for extra
14 support for students with disabilities and creation
15 of new seats in preschool, for preschool students
16 with disabilities. I wish I could say that came as a
17 surprise to us. While the DOE allocated funding to
18 schools for afterschool or Saturday special education
19 recovery services, SERS, to students with
20 disabilities and launched the SEED program for
21 students with sensory challenges, we've heard
22 repeatedly about children unable to access those
23 services.

24 For some time now around those make up services,
25 we've been recommending improved delivery of the

1
2 services actually offered. Clear information for
3 families about those services, expansion to all
4 students with disabilities regardless of where they
5 attend school. Targeted instructional interventions
6 at all SERS programs and guaranteed busing for
7 students with IEPs mandating transportation, after
8 school and on weekends to SERS and SEED programs.
9 There's no way around it. To be successful in making
10 up for what was lost for all these students, the DOE
11 must use the COVID relief funds already committed to
12 support students with disabilities. We ask for your
13 help making that a reality.

14 We also want to be sure that all new education
15 initiatives funded in this year's budget explicitly
16 include students with disabilities. Think about the
17 Career Pathways program in the Executive Budget for
18 that and all other new programs to be successful -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 MAGGIE MOROFF: Students who require
21 accommodations and modifications to participate, must
22 receive them or risk being effectively cut out.
23 Finally, we join with all the others who have
24 testified about the need to provide pay parity for
25

1
2 preschool special education teachers working at
3 CBO's. Thank you very much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Maggie and next,
5 we'll turn to Chantal Hinds from Next100.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 CHANTAL HINDS: Thank you. Good afternoon Chair
8 Brannan and members of the Committee on Finance.
9 Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you
10 today. My name is Chantal Hinds and I am a Policy
11 Entrepreneur at Next100. A startup think tank
12 working to diversify the public policy sector. Prior
13 to Next100, I was an Attorney at Advocates for
14 Children of New York, working to ensure students in
15 foster care receive the support they needed to
16 succeed.

17 I am here to ask the City Council to support
18 students in foster care by ensuring the DOE will
19 follow through on its commitment to create and fully
20 staff a foster care office and for the budget to
21 include \$5 million to guarantee transportation for
22 students in foster care.

23 Students in foster care are disproportionately
24 Black and come from the city's poorest communities.
25 Black and Latinx children make up about 80 percent of

1 children in foster care in New York City. Many
2 students in this unique population have significant
3 academic needs. Nearly half of this population have
4 special education needs and less than half graduate
5 high school in four years.

6
7 It's important that the DOE move quickly to hire
8 and fully staff its first ever team to support these
9 students.

10 This office is especially important to improve
11 policy development, educational interventions and
12 data collection and transparency for students in
13 foster care. While the DOE has started posting some
14 of these positions, it is important that all eleven
15 of the promised positions move forward.

16 Additionally, children cannot succeed in school if
17 they aren't able to get there. The DOE must
18 guarantee busing or other door to door transportation
19 for students in foster care. Federal and state law
20 require the city to provide transportation to
21 students in foster care, so they can stay in their
22 original school unless it's in their best interest to
23 transfer.

24 Since the law went into effect nearly six years
25 ago, the DOE has refused to guarantee bus service or

1
2 another comparable mode of transportation to these
3 students. The city should include and baseline \$5
4 million for bus service or other door to door
5 transportation for students in foster care -

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

7 CHANTAL HINDS: To maintain school stability.
8 Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you
9 today.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
11 call Cal Hedigan.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will turn to Joy
14 Cambe from Empire Liver Foundation.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 JOY CAMBE: Hi, my name is Joy Cambe and I'm the
17 Program Coordinator for Empire Liver Foundation and
18 we're part of the New York City Council's Viral
19 Hepatitis Initiative, which provides the most
20 innovative and effective Hep B and C treatment
21 prevention and linkage to care initiatives in the
22 country.

23 We submitted our written testimony, so I'm going
24 to take this time to highlight the potential impact
25 of the first ever New York City viral hepatitis

1 elimination program from the New York City DOHMH.

2 So, and how we can put New York City on the map as
3 one of the first cities to eliminate viral hepatitis
4 using the existing service framework that the Viral
5 Hepatitis Initiative already put in place, thanks to
6 the New York City Council.
7

8 So, for funding year '23, we have a minimal ask
9 of \$2 million to support the necessary work to
10 achieve viral hepatitis elimination. So, on behalf
11 of some of our members, I have some stories to
12 illustrate the profound impact of Viral Hepatitis
13 Initiative. From Dr. Rundishudian(SP?) of Cornell,
14 he said, "I saw a patient, 66-year-old female with a
15 history of intravenous drug use and a new diagnosis
16 of Hep C. This is not to be discovered without the
17 recent public health messaging on universal screening
18 for Hep C.

19 As she had never previously been screened despite
20 A, being a baby boomer and two, her known risk
21 factors were infectious. By the time that I got to
22 her, she was shocked to hear that she developed
23 advanced fibrosis of the liver, despite never having
24 symptoms.
25

1
2 Our initial conversation about chronic hepatitis
3 C and the risk for cirrhosis and liver cancer were
4 tough for her to hear and I'm happy to report that
5 she has successfully treated herself, all the
6 hepatitis C and no longer lives with that danger. I
7 still follow her regularly but I have been pleased to
8 inform her that her risk for both cirrhosis and liver
9 cancer are now significantly reduced, after the viral
10 clearance of hepatitis B and she's profoundly
11 grateful for feeling that she had narrowly avoided a
12 major health threat and uh, our organization has
13 worked with the previous Health Chair -

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 JOY CAMBE: For such a vital - for such these
16 vital services for New York City living with
17 hepatitis but there's a lot of work to do. So,
18 together New York City has the existing resources in
19 place to set the precedence for viral hepatitis
20 elimination for the country. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
22 Panel 31. I will announce the next few panels.
23 Panel 32 will be Saaif Alam, Dana Politis(SP?), Gary
24 English, Sharone Kaufman, Rosa Rodriguez, Jose
25 Martinez, and Jamal Westmore.

1
2 Panel 33, Aga Trojniak(SP?), Anya Mukarji-
3 Connolly, Jeannette Miller, Shane Correia, Lee
4 Sessions, and Pablo Estupiñan. Panel 34, Michael
5 Janice, Mariam Fisher, Nicholas Navarro, Patrick
6 Boettcher, Savannah Millard, and Mon Yuck Yu. Panel
7 35, Andy Bowen, Christine James-McKenzie, Carina
8 Kaufman-Gutierrez, Hannah Towfiek, Mohamed Attia, and
9 that's Panel 35.

10 So, I will now start with Panel 32, Saaif Alam.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 SAAIF ALAM: Good afternoon everyone. My name is
13 Saaif Alam, a Student from John Jay College. I
14 currently serve as the University and Senate by a
15 share of disability affairs. As an individual
16 growing up with an invisible disability, I understand
17 the challenge because I went through it myself. We
18 currently have 930,100 New York City residents with
19 disabilities and 11,000 community students with
20 disabilities at CUNY.

21 And representation for individuals with
22 disability including man's help is crucial for these
23 communities. I'm here to testify because our New
24 Yorkers, including New Yorkers with disabilities need
25 to have better access to mental health and healthcare

1
2 services. Mental health accessibility is important
3 for individuals with disabilities, especially the
4 pandemic. Based on the statistics, one in ten New
5 Yorkers experience mental health challenges that
6 effect their life at work and school. Also, one in
7 six CUNY students experience distress, anxiety and
8 depression.

9 The pandemic has negatively affected our New
10 Yorkers including CUNY students since they face food,
11 housing and job insecurity. Also, a great number of
12 New Yorkers and CUNY students has lost a loved one.
13 According to conversations from constituents, they
14 express that they need to have adequate access to
15 counseling services, which also includes individuals
16 with disabilities.

17 Healthcare accessibility is also not a challenge.
18 Our individuals with disabilities are still in need
19 for assistive devices for effective communications,
20 housing for interactive service building, more staff
21 at the facilities, auxiliary aids through our mental
22 health center. Healthcare is a priority and there's
23 a need to invest in healthcare, so individuals with
24 disabilities receive the healthcare they need to
25 thrive in our society.

1
2 I want the City Council to acknowledge that this
3 month is Mental Health Awareness Month and please
4 prioritize the \$393 million funding for mental health
5 and \$145 million from the Mayor Adams healthcare
6 funding initiatives for our New Yorkers including New
7 Yorkers with disabilities -

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 SAAIF ALAM: Mental health care and mental health
10 services, which also includes CUNY students with
11 disabilities. Thank you for allowing me to testify
12 today.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
14 turn to Dana [INAUDIBLE 5:27:29].

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on our list is
17 Gary English.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 GARY ENGLISH: Hello. Good afternoon everyone.
20 My name is Gary English and I'm the Executive
21 Director of Get it Get it, which is a non-profit
22 organization in New York City that serves Black gay
23 men and our mission is to prevent infection in the
24 Black gay community.
25

1
2 I would like the City Council to be aware of the
3 End of AIDs Epidemic Campaign will not be successful
4 until we really get a handle on the new infections
5 with Black gay men in New York City. And we're
6 proposing that the City Council green light a special
7 initiative of \$2 million for Black gay men prevention
8 in New York City. And this initiative has other
9 successes such as the Faith-Based Initiative, has
10 been happening for the last eight years. It's been
11 very successful and also, the Department of Health,
12 started two years ago with a special RFP for Black
13 gay men and some reason it disappeared. And I think
14 one reason why it disappeared because we're not
15 visible. We're not in the face of City Council and
16 say, these are our issues. These are the ways you
17 can effect and get Black gay men attention.

18 And we also want this initiative to be targeted
19 to small CBO's because there's a space, a unique
20 space for organizations like mine, Get it Get it to
21 reach Black gay men. And Black gay men need to talk
22 to Black gay men because we know the strategies of
23 what is the best way to get their attention. And so,
24 keeping within my two minutes, and I would like say
25

1
2 to the City Council, let's make history together and
3 make this special initiative happen. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you sir. Next we will
5 turn to Sharone Kaufman from the Legal Aid Society.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 SHARONE KAUFMAN: Good afternoon. My name is
8 Sharone Kaufman and I'm a Deputy Attorney in charge
9 of the Immigration Law Unit at the Legal Aid Society.
10 Thank you Chair Brannan and Council Members for this
11 opportunity to address you.

12 In Fiscal Year '23, NYIFUP is seeking an increase
13 from \$16.6 million to \$18 million to help address our
14 increased costs. Although ICE raids have been lower
15 in the past year than before, it seems likely that
16 detention numbers will go back up as things start to
17 return back to normal.

18 This would include NYIFUP clients for whom we
19 one, released during the pandemic due to health
20 reasons, who ICE could try to re-detain, claiming
21 that the jails are safe again.

22 We also need to be able to fully staff up in
23 response to ICE detention activities. While
24 representing the many clients we got released over
25 the past years and before. Also, there's an

1
2 increased need to fight against the horrific
3 conditions that our clients face in detention and the
4 impending transfers of New York City residents to
5 jails and courts across the country. There's a need
6 for continued support from the Council for these most
7 vulnerable immigrants.

8 In addition to supporting NYIFUP since 2014, the
9 Council has been a steadfast supporter of
10 unaccompanied minors since 2014 through the
11 Unaccompanied Minors and Families Initiative, which
12 is granted annually to Legal Aid and our partners in
13 the Immigrant Advocates Response Collaborative ICARE.

14 For Fiscal year '23 ICARE is seeking an
15 enhancement to four million five hundred and seventy
16 thousand, of which one million seventy five thousand
17 would be for Legal Aid. The enhancement would be to
18 offset the loss of funding to ICARE from the
19 Robinhood Foundation, which is ending its investment
20 at the end of Fiscal Year '22.

21 We applaud the city for supporting removal
22 defense and affirmative immigration benefits through
23 the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative. We encourage
24 the city to keep the flexibility adopted in the last
25 two fiscal years regarding meeting deliverables

1
2 through overall units of service, rather than
3 specific -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

5 SHARONE KAUFMAN: Of cases. Just one more minute
6 please. We also thank the Council for their
7 continued support and funding for the Low Wage
8 Workers Initiative, which we hope can be baselined.

9 And finally, we're seeking \$710,000 for
10 immigration federal practice to allow us to continue
11 our cutting edge work. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I'll turn
13 to Rosa Rodriguez.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 ROSA RODRIQUEZ: Good afternoon. Can you hear
16 me?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

18 ROSA RODRIGUEZ: Okay, thank you very much. Good
19 afternoon. I appreciate your attention. My name is
20 Rosa Rodriguez, I'm the President of 7981 Post Avenue
21 Tenant Association. I mean Washington High. This is
22 in reference about the teil coalition. This is a
23 program that HPD had formed back in 1978. We have
24 uhm, my plea's to the Mayor and the City Council to
25 fund the HPD program to make the funding to the New

1
2 York City Council to include the funding in 2023
3 budget adequate funding to rehabilitate the teal
4 building. Instead of funding ANCP and third party
5 program to which HPD is transferring the teal
6 buildings.

7 Those third party programs will end in
8 contribution to increase the homeless situation in
9 New York City as the original tenant of the teal
10 building will not be able to afford the maintenance
11 of the ACHC apartments. Which we include payment on
12 the mortgage entering into the development and
13 mandatory percent increase. Therefore, they will
14 lose their apartment and any opportunity to ownership
15 and in the general world.

16 This is why we plea, the whole coalition plea
17 you, so we are low-income family, we plea you at the
18 end of the day that we are working together to
19 rebuild and maintain our community in New York City.
20 Yes, together we can succeed in the city for a better
21 future. Our children are becoming professionals.
22 They are the people of the future who will maintain
23 the city. We don't want our descendants to move away
24 from New York City and work in other states. They

1
2 are the New York City seeds to be planted in New York
3 City and grow. They are New Yorkers.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 ROSA RODRIGUEZ: So, we plead to the City of New
6 York to fund our program, our teal program, and de-
7 fund the ANCP, which are going to take all the
8 tenants to the street and be homeless. Thank you and
9 I appreciate your time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
11 to Jose Martinez from the National Harm Reduction
12 Coalition.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 JOSE MARTINEZ: Hi sorry. Hello, my name is Jose
15 Martinez. I'm the Harm Reduction Associate for
16 National Harm Reduction Coalition, National Advocacy
17 and Capacity Building Organization whose main office
18 is in Midtown Manhattan.

19 And I'm responsible for providing a general
20 support system for Hep C navigators throughout New
21 York City. Support maybe a system and navigator
22 would create a new outreach methods and approaches,
23 navigating resources for community members, workforce
24 development or support with personal issues. The
25 viral Hepatitis Initiative has played a vital role in

1
2 harm reduction efforts to combat viruses that effect
3 our communities like Hep C and HIV.

4 Since 2014, we've been responsible for over
5 10,000 linkages to care, many of which led to
6 community members being cured of Hep C. Many of our
7 navigators who were responsible for keeping community
8 members engaged in care, have done it with very
9 little funding and resources. The Viral Hepatitis
10 Initiative for the last eight years has been that
11 little bit of funding and resources for our Hep B and
12 Hep C navigators.

13 My experience with the Viral Hepatitis
14 Initiatives have been a lessen every day. My work
15 has allowed me to see how our community is effected
16 by Hep C and how much services we really need and how
17 much more we can do with a little more focus on this
18 problem. I'm not living with Hep C; I was introduced
19 to the program when I used to go to the Hep C group
20 in Saint Anne's Corner of Farm Reduction. I was in a
21 bad space and would go to the groups to receive the
22 Metro. After a month of attending the groups, I
23 became more interested in being a part of the
24 movement that tackles Hep C than receiving a metro.

1
2 New York City Council Viral Hepatitis Initiative
3 also allows my organization and funding to provide
4 various Hep C related trainings and the Hep C basics
5 over those preventions of Hep C navigators and
6 medical care and treatment update.

7 With these workshops we provide navigators
8 through the city with skills and information they can
9 use to help themselves and community members.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 JOSE MARTINEZ: Thank you for having us.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Jose. Next, we
13 will turn to Jamal Westmore from the New York State
14 Nurses Association.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 JAMAL WESTMORELAND: Good afternoon Chairman
17 Brannan and Council Members. I would like to thank
18 you for this opportunity to provide my testimony. My
19 name is Jamal Westmoreland and I am a registered
20 nurse employed at Woodhall Hospital in Brooklyn. I
21 am also a proud NYSNA member and a membership
22 committee chairperson at Woodhall Hospital. NYSNA
23 represents 9,000 registered nurses to work for the
24 public hospital system. As a frontline staff nurse,
25 I am more than familiar with the invaluable role

1
2 registered nurses play within the public healthcare
3 system, and their recruitment and retention are
4 essential to ensuring that New York City public
5 hospital are able to provide high quality, safe,
6 effective, patient centered care. The nursing
7 profession continues to face shortages due to the
8 lack of potential funding, educators, high turnover
9 and burnout rates and inequitable workforce
10 distribution, as I can attest to.

11 Nursing shortages can only lead to more potential
12 medical error, higher morbidity and mortality rate
13 and ultimately patient dissatisfaction. An
14 environment that empowers and motivates nurses is
15 imperative in order to rejuvenate and sustain the
16 nursing workforce, especially within these uncertain
17 times we find ourselves living through. Life
18 continues to supportive initiative directed toward
19 the recruitment and retention of nurses within the
20 NYHMH hospital system. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
22 our testimony for Panel 32. We will now move to
23 Panel 33. Aga Trojniak(SP?), Anya Mukarji-Connolly,
24 Jeannette Miller, Shane Correia, Lee Sessions, and
25

1
2 Pablo Estupiñan. We'll start with Aga Trojniak from
3 Flatbush Tenant Coalition.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I will call on
6 Anya Mukarji-Connolly from Brooklyn Defender
7 Services. I felt like I called that name.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I did call on Anya
10 already and she did testify. Okay, so Jeannette
11 Miller from CAMBA Legal Services.

12 JEANNETTE MILLER: Thank you. Thank you to Chair
13 Brannan.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 JEANNETTE MILLER: Uh, thank you to Chair
16 Brannan, Chair Ayala and to the New York City Council
17 at large for the longstanding support of the Legal
18 Services for the Working Poor Coalition.

19 My name is Jeannette Miller, I'm an Executive
20 Vice President at Camba Legal Services. One of the
21 five members of the Legal Services for the Working
22 Poor Coalition that includes Housing Conservation
23 Coordinators, Mobilization for Justice, Mimic and
24 Take Root Justice.

1
2 The coalition was created 18 years ago with
3 support from the City Council to address the civil
4 legal needs of working poor and other low income New
5 Yorkers whose income is slightly higher than the
6 poorest New Yorkers. Their income renders them
7 ineligible for free civil legal services and yet they
8 are often one missed paycheck from facing eviction or
9 other dire consequences. Our services are critical
10 to allowing working New Yorkers to maintain financial
11 independence and preserving economic stability in
12 communities across New York City.

13 In Fiscal Year 2022, each of the five coalition
14 members received \$455,000. In FY23, each of us are
15 asking for an allocation of \$600,000 from the City
16 Council to support civil legal services for working
17 for New Yorkers.

18 Additional legal services in these areas are
19 needed to support working poor New Yorkers
20 particularly as they were and continue to be
21 disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
22 The Council's funding for civil legal services is the
23 only funding that targets the civil legal needs of
24 working poor, working people to ensure continued
25

1
2 self-sufficiency for families struggling to survive
3 in New York City.

4 Our organizations represent these New Yorkers in
5 all five boroughs in housing, consumer, foreclosure,
6 immigration benefits and employment matters. If we
7 are not able to meet the legal service needs of the
8 many people who seek our help, particularly those
9 affected by the COVID-19 crisis, the human
10 consequences will be dire. It is vitally important
11 that the Council not only continue to support this
12 flexible funding stream -

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 JEANNETTE MILLER: Thank you. We urge the
15 Council to fully fund civil legal service initiatives
16 overall and for the legal services for the working
17 poor allocation in particular. The positive benefits
18 of civil legal service funding for the city's budget
19 and its economy make it the right choice for
20 economic, social and humanitarian reasons. Thank
21 you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next from the
23 Center for Court Innovation, I'll turn to Shane but I
24 won't butcher his name anymore.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 SHANE CORREIA: You actually did a great job.
3 It's Correia. Thank you for allowing me to testify
4 today. My name is Shane Correia, I'm the Deputy
5 Director of Government Partnerships at the Center for
6 Court Innovation. Briefly, we're an organization
7 that researches and implements justice system
8 reforms. Our first program being the Midtown
9 Community Court, established 25 years ago, helping
10 change the nature of Time Square with proportionate
11 responses.

12 Since then, we've grown to reach and provide
13 expert assistance across the nation and the world but
14 the majority of our direct service sites are actually
15 here in New York City where we help improve civil,
16 family, criminal and non-court based processes that
17 touch the justice system. In fact I'm a South Bronx
18 Native and a participant in one of the programs after
19 two of my siblings were arrested, convicted and
20 deported for violent felony crimes back in 2002.
21 Which brings me here to talk to you today about what
22 the Center for Court Innovation is doing in
23 increasing public safety, yet reforming the justice
24 system.

1
2 Specifically, we're implementing new approaches
3 to addressing intimate partner violence, anti-gun
4 violence programing and reducing unnecessary
5 incarceration through community supervision.
6 Regarding budget asks, I want to highlight the
7 following items in our testimony that I think are
8 exceedingly important. Our ask to expand our core
9 center funding under the innovative criminal justice
10 initiatives is where we have the flexibility to
11 respond to needs in our communities as they arrive
12 throughout all five boroughs. Over the last two
13 years, that's been everything from deploying remote
14 youth engagement programming during the height of the
15 pandemic to implementing new methods of gun responses
16 in the following months.

17 We're asking that this be expanded to \$1 million.
18 Similarly, we're asking that the city continue with
19 support of felony alternatives to incarceration in
20 Brooklyn at \$1.3 million and take over the funding
21 that will expire from Dannie's asset forfeiture
22 dollars sun setting for a total ask of \$2 million in
23 Manhattan and Brooklyn.

24 It's effective throughout Brooklyn mental health
25 court practices which have shown to reduce recidivism

1
2 while keeping communities safe and we hope to
3 continue to show its efficacy –

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 SHANE CORREIA: Thank you for your time.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
7 turn to Lee Sessions.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 LEE SESSIONS: Hi, my name is Lee Sessions, I'm
10 a New York City resident and a member of DSA's NYC
11 Chapter. I'm here to voice my opposition to Mayor
12 Eric Adams's Executive Budget and to call on the City
13 Council to pass a budget that meets the needs of all
14 New Yorkers.

15 Two years into the pandemic, working class New
16 Yorkers are in crisis. COVID-19 cases are surging,
17 landlords are raising rents and families struggle to
18 stay in their homes but the Mayor continues to favor
19 the wealthy and powerful over every day New Yorkers.
20 His budget makes devastating cuts to vital city
21 services like housing, healthcare, sanitation and
22 education. While leaving the NYPD's \$10 billion
23 budget impact.

24 Today, I urge the Council to fight against the
25 Mayor's program of austerity and punishment. Instead

1
2 of cutting funding for housing, the Council must
3 invest \$4 billion into permanent, affordable housing,
4 including \$1.5 billion for NYCHA and \$2.5 billion for
5 HPD.

6 The Council must also reject Adams cuts to our
7 public education system by investing \$122 million
8 into CUNY and funding DOE mental health counselors
9 and social workers, rather than filling school police
10 vacancies. I also urge the Council to act on two
11 deadly crisis facing our city, climate catastrophe
12 and the overdose epidemic.

13 We need \$3.1 billion for the streets plan. \$1.8
14 billion for green public schools. \$250 million for
15 Fair Fares and \$10 million to expand lifesaving safe
16 consumption sites to all five boroughs.

17 Finally, the Council must reject the Mayor's
18 regressive return to law in order. I urge the
19 Council to reject the proposal to add hundreds of new
20 CO's for solitary confinement. A practice the UN
21 defines as torture. I also urge the Council to
22 demonstrate their commitment to racial justice by
23 cutting failed NYPD criminalization programs, like
24 the ineffective and violent plain clothes units. The
25 so-called subway safety plan and ending all NYPD

1
2 response to mental health calls. Thank you Council
3 Members and Committee Chair Brannan –

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 LEE SESSIONS: For hearing my testimony. Thank
6 you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and our final
8 panelist is Pablo Estupiñan from the Right to Counsel
9 New York City Coalition.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 PABLO ESTUPIÑAN: Good afternoon Chair Brannan
12 and Council Members. Thank you for the opportunity
13 to testify. My name is Pablo and I'm the Coalition
14 Coordinator for the Right to Counsel New York City
15 Coalition and I'm here today to testify in favor of
16 Local Law 53.

17 As many of you know, we, our coalition passed a
18 historic right to counsel legislation back in 2017
19 giving tenants the right to free legal representation
20 housing courts. Unfortunately, that is no longer the
21 reality with the overwhelming volume of eviction
22 cases, there is currently not enough attorney's to
23 take on eviction cases, so now thousands of tenants
24 are at risk of being evicted without ever access a
25 right to counsel attorney and last May 2021, our

1 coalition passed a bill, Intro. 1529, which is known
2 as Local Law 53 that mandated that the city
3 specifically, the Office of Civil Justice, the city
4 agency in charge of implementing right to counsel.
5 This Local Law 53 requires OCJ to fund tenant
6 organizing groups because the reality is that half
7 the tenants that we have surveyed don't know about
8 right to counsel when they are going to housing
9 courts and facing eviction.
10

11 And we're here today because that law was signed
12 last May. The city had 180 days to release the
13 request for proposal RFP at the end of November and
14 they haven't. And so, from our perspective, the new
15 mayoral administration, Mayor Adams, is failing New
16 Yorkers, not delivering on its promises to ensure
17 that New Yorkers stay in their homes and we're
18 calling on the - we're urging the Committee to
19 immediately - to help us immediately and fully
20 implement Local Law 53 and allocate \$5 million for
21 tenant organizing groups. And that would come
22 through OCJ and that would help fund trusted tenant
23 organizing groups to work in low-income communities
24 of color.
25

1
2 We know that this issue impacts people of color,
3 especially women and children.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

5 PABLO ESTUPIÑAN: You know eviction is housing
6 instability, have significant impact on all people's
7 lives. So, we look forward to working with you and
8 thank you for your time.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. (COUGHS) Excuse
10 me. Thank you. Next, we will go to Panel 34.

11 Michael Janice, Mariam Fisher, Nicholas Navarro,
12 Patrick Boettcher, Savannah Millard and Mon Yuk Yu.
13 We will first turn to Michael Janice.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list, I have
16 Mariam Fisher.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I have Nicholas
19 Navarro.

20 NICHOLAS NAVARRO: Thank you for the chance to
21 speak. Uhm, I am Nicholas Navarro, a volunteer with
22 the New York Civil Liberties Union. I have been
23 monitoring police activity at protests for almost two
24 years. So, recently, I have had a lot of encounters
25 with the SRG, which is supposedly the counter

1
2 terrorist unit. However, many, many times recently,
3 I have seen them being deployed in just completely
4 inappropriate situations.

5 I remember, I was at Union Square and there was a
6 small group of people singing and dancing pro-choice
7 protestors and a couple blocks down the street there
8 was the SRG parked. So, I would - I have seen them
9 insight violence many times at protests. They're
10 very opaque and unclear about their funding and
11 strategies, so I would request that the City Council
12 seriously reconsider this funding for this department
13 and demand accountability for where the money is
14 going. Thank you for your time.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
16 turn to Patrick Boettcher from the Divest from the
17 Strategic Response Group.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 PATRICK BOETTCHER: Hello, my name is Patrick
20 Boettcher. I'm a Veteran of the Army a King student.
21 I'm here today to urge the City Council to seize
22 funding to the New York City Police Department
23 through the Strategic Response Group.

24 I've personally witnessed several incidents of
25 misconduct by the SRG. On one occasion, I saw an

1 officer armed as though we were going into battle.

2 As I passed him, I heard the distinctive click of his
3 rifle safety and look over to see the officer playing
4 the safety on a deadly weapon in crowded street.
5

6 If he were soldier and he were caught by a
7 Sergeant, he would suffer severe consequences,
8 however, this officer was not a soldier. These
9 officers do not have the training, discipline or
10 responsibility to be entrusted with the equipment and
11 the funding that they've been given.

12 I was recently at a climate protest where the SRG
13 demonstrated this to me by inappropriately using a
14 reciprocating saw to cut protestors down from wooden
15 structures. As they were doing this, most of the
16 officers who have asked the other protestors were
17 simply standing around idly, some chatting casually.
18 I asked an officer if they truly had no other more
19 pressing matters to attend to and he said, no.

20 By then, I asked why in that case, were all of
21 his officers on duty? He simply said, "I don't
22 know." However, when I was recently attacked on a
23 subway the police were nowhere to be found. Given
24 the clear misuse of the funds by the SRG and their
25 self-professed lack of need for their services, I

1
2 urge the City Council to shift their funding to areas
3 that will meaningfully improve the lives of New
4 Yorkers.

5 I'm currently attending City College on the GI
6 bill and I could tell you from firsthand experience
7 that many of the buildings are badly run down. With
8 ceilings that leak in the rain and bathrooms
9 regularly shutdown due to the plumbing malfunctions.
10 One's even had a ceiling tile fall on me at EMCC.

11 As many of my classmates come from around the
12 country and around the world, I ask you, "is this the
13 image of the city you once lived in." "Do we want to
14 be a city that takes pride in our dedication to
15 educating the next leaders of the world?" Or one
16 that takes pride in cracking down on its citizens as
17 they practice their first amendment rights.

18 The proposed new deal for CUNY would be a much
19 better use of the funds and would bring us much
20 closer to embodying the ideas that we claim to hold
21 in SRG every day. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
23 turn to Savannah Millard from the NYCLU.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
25

1
2 SAVANNAH MILLARD: Hi, thank you. Good
3 afternoon. My name is Savannah Millard and I am a
4 volunteer with the NYCLU. I'm here to urge the City
5 Council to remove funding of the NYPD Strategic
6 Response Group from the police budget. The unit has
7 been a consistent presence at protests across New
8 York City and has been known for escalating and
9 bringing violence to protestors. In 2020, the units
10 brutality was in public view as members of the unit
11 deployed militarized tactics against protestors. The
12 SRG has been central to many lawsuits and
13 investigations related to the NYPD's abuse of
14 protestors throughout 2020. And as someone that
15 participate in the Black Lives Matter Movement of
16 2020, I can personally attest to seeing these things
17 happen.

18 However, the violence of the SRG is without
19 coincidence. The units training overwhelmingly
20 focuses on the use of force and members of the unit
21 are trained to treat racial justice protestors as
22 enemy combatants. In the SRG Bikes Squads Manual,
23 protests groups are divided into two categories,
24 peaceful and violent with examples of violent
25

1
2 protestors as being part of the BLM movement, occupy
3 Wall Street and anti-Trump demonstrators.

4 SRG officers receive disproportionately high
5 levels of misconduct complaints and have a history of
6 racial violence. The SRG has inflicted emotional and
7 physical harm on New Yorkers with impunity. City
8 Council must put an end to the SRG's abuse by
9 disbanding the unit and removing its funds from the
10 hands of the NYPD and then reinvesting those funds
11 into our communities. Thank you for your time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and our last
13 panelist is Mon Yuck Yu.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I'm going to turn to
16 Panel 35, Andy Bowen, Christine James-McKenzie,
17 Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez, Hannah Towfiek, Mohamed
18 Attia. We'll first start with Andy Bowen from the
19 New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 ANDY BOWEN: Good afternoon Chair Brannan,
22 members and outstanding staff of the New York City
23 Council Committee on Finance. I'm reading the
24 testimony of Clara Kowvo(SP?), a worker/owner at
25 Cooperative Homecare Associates CHCA and a member of

1
2 the New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives
3 Advocacy Council.

4 I came to the United States in 1955 from the
5 Dominican Republic looking for an opportunity to
6 improve my life and the life of my three children.
7 For five years, I worked long hours, unpredictable
8 schedules, and in challenging work environments while
9 making very little money.

10 In 2000, I found and was trained by Cooperative
11 Home Care Associates or CHCA, a Bronx space company
12 that trains and employs homecare workers. Shortly
13 after beginning my career at CHCA, I joined the
14 company as a worker owner and have served on the
15 board for multiple terms. Whether as a board member
16 or worker/owner, I am always an engaged leader,
17 providing insight and guidance to my fellow worker
18 owners. I believe I'm an amazing reflection of why
19 the model of a worker cooperative is so powerful,
20 transformative and necessary for worker protection.

21 Like my cooperative, there are a number of
22 cooperatives in New York City with different economic
23 activities from cleaning, support for the elderly,
24 childcare and a lot more services that help the
25 economic growth of this city. However, as with many

1
2 small businesses, the pandemic wreaked havoc on some
3 of the cooperatives.

4 With the support of the worker cooperative, this
5 development initiative or WCBDI partners, though our
6 cooperatives have largely sustained the challenges of
7 the pandemic by getting grants, loans and other
8 financial support, technical assistance in making
9 sure we did our work safely under pandemic conditions
10 and more formal kinds of support like with
11 bookkeeping.

12 Your commitment to cooperatives is necessary and
13 urgent in our growth. So, we're not among the small
14 businesses that disappear as a result of the
15 pandemic. We hope that you will consider the Worker
16 Cooperative Business Development Initiative at \$5.012
17 million during this year's budget negotiation
18 process. Thank you for your time.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and Andy and next,
20 we will turn to Christine James-McKenzie from Jobs
21 First NYC.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 CHRISTINE JAMES-MCKENZIE: Good afternoon
24 Committee Chair Brannan and the distinguished members
25 of the City Council Committee on Finance. Thank you

1
2 for allowing Jobs First NYC to provide testimony
3 today on important issues effecting New York City's
4 budget. My name is Christine James-McKenzie, I'm the
5 Communications and Policy Manager at Jobs First NYC
6 which provides research and developed systems that
7 impact health, philanthropy and government invest and
8 workforce development.

9 In 2021, Jobs First NYC published a report
10 titled, 'Equitable Recovery for Young Adults and
11 Agenda for Young Adult Workforce Development in New
12 York City. It provides a set of citywide policy
13 priorities that are routed in the real needs of young
14 people.

15 It also includes the perspectives of on the
16 ground practitioners and the literature on successful
17 policies and interventions. It details the changes
18 needed to quickly connect our 18-24 year old's to
19 employment now and to effectively prepare them for
20 the future for in a rapidly shifting and increasingly
21 virtual economy.

22 It builds on Jobs First NYC comprehensive system
23 level view of the city's young adult workforce
24 ecosystem and proposes an actionable timebomb
25 framework to foster citywide systems change. We must

1
2 act now to connect our young adults to training,
3 education and work opportunities and to advance them
4 along educational and career pathways. Our report
5 outlines six recommendations for the city that we
6 informed by a diverse coalition of workforce
7 development and education stakeholders.

8 We call for \$770 million increase in annual
9 investment by New York City. This proposed funding
10 would support \$100 million for bridge programming,
11 \$150 million for sectoral training, \$357 million for
12 subsidized jobs, \$105 million for high school degree
13 attainment and career preparation and \$58 million for
14 capacity building and system enhancement.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 CHRISTINE JAMES-MCKENZIE: We appreciate the
17 opportunity to submit the testimony to the Finance
18 Committee and we are certainly looking forward to
19 your leadership to address the crisis that young
20 adults in New York City face. Thank you and we will
21 submit the rest of our testimony.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
23 turn to Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
25

1
2 CARINA KAUFMAN-GUTIERREZ: Thank you. Good
3 afternoon. My name is Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez and
4 I'm the Deputy Director of the Street Vendor Project.
5 I first would like to thank Chair Brannan and all the
6 Council Members present today for the opportunity to
7 testify.

8 The Street Vendor Project is a membership based
9 organization that works to improve the working
10 conditions of the approximately 20,000 people who
11 sell food and merchandise from the streets of our
12 city. SVP is respectfully requesting funding to
13 sustain and expand two of our critical programs that
14 serve street vendors, New York City's smallest
15 businesses. Our first is the community outreach and
16 education program and the second is the small
17 business consultation program. Both of which
18 together support an equitable economic recovery for
19 our entire city. Our membership base of the Street
20 Vendor Project includes over 2,600 of New York City
21 Street Vendors. This population is primarily new
22 immigrants who rely on vending to provide for
23 themselves and their families. And vendors come from
24 some of the most marginalized communities,
25 specifically immigrant communities of color and low-

1
2 income households. Over 90 percent of vendors are
3 immigrants.

4 The high demand for our services, especially
5 during the pandemic has presented an unsustainable
6 demand on a very small staff body and organization.
7 Hence our request for support to increase our ability
8 to respond, so that we may support our community to
9 rebuild and thrive.

10 In 2021, we connected nearly 3,000 street vendors
11 to resources and information about housing, food
12 access, and loan and grant opportunities and held 450
13 consultations to support street vendors with business
14 development trainings, financial empowerment
15 workshops and enhanced business, stabilization and
16 growth. We work in five different languages. In
17 Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, Bengali and a little bit
18 of English.

19 In this New York City Council's support, we do
20 hope to sustain and expand our vital programming for
21 small businesses and community outreach, so that we
22 can ensure that street vendors –

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.
24
25

1
2 CARINA KAUFMAN-GUTIERREZ: Receive support and
3 education that they deserve. Thank you so much for
4 the opportunity to testify and your consideration.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
6 turn to Hannah Towfiek.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 HANNAH TOWFIEK: Good afternoon Chair Brannan and
9 fellow Council Members and thank you for the
10 opportunity to testify today. My name is Hannah
11 Towfiek and I am the Middle Eastern and North African
12 Member Organizer at the Street Vendor Project and a
13 resident of Bensonhurst Brooklyn.

14 So, as my colleague Carina had mentioned, we
15 request support to both sustain and expand our Cooney
16 Outreach and Education Program. Through this
17 program, we conduct multilingual outreach in a range
18 of formats as street vendors to educate them on the
19 rules and regulations of vending. Teach them their
20 legal rights and responsibilities and connect them to
21 a variety of resources ranging from public health to
22 immigration. Our staff provides interpretation and
23 translation services for outreach materials in many
24 languages, including Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin and
25 Bengali.

1
2 With support from City Council this year for the
3 community outreach program, SVP intends to conduct 85
4 sessions of in person outreach across the five
5 boroughs to educate vendors on their rights and
6 responsibilities. Meeting street vendors where it's
7 convenient to them, whether that's on the streets, on
8 the sidewalks, in commissary kitchens, accommodating
9 the schedules of these business owners. And also
10 lead 24 in person and virtual community education
11 sessions to speak with vendors and to also share
12 materials regarding regulatory compliance, financial
13 literacy and referrals to other governmental
14 resources and support.

15 Last year, we supported more than 1,000 vendors
16 with individualized applications for the funding
17 saluted workers – for the Excluded Workers Fund,
18 pardon me. Connected more than 3,000 vendors to
19 housing, food and mental health resources and created
20 multilingual COVID safe business operating guidelines
21 for vendors. Through this process, the vendors
22 themselves become community ambassadors as they have
23 deep connections with their neighborhoods. They are
24 allowed to disseminate information to their cliental
25 and with the help of the Council, we're hoping to

1
2 ensure that street vendors not only survive in our
3 city but also thrive and prosper as a central part of
4 the city's fabric. Thank you for your time and
5 consideration.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, from the
7 Street Vendor Project Urban Justice Center, we'll
8 turn to Mohamad Attia.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Attia, oh, I see you
11 speaking but I don't hear anything. We'll unmute you
12 again, bear with us just a second. Okay, try
13 speaking again.

14 MOHAMAD ATTI: It's now better?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, now I can hear you.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 MOHAMAD ATTIA: Alright, good afternoon my dear
18 Council Members, Chair Brannan and Members of the
19 Committee. My name is Mohamad Attia, I'm the
20 Director of the Street Vendor Project, a part of the
21 Urban Justice Center. I would like to first thank
22 you for the opportunity to testify today.

23 As the only organization that Street Vendor
24 Project serves the street vendors in New York City
25 SVP is the centralized hub of this underserved

1
2 population, providing regular services including
3 legal consultations, small business development,
4 outreach and education and even more. Additionally
5 SVP supports vendors across several issues, including
6 but not limited to immigration, housing, childcare,
7 and food access needs.

8 SVP respectfully request funding to sustain and
9 expand two critical programs that serve street
10 vendors, our city's smallest businesses. The first
11 one is community outreach and education program and
12 the second is small business consultation program.
13 The programs will support an incredible economic
14 recovery for New York City by serving the smallest
15 businesses. The Street Vendor industry has grown
16 significantly within the last two years, with many
17 New Yorkers who lost their shops, their businesses,
18 turn street vending for an income, dramatically
19 increasing the demand for our services and our work.

20 With the membership base of more than 2,600
21 street vendors, our organization currently has a
22 growing list of over 300 individuals interested in
23 accessing our services. The current ratio of staff
24 to street vendors in the city is one to 400. As we
25 have seen also in Monday's hearing with the

1
2 Committee, some Council Members ask the questions to
3 the agencies about services provided to the street
4 vendors and we didn't hear any answer from the city.

5 What the city offers street vendors usually is
6 enforcement by multiple agencies who hand vendors
7 stake it with very high fines. Street vendors need
8 investment from the city and they deserve it. We
9 hope that the Council will consider our request and
10 help us support our smallest businesses. Thank you.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Uhm, I will now
13 call panel 36, 37, 38, 39 and 40 so people can be
14 ready. Panel 36, Jackie Del Valle, Carmen
15 Quenonez (SP?), Rumi Akong), Michael Winston Pam and
16 Lorraine Collins.

17 Panel 37, Andrew Cesano (SP?), Priscilla
18 Alexander, Petra Morales (SP?), Ricarda Pantaleone,
19 Gloria Manzano.

20 Panel 38 Salma Mohammed, Lily Liang, Ravi Reddi,
21 Netta Goash and Lloyd Feng and Mohamed Amin. Panel
22 39, Adrianna Duffey (SP?), Emma Katz (SP?), Julian
23 McKinley, Emina Frankle (SP?), Marcella Sosa (SP?) and
24 Minerva Contreras.

1
2 I will start with Panel 36 Jackie Del Valle from
3 Take Root Justice.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 JACKIE DEL VALLE: Hi, my name is Jackie Del
6 Valle, I'm Coordinator of Stabilizing NYC at Take
7 Root Justice. Take Root is a founder and coordinator
8 of Stabilizing NYC, which is a coalition of
9 grassroots organization that combine tenant
10 organizing with legal representation to combat tenant
11 harassment and preserve affordable housing for New
12 Yorkers who need it most. The Council's funded
13 Stabilizing NYC every year since 2014 and we're
14 looking for an enhancement to \$4 million from \$3.75
15 million to bring SNYC organizing groups to equal
16 levels. Take Root Justice and the 19 grassroots
17 they're apart of Stabilizing NYC form and strengthen
18 hundreds of tenant associations.

19 Despite the limits of the pandemic, stabilizing
20 groups continue to organize tenants association and
21 represent tenants across the city. Many groups
22 organize outreach programs and tenants for evictions,
23 ensuring that tenants and communities not only know
24 of their rights about housing court eviction and
25 accessing rent arrear funds like ERAP and Excluded

1
2 Workers Fund but also had hands on assistance to
3 access these and other resources.

4 As a result, the Tenants Associations we
5 organize: one, rent strikes, held their landlords
6 accountable for incorrect rent amounts and received
7 the ERAP protections that they're entitled to to the
8 Benefit and Housing Court.

9 Through organizing, tenants are stopping
10 evictions from moving forward in court and fighting
11 to keep one another in their homes. Tenants connect
12 their individual building experiences to the wider
13 fight for housing justice. Through mass rallies and
14 trips to Albany, tenant leaders connect with fellow
15 members of working class to fight for racial and
16 economic justice.

17 I don't think I need to spend a lot of time
18 explaining our housing crisis and its disparate
19 impacts across the city and the tolls of the pandemic
20 on housing and community stability. Speaker Adams
21 herself spoke passionately in her State of the
22 Speakers Address about the importance of having
23 people living in good conditions and that the
24 foundation of health for every neighborhood in our
25 city is save in stable housing.

1 We're also advocating for a COLA increase -

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

3 JACKIE DEL VALLE: All the discretionary awards
4 and enhancement for the Community Land Trust, Legal
5 Services for the Working Poor, Worker Co-op Business
6 Development and Community Housing and Preservation
7 Strategies. Thank you so much for this time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next from
9 Douglas Houses, I'll turn to Carmen Nonaze(SP?).

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, not seeing them on,
12 we'll turn to Rumi Akong.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 RUMI AKONG: Good afternoon. My name is Rumi
15 Akong, I'm the Trans Justice Program Coordinator at
16 the Audre Lorde Project. I'm here today to ask you
17 to support stronger pathways to safe, long-term
18 housing resources for all New Yorkers.

19 Last fall, I voted in-person, double masked in
20 District 31 out in Queens. When I moved into Central
21 Brooklyn five years ago, it was to be closer to my
22 classes at the CUNY Graduate Center and my part-time
23 gigs in food service. I rented apartments within
24 District 41, 45, and now 37.
25

1
2 I choose to live in Brooklyn because these
3 neighborhoods are among the few neighborhoods where
4 low-income lesbian, gay, bisexual, two spare,
5 transgender and gender nonconforming New Yorkers of
6 color can just barely afford rent. Any time I've
7 experienced housing insecurity, I've been offered a
8 couch, a room, an entire studio apartment by friends
9 and lovers in community.

10 Access to housing has not been too far out of
11 reach for me. However, I've commuted with many
12 community members from events whose journey home is
13 more than 90-minutes away. At our events, too many
14 trans people have shared with me that they hadn't
15 eaten for 60-hours before our food delivery arrives.
16 Our most marginalized New Yorkers, my community of
17 trans and gender nonconforming people of color are on
18 our 3,019 housing equity supports across the city are
19 asking City Council and the Mayor's Office to
20 collaborate in developing secure permanent housing.

21 Please help Trans Justice and the Audre Lorde
22 Project develop resources to increase access to
23 housing, food security and competent and
24 comprehensive medical care within all five boroughs.
25 I wish for my home city to be truly a sanctuary city.

1
2 For our institutions to be responsive, truly people
3 entered and to prioritize those most
4 disproportionately impacted. We, our discretionary
5 ask, for the housing equity resource guide. Trans
6 Justice members are available to co-work alongside
7 City Council Offices finish budgeting for the fiscal
8 year coming up.

9 New Yorkers of all gender expressions deserve
10 access to safe and secure housing. So, let's talk –

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 RUMI AKONG: All New Yorkers deserve housing.
13 Housing for all New Yorkers. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And next, I will
15 turn to Michael Winston Pam.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, the next person on our
18 list is Lorraine Collins.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. That concludes Panel
21 36. Next, I will turn to Panel 37, Andrew Cesano,
22 Priscilla Alexander, Petra Morales, Ricarda
23 Pantaleone, Gloria Manzano. I will first call on
24 Andrew Cesano.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, not hearing from
3 Andrew, I'm calling on Priscilla Alexander.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Go ahead Priscilla, you're
6 unmuted.

7 PRISCILLA ALEXANDER: Okay, thank you. Hi
8 everyone. Thank you for allowing me to speak today.
9 I am here on behalf of the Healing Ambassadors. I am
10 the Healing Ambassador for PS 199 in the Bronx. I
11 can vogue that the Healing Ambassador Program has
12 been beneficial to our school community and also, our
13 surrounding community. People love having the space
14 where they can confide with one another, get
15 resources, tips and information.

16 After our meetings, they leave feeling with a
17 clearer head and a mentality that lets them know that
18 they are not alone and they can concur anything.
19 Getting rid of this program will be very detrimental
20 to our community. Healing Ambassadors have been the
21 bridge that's needed between a community who is
22 afraid to speak with Department of Education
23 representatives or for anyone for that matter.
24
25

1
2 We have created a safe and trusting environment,
3 keeping this program is what our community
4 desperately needs. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
6 turn to Petra Morales.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I will turn to Ricarda
9 Pantaleone. Okay, next, we'll call no Gloria
10 Manzano.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, not in the Zoom. I
13 will now turn to Panel 38. Panel 38 is Salma
14 Mohamad, Lily Liang, Ravi Reddi, Neta Goash, Lloyd
15 Feng and Mohamed Q. Amin. I will first turn to Salma
16 Mohamed.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I will now call on Lily
19 Liang.

20 LILY LIANG: Hi.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 LILY LIANG: Hi everyone. My name is Lily Liang.
23 I am the NYC Organizer of National Asian Pacific
24 American Woman's Forum. We're the only organization
25

1
2 for abortion rights and uh, economic equity for AAPI
3 women.

4 Well, I just want to point it out to the City
5 Council that based on 2020 Census, that NYC has three
6 million immigrants. New AAPI immigrants are almost
7 850,000. Most of them communicate with inadequate
8 English. But unless it doesn't have a designated
9 fund for quality translations, yes, there are over
10 100 languages appeared HRA's website but the Mayor's
11 Office [INAUDIBLE 6:17:52] that they use Google
12 translate and cannot guarantee accuracy.

13 And we have identified numerous translation
14 errors and the most common thing we hear on the
15 street while doing canvassing from mothers, seniors,
16 cannot have someone who speak my language to help me
17 navigate the application of public benefits. But
18 there is now a translator for by the city agency.

19 So, the community-based organizations pick up the
20 work and the factual translators for government
21 agencies. They help with schools with parents and
22 the doctors with patients and the low-income
23 communities who need to sign up for subsidized
24 housing or food stamps. But their work are not —

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 LILY LIANG: So, I just want to call on City
3 Council to recognize the work and the need to fund
4 AAPI organizations. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
6 turn to Ravi Reddi from the Asian American
7 Federation.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 RAVI REDDI: Thank you so much to Committee Chair
10 Brannan. My home Council Member, Council Member
11 Hudson and all Council Members here for this
12 endurance test of a hearing. Special thanks to
13 Malcom, I don't know how you're doing it.

14 I'm Ravi Reddi, the Associate Director of
15 Advocacy and Policy at the Asian American Federation
16 where we proudly represent the collective voice of
17 more than 70 member nonprofit serving \$1.5 million
18 New Yorkers. We want to thank Speaker Adams for
19 advocating our communities behalf during the State of
20 the City Address and pushing for change and for
21 Council for asking the critical question than
22 advocating for our community throughout the Executive
23 Budget hearing. Specifically, when it comes to
24 mental health, AAF just recently released a first
25 Asian focused mental health directory in our city.

1
2 Featuring more than 100 culturally competent language
3 accessible mental health therapists and the database
4 is growing.

5 Here is some of our mental health
6 recommendations. I'm just going to race through
7 these. Provide increased consistent investment in
8 Asian mental health organizations to build bilingual
9 and culturally competent staff capacity and expertise
10 to address the increasing needs of our clients with
11 severe mental illnesses.

12 Develop the capacity of Asian serving community-
13 based organizations to identify mental health needs
14 and provide non-clinical interventions. Develop and
15 finally develop workforce initiatives that create a
16 pipeline of Asian mental health professional skills
17 in bilingual and culturally competent mental health
18 care. And on language access, we're thankful that
19 City Council has expressed support for the Community
20 Lingual Interpreter Bank and worker co-ops for that
21 support - that support the need for quality language
22 access from within our communities. Now we need the
23 funding to bring this home to the tune of \$2.25
24 million for the Community Lingual Interpreter Bank
25 and 300K per worker co-op for three worker co-ops

1 covering African, Latino and Asian languages. The
2 Asian One is the one that Asian American Federation
3 would focus on.
4

5 In addressing public safety and anti-Asian hate,
6 we urge City Council to continue our Hope Against
7 Hate Campaign, which amongst other things has already
8 trained thousands of upstanders through training with
9 partner organizations through the city since last
10 year and implement these other recommendations.
11 Increase funding for the APAC Community Support
12 Initiative to the tune of \$600 million in order to
13 sustain, expanded direct services that are seeing an
14 increased demand as well as fund critical anti-
15 violence programming in our hope against -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 RAVI REDDI: Finally, uh, you know there are a
18 few other things we'd like to discuss but we'd also
19 just like to raise up the fight of our seniors and
20 are thankful that they have been prioritized in
21 several ways, through the Exec Budget hearings and in
22 the Stated City's Speech.

23 For now, thank you and our written testimony will
24 feature more thorough breakdowns of our community and
25 organization asks. Thank you so much.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
3 turn to Netta Goash.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next we'll turn to
6 Lloyd Feng.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 LLOYD FENG: Good afternoon and I just want to
9 apologize for my COVID voice. My name is Lloyd Feng,
10 I am a Policy Coordinator at the Coalition for Asian
11 American Children and Families CACF. The nation's
12 first and only Pan-Asian children and families
13 advocacy organization that leads the fight for
14 community equity. CACF also leads the 18 percent and
15 growing campaign, which brings together nearly 78
16 AAPI organizations across all five boroughs of the
17 city to fight for a fair and inclusive budget that
18 protects the needs of our most vulnerable AAPI
19 community members.

20 There are currently over 1.5 million residents of
21 AAPI descent in New York City comprising over 18
22 percent of the city's total population. AAPI New
23 Yorkers are the fastest growing racial ethnic group
24 and voting population in New York City, New York
25 State and the nation. Despite our communities

1
2 expansive growth and development, the needs of AAPI
3 New Yorkers continue to be overlooked, misunderstood
4 and uncouncted. Last year, AAPI organizations
5 received less than 4.5 percent of City Council
6 discretionary funding and less than 1.5 percent of
7 social service contract dollars.

8 Therefore, we call on Council to expand funding
9 to the following: AAPI Community Support Initiative
10 to \$6 million to fund critical programming including
11 mental health support, racial literacy, hate crimes
12 intervention, gender-based violence intervention and
13 prevention, youth programs and other culturally
14 responsive services needed to build long-term care
15 and healing for our AAPI New Yorkers during this
16 critical time. Access Health NYC to \$4 million to
17 sustain the citywide initiative that fund CBO's to
18 provide education, outreach and assistance to all New
19 Yorkers about how to access health care and coverage
20 and Communities of Color Non-Profit Stabilization
21 Fund to \$7 million.

22 The first Council fund of its kind that aims to
23 build the capacity of NYC nonprofits in recognition
24 of the fact that orgs led by people of the community
25 are best equipped to meet the needs of the community.

1
2 We also call on City Council to ensure an
3 investment and baseline of \$6 million to DOE to
4 establish a permanent central system for immigrant
5 and limited English proficient family communications
6 and expansion of the \$4 million investment made last
7 year.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 LLOYD FENG: To address the racial inequities
10 that have underwritten the rise in anti-Asian
11 violence in this city. Resources must be allocated
12 to CBO's that have trust and deep ties within our
13 diverse communities.

14 Thank you so much and a big shout out to Malcom
15 here.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
17 turn to Mohamad Q. Amin from Caribbean Equality
18 Project.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 MOHAMED Q. AMIN: Hi, good afternoon everyone.
21 My name is Mohamed Q. Amin and I am the Founder and
22 Executive Director of the Caribbean Equality Project,
23 founded in 2015 in response to anti-LGBTQ hate crime
24 violence in Richmond Hill Queens. Caribbean Equality
25 Project is a New York City based community

1 organization that empowers advocates for and
2 represents Black and Brown LGBTQ Caribbean immigrants
3 in New York City. We are a proud coalition member of
4 the Asian American Children and Families, CACF, which
5 leads the 18 Percent and Growing Campaign.
6

7 In New York City, South Asian and Indo-Caribbean
8 New Yorkers had the highest COVID rates infection and
9 hospitalization in 2020 due to limited lack of access
10 to culturally congruent testing and vaccination
11 sites. Including neighborhoods of Ozone Park, South
12 Ozone Park in Richmond Hill Queens.

13 Even before the pandemic, being underfunded has
14 led to our community-based organizations who
15 experience growing capacity uncertainties, rising
16 costs and inadequate resources to support our
17 undocumented and documented communities in sustaining
18 vital and lifesaving services such as culturally
19 competent mental healthcare, immigration support for
20 LGBTQ asylum seekers, language accessibility and
21 domestic violence resources.

22 We call on the New York City Council to invest in
23 and protect our marginalized communities by
24 increasing funding to the communities of color,
25 nonprofit stabilization fund to \$7 million. During

1
2 the pandemic, this funding became essential to help
3 the Caribbean Equality Project build capacity to
4 respond our communities emergent needs. From
5 training, our community action team volunteers, to
6 address food insecurity by distributing culturally
7 response groceries, fresh produce, EPE and safe sex
8 products to expand in the organizations leadership
9 capacity to advocate for culturally, inclusive and
10 linguistically COVID-19 testing services.

11 The Communities Color Nonprofit Stabilization
12 Fund was critical in addressing and relieving these
13 ongoing challenges.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 MOHAMED Q. AMIN: AAPI New Yorkers and LGBTQ
16 people have always been essential workers. The
17 COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted
18 immigrant communities and it will take years to
19 recover from its economic crisis. Our diverse
20 intersectional communities can no longer be
21 neglected, underfunded and under resourced. Thank
22 you for the time to testify today.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
24 call on Adrianna Dufey(SP?) from the New York City
25 Coalition for Domestic Work.

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, that concludes our
4 panels. I'm now going to announce the next five, so
5 people can be ready. So, Panel 39, Emma Katz, Julian
6 McKinley, Jimena Frankel, Modicella Sosa and Manerva
7 Contreras.

8 Panel 40, Jonathan Robinson, Keith Signora,
9 Roxanne Delgado, Christina Fernandez and Destiny
10 Tucker.

11 Panel 41, Jeannette Boca Negra, Sarah Nisble,
12 Stephanie Glass, Victoire S., Jessica Marshal. Panel
13 42, Lyric Thompson, Katherine Clad, Ombre Shamet,
14 Brandan Acton Bond and Harrison New House. Panel 43,
15 Cheryl Warfield, Eleni DeSiervo, Jessica Chen,
16 Francine Garber-Cohen, Taryn Sacramone. Beginning
17 with Panel 39, Emma Katz.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list was
20 Julian McKinley.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 JULIAN MCKINLEY: Good afternoon Chair Brannan
23 and distinguished committee members. My name is
24 Julian McKinley, I'm the Senior Director of Democracy
25 at Work Institute and I'm testifying today as a

1
2 member of the Worker Cooperative Business Development
3 Initiative, also known as WCBDI.

4 Since 2014, WCBDI has created more than 1,000
5 jobs in pathways to business ownership. We've
6 reached more than 9,000 entrepreneurs with education
7 and technical assistance. We've created more than
8 175 worker owned businesses that offer higher hourly
9 wages, better working conditions and importantly,
10 opportunities for Wealth building for Workers.

11 Worker Cooperatives are businesses that are owned
12 and managed by the people who work in them and I want
13 to share the impact of worker ownership with you.
14 Now, the South Bronx is home to the largest worker
15 cooperative in the United States, CHCA and CHCA has
16 transformed home healthcare locally. A traditionally
17 low-wage, high turnover yet essential industry where
18 the vast majority of workers are BIPOC immigrant
19 women.

20 They've raised job quality and industry standards
21 through on the job training and skill development.
22 Now, this is a fundamental component of worker
23 ownership that's investing in long-term worker
24 success. Now, compared with similar programs, CHCA
25 has nearly tripled job placement rates with quality

1 wages and doubled long term employment. When you
2 invest in worker ownership, you invest in a more
3 resilient future for businesses and for workers.

4
5 And now, in response to COVID, WCBDI sought to
6 preserve conventional businesses we love and the jobs
7 we rely on. At the request of SBS, we provided the
8 signature service of the Employee Ownership NYC
9 Initiative. It's the first initiative of its kind in
10 the U.S. and we've helped more business owners than
11 ever access support for a more resilient and
12 equitable approach. Worker owned small businesses
13 are unique in their ability to establish, grow and
14 retain community wealth as well as to create stable,
15 dignified work for all New Yorkers.

16 We ask City Council to continue investing in
17 workers cooperatives through WCBDI as an innovative,
18 economic and workforce development strategy by
19 enhancing WCBDI funding to \$5.012 million for FY23.
20 Thank you for the opportunity today.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
22 turn to Jimena Frankel.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list is
25 Modicella Sosa (SP?).

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next I will turn to
Manerva Contreras (SP?).

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I heard a voice I thought.
Okay, that concludes Panel 39. I will now turn to
Panel 40, Jonathan Robinson, Keith Signora, Roxanne
Delgado, Christina Fernandez and Destiny Tucker. We
will start with Jonathan Robinson from the Marine
Park Alliance.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

JONATHAN ROBINSON: Hi-

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh -

JONATHAN ROBINSON: Hello?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There we go. You are
unmuted. You can begin.

JONATHAN ROBINSON: Hey, okay, great thank you.
Good afternoon, I'm Jonathan Robinson, Communications
Director for Marine Park Alliance. We're a nonprofit
that advocates for our name sake park. Today, I'd
like to share with you the letter our Board Chair
Mariah Carroll Dalessandro wrote to Mayor Adams
regarding the inadequate state of parks funding.

1
2 Dear Mayor Adams, it is paramount that I share
3 with you the concerns of my organization and the
4 constituency and advocates for particularly regarding
5 the lack of resources and support parks receive to
6 fulfill their critical role in our communities. The
7 city's parks have received inadequate funding for
8 over four decades and the meager funds that are
9 allocated to them are inequitably distributed.

10 Marine Park, the largest city park in Brooklyn
11 has nearly 800 acres of green space across its
12 natural grasslands, salt marshes, and its
13 recreational areas. It has a range of uses including
14 leisure and sporting activities, ecological
15 conservation, and outdoor recreation. With proper
16 support, you could stand alongside the lights of
17 Central and Prospect Park as a preeminent New York
18 City destination. And it has nowhere near the needed
19 amount of staffing and upkeep for a park of its size
20 and potential.

21 As things stand, even if it were to receive
22 additional staffing and resources, this would likely
23 come at the expense and to the detriment of another
24 city park. Marine Park Alliance works hard to bridge
25 this gap, providing volunteer programs to maintain

1
2 the park and free recreational and cultural
3 programing to enrich the experience of all park
4 visitors. Yet MPA and other charitable organizations
5 that champion Marine Park, can only do so much.

6 For a healthy, thriving greenspace, services like
7 these should be ensured through the city's budget.
8 Furthermore, as a vital point and connection between
9 social service providers and the people who depend on
10 those services, parks should have an ample budget,
11 not face deep budget cuts that result in the loss of
12 critical part in jobs and services.

13 The COVID-19 pandemic has only underscored the
14 need for parks and showing just how stretched their
15 already thin resources are. I implore you to change
16 this disheartening status quo. Please dedicate one
17 person of the budget to New York City Parks. Signed,
18 Mariah Carroll Dalessandro Ward Chair. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Robinson and
20 Minerva was in attendees, now on panelists. So,
21 next, we'll call on Minerva Contreras.

22 DANIELA CONTRERAS: She is my sister but I will
23 be testifying on behalf of her and everyone else.
24 So, my name is Daniela Contreras, a former domestic
25 worker and currently an Organizer at the National

1
2 Domestic Workers Alliance, also a volunteer at the
3 BDA at my child's school and a constituent of
4 District 43. I'm here today because I want to speak
5 up on behalf of the people who while so many of us
6 have the opportunity to be safe at home. While the
7 pandemic was hitting hard, they had to go to work and
8 care for the families they work for, unfortunately,
9 many of them risking their lives. As we say at NEWA,
10 domestic work makes all the work possible. Today,
11 we're here because someone is caring for our loved
12 ones at this event.

13 In 2021, even while the pandemic was happening,
14 domestic workers were fighting to pass a bill.
15 Unfortunately we won. We had great supporters, like
16 employers from Hand and Hand that were supporting us
17 but 300,000 workers are currently looking for more
18 rights and more benefits and while we're passing
19 laws, they're not able to get access to this
20 benefits. So, we're asking for the Council to please
21 allow us to get those \$300,000 that we're asking so
22 that we can support other domestic workers, we can
23 support workers and let them know that they have
24 protections and that we want them home, a workplace

1
2 and the space to be treated with respect and dignity
3 and thank you. Sorry.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, that's alright, thank
5 you, appreciate that. Next, we will turn to Keith
6 Signore. I hope I pronounced that right.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list, we
9 will turn to Roxanne Delgado.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list,
12 Christina Fernandez.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next I will call on
15 Destiny Tucker. Okay, I'm going to move to Panel 41.
16 Panel 41, Jeanette Boca Negra, Sarah Nisble,
17 Stephanie Glass, Victoire S., Jessica Marshal. I'll
18 first start with Jennette Boca Negra. Sarah Nisble,
19 Stephanie Glass.

20 STEPHANIE GLASS: Hi.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 STEPHANIE GLASS: Can everyone hear me? Okay,
23 great.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, yup hmm, hmm.
25

1
2 STEPHANIE GLASS: Hi, I'm Stephanie Glass. I am
3 personally very familiar with the Strategic Response
4 Group and I can tell you first hand that as a unit,
5 they are violent, cruel and functional useless at
6 counter terrorism and they must be disbanded by
7 eliminating their immense budget.

8 In April of 2021, I was at a March in honor of a
9 13-year-old who had been killed by Chicago PD, Adam
10 Toledo. For some reason, the SRG had a particular
11 interest in us that night. That night, I was with a
12 friend who tended to walk in the back of the March to
13 make sure everyone was safe. I remember very
14 clearly, my friend is walking backwards away from the
15 line of SRG following us with his hands up and
16 Captain Julio Delgado, who is the Captain of
17 Strategic Response Group Two. Suddenly, he just
18 points at my friend and he says, get em. And four
19 officers push in and grab my friend and they're
20 manhandling him into the cuffs. And I'm freaked out
21 and I'm screaming and screaming, "let him go. Let
22 him go, he didn't do anything." And the SRG officers
23 are shoving me back.

24 And then suddenly, I see a different friend of
25 mine on the ground and she has four or five SRG

1
2 officers on top of her. She is this very short Black
3 woman and multiple men have their knees on her back
4 and her limbs and they're holding her down and she's
5 screaming in pain.

6 These men are in full body armor covered in
7 weapons. There is no way my friend in her miniskirt
8 was posing a threat, much less a terroristic threat
9 to any of them. In that moment, I thought she was
10 going to die.

11 At the moment Frank James opened fire, the SRG
12 were throwing out the possessions of homeless people
13 and arresting their supporters. That is a fact.
14 They only exist to intimidate and traumatize people
15 who are trying to do the right thing. Their only
16 purpose is to hurt people. I am not a terrorist. I
17 am a taxpayer. I'm a good neighbor. I try very hard
18 every day to do the right thing and the SRG live in
19 my nightmares. If - I believe the Speaker said at
20 the beginning of the meeting, the Budget is a moral
21 document.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23 STEPHANIE GLASS: If the budget is a moral
24 document, which I agree that it is, the SRG cannot be
25 funded. Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 turn to Victoire S. Sorry if I mispronounced that.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting Time.

5 VICTOIRE S.: Uhm, hi. My name is Victoire. I'm
6 a New Yorker here to urge City Council to completely
7 remove funding from one of the NYPD's most violent
8 units, a Strategic Response Group.

9 On June 5, 2021, I was violently arrested by the
10 SRG while protesting the illegitimate curfew imposed
11 on Washington Square Park. That night, hundreds of
12 SRG officers rushed into the park and before I knew
13 it, one of them had slammed me to the ground. Had I
14 not been carrying a backpack that cushioned my fall,
15 I could have fractured my skull.

16 Despite being compliant and yelling that I was
17 resisting, four officers insisted on carrying me by
18 each of my limbs. I cannot express how distressing
19 it was to have been carried with my legs spread apart
20 in the air by two male officers. I wish I could say
21 I'm the only person this has happened to but I'm not.

22 In fact, like Stephanie mentioned, this is just
23 one of the many instances of SRG brutality we've
24 witnessed over the past two years. I've personally
25 seen the SRG beat, shove, drag, pepper spray, tase,

1
2 kettle, strip and humiliate civilians, press, medics
3 and legal observers at protests.

4 I've witnessed the SRG thrust heavy bikes into
5 people's chests and use the L-Rad, a military weapon
6 that can cause ear damage and migraines, even when
7 not used at its full power. Removing the SRG from
8 policing protests isn't enough because the unit also
9 harms communities. Specifically, Black and Brown
10 communities outside of protests.

11 In 2018 SRG officers were involved in the murder
12 of Saheed Vassell in Crown Heights. More recently,
13 they have been assisting in the city's violent
14 homeless sweeps, destroying the property of houseless
15 folks. The SRG needs to be stopped.

16 I urge City Council to disband the Strategic
17 Response Group and prevent it from ever being
18 recreated in any form. Thank you and I will also be
19 later reading the testimony for Kelsa, just as a
20 note.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uhm, next we're going to turn
22 to Jessica Marshall.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 JESSICA MARSHALL: Hi, my name is Jessica
25 Marshall. I am proud to be one of the many who left

1
2 their city at birth to realize their dream of coming
3 to New York City to live, work, and raise a family.

4 My students too – I'm an Adjunct Professor. Have
5 come from all over the country and they're ecstatic
6 to be starting their adult lives here in New York
7 City. This is a city that is all about tolerance and
8 doing the smart thing. And today, I'm here as a New
9 Yorker, a teacher and a parent to urge you, esteemed
10 City Council Members to do the right thing and remove
11 the funding for the NYPD's Strategic Response Group
12 from the NYPD's budget.

13 This group tasked extensively with fighting
14 terror, has attacked New Yorkers including our most
15 idealistic young people who take to the streets
16 calling for justice and change. It's a source of
17 shame for all of us who've seen the videos and at
18 this point, that's pretty much all of us.

19 Thanks to a study by the Human Rights Watch, we
20 know that the SRG is specifically training its
21 members to attack people from groups calling for
22 progressive change. And that the SRG's efforts have
23 disproportionately affected people of color.

24 In that report, New York City, the city that we
25 love, seems like one of the throwback regimes so

1
2 popular in other parts of the country. Cities and
3 states, where bullies believe they can silence people
4 calling for social equity. Come on. That's not New
5 York. We should be leading the country, not
6 following its worst examples.

7 City Council Members, you have the opportunity to
8 fix this and approve that New York City, the city the
9 people around the world dream of is back and better
10 than ever. Please, I urge you to remove the funding
11 from the NYPD's SRG and instead, invest in these
12 wonderful organizations that have testified here
13 today. Thank you so much for your time and your
14 work.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and now we will go
16 to Panel 42, Lyric Thompson, Katherine Clad, Ombre
17 Shamet, Brandon Acton Bond and Harrison New House.
18 We will first turn to Lyric Thompson.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I'm going to now turn
21 to Katherine Clad.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next turning to Ombre
24 Shamet. Okay, next on the list is Brandon Acton
25 Bond. Okay, next is Harrison New House. Okay, I'm

1
2 going to turn to the next Panel 43 but I will
3 announce a few others. Panel 43, Cheryl Warfield,
4 Eleni DeSiervo, Jessica Chen, Francine Garber-Cohen,
5 and Taryn Sacramone.

6 Panel 44, Ms. Amel Vega (SP?), Jeff Kuntz,
7 Nathaniel Evans. Panel 45, Zachary Katznelson,
8 Shalonda Curtis-Hackett, Shania Morris, and Zolema
9 Dominquez. Panel 46, Aji Gaye, Laura Jean Hawkins,
10 Jeninia Ding (SP?) and Meghan Chappell.

11 Panel 47, Debra Ack, Albert Scott, Beverly Pabon,
12 Jeremy Caplin, Valerio Orseli (SP?). And Panel 48,
13 Randy Dillard, Alejandro Corieat (SP?), Stephani
14 Espinal, Karen Asner, Rachel Barkley, Damian
15 McShane (SP?), Sarah Williams, Ivan Felkner, and
16 Suzette Simon.

17 I'll first start with Cheryl Warfield for Advance
18 More Opera.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 CHERYL WARFIELD: Greetings. Thank you Chair
21 Brannan and Finance Committee Members for the
22 opportunity to testify in support of an additional
23 \$100 million in funding for arts and culture.
24 Culture generates billions for the economy and has
25 employed nearly 400,000 people in New York City in

1
2 the past. Communities with cultural assets show
3 better outcomes for education, aging, health and
4 against crime. Arts initiatives provide greater
5 access to the arts.

6 I am Cheryl Warfield, a Professional Opera
7 Singer, Su-Casa Teaching Artist with the Bronx Opera
8 and Founder of More Opera. We make opera accessible
9 in underserved communities through culturally
10 responsive programs that showcase Black themes. We
11 presented free outdoor concerts of opera, spirituals
12 and Caribbean music in Spanish and English in
13 Washington Heights and East Harlem through a grant
14 initiative last fall.

15 Now, we are in partnership with the Department of
16 Transportation to present the program in public
17 spaces around the city. I urge you to support
18 culture vibes request for an additional \$100 million
19 in the Fiscal '23 budget for \$50 million in CIG and
20 CDF baseline funding. \$45 million in grants for
21 strategic initiatives and an additional \$5 million to
22 increase staffing for TCLA.

23 The additional \$100 million would bring the
24 city's annual investment in culture to less than one
25 quarter of a percent. That's 0.24 percent to be

1
2 exact of the city's total budget. I wish to thank
3 New Yorkers for -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 CHERYL WARFIELD: And Culture at Three for
6 including more opera in its efficacy work and I thank
7 you Council Members for your efforts towards a
8 greater, more equitable, and just New York. Thank
9 you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
11 turn to Eleni DeSiervo.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 ELENI DESIERVO: Thank you. Good evening Chair
14 Brannan and members of the Committee on Finance. My
15 name is Eleni DeSiervo, Senior Director of Government
16 Relations at the Lincoln Center.

17 Today, I implore you to prioritize the cultural
18 sectors request for an additional \$100 million
19 investment from the city in the Fiscal Year '23
20 budget as a down payment toward Cultural for All.
21 Supporting the cultural sector is the key to moving
22 New York City's holistic economic recovery forward.
23 Culture creates jobs is part of the ecosystem
24 supporting small businesses and is economic
25 development.

1
2 From our [INAUDIBLE 6:51:07] to construction
3 workers, we work to support union jobs. At a time of
4 high employment, Lincoln Center accelerated its
5 timeline for the new David Geffen Hall to get New
6 Yorkers back to work. By supporting 6,000 jobs,
7 awarded 43 percent of construction contracts to
8 MWBE's and developed a workforce development program
9 with Turner Construction after 30 local residents on
10 track with full-time union positions.

11 Culture is a pathway to upward mobility for the
12 leaders of tomorrow. Lincoln Center invests in
13 students through programs like the DOE's middle
14 school addition camp participating at the Summer
15 Youth Employment Program, Ladders for Leaders and
16 CUNY Cultural Corp. We know this is important to
17 raising the next generation of New Yorkers or dance
18 artists as administrators.

19 Art is healing. Throughout the past two years of
20 uncertainty, culture played an essential role in the
21 city's pandemic response. Despite incredible loss,
22 organizations found new ways to engage audiences to
23 help us process our collective grief grappled for
24 injustices and continue to heal. At Lincoln Center,
25 we firmly believe in rejuvenating power of the arts

1
2 and we're dedicating our summer season, called Summer
3 for the City with hundreds of free events for all New
4 Yorkers to rejoice for member reclaim, a city built
5 on equity inclusivity.

6 And the arts is interwoven in social service and
7 civil life. We've hosted countless community
8 graduations, blood drives, food distributions,
9 naturalization ceremonies. You know we encourage the
10 City Council to restore -

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

12 ELENI DESIERVO: Initiative funding, like Autism
13 Awareness and Geriatric Mental Health Initiative. As
14 a proud member of the 34 Cultural Institutions Group,
15 we encourage the City Council and the city
16 administration to work together to pass the
17 additional \$100 million request under the NYC Culture
18 Vibe. Thank you for listening.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
20 turn to Jessica Chen.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 JESSICA CHEN: Hello everyone. My name is
23 Jessica Chen. I am Artistic Director and
24 Choreographer of JChen Project, a contemporary dance
25 company. Thank you Malcom, Chair Brannan, Council

1
2 Members and my colleagues for the time to speak
3 today.

4 New York City is a place where culture thrives
5 and trends are set. The arts are vital to our city's
6 soul and our collective humanity, as well as an
7 essential, economic driver. New York City
8 Comptrollers report before the pandemic at NYC's
9 creative industries employed nearly 300,000 people
10 and it accounts for 13 percent of the city's total
11 economic output, totaling \$110 billion.

12 As the most populated city in the United States,
13 we have the power to set trends globally. Let's use
14 this power to make a positive change in our city and
15 our country. Trends I would like to see reflected in
16 this city budget includes: One, a significant
17 investment in the arts. My colleagues at New Yorkers
18 for Culture and Arts, Cheryl who just spoke, Eleni
19 who just spoke and all other cultural workers who
20 have testified today, request for an additional \$100
21 million investment in culture, which brings us to a
22 .24 percent of the city's total budget. Let's start
23 there.

24 And two, budget equity for the Asian American
25 Pacific Islanders communities. 2021 saw a 343

1
2 percent increase in anti-Asian hate crimes. At the
3 same time, API is the fastest growing racial group in
4 New York City, currently representing 18 percent and
5 growing. We are advocating for budget equity. JChen
6 products mission is to create dance works that
7 emphasize identity, cultural diversity and belonging.
8 Our work challenges stereotypes and negative biases.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 JESSICA CHEN: We believe that culture connects
11 and representation matters. I'm happy to answer any
12 questions you may have to help navigate the budget
13 negotiations. Thank you so much for your time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Jessica and next we
15 will turn to Francine Garber-Cohen from the Regina
16 Opera Company.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 FRANCINE GARBER-COHEN: Can you hear me?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

20 FRANCINE GARBER-COHEN: Okay, I'm Fran Garber-
21 Cohen, President of Regina Opera. For 52 years,
22 Regina Opera has offered fully staged operas with
23 four orchestra and English super titles in Sunset
24 Park and underserved low-income community. We also
25 present many free concerts in public accessible

1
2 spaces in Sunset Park, Bay Ridge and other sections
3 of Brooklyn. One result is that we bring money to
4 businesses in these areas from money from tourists
5 from our staff, from our musical artists. We provide
6 affordable professional level entertainment in
7 accessible venues. The performances bring people
8 together, especially senior citizens which make up 65
9 percent of our audience.

10 The need for cultural enrichment is reflected in
11 the fact that over 4,000 people usually attend our
12 performances each season due to COVID-19, Regina
13 Opera lost a ticket income from about two years of
14 shows. We lost most of our private sponsorship and
15 we've relied on public funding from the Department of
16 Cultural Affairs and Council Members Brannan and
17 former Menchaca, to pay for rent, insurance, phone,
18 to keep our company alive.

19 From the March 2020 shutdown until May 2021, we
20 never gave up the task and joy of bringing happiness
21 to our friends and neighbors by offering recorded
22 Operas and concerts online. Now, we have returned to
23 fully staged operas with a full orchestra but the
24 audiences are only 50 percent of our prior
25 attendance, greatly reducing earned income.

1
2 Donations and grants have also not returned to
3 prepandemic levels. Making it difficult to plan for
4 the Fiscal Year '23 season due to loss of funds. We
5 cannot retain singers, staff, orchestra members.
6 Many have not returned to a company after being laid
7 off.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 FRANCINE GARBER-COHEN: So, we request again,
10 just like the other members, we request additional
11 funding, \$50 million for Department of Cultural
12 Affairs and \$5 million for the Department of Cultural
13 Affairs to hire additional staff needed to process
14 the grant proposals.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
16 turn to Taryn Sacramone.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 TARYN SACRAMONE: Thank you Chair Brannan and
19 members of the Committee. I'm Taryn Sacramone,
20 Executive Director of Queens Theater and Chair of the
21 Cultural Institutions Group. A diverse coalition of
22 34 cultural organizations who share a public, private
23 partnership with the City of New York and are located
24 in all five boroughs, including Zoo's, gardens and
25 performing arts organizations.

1
2 In Fiscal '20, we welcomed over 24 million
3 visitors to our institutions. Well, I represent the
4 Cultural Institutions Group, I am here to advocate
5 for a request in investment on behalf of the entire
6 cultural community, NYC Culture Vibe. One that will
7 have enormous economic and social impact for all New
8 Yorkers and address the city's most pressing needs.
9 Culture has the data driven, data proven ability to
10 strengthen communities, include education outcomes,
11 decrease youth involvement in the criminal justice
12 system and improve the mental health and wellbeing of
13 the community they serve.

14 The city's cultural sector has proven time and
15 again its capacity is the number one driver of
16 tourism and it has been the impetus behind all of the
17 city's past recoveries. As my colleague said, the
18 importance of our sector, the services we produce and
19 the revenue we generate towards the economy are
20 underrepresented in the city's budget.

21 Today, we are coming together to request an
22 additional \$100 million investment. This investment
23 known as NYC Culture Vibe, the in visionary
24 investment in building the city's economy will bring
25 the annual investment in culture to less than a

1
2 quarter percent of the city's total budget. And
3 represent a commitment toward the ultimate goal of
4 reaching one percent for culture.

5 This includes \$50 million in funding for the
6 Cultural Institutions Group and Cultural Development
7 Fund baselined. Baselined support to sustain these
8 organizations, plus \$45 million in funding across
9 five strategic initiatives, including the
10 establishment of a cultural equity fund to support
11 BIPOC led and serving organizations. \$10 million in
12 tourism and marketing, \$10 million for workforce
13 development, \$5 million in accessibility, \$5 million
14 for artists and money to increase the staffing.

15 Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and now I will turn
17 to Panel 44, Ms. Amel Vega (SP?), Jeff Kuntz, and
18 Nathaniel Evans. We will first turn to Ms. Vega.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I will turn next on my list
21 to Jeff Kuntz.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on the list,
24 Nathaniel Evans.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1

NATHANIEL EVANS: Hello.

2

3

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, you can go ahead. We
4 can hear you.

4

5

NATHANIEL EVANS: You can hear me?

6

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

7

NATHANIEL EVANS: Okay, yes, thanks for having
8 me. My name is Nathaniel Evans, I'm a member of
9 Freedom Agenda. Uhm, this is the great value in
10 closing Rikers Island and now it's the protection of
11 life. When your life is not the ultimate goal to
12 look forward to then life takes on little meaning.

13

Today, the Department of Correction is for more
14 suffering and loss of too many lives instead of care
15 and control as it claims to be its purpose. It is
16 time to stop the devaluing of life that is being
17 perpetuated within the system design or pretrial
18 detention and not death.

19

New York City does not have a death penalty, so
20 there's no reason for anyone to lose their life
21 within the system. Value life above the system of
22 dehumanizing and death that is taking place on Rikers
23 Island. The Mayor is proposing to hire over 500 new
24 CEO's. Department of Correction already has the
25 largest budget and staff than any Department of

1
2 Corrections in the country. DOC does not need any
3 more guards, that the Federal Monitor has made clear.
4 DOC needs transparency and accountability to maintain
5 the dysfunction and reduce the harm people in their
6 custody are experiencing every single day.

7 The \$63 million of taxpayers money proposed for
8 more jail guards should actually go into more
9 vulnerable communities in our city. This action will
10 validate the true purpose of a city budget, which
11 will also contribute the public safety. We need to
12 make urgent investments into the most vulnerable
13 communities in our city. Investments need to be made
14 in developing people that have a social impact into
15 the community. For instance, creating one on one
16 mentorship programs for individuals who leaves from
17 Rikers will ensure the lowering of recidivism,
18 thereby improving public safety as a whole.

19 I encourage this Committee to also fully fund -
20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 NATHANIEL EVANS: The Board of Corrections which
22 serves as an independent oversight board that
23 monitors New York City jail system. My last phrase,
24 in closing, do not increase DOC's already bloated
25 budget. Instead we should be deflating DOC's budget

1
2 and redistributing those resources to the communities
3 that the jail system is extracting its population
4 from. Thanks a lot, good day.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
6 Panel 44. Next, I will turn to Panel 45, Zachary
7 Katznelson, Shalonda Curtis-Hackett, Shania Morris
8 and Zulema Dominguez. I will first turn to Zachary
9 Katznelson.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 ZACHARY KATZNELSON: Hi, good afternoon. Sorry
12 about that technical difficulty for a moment there.
13 I'm Zachary Katznelson, I'm the Executive Director of
14 the Lippman Commission. Thanks for the chance to
15 testify. I'm here to talk about Rikers.

16 As we all know as Mr. Evans was just saying,
17 lives on Rikers are at great risk, both staff and
18 incarcerated people alike but the Council can help
19 ease this crisis even as we take the essential steps
20 to close Rikers. Critically, Rikers cannot safely
21 handle a number of people that are locked up there
22 right now, not with the current staffing crisis.
23 Safely lowering the jail population will allow the
24 Department of Correction to consolidate operations to
25 close jails. That will mean fewer officers in need

1 on any given shift. Overtime costs will come down.
2 Safety should go up and this is not just about
3 opening the gates. This is about safely and smartly
4 lowering the population. I'm going to give you two
5 ways the Council can help do that. First, please
6 continue to push to increase funding for supportive
7 housing, particularly for people who are in the
8 system which is called justice involved supportive
9 housing.
10

11 Now the corporation for supportive housing
12 analyzes the system and so, there are 2,500 people,
13 more than that could go through Rikers every year who
14 need supportive housing but haven't been able to
15 access it. We spend over \$1 billion, well more than
16 \$1 billion incarcerating them every year. Supportive
17 housing for these folks would cost over \$100 million.
18 Far better investment with far better results.

19 Second, 90 percent of the people at Rikers are
20 there pretrial. 1,400 folks have been there for more
21 than one year waiting for trial and what's probably
22 the most expensive dangerous waiting room in the
23 world. Every week they're there, it cost New York
24 City another \$13 million.
25

1
2 If we fund for \$600,000, a pilot project that was
3 done in the Brooklyn Courts, run by the Center for
4 Court Innovation make that citywide to help speed up
5 cases, we can lower the jail population by about
6 1,000 people. A huge amount with just a small
7 investment, basically the cost of incarcerated; one
8 person on Rikers for a year, we can change thousands
9 of lives, safety will increase, positive outcomes
10 will increase. This is the way forward. Thanks so
11 much.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
13 turn to Shalonda Curtis-Hackett.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 SHALONDA CURTIS-HACKETT: My name is Shalonda
16 Curtis-Hackett and I'm a parent of three at
17 community-based Doula and part of Dignity in Schools
18 Campaign NY. As a parent and community member, I
19 stand with New York City Youth who have worked
20 tirelessly to get the Mayor and his administration to
21 understand why police free school is important and to
22 invest in them, their care, mental health and
23 restorative justice over policing.

24 Our Black and Brown children are adultified,
25 dehumanized and criminalized in schools. Eric Adams

1
2 and his administration are refusing to listen to the
3 demands of students. Instead, the Mayor's NYPD and
4 DOE are doubling down on youth criminalization. The
5 DOE has passed the buck. During the Executive Budget
6 hearing process, the DOE refused to acknowledge that
7 they are funneling DOE funds to the NYPD. They've
8 tried to deflect and escape accountability for the
9 harms of school policing. Let the record show, every
10 dollar spent on school policing is a dollar not spent
11 on education.

12 The Mayor spreads fear to hide the harms and
13 financial and social costs of youth policing. City
14 Law makers jeopardize students childhood when they
15 choose to funnel hundreds of millions of dollars
16 into school policing. Full commitment to funding for
17 school restorative justice models will make schools
18 safer for all students. We are calling for new
19 initiatives of \$75 million directly to 500 high
20 schools to hire school-based restorative justice
21 coordinators. The city must stop hiring new cops.

22 When you negotiate the adopted budget, push to
23 hire 2,000 New Yorkers to strengthen schools, fund
24 school-based restorative justice, support students
25 social and emotional wellbeing and move money away

1
2 from policing. In light of such tragedies as
3 yesterday in Texas, Buffalo and the countless other
4 acts of violence.

5 School should be a safe and supportive space for
6 children to process their emotions and seek counsel.
7 Unfortunately, I am afraid this will be co-opted and
8 used as an opportunity to capitalize on fear. When
9 students arrive in schools, they should be greeted by
10 community members and teachers, not police. Young
11 people and families must be well-resourced, have
12 borough resourced schools and communities. It is the
13 city's government duty to make sure that happens. It
14 is important to fund evidence-based solutions and
15 school policing is not one of them.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 SHALONDA CURTIS-HACKETT: I urge the City Council
18 to reject the Mayor's cuts to the public school
19 system. The Mayor's proposed budget would set the
20 city back. It doesn't have to be this way. When you
21 negotiate the adopted budget, please push for all the
22 initiatives I said earlier.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
24 turn to Shania Morris.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 SHANIA MORRIS: Hello, my name is Shania Morris,
3 my pronouns are he, him. I am a Youth Leader at Make
4 the Road New York and the Urban Youth Collaborative.
5 I am in the tenth grade. I go to high school in
6 Staten Island. Everyone please listen to what I'm
7 about to say. In New York City, Black and Latinx
8 youth represents 91 percent of all arrests, despite
9 being only 66 percent of the students population.
10 Ain't that injustice?

11 For almost a year, I have been fighting for
12 mental health support, guidance counselors, nurses,
13 teachers, after school programs for Black and Brown
14 students. Students like myself are constantly
15 ignored. All we are fighting for is our own future.
16 It inferiorities me to see how each year, City
17 Council Members turned their back on us as they keep
18 passing the city budget that spends more than \$400
19 million on police in schools, yet there is no proof
20 that school police actually prevent conflict in our
21 schools. In fact, we have seen it mostly escalate
22 any conflict that does happen, making things worse.

23 As a Black gender non-conforming student, every
24 time I go through a metal detector at my school, I
25 feel intimidated, threatened by police officers.

1
2 Especially after what happened to me in eighth grade.
3 I was pushed to the ground and held down by school
4 cops when they thought I was going to fight another
5 student. School police don't know how to deescalate
6 situations. Often they try to resolve confrontations
7 with more violence.

8 Schools are supposed to be welcoming. Police in
9 schools don't make me feel safe or any of the other
10 students, yet Mayor Adams Executive Budget even funds
11 nearly 800 empty school police positions. New York
12 City must not hire a single new cop.

13 New York City already funds more school cop
14 positions than school counselors.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 SHANIA MORRIS: Social workers or restorative
17 justice coordinators. New York City already has the
18 largest school police force in the country. For
19 comparisons, Los Angeles has 20 times less police
20 officers in schools than we do, despite having more
21 than half of New York City students population. It
22 is time for students voices to be heard by the City
23 Council. Stop funding racist policing and start
24 funding our futures. Thank you.

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you and next we will
3 turn to Zalima Dominquez.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 AKERIA ADAMS: Hi, Zulema's an organizer and I'm
6 the student leader and we'll be testifying. My name
7 is Akeria Adams, I'm a Youth Leader at the Urban
8 Youth Collaborative and a high school senior in
9 Queens. I'm here today testifying on the city's
10 budget, which will fail me and my peers by
11 prioritizing funding police in schools into the
12 resources that help students like me.

13 As a student that attends a heavy police public
14 school with mostly students of color, I witnessed and
15 experienced the impact of spending so much money on
16 school cops.

17 Every day when I walk into school, the first
18 thing I see is about ten cops waiting to scan
19 students at metal detectors. But getting support
20 inside the school building is hard to come by. My
21 school has one college advisor for 100 students, 100
22 seniors and one guidance counselor for 400 students.
23 As a senior, I wanted to start my college application
24 process early but it was difficult for me to do so
25

1
2 with both my schools college advisor and counselor
3 being busy to give me support.

4 When I tried to reach out to them, they were
5 often busy and would postpone the time we were
6 supposed to be meet for weeks. This led to me
7 feeling discouraged to apply and even led to me
8 missing application deadlines. School cops can't
9 help solve issues that students have, yet the Mayor's
10 Executive Budget plans to again spend \$400 million on
11 them next year. In addition to being a waste of
12 precious funds, school police also harm students.
13 School police are known to escalate situations. I
14 have seen school police in my school use excessive
15 force and hurt students until they are bruised.

16 I have seen them arrest students and yell at them
17 during metal detector searches. I once had a fork in
18 my bag for lunch and they told me I couldn't bring it
19 to - I couldn't go to class unless I threw it away.
20 Making me late to class. I have been taken aside
21 nearly every other week to be scanned by a wand
22 because of harmless items like a hole puncher and
23 jewelry. I really don't know how the city officials
24 sleep at night knowing that they are funding cops

1
2 instead of care for students. And it is a slap in
3 the face that the Mayor's Executive -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 AKERIA ADAMS: Budget funds nearly 800 vacant
6 school compositions. We don't need hundreds of new
7 cops in schools. We need support. Stop neglecting
8 our needs and give us police free schools and
9 resources that help us. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
11 testimony for Panel 45. I'm going to announce a few
12 more panels since we're approaching the end of what I
13 announced. So, I'm going to announce Panels 50, 51,
14 52, 53, 54.

15 Panel 50 will be Brian Carmichael Freedom Agenda,
16 John Paris Govoculous(SP?), Michael Pope, Amanda
17 Porch, Ari Silver, Rosalyn, Chauncey Young, Rasheedah
18 Brown Harris, Crystal Rodriguez, and Erica Bravo.
19 Panel 51, Ruwee Lee, Yaka Yatzillo(SP?), Justin
20 Pascone, Chris Langfield. Panel 52, Dahlia Forte, GG
21 Racake, Indira Martinez, Benjamin Spierman, Carlye
22 Eckert, and Scott Daly. Panel 54, Kimberly Olsen,
23 Richard Bronner, Athena Bernkopf, Beverly McFarlin,
24 Cassandra Warney. I'll now start with 46 Aji Gaye.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 AJI GAYE: Good afternoon everyone. My name is
3 Aji Gaye and I'm a freshman at high school in the
4 Bronx. A youth leader with Sisters and Brothers
5 United and the Urban Youth Collaborative. I'm here
6 today to urge the City Council to stand up for young
7 people and support our demands for police free
8 schools.

9 Young people across New York City have been
10 constantly calling for the complete divestment of a
11 policing infrastructure that has historically
12 disproportionately targeted Black and Latinx young
13 people like myself. I am tired of attending a school
14 with more school police than counselors. I am tired
15 of attending a school that doesn't feel welcoming. I
16 am tired of feeling like I'm entering a prison.

17 As a freshman, it was shocking to see this many
18 police at my school on the first day. I immediately
19 thought something had happened and quickly realized
20 that all those cops were there for me. I was the
21 schools biggest threat on the first day and my second
22 day and my third day and every day I go into school.

23 Cops are aren't there for my safety. When they
24 see me and my peers, I'm a threat, so I don't
25 understand why New York City continues to hire them.

1
2 At this moment, many of you are probably
3 wondering why even after yesterday's tragic incident
4 in Texas, me and my peers are still calling for
5 police free schools. The answer is that the public
6 school system has been used as a tool to further
7 criminalize Black and Brown young people and while we
8 know violence in our community is real, we also
9 understand that violence is a symptom of
10 underfunding, disinvestment and neglect of our basic
11 human rights. When people can't access living wage
12 jobs, quality healthcare, education and mental health
13 services and affordable housing, I can go on and on
14 and what we see is a community reacting to that
15 neglect and I'm not justifying violence but I hope
16 you can understand that if we address the root cause
17 of these issues, than we've been taking a step
18 forward to transforming our communities into
19 healthier and safer environments.

20 You as City Council have the opportunity to begin
21 to shift the conditions in our schools. To do this,
22 NYC must spend \$75 million to hire restorative
23 justice coordinators in five high schools and \$45
24 million to implement restorative justice practices.
25 Unlike policing, restorative practices seek to

1 address the root cause of the harm. It would look at
2 youth like me as a person rather than a potential
3 problem. New York City must spend \$75 million to
4 hire 500 new school counselors and \$75 million to
5 hire 500 new school social workers.
6

7 School counselors and social workers provide key
8 mental, emotional and academic support for us that is
9 badly needed. While we need a one to one fifty ratio
10 of counselors, social workers and students, NYC's
11 ratios for these are like one to four. We must have
12 a one to 181, 82 ratio for school police to students.
13 NYC must spend \$75 million to hire 500 community
14 members.

15 When students arrive at school, they should be
16 greeted by community members, not police. We must
17 prioritize hiring Black and Brown community members
18 to greet students as they enter the building and
19 check in visitors. Additionally, we need youth
20 advocates, parent coordinators and community outreach
21 coordinators to help contribute to the safety and
22 flourishing of our communities. New York City must
23 baseline \$5 million on the mental health continuum.
24 Youth in New York City need a better mental health
25 system, especially living through this pandemic. We

1
2 are calling for a mental health continuum. A network
3 of mental health services that connect students with
4 in school services and community services to get the
5 care they need.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

7 AGI GAYE: Lastly, they must not hire a single
8 new school cop. New York City already funds more
9 school cop positions than school counselors and
10 social workers combined. New York City already has
11 the largest school police force in the country by
12 far. For a comparison, Los Angeles has 20 times less
13 police in their schools than we do, despite having
14 more than half New York City school population.

15 Today, I ask the City Council Members to not give
16 into Mayor Adams call for more school police, which
17 is a tactic of fear mongering. Instead, you need to
18 stand up and vote for budget that divests in our
19 criminalization and invest in our care. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will turn to Laura
21 Jean Hawkins from Astoria Queens Sharing and Caring.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 LAURA JEAN HAWKINS: Good evening, oh, good
24 evening Chair Brannan and all the members of the
25 Council who have been powering through today's

1
2 hearing. As Advisory Board Chair of Astoria Queens
3 Sharing and Caring, DVA Sharing and Caring, I'd like
4 to thank the Council for its longstanding support of
5 our work.

6 In her State of the City Address, Speaker Adams
7 outlined her vision to expand health and opportunity
8 to improve safety and recover from the pandemic. She
9 talked of equity, health equity in our communities
10 and that resonated with me. 28 years ago, Sharing
11 and Caring was founded by four breast cancer
12 survivors to address the disparities that existed in
13 Queens County. It was our feeling then and it is
14 still today that Queens residents should not have to
15 leave their borough to get top notch quality cancer
16 screening, treatment, support and care. That's why
17 we have been proud to partner with the Queens Cancer
18 Center and the entire HH system to provide much
19 needed assistance, treatment and care to cancer
20 survivors, including those currently undergoing
21 treatment.

22 The onset of the pandemic two years ago changed
23 our world, especially for cancer survivors, who are
24 among the most vulnerable populations being effected
25 by COVID. We, as an organization have seen a

1
2 tremendously increased need for our services over the
3 past two years. Specifically the need for individual
4 and group counseling, as well as emergency financial
5 assistance.

6 People who pre-COVID would have been considered
7 employment secure, housing secure, food secure, were
8 no longer and they turned to us for help and we have
9 helped them to the best of our ability. Due to the
10 increased need that we have experienced, which is 25
11 percent from 2019, we are seeking \$200,000 under the
12 Council's Cancer Services Initiative.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 LAURA JEAN HAWKINS: Is that my time?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, if you could just wrap
16 up with a sentence or two.

17 LAURA JEAN HAWKINS: Okay, yeah, so due to our
18 increased need, we're asking for the Council's
19 continued support and to consider allocating \$200,000
20 to Astoria Queens Sharing and Caring. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and just to remind
22 everyone, testimony should be emailed to
23 testimony@concil.nyc.gov. So, anyone that is
24 speaking today and has not emailed their testimony,
25 they should do so. We collect it up to 72 hours

1
2 after close of this hearing. Next, we will turn to
3 Janiah Ding (SP?).

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next we will turn to
6 Meghan Chappell.

7 MEGHAN CHAPPELL: Good evening Chairperson
8 Brannan and members of the Committee on Finance. My
9 name is Meghan Chappell and I am the Program Manager
10 at Empire Liver Foundation.

11 The New York City Council Viral Hepatitis
12 Initiative funds 34 organizations to provide the most
13 innovative and effective Hep B and C treatment,
14 prevention and linkage to care education initiatives
15 in the country. There are currently approximately
16 230,000 New York City residents effected with chronic
17 hepatitis B and 116,000 believed to be infected with
18 chronic hepatitis C.

19 Since 2014, the Council funding, City Council
20 funding has enabled community health organizations to
21 hire and train Hep B and C patient and peer
22 navigators, healthcare providers and Hep B and C
23 screening care treatment and healthcare navigation
24 and educate New York City communities at risk to
25 promote, prevention and care.

1
2 Empire Liver Foundation was established by
3 leading liver specialists dedicated to improving
4 health in New York City communities at a time when
5 New York City needed expert guidance on the novel
6 hepatitis C treatment regimens. We've developed
7 evidence-based clinical trainings for over 3,000 of
8 New York City's frontline primary care providers who
9 serve communities most impacted by viral hepatitis.
10 With the introduction of the first ever New York City
11 Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan by 2030, continued
12 support of this initiative is vital to the health and
13 wellbeing of New York City's most vulnerable.

14 For funding in 2023, we are asking for a minimal
15 investment of \$2 million to support the necessary
16 work in order to achieve elimination. Our
17 organizations members lead in the latest medical
18 advances for care of liver diseases. We recognize
19 the stark gaps in healthcare access and work to
20 expand viral hepatitis treatment. Prescribers and
21 New Yorkers can access these life saving treatments.
22 With your support we can continue to offer care,
23 treatment and education to protect the health and
24 lives of our New York City communities and eliminate
25 viral hepatitis together. Thank you.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And next, I will
3 call on Debra Ack.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 DEBRA ACK: Uh, can you hear me?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

7 DEBRA ACK: Hi, good afternoon Chairman Brannan.
8 Good afternoon Council Members. My name is Debra Ack
9 and I am a Board Member of the East New York
10 Community Land Trust. We are a grassroots non-for-
11 profit boots on the ground volunteer resident led CTL
12 fighting for community control of land, so that what
13 is built in our community meets the needs of truly
14 low-income Black and Brown residents forever.

15 East New York CLT and approximately 19 partner
16 organizations and growing, are part of the citywide
17 CLT initiative that seeks \$3 million in City Council
18 discretionary funding in FY2023. We ask the
19 Committee to recommend renewed funding for the
20 citywide CLT initiative in the FY 2023 budget. We
21 rely on the CLT. We, the CLT, rely on initiative
22 funding to move our work forward. We have done so
23 much with the Council funding in the past and there
24 is much more work to be done.

1
2 East New York CLT has given me my every day
3 senior life meaning in assisting my community with a
4 voice. We need this funding to continue to move
5 forward in educating and bringing the community into
6 the visions of CLTs. Some of our accomplishments
7 are: We've grown our steering committee to 30 plus
8 active members who move our work forward in three
9 committees that meet weekly over Zoom. All steering
10 committee members are East New York and Brownsville
11 residents, volunteer residents.

12 We've held multiple virtual community events and
13 multiple in-person events to educate residents about
14 the Community Land Trust and model -

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

16 DEBRA ACK: And as - I'll finish shortly. And as
17 we ask the community residents what they would like
18 to see on these vacant lots that would uplift the
19 community. We have deepened our community
20 relationship through full giveaway, lot cleanups,
21 rallies and an upcoming Take Back the Block, block
22 party. We have surveyed 255 vacant publicly owned
23 lots in East New York every other Saturday morning.
24 Seeking input from the residents. Nothing should be
25 built in our community without the residents input.

1
2 Who better to know what is needed in our community
3 but us. Our slogan is, Our Land, Our Community, Our
4 Decision. We need the City Council to invest in -

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

6 DEBRA ACK: Our city and the citywide CLT
7 movement. Please renew funding for the CLT
8 Initiative at \$3 million. Thank you for this time.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
10 call Albert Scott.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on my list is
13 Beverly Pabon.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 BEVERLY PABON: Good afternoon. Okay, thank you.
16 Good afternoon City Council Committee of Finance,
17 members and its Chair. My name is Beverly Pabon and
18 I'm the Officer of 2 East on 27th Street Tenant
19 Association and we were contracted into the Tenant
20 Interim Reach Program at 1997 at the behest of HPD
21 with the goal and promise of becoming home owners at
22 the end of three to five years.

23 I'm here asking the City Council approval for
24 Fiscal Year 2023, \$200 million in the city capital to
25 be allotted to the Tenant Interim Lease Program, also

1
2 known as TIL for the total construction
3 rehabilitation of TIL buildings. Committee of
4 Finance members, some of you have already heard about
5 the flight and plight of the TIL buildings and its
6 struggle with the lack of support under HPD
7 financially. But let me tell you why it's important
8 for you to fund the TIL program as it originally was.

9 One problem that it is with the ANCP program that
10 HPD has committed to having us go into since 2012, is
11 that there will be a debt, a large debt on the
12 building once the rehabilitation is done. If you
13 fund the TIL program, there will be no debt, private
14 debt for the TIL buildings, their tenants, then
15 perspective home owners of low income.

16 Another benefits of this is that we will be able
17 to decrease the profit dollars in tax dollars that
18 the developers get and which is under the ANCP
19 program. It started out with a flat fee that they
20 would get under the ANCP program but now, it's ten
21 percent of whatever the construction cost is. That's
22 a lot of money and incentive for them to spend as
23 much money as they can and then put it on the backs
24 of the tenants and perspective tenant owners of low
25

1
2 income. There will be no need for no third party
3 management company under you guys funding the -

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 BEVERLY PABON: Tenant program, because the
6 tenant buildings have 25 years of experience of
7 monitoring and management buildings under TIL. We
8 ask that you please stop funding the ANCP program and
9 fund the TIL program in totality for the construction
10 work that need to be done for all the buildings that
11 are suffering right now under the TIL program. Please
12 fund \$200 million for the year and it will go a long
13 way and save the city a lot of money and homelessness
14 in the future for buildings that are - and people
15 that are in these buildings and not in homeless
16 shelter. Thank you so very much.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
18 call Jeremy Caplan.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 GIGI VERKAIK: Good evening, I am not Jeremy
21 Caplan but I'm speaking on his behalf and on my
22 behalf. My name is Gigi Verkaik and I am the Senior
23 Director of Development at Encore Community Services.
24 A nonprofit providing life saving support to older
25 adults in Manhattan. We're known for our home cooked

1
2 scratch, delivered, home delivered meals which go to
3 about 1,000 seniors every day and we also provide 70
4 percent of the city's recovery meals. An emergency
5 food program that was assisting about 12,000 seniors
6 who were or became food insecure during the pandemic.
7 This program ends at the budget, the end of this
8 budget season. There is nothing in place to provide
9 for the thousands upon thousands of seniors who will
10 go hungry. Right now, there's \$8.8 million in the
11 budget and it's estimated to keep meals running is
12 about \$40 million.

13 Sadly, it has often been the case when it comes
14 to city budgets including this year's executive
15 budget. It's being balanced at the expense of human
16 service organizations like Encore and even more
17 concerning, at the expense of our Asian population.
18 This despite that we are in an era where the 65 plus
19 population is growing at a rate 12 times faster than
20 those under the age of 65.

21 You may have heard this budget touted as generous
22 and that may be the case in some areas but for
23 organizations like Encore and other nonprofits, it
24 barely allows us to stay afloat. This, as we take on
25 more and more responsibility to ensure that our

1
2 growing population of older adults is not going to
3 bed hungry. The DFTA budget continues to make up
4 less than one half percent of the overall budget.
5 However, organizations like Encore get it done
6 anyway. We find ways to make sure seniors get their
7 meals, whether we're tested by the extreme obstacles
8 of the pandemic, be it the lack of working building
9 buzzers or elevator. In spite of it all, Encore and
10 other nonprofits deliver on sweltering days of
11 summer, the snowiest days of winter, climbing up
12 numerous flights of steps to reach those who are
13 homebound, hungry and in need.

14 Encore will always come through but we cannot
15 continue to cover the funding gaps in places -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 GIGI VERKAIK: On the backs of our overworked
18 workers and our dedicated staff. Hashtag Just Pay;
19 we call on every member of this Committee, every
20 Council Member and the Mayor to do right by our older
21 adults and our human service workers. Thank you for
22 the time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
24 turn to Valerio Orseli(SP?).

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, we will call on
3 Boris Santos.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Boris, you're unmuted if you
6 can begin your testimony.

7 BORIS SANTOS: Hello, can you hear me? Good
8 evening. Thank you so much to the Council, to Mr.
9 Chair. I appreciate you and we at the East New York
10 Community Land Trust appreciate you dearly as well
11 for this opportunity to speak, as my colleague Madam
12 Debra Ack the Secretary said, I am the Treasurer of
13 the East New York Community Land Trust and hello?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, go ahead.

15 BORIS SANTOS: Oh, yeah. Hope I can get
16 recompensed for that time but we at the East New York
17 Community Land Trust use community-based urban
18 planning or what we call planning for us, by us to
19 collectively determine what will be developed on
20 vacant and underutilized land.

21 As the secretary said, we operate on our board,
22 three part model. Five of us are East New York
23 residents. Five of us hear from the community at
24 large. East New York and Ocean Hill Brownsville,
25 excuse me and then, five of us are skilled

1
2 technicians and business owners and so forth. Since
3 the Council first funded the CLT Initiative funds
4 from \$1.5 million, we are asking for a doubling of
5 that, \$3 million and that's why I'm here for. Of
6 that \$1.5 million, we've only gotten as a CLT,
7 \$98,000. That only covers money for one staff. So,
8 we're looking to expand to at least three staff and
9 we've helped generate and actually secure 1.5 times
10 the city amount of allocated funding that you all
11 have given us.

12 And I just quickly want to talk about one project
13 that's a mixed use development that we're planning
14 for. Two mixed use developments we're planning for.
15 One on Hinsdale and Blake and one on Sutter and
16 Elton, which will amount to 124 units of affordable
17 housing, rental and homeownership.

18 Our land report, which I'll provide forward or is
19 provided in my written testimony, the link to,
20 details all the lots that we want to go after and
21 seek to target for ownership. And we beyond that, we
22 are doing other revitalization, such as in the Jewel
23 Streets, which lays 20 feet below regular grading.
24 I'll just finish up.

25

1
2 And then beyond just supporting our operating
3 costs, the city needs to invest its capital dollars
4 on CLT led projects. In the long-term this means
5 creating a CLT acquisition fund because we know to
6 truly remove speculation off the market, we have to
7 take over costs, the private land.

8 And in the short term, we must increase
9 investment to HPD's capital budget to further
10 increase production of affordable housing. The
11 numbers reported and the numbers even given after
12 Adams made an increase is just simply not enough.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

14 BORIS SANTOS: I'll leave it at that and thank
15 you so much again Council and Mr. Chair.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll call now
17 Panel 48, Randy Dillard, Alejandro Corieat (SP?), and
18 Stephani Espinal. We'll start with Randy Dillard.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I will call
21 Alejandro Corieat.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on the list is Stephani
24 Espinal.

25 STEPHANI ESPINAL: Good afternoon.

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3 STEPHANI ESPINAL: All the brave people here.

4 [INAUDIBLE 7:37:32].

5 My name is Stephani Espinal and I am an Organizer
6 with Family Immigration Services based in Queens. We
7 are a nonprofit legal service provider with a
8 community-based organizing. I want to do this really
9 quickly and I'm here because it's an urging this
10 community to immediately and fully implement Local
11 Law 53 and to work with the courts to ensure that no
12 case move forward without [INAUDIBLE 7:38:03].

13 Immediately and fully implement Local Law 53.
14 The intent of Local Law 53 is clear. To fund, trust
15 tenant organizing groups working in low-income
16 communities of color to lead. Outreach and education
17 efforts through community meetings, workshops, tenant
18 association meetings and more. This is the vital
19 work of tenant organizing and ensuring that tenants
20 are informed of right to counsel and supported prior
21 and eviction case fighting.

22 For tenants to exercise their rights, they need
23 to know they have them. Local Law 53 was signing
24 into - in - sorry. Local Law 53 was signing into law
25 in May 2021, with an effective date of November 2021.

1
2 It has required the city to work with trusted tenant
3 organizing groups to engage and educate tenants about
4 their right to counsel. We were told the city
5 allocate 3.6 million stores built had it. We know
6 that the mayoral and City Council Administration take
7 time to transition but now, the evictions protection
8 four months ago and hundreds of tenants are being
9 denied right to counsel.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 STEPHANI ESPINAL: We can't wait. The city is
12 now out of complaints. It is a law and needs to
13 implement this now. Please, the city needs this and
14 it is urgent. Call on Mayor Adams to fully fund and
15 implement Local Law 53 and ensure that the Office of
16 Civil Justice is allocate \$5 million. We're looking
17 forward to working with you on this.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

19 STEPHANI ESPINAL: Thank you for the opportunity
20 to testify.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
22 Panel 48. Panel 49 is Karen Asner, Rachel Barkley,
23 Damion McShane, Sarah Williams and Ivan Falkner.
24 I'll first start with Karen Asner.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 KAREN ASNER: Thank you. I act as the Volunteer
3 President of the friends of St. Nicholas Park and
4 we're an all-volunteer organization that works to
5 improve St. Nicholas Park, which is a 23-acre New
6 York City Park in Harlem. I'm speaking today to urge
7 the City Council to hold the Mayor accountable for
8 his unambiguous campaign promise to increase funding
9 to our New York City parks to the one percent budget
10 level.

11 New York City parks are critical city
12 infrastructure but they are not funded that way. In
13 our park, we lack the staff and resources to achieve
14 even the basic level of maintenance. We hold
15 volunteer cleanups every other Saturday from April to
16 October just to pick up trash and do other
17 maintenance projects in the park. Large areas of our
18 park do not get mowed during most of the summer. Our
19 park is overwhelmed with invasive weeds that are four
20 to six feet high along the pathways and throughout
21 the park. And this is not a cosmetic problem. We
22 smother other plants and they block site lines and
23 they make our parks unsafe.

24 Just last summer, I personally intervened a
25 domestic violence situation where a man had pushed

1
2 his companion into those weeds and was assaulting
3 her. He thought he was invisible and could assault
4 her there without any worry. And lack of maintenance
5 in our parks is also just bad policy. It's pennywise
6 and pound foolish. Growing weeds on park stairs for
7 example, break up the stairs and lead to million
8 dollar capital projects to repair those same stairs.
9 We in our park in St. Nick have one main set of
10 stairs that has been fenced off for more than ten
11 years because it was broken and dangerous and now
12 it's estimated to cost almost \$3 million to repair.
13 Basic maintenance could have prevented this problem.

14 And the impacts of these funding shortfalls for
15 New York City Park funding are most acutely felt in
16 communities like ours in Harlem, which lack the
17 extensive private funding that supports parks in
18 wealthier parts of the city. This is not how it
19 should be done and it's not how other large cities do
20 it. They generally allocate closer to two percent of
21 their budget to city parks. So, equity here
22 absolutely demands increased funding –

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

24 KAREN ASNER: For our community parks and so I
25 ask the City Council to please push back hard on the

1
2 Mayor's Executive Budget and increase the funding for
3 all New Yorkers and their parks. Thank you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next I will
5 call on Rachel Barkley.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 RACHEL BARKLEY: Uhm, hello and good afternoon.
8 My name is Rachel Barkley and I'm a law student at
9 Benjamin and Cardozo School of Law. I'm also the
10 partner of a member of the stewardship team at NYC
11 Parks. I'm testifying today to ask that the Council
12 push Mayor Adams to commit to providing one percent
13 of the city's budget to parks. Personally, the
14 city's park provided a refuge to me through the
15 strenuous work that is the first year of law school.
16 I've taken time to visit the parks to relieve stress
17 and get involved in my community.

18 At these volunteer events, I've seen New Yorkers
19 from all walks of life and equity backgrounds coming
20 together and forming community by cultivating the
21 land, planting trees and doing their parts to keep
22 our city green and clean.

23 Additionally, as the partner of a park, we had
24 gotten a close connection to the parks team and I
25 have had the immense pleasure of getting to know the

1
2 wonderful people who keep our city's green spaces
3 safe and beautiful for all. Without this funding, so
4 many parkee's will lose their jobs, which is a
5 terrifying prospect knowing that these people have
6 dedicated time and effort to the parks.

7 These parkees have jeopardized their safety
8 through the pandemic for the sake of maintaining our
9 parks. They put their livelihoods on the line and
10 now it's up to you all and the Mayor to repay these
11 parkees for their service by fulfilling Mayor Adams
12 promise to dedicate one percent of the budget to
13 parks. Thanks for the opportunity to testify.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
15 turn to Damian McShane.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on our list is
18 Sarah Williams.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 SARAH WILLIAMS: Hello and thank you for your
21 time. I'm Sarah Williams, Executive Director of
22 Green Guerillas. A nonprofit organization that
23 supports community gardens across the city.

24 We use a mix of education, organizing and
25 advocacy to help people cultivate community gardens,

1
2 engage youth in historically underrepresented
3 neighborhoods and advance food and environmental
4 justice.

5 Our vision is for a sustainable, equitable
6 communities across New York City. I'm here to speak
7 in support of the budget request of the Play Fair
8 Coalition as well as the New York City Food Policy
9 Alliance. We are requesting one percent of the city
10 budget for NYC Parks. A number that Mayor Adams
11 repeatedly committed to and the funding of \$6.5
12 million for the Parks Equity Initiative and \$4.5
13 million to protect and conserve our natural areas.

14 New York City's park system has been underfunded
15 and inequitably funded for 40 years, operating with
16 just .5 percent of the city budget. We ask the
17 Council to invest in Green Thumb by hiring more
18 outreach coordinators providing youth with
19 compensation for their work and compensating
20 community gardeners for taking leadership roles
21 within programming and mentoring the youth in Green
22 Thumbs Youth Program.

23 We urge the Council to utilize food systems as a
24 catalyst for building community wealth. Among other
25 things, this would include allocating \$5 million to

1
2 establish a new food justice grant program housed
3 within the Mayor's Office of Food Policy that
4 supports community led projects to grow food justice
5 and build wealth in BIPOC and low income communities.

6 We request that the Council fully restore funding
7 for NYC composting programs. We were disappointed to
8 see that the Administration cut funding for the
9 reintroduction and plan expansion of the curbside
10 composting program. If NYC is to meet its climate
11 goals and waste goals and take the burden off of
12 CBO's that have stepped in to fill this gap, the city
13 must reinstate and fully fund the city's composting
14 program.

15 Community gardeners provide their neighbors with
16 tangible resilience, create food access, foster life
17 giving connections between people and nature -

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

19 SARAH WILLIAMS: Strengthen community bonds,
20 engage youth and foster biodiversity and
21 environmental resilience. The Council's investments
22 in programs will help advance equity across the city.
23 Thank you for your time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next I will
25 call on Ivan Falkner.

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, we're going to
4 call Suzette Simon.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 SUZETTE SIMON: Okay great. Hi, my name is
7 Suzette Simon. I have an organization called NY
8 Laughs and what we do is we use the power laughter to
9 change New York City.

10 For the last 15 years, we've been producing
11 events in city parks, museums; like the Brooklyn
12 Museum Lincoln Center. And so, what we do is we
13 basically believe that we use the power of laughter
14 to heal and to bring happiness to New Yorkers. We've
15 entertained over 27,000 New Yorkers in three boroughs
16 and so, we put in a request because we really would
17 love to come to the Bronx and be able to produce an
18 event in the Bronx.

19 So, we're hoping that we've gotten funding
20 already for Staten Island and so, we were hoping that
21 the City Council would see you know some of the work
22 that we do. That we serve seniors, we serve people
23 of color. You know, people come to our shows from
24 Access A Ride and so, basically we serve all of New
25 York. And so, we're hoping that we can get funding

1
2 for the Bronx, as well as we're going to be
3 partnering with the Staten Island and New York Public
4 Library for an educational series on comedy, because
5 right now, Staten Island is the center of comedy in
6 New York.

7 And so, it's not just about performing but it's
8 also producing and uhm, and everything that goes
9 behind it, producing, writing, the technical skills
10 behind putting together things like that. So, we
11 want to serve the underserved community in Staten
12 Island as well as take it online. And so, we're
13 hoping that the City Council can see that you know
14 comedy is such an important business in the city. We
15 have the late night shows. It's a tourist
16 attraction. All of the top comedians. We have the
17 comedy capital world and it's not recognized and it's
18 under represented and so, we just really want to be
19 able to utilize comedy as a force for good in the
20 city. And so, that's what we're hoping.

21 You know like, you know you are our super heroes.
22 We even invite Council Members out to even tell jokes
23 and it's a great way for Council Members to engage
24 with their constituency in a different way. We've
25 had Council Member Rosenthal come out and tell a

1
2 joke. We had Council Member Brewer when she was a
3 Manhattan Borough President come out and tell jokes.
4 So, it's a great time for all. We invite New Yorkers
5 to get out of the subways, get out of their homes.
6 Put away their knives.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

8 SUZETTE SIMON: Come out and get your emotional
9 support pigeon. Yeah, just come out and laugh.
10 That's all. We really want to just make New York
11 healthier and happier through laughter and build
12 community. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, uh, that
14 concludes Panel 49. So, I will now call on Panel 50.
15 Brian Carmichael, John Paris Govoculous(SP?), Michael
16 Pope, Amanda Porch, Ari Silver, Rosalyn, Chauncey T.
17 Young, Rasheedah Brown Harris, Crystal Rodriguez, and
18 Erica Bravo.

19 We'll first start with Brian Carmichael.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I will call John
22 Paris Govoculous.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I will turn to
25 Michael Pope.

1
2 MICHAEL POPE: Good evening, my name is Mike
3 Pope, I'm the Executive Director of Youth Represent.
4 We're a legal services nonprofit that supports young
5 folks 26 and under after a criminal system
6 involvement. Thank you for the opportunity to
7 testify here tonight.

8 As we all know the city's at a crossroads. We
9 are not yet out of the pandemic. Gun violence has
10 surged over the past two years and the humanitarian
11 crisis at Rikers is just getting worse. Opponents of
12 Raise the Age and Bail Reform have tried to blame the
13 surge in gun violence on those reforms but the data
14 tells a different story.

15 For the first 18 months, 18 months after Raise
16 the Age went into effect, shootings in New York
17 remained the lowest that they had been in decades.
18 Only months into the pandemic did gun violence
19 increase in New York City. Young people are looking
20 at the elected leaders to lead us out of this
21 pandemic and into a just recovery.

22 We've heard from many of these incredible young
23 people here today. They are looking for a lasting
24 community-based solutions to gun violence and not for
25 policies that blame and criminalize youth. As of

1
2 this week, there were over 1,200 young people 18-25
3 incarcerated in New York City jails. And as you all
4 know, the annual cost to incarcerate one person in
5 DOC's custody over a year is over a half of a million
6 dollars. Many times the cost of even the most
7 expensive college.

8 Over those half million dollars per year and they
9 can't even provide basic safety. There are so many
10 better ways to spend this money. The city must
11 divest from systems that surveil police arrest and
12 incarcerate young people and invest in housing,
13 education, green spaces, healthcare, living wages and
14 employment opportunities and yes, legal services. We
15 detail these investments in the Raise the Age
16 Campaign 2022 and the Youth Justice platform that are
17 in my written testimony.

18 Youth represent profoundly appreciates the
19 support from Council this past year. This year has
20 brought an overwhelming demand for our legal services
21 and we deeply hope the Council will consider a new
22 area of funding and supporting our request for an
23 enhancement. Thank you and good night everyone.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
25 to Amanda Porch.

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3 VICTOIRE: Hi, I'm Victoire and I'll be reading a
4 statement on behalf of Amanda Porch. Amanda is a
5 Community Organizer who dedicates a lot of her time
6 to helping the houses community. This is her
7 statement.

8 Hello, my name is Amanda and I am a New York
9 resident. I'm here today to talk about the NYPD
10 Strategic Response Group. The Strategic Response
11 Group is a violent unit of the NYPD that police
12 protest. Since 2020, the SRG has been deployed to
13 protests where they've abused protestors who are
14 exercising their First Amendment Rights. Recently,
15 the SRG has been deployed to make arrests at homeless
16 encampment sweeps. On May 4, 2022, 50 SRG officers
17 were sent to arrest me and seven other people who
18 were standing on the sidewalk at an encampment sweep,
19 trying to save the belongings of the unhoused people
20 living there.

21 After the SRG arrested us, they ripped an
22 unhoused person out of his tent. Five SRG officers
23 were on top of him when they carried him away for
24 arrest. After my arrest, I was mistreated in the
25 holding cells. I was aggressively patted down to the

1
2 point where I felt like I was being assaulted. The
3 SRG has traumatized community members time and time
4 again. When the SRG shows up, we know that our
5 safety is at risk. The SRG has no place in our
6 communities for protests.

7 I'm asking the Council to disband the unit and
8 reinvest its funds fully back into our communities.
9 That the end of statement. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
11 turn to Ari Silver.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ari Silver we have -

14 [UNIDENTIFIED]: Sorry, I think that there is
15 error with the Zoom, you unmuted the wrong account.
16 Go ahead Ari.

17 ARI SILVER: Hello, my name is Ari Silver and I'm
18 a New York City resident and I'm here to ask that the
19 City Council remove the funding of NYPD to Strategic
20 Response Group from the police budget. I've spent
21 the last two years volunteering with ACLU of New York
22 as a Protest Monitor. During these last two years, I
23 have consistently seen first hand the brutality
24 inflicted by the NYPD's Strategic Response Group,
25 which was created at 911 to help supplement New York

1
2 City's Police Departments Counter terrorists and
3 efforts. I have seen first hand peaceful gatherings
4 of marginalized New Yorkers turn into unprovoked
5 beatdowns of the hand of the SRG.

6 In addition to the violence that the SRG has
7 inflicted upon activists, predominantly folks of
8 color. Fellow protests monitors and I have
9 experienced harassment, coercion and threats of
10 violence towards ourselves. Last summer, while the
11 SRG was enforcing a crackdown, or as they like to
12 call it curfew of gatherings at Washington Square
13 Park, a fellow protest monitor and myself were
14 threatened with the arrests for multiple SRG officers
15 for simply executing our duties.

16 Which aren't allowed according to the NYPD's
17 handbook. We even saw the SRG that night arrest
18 bystanders on their first date. Simply for being
19 near the NYPD made chaos. Even more recently, we
20 have seen the SRG assist the DHS sanitation and other
21 city agencies and their constantly recurring sweeps
22 of unhoused encampment. Where folks are simply on
23 the sidewalk and not blocking any traffic.

24 During one protest two years ago, after a car
25 rammed into a group of protestors outside the UN

1
2 headquarters, good Samaritans who were delivering
3 first aid to the injured were brutally arrested by
4 the SRG. They simply do not serve the needs of the
5 community and instead, are directly responsible for
6 inflicting harm and trauma against peaceful civilians
7 just trying to exercise their first amendment rights.

8 You, the City Council have a great opportunity
9 here to help serve the community and ensure that
10 there is an end to this violence and to ensure that
11 New Yorkers feel safe being able to exercise our
12 first amendment rights. Just like every other
13 American should be able to. So, that's why I'm here
14 asking you, the New York City Council to disband the
15 SRG and to help reinvest those funds, the billions of
16 dollars which we are spending in this police
17 department, to help ensure that -

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

19 ARI SILVER: And I thank you for the opportunity.
20 Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
22 turn to Rosalyn.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I will call on Chauncey
25 T. Young.

1
2 CHAUNCEY T. YOUNG: Good evening all. My
3 apologies that I cannot undo my video this evening
4 but my name is Chauncey Young, I'm the Director of
5 the Parent Action Committee. I am a resident in the
6 Hybridge neighborhood in the Bronx and the Parent
7 Action Committee is a part of several coalitions that
8 have been testifying this evening including part of
9 Dignity in Schools, part of the New York City
10 Coalition for Educational Justice and part of the
11 Healing Centered Schools Working Group.

12 We'd like to address the way that the New York
13 City's Budget is going and ensure that funding is
14 going to support our students and families socially
15 and emotionally, put additional funding into
16 counselors and social workers for our students and
17 not fund punitive things for our students. We don't
18 need new metal detector technology in schools. We
19 need social emotional supports for students in
20 crisis. We also want to remind the City Council that
21 our last Administration put forward an incredible
22 goal of a culture responsive curriculum that they
23 called Mosaic that either was \$500 million or \$200
24 million depending on what you hear. But we want to
25 ensure that this current administration devotes time

1
2 and energy to develop that. We also would like for
3 the city to ensure that funding for the mental health
4 consortium, \$500 million is made permanently part of
5 the budget as well as \$6 million for our immigrant
6 families and language access programs. These are all
7 essential as well as restorative justice programs if
8 we want our schools to be safe and responsive places
9 for our youth.

10 I recommend everyone listens to our youth this
11 evening. It's hard for you to get out and speak as
12 well as parent leaders and we do of course want for
13 the parent ambassador program, which is a one year
14 program that we've done in collaboration with the DOE

15 -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 CHAUNCEY T. YOUNG: With private funds to be
18 something that the city implements fully in years
19 going forward. So, thank you so much and we
20 appreciate you listening to us.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chauncey. Next,
22 we'll turn to Rasheedah Brown Harris.

23 RASHEEDAH BROWN HARRIS: Okay, can you all hear
24 me.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can ma'am.

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

3 RASHEEDAH BROWN HARRIS: Peace and blessings. My
4 name is Rasheedah Brown Harris. My pronouns are she,
5 her, hers and thank you for the opportunity to
6 testify Chair Brannan, other City Council members and
7 uhm, hey Malcom.

8 I'm proud to represent Legal Services NYC LSNY
9 for this testimony. LSNY's mission is to fight
10 poverty and seek racial, social, and economic justice
11 for low-income New York City residents. Through
12 litigation, advocacy, education and outreach, LSNY
13 has advanced the interest of our clients and created
14 systemic changes that strengthen and protect low-
15 income communities. Thank you City Council for many
16 years of your support. The Education Rights
17 Practices at LSNY assists hundreds of New York City
18 school children and their families to ensure
19 equitable access to education.

20 I'm here today speaking not only as a legal
21 services advocate but as a parent leader in education
22 reform. Specifically with LSNY's Ed unit with the
23 Healing Centered Schools Working Group. Me and my
24 two siblings were raised by a single Black man, my
25 father. He is a Vietnam Veteran suffering with

1
2 substance abuse issues, PTSD and other mental
3 illnesses. We struggled as children. We moved
4 around a lot. Living with friends, family members
5 and neighbors. I was in a different school every
6 year, sometimes two or three different schools with
7 the one school here.

8 When I say the services we provide at LSNY, I
9 wish we were able to get a hold of these services for
10 myself and my family growing up. The schools should
11 have been a safe place for me. It was not. The
12 unjust education system that did more harm than good
13 for us, still exists to this day. Therefore, the
14 need for LSNY's education services are great. But
15 our capacity is limited. We ask that you provide
16 \$500,000 to support our access to education project,
17 which delivers legal services to help children get
18 the support they need to catch up and keep up with
19 their education and support families with their
20 social, emotional -

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

22 RASHEEDAH BROWN HARRIS: Thank you, I'm going to
23 finish. The support and advocacy we provide at LSNY
24 takes a holistic wrap around approach with our
25 families. That is nontraditional but very much

1
2 needed. Providing empathy and dedication to our
3 community members like no other organization. We ask
4 that you please support us so we can continue to
5 support our school community. Thank you and peace.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Rasheedah. Next we
7 will turn to Crystal Rodriguez.

8 Okay I will turn to the final panelist for Panel
9 50 Erica Bravo.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, that concludes Panel
12 50. I will now turn to Panel 51 Ruwee Lee, Yaka
13 Yatzillo(SP?), Justin Pascone and Chris Langfield.
14 We will first turn to Ruwee Lee.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on the list, I have Yaka
17 Yatzillo. Next, we'll turn to Justin Pascone. Next
18 on my list is Chris Langfield.

19 CHRIS LANGFIELD: Hi, thank you for the
20 opportunity to testify. My name is Chris, I'm a
21 longtime New York City resident and I'm the member of
22 the New York City DSA. I want to talk about the
23 completely inadequate and unacceptable affordable
24 housing provision in the Mayor's revised budget.
25 After all the hardship and death we've gone through

1
2 as New Yorkers, we're now faced with a housing
3 catastrophe as evictions cases are piling up and
4 property owners are squeezing us for even more rent.
5 I know people who live with four or five people in
6 one apartment who are still being forced to move
7 because of thousands of dollars of rent increases.

8 I worked as an emergency medical technician in
9 the city for three years, two of those years during
10 COVID. I've seen the shelter facilities that the
11 city claims are adequate and safe. I've seen the
12 state of NYCHA buildings and I've met many people in
13 New York who fell through the cracks and have nowhere
14 to live. This proposed budget shows that we still
15 have a city government which is completely
16 unresponsive to the needs of most New Yorkers,
17 especially the most vulnerable and especially the
18 100,000 school children. School children that don't
19 have a stable home.

20 If we continue along this path, we're going to
21 see more and more people evicted or forced into worse
22 living conditions. New York already caters to the
23 privileged and ignores the needy and Eric Adams seems
24 determined to continue that policy. I'm urging the
25 Council to invest \$4 billion into permanent and

1
2 affordable housing, which Eric Adams promised to do
3 in this campaign.

4 Failure to do this would be devastating for
5 millions of us. The only thing we want is to live in
6 a safe affordable apartment, in our home city and we
7 want the same thing for our neighbors. And my final
8 statement to the Council Members is, don't sacrifice
9 our future for developers and speculative real estate
10 owners. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
12 turn to Dahlia Forte.

13 DAHLIA FORTE: Hi, my name is Dahlia Forte. I'm
14 a New York City resident and a member of DAC's NYC
15 Chapter. I'm here to voice my opinion by opposition
16 to Mayor Adams Executive Budget and to call on the
17 City Council to pass a budget that meets the needs of
18 all New Yorkers.

19 Two years into the pandemic, working class New
20 Yorkers are in crisis. COVID-19 cases are surging,
21 landlords are raising rents and families struggle to
22 stay in their homes but the Mayor continues to favor
23 the wealthy and powerful over everyday New Yorkers.
24 His budget makes devastating cuts to vital city
25 services like housing, healthcare, sanitation and

1
2 education while leaving the NYPD's \$10 billion budget
3 intact.

4 Today, I urge the Council to fight against the
5 Mayor's program of austerity and punishment. Instead
6 of cutting funding for housing, the Council must
7 invest \$4 billion into permanent affordable housing,
8 including \$1.5 billion for the New York City housing
9 authority and \$2.5 billion for HPD. The Council must
10 also reject Adams cuts to our public education system
11 by investing \$122 million into CUNY and funding DOE
12 mental health counselors and social workers rather
13 than filling school police vacancies.

14 I also urge the Council to act on the two deadly
15 crisis facing our city, climate catastrophe and the
16 overdose epidemic. We need \$1.3 billion for the
17 streets plan, \$1.8 billion for green public schools
18 and \$250 million for Fair Fares and \$10 million to
19 expand lifesaving safe consumption sites to all five
20 boroughs.

21 Finally, the Council must reject the Mayor's
22 progressive return to law in order. I urge the
23 Council to reject the proposal to add hundreds of new
24 CO's for solitary confinement, a practice that the UN
25 defines as torture. I urge the Council to

1
2 demonstrate their commitment to racial justice by
3 cutting failed NYPD criminalization programs like the
4 ineffective and violent plain clothes units and the
5 so-called Subway Safety Plan and ending all NYPD
6 resources to mental health calls.

7 Thank you Council Members and Committee Chair
8 Brannan for hearing my testimony.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
10 Panel 52. I will now turn to Panel 53 Indira
11 Martinez, Benjamin Spierman, Carlye Eckert and Scott
12 Daly. We'll first start with Indira Martinez.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

14 INDIRA MARTINEZ: My fellow New Yorkers and
15 members of the Council, I was not born in New York
16 City but like so many others, I've chosen to make it
17 my home. As a young woman of color in rural Georgia,
18 New York City represented a kind of safety for me. A
19 place I could be myself, those accepting of people
20 from all walks of life.

21 Since the Mayor took office, we've seen what
22 safety means to him. It means, authorizing the NYPD
23 to violently remove unhoused New Yorkers from public
24 spaces. Last year was the deadliest year on record
25 for unhoused New Yorkers.

1
2 It also means cutting the DOE budget by \$1.2
3 billion while simultaneously increasing the already
4 \$10 billion NYPD budget by \$690 million. This is the
5 Mayor's vision of safety. I am here to echo my
6 fellow constituents Rakia McKay, Katherine Clyde,
7 Christina Rodriguez Harts and others and voice my
8 vivamente opposition to Mayor Eric Adams Executive
9 Budget. I believe in the possibility of a truly safe
10 New York. One in which every single person has
11 access to safe housing and healthy food every single
12 day, schools that provide all children with what they
13 need to thrive. Clean parks where we can spend our
14 time without spending our dollars, carbon negative
15 infrastructure that actively fights against the
16 rising sea level lapping at our shores, land returned to
17 Lenape stewardship.

18 This future is possible and it is not idealistic
19 to ask for it. Government was created to meet the
20 needs of people and we have the resources, technology
21 and skills to accomplish all of these things and so
22 much more. What you lack is political will. Listen
23 to the people here representing community based
24 organizations. Why? Because they are doing your
25 work for you. On this very call, New Yorkers are

1
2 begging for their lives, then thanking you for the
3 opportunity to speak about it. About seven hours
4 ago, a Council Member joined the call and told us
5 that we needed to organize and rise up and I
6 appreciate the sentiment. But I can't help but find
7 it ironic that we're being asked yet again to do your
8 jobs for you.

9 Those who are most marginalized are being held
10 responsible for enduring and solving all of NYC's
11 most egregious injustices. Do your jobs, fight for a
12 budget that prioritizes the millions of New Yorkers
13 that are struggling to survive.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

15 INDIRA MARTINEZ: You report to us and
16 respectfully, I will not be thanking you for my time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we're
18 going to turn to Benjamin Spierman.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

20 BENJAMIN SPIERMAN: First of all, good afternoon
21 to Chair Brannan and Council Members. I'm Benjamin
22 Spierman, a New York City resident, General Director
23 of Bronx Opera and a Board Member of the New York
24 Opera Alliance. Off topic, I also urge the Council
25

1
2 to adjust the Mayor's budget as requested by so many
3 people and including Ms. Martinez a few moments ago.

4 Bronx Opera has received city support via the
5 cultural development fund and through Council
6 initiatives, using that support to work with kids
7 after school with the Bronx's immigrant community and
8 the senior citizens in addition to presenting 55
9 years' worth of opera performances.

10 Though my organization has needs, today I'm here
11 to talk about our alliance and the impact our members
12 make. Pre-pandemic, the 45 organizations in the New
13 York Opera Alliance provided over 2,000 jobs to New
14 Yorkers, providing these arts workers with over \$30
15 million in salaries each year. This includes people
16 on stage and backstage, instrumentalists,
17 administrators and more.

18 Organizations in our alliance usually bring in
19 over \$90 million in revenue each year but obviously,
20 that economic power has been challenged since March
21 2020. Most of survive thanks to a combination of
22 creativity, and the support of our faithful funders
23 very much including the New York City Department of
24 Cultural Affairs.

1
2 Men in small size opera companies all over New
3 York City are an under appreciated source of economic
4 power and we all know how to spend our money wisely
5 but wise spending does not preclude the need for
6 greater support. In that spirit, the New York Opera
7 Alliance asks that the City Council support the
8 request laid out in the 2023 New York Culture Vibe
9 ask, particularly the \$50 million increase to the
10 cultural affairs baseline budget.

11 At the least, we think and ask that the Council
12 should hold the cultural affairs budget harmless for
13 Mayor Adams three percent across the board cut. As
14 we recover from the pandemic, we've all seen live
15 audiences that are reduced from pre-pandemic levels.
16 Your funding will help our community remain the bang
17 for the buck industry that its always been and will
18 help our producers keep working in the community and
19 keep the music echoing in places and spaces all over
20 New York City, outside of the -

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 BENJAMIN SPIERMAN: And allow us to continue
23 raising our voices as we help provide entertainment
24 to audiences and dollars to the people who bring
25

1
2 opera to life in New York. Thank you for the chance
3 to speak today.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
5 turn to Carlye Eckert.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

7 CARLYE ECKERT: Hello, my name is Carlye Eckert.
8 Thank you for hearing my testimony today as a
9 representative of Dance Parade, a nonprofit arts
10 organization in New York City. I'm the Community
11 Engagement Director for Dance Parade and my
12 responsibilities are to coordinate year around dance
13 education in schools and community centers across the
14 boroughs, which culminate in the annual dance parade
15 on Broadway and Festival in Tompkins Square Park.

16 That event took place this past Saturday. We
17 held the 16th Annual Dance Parade and Festival in NYC
18 and our theme was Back to the Streets. This was our
19 first live event in two years with 10,000 dancers
20 representing over 100 styles of dance. The Dance
21 Parade and Festival was covered by ABC and BCCBS
22 Telemundo and New York One and dozens of others,
23 including a print addition of the New York Times as
24 the number one pick in their weekend roundup.

1
2 On Saturday, Folk Dance Club Kaleidoscope, a
3 bright and beach based childrens dance group led out
4 the parade with a display of Ukrainian and Russian
5 dances. This beautiful poignant performance shared
6 with the public, the similarities and differences of
7 these two peoples and cultures embodied side by side
8 and unified in dance.

9 Our mission is to celebrate diversity inclusion
10 and cultural equity through the promotion of dance in
11 all its forms. Throughout the year, we serve the
12 dance community by employing scores of teaching and
13 performing artists based in New York City, which 94
14 percent are BIPOC artists and immigrants. And
15 through our programs, we reach over 150,000 New
16 Yorkers each year. We believe that live dance
17 performance has the potential to awaken communal
18 spirit, help the public and dance community heal from
19 the pandemic and creates more vibrant and equitable
20 society.

21 This year, through our community engagement
22 programs, we've worked closely with 12 schools across
23 the five boroughs to bring back in-person ten to
24 twenty week dance education programs for K-12
25 students. And our teaching artists work in senior

1
2 centers March through June thanks to a partnership
3 with the Department of the Aging.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

5 CARLYE ECKERT: Offer joyful, physical activity
6 that supports coordination, flexibility, improved
7 circulation and honors life experiences,
8 strengthening connections between older Americans and
9 vibrant NYC Arts and Culture.

10 Through our continued efforts and experiences at
11 this time, we pledge to continue our work of bringing
12 the joy of dancing in all its forms to New Yorkers.
13 We're grateful to the DCLA and the Council's effort
14 to support the cultural sector. We ask City Council
15 to approve the request of NYC Culture Vibe. \$100
16 million in additional investment to the cultural
17 sector and bring us closer to our goal of 100 percent
18 for culture in NYC. Thank you very much.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
20 turn to Scott Daly.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

22 SCOTT DALY: Good evening Chair Brannan and all
23 members of the Executive Budget Committee. On behalf
24 of the Board and the staff of the New York Junior
25

1
2 Tennis and Learning, NYJTL, I want to thank you all
3 for allowing us to testify today.

4 I also want to thank you all for hanging in there
5 for these past eight hours. It's been a long day for
6 all of us and I want to particularly thank everyone
7 here.

8 I am the Senior Director of the free community
9 tennis programs of NYJTL. NYJTL is the largest,
10 free, youth and teen tennis program in the country.
11 This year, we are seeking \$1 million, an increase of
12 about \$200,000 under the Council's Physical Education
13 and Fitness Initiative. Over the past years, we
14 believe we've seen it, the talent, the kids have the
15 talent and it's universal but the opportunity is not
16 and that's where the City Council comes in through
17 these initiatives.

18 We allow tenants to be played; you allow it to be
19 played in all 51 Council Districts throughout the
20 entire City of New York. Kids get the opportunity to
21 become physically fit. They have the opportunity to
22 reach new educational heights. The opportunity to
23 make friends. The good, the character development
24 that comes out of sports can not be understated.

1
2 You know, we are asking for an increase mainly
3 because 14-years-ago, minimum wage in the City of New
4 York was \$6.50. We all know what it is today, \$15.00
5 and what we start the people at with NYJTL, we want
6 to give them a living wage. We do need the increase
7 that we're asking for.

8 Through the community chance programs throughout
9 the city, we annually reach over \$85,000 kids in
10 schools and parks throughout the City of New York.
11 The overwhelming majority of these kids are Black,
12 Latino, and Asian. The registration in each group is
13 about 25 percent each. Two-thirds of each of the
14 groups -

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

16 SCOTT DALY: Two-thirds of the group are ten
17 years of age and younger. We want to give them a
18 safe haven, an opportunity to play. We're not
19 unmindful of the other factors involving the city and
20 significant challenges that are faced. Tomorrow, we
21 start the largest interscholastic free tennis
22 tournament for middle school and high school kid in
23 the first congressional district in the country.

24 Again, I just want to say that I want to thank
25 you for your time. We just ask and we join with

1
2 other youth providers in urging that the upcoming
3 budget not be balanced on the back of the city's
4 youth. Thank you very much everyone. I'm grateful
5 for your time.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and before calling
7 Panel 54, I will announce Panels 56 through 60.
8 Panel 56 Usara Tavares(SP?), Shannon O'Neill Fonseca,
9 c(SP?), Eisha Ervin Joans(SP?), Yanni Sanchez. Panel
10 57, Barry Weinberg, Annette Robinson, Lorraine
11 Collins, Randy Dillard, Uraldi Perez, July
12 Colone(SP?). Panel 58, Darlene Jackson, Grace Ortez,
13 Michael Pearls, Jeff Lau, Justice Laboy. Panel 59,
14 Ella Wheel, Ken Mi Ung, Natasha Cappers. Panel 60,
15 Clenintine Palmberg, Ethan Cyrus, Faith Catherine
16 Jones, Leslie Gomez Rivera, Samantha Vargais(SP?). I
17 will first now turn to Panel 54 Kimberly Olsen,
18 Richard Bronner, Athena Bernkopf, Beverly McFarlin,
19 and Cassondra Warney. We'll start with Kimberly
20 Olsen.

21 KIMBERLY OLSEN: Great. Good evening everybody.
22 First a huge thank you to Chair Brannan, to fellow
23 Committee Members and to City Council staff. We are
24 so grateful for your passion, your leadership, your
25

1
2 endurance, as well as your support of arts education
3 here in New York City schools.

4 My name is Kimberly Olsen and I'm the Executive
5 Director of the New York City Arts and Education
6 Roundtable. New York City's public schools have been
7 through a lot over the past two years. Lost learning
8 time, suffering from the mental and emotional strain
9 of remote learning, processing the trauma associated
10 with the pandemic and racial injustices in our city
11 and country.

12 Transforming our city schools starts with the
13 arts. That's why I'm here today to call on our city
14 to invest in dance, music, theater, visual arts and
15 media education in the DOE budget. The arts provide
16 evidence-based solutions for engaging students in
17 learning, for increasing our parents engagement,
18 improving academic outcomes, supporting student
19 mental health and promoting well-being. We know that
20 excellent arts education is the foundation and a
21 launch pad for success in school and life. However,
22 underinvestment in arts education in New York City
23 has been recurrent.

24 Prior to COVID, a majority of principals, 67
25 percent said that funding for the arts was generally

1
2 insufficient. Only 34 percent of middle schoolers
3 are meeting state arts learning requirements and now
4 17 percent of schools still lack a certified arts
5 teacher, not to mention almost 30 percent of schools
6 no longer partner with the many wonderful arts and
7 cultural organizations that our city has to offer.

8 We want inviting, vibrant, colorful and thriving
9 school communities and again, that starts with the
10 arts. The Roundtable recommends that the city make
11 sure that all schools, every neighborhood across all
12 boroughs can provide recommended arts instruction to
13 every single student by guaranteeing at least \$100
14 per student in dedicated funding to support
15 sustainable arts ed for all. Continuing to devote 20
16 percent of academic recovery funding for standard
17 based arts instruction –

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

19 KIMBERLY OLSEN: In the summer and school year
20 programs and restoring and baselining \$24 million for
21 arts services. The arts are an essential part of
22 every students academic program and the very fabric
23 of New York City. Thank you so much for your time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we will
25 turn to Richard Bronner.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next on our list is
Athena Bernkopf.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

ATHENA BERNKOPF: Hi, good afternoon all.
Apologies for my slow get up here. So, thank you for
the time to offer testimony today. My name is Athena
Bernkoff, I'm here representing the East Harlem El
Barrio Community Land Trust. We are part of the
Community Land Trust Initiative ad we're asking for
\$3 million in support of CLT's growing and expanding
across the city.

So, East Harlem El Barrio CLT is one example of
what is possible through the Community Land Trust.
Since acquiring our first properties in November of
2020, we have been in the process of renovating
buildings that have been neglected for decades. The
rents of the four buildings in the project have been
projected - protected excuse me, at a range of 35-100
percent AMI, including four units set aside for
people experiencing homelessness. These rents are
stabilized for the long term future through a 99 year
ground lease built into our ownership structure.

1
2 At the same time, through ongoing trainings and
3 relationship building with residents, we've been
4 building out infrastructure for sustainable resident
5 led governance of these buildings to ensure that
6 those whose well-being are directly impacted are at
7 the forefront of any decision making on the
8 properties.

9 All of our residents are Black and Brown working
10 class people, immigrants, elders, and people with
11 disabilities who have been most vulnerable to the
12 intersecting housing, health and environmental crisis
13 that are devastating our communities right now. This
14 work demands immense people power and organizational
15 resources. Since what we are building on the larger
16 scale is community capacity to sort our land, in
17 addition to creating and preserving truly and
18 permanently affordable housing.

19 As some of my colleagues have testified here
20 today, Community Land Trust across the city are doing
21 this work in different ways. From building out
22 affordable commercial spaces to green spaces in
23 environmental justice neighborhoods. We don't have
24 time to waste on temporary and wasteful policies that
25

1
2 put people over profit – excuse me, that put profit
3 over people in our communities.

4 Putting control of land and housing in community
5 hands is racial justice strategy, is community safety
6 strategy, is anti-displacement strategy and economic
7 and environmental justice strategy. We are asking
8 that the city's resources be directed to
9 transformational work of community control of land.
10 We're also asking that capital funding for the
11 acquisition and preservation of community land be
12 added to this –

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

14 ATHENA BERNKOPF: Please sustain and expand the
15 CLT Initiative. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we'll turn
17 to Beverly McFarlin.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next we will turn to
20 Cassondra Warney.

21 CASSONDRA WARNEY: Good evening. My name is
22 Cassondra Warney, I work for the Corporation for
23 Supportive Housing. I'm here to talk about how the
24 city needs to invest in supportive housing as a
25

1
2 strategy to de-incarcerate Rikers Island and end
3 homelessness.

4 My organizations mission, CSH is to advance
5 solutions that use housing as a platform to deliver
6 services, improve the lives of the most vulnerable
7 people and build healthy communities. It's important
8 to note that through the borough-based jail plan
9 points of agreement in 2019, city leadership agreed
10 to expand justice involved supportive housing, JISH,
11 which is overseen by DOHMH, which has not yet
12 happened.

13 We thank City Council for formally requesting the
14 Adams Administration add, \$28.4 million to the
15 existing funding dedicated to JISH. Supportive
16 housing for the justice impacted. Review of the
17 latest budget request has not been incorporated.

18 For background, we are urgently looking to
19 improve access to supportive housing for those
20 currently on Rikers Island with significant
21 behavioral health needs and are homeless. In a
22 recent analysis, we found several thousand people on
23 Rikers Island, approximately 2,500 people in a given
24 year are experiencing homelessness and struggle with
25 ongoing behavioral health needs. When released, they

1
2 don't find adequate support, they cycle through
3 crisis systems. It's costing the city \$1.4 billion
4 annually just to incarcerate this group of 2,500
5 people. This group needs an intervention of
6 supportive housing. A combination of affordable
7 housing with voluntary individualized services.

8 We know supportive housing works as a solution.
9 It reduces jail recidivism. It will cost the city
10 \$108 million annually to provide supportive housing
11 to this group of people. So, \$108 million versus
12 \$1.4 billion.

13 So, I want to elevate two essential budgetary
14 elements. We need to expand JISH and increase the
15 annual commitment to supportive housing. For JISH,
16 the rates are so low, no provider has stepped forward
17 to apply for the RFP in the last three years. We
18 need more funding to increase the rates. Further
19 detail is available in the written testimony I've
20 submitted. Looking forward to working with you on
21 this.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
23 turn to Anna Pestoresa.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, we'll turn to
3 Victor Herrera. Okay, next, I'm going to call
4 Elizabeth Langer. Next on our list is Donna Hilton.
5 Okay, next we're going to call Lisa Gitelson.

6 LISA GITELSON: Thank you very much. Thank you
7 Chair Brannan and distinguished members of the City
8 Council for the opportunity to testify during this
9 virtual hearing. We applaud the Council and youth
10 services Chair Stevens for prioritizing programs and
11 services for young people and are thrilled by the
12 commitment for summer programming and SYEP.

13 To that end, summer camp and recreational
14 experiences are vital to the well-being of young
15 people and we hope that the City Council can support
16 programs like those offered by the Fresh Air Fund.

17 I'm Lisa Gitelson and I'm the CEO of the Fresh
18 Air Fund. For 145 years, we've provided the city's
19 children with summer experiences that help them
20 thrive and succeed, emotionally, academically and
21 socially. Despite having to suspend our traditional
22 camp and visiting host programs for the past two
23 summers due to the pandemic, the fund ensured that
24 New York City's children were able to have the summer
25 experiences they deserved and needed.

1
2 Last summer, the funds served over 2,400 children
3 in New York City based on in person and virtual
4 programs and we employed over 200 youth ages 18-24 as
5 counselors across our programs. We continued our
6 summer spaces programming working with the Department
7 of Transportation and the Open Streets Program to
8 give children ages 5-12 across four boroughs safe
9 places to play outdoors under the guidance of
10 counselors and mentors.

11 Our summer team academy for teens ages 13-17, was
12 a stipend program that gave young people insights
13 into possible careers, work experience and through
14 four partnership skills and a credential and
15 certificate. Although we did not have traditional
16 camp, families were able to visit our camps for three
17 day, two night overnight trips to relax and enjoy
18 time together and we had additional virtual programs
19 to keep children engaged, learning and having fun.
20 This summer, we are delighted to be returning to our
21 camping and visiting host family programs while
22 continuing some of the new programs we developed
23 during COVID. Children will have the opportunity to
24 go to four of our six camps and to reunite with
25

1
2 volunteer host families they visited prior to the
3 pandemic.

4 In addition, we're excited to continue our
5 stipend summer team academy and will have the
6 opportunity to provide more in person programming.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

8 LISA GITELSON: The past two years have been
9 especially difficult to the children in our city. We
10 are asking and encouraging the City Council to
11 support and fund organizations that will provide
12 essential summer programming to New York City's
13 children this year. Thank you for your time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
15 call on Salma Mohamed.

16 Okay, that concludes panel 55. I will now turn
17 to Panel 56, Usara Tavares, Shannon O'Neill Fonseca,
18 Mirna Aparicio, Eisha Ervin Joans, and Yanni Sanchez.
19 First start with Usara Tavares.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next we'll turn to and
22 call on Shannon O'Neill Fonseca. You can go ahead,
23 thank you.

24 SHANNON O'NEILL FONSECA: Good afternoon. Thank
25 you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is

1
2 Shannon O'Neill Fonseca, my pronouns are she and her.
3 I'm a Senior at Hunter College studying psychology
4 and I'm also an Education Organizer with the Parent
5 Action Committee in Bronx School District 9 and with
6 the Healing Center Schools Coalition. I have been
7 blessed to work with and be in community with our
8 powerful healing ambassadors and parent leaders in
9 the Bronx and citywide. Now, more than ever it is
10 necessary to have spaces that are trauma informed,
11 culturally responsive and centered in healing.

12 We must support initiatives where we can built
13 community of students, parents, families and
14 community advocates and community members. I am here
15 to urge the city and the New York City Department of
16 Education to continue investing and expanding the
17 Healing Ambassador program and in addition, to
18 develop a Youth Ambassador program as well.

19 We must invest in programs for our students that
20 are supportive and not punitive. This includes
21 restorative justice practices, culturally responsive
22 and sustaining education, language access and
23 providing mental health services and support for
24 hiring additional social workers and counselors to be
25 in your schools.

1
2 We are also asking for a \$5 million budget for
3 mental health continuum and a baseline \$6 million
4 budget for immigrant families and language access.

5 Inclusivity starts here. It starts with us and
6 accessibility is caring, is healing, is letting our
7 community members that no matter what, they are seen.
8 They are supported and they are loved just for who
9 they are, no matter our race, where we're from, the
10 language that we speak, our gender identity or our
11 sexuality. We are deserving of support, love and
12 care and we will not stop until this is how every
13 single person feels in all of our spaces.

14 And I'm going to repeat that again. We will not
15 stop doing this until every student, parent, family
16 member, community member feels included, loved and
17 supported. Thank you and once again for allowing me
18 to speak today.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Shannon and next,
20 I'll call on Mirna Aparicio.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on our list is Eisha
23 Ervin Joans.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I will call on Yanni
3 Sanchez. Okay, that concludes Panel 56. We're at
4 Panel 57, so I'm going to announce 61-65 because I
5 announced up to 60 and for folks, if people have been
6 coming and going from this Zoom all day. When I
7 called your name, you were not on the Zoom, there is
8 still an opportunity to speak after we have concluded
9 the panels. I will make an announcement at that
10 point.

11 Panel 61, Katelin Wong, Liz Accles, Shivani Shah,
12 Katelin Degear(SP?) and Ameer Ahasser. Panel 62,
13 Anna Lilla Araiza, Ashley Yang, Alexander Reijo
14 Martinez, Ashley Liu, Alisha Vardes(SP?), Aliza
15 Porcello(SP?). Panel 63, Tracey Fu, Yuri
16 Kavalerchik, Kim Noble Houston, Melanie Gruveles,
17 Jamila Elder. Panel 64, Jennifer James, July Bowen,
18 Kay Gabriel, Melissa Kagle, Araceli Mena and Rob
19 Katz. And the number we messed up, that was 64 and
20 65 and I apologize if I'm mispronouncing names. I
21 know how it feels.

22 Next, we're going to turn to Panel 57. We're
23 going to start with Barry Weinberg.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, going to call on
3 Annette Robinson.

4 ANNETTE ROBINSON: Whew whoo, thank you Jesus.
5 Greetings all.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Don't break me Annette, we
7 got more to get through.

8 ANNETTE ROBINSON: Oh my goodness. I come before
9 you this evening on behalf of Harlem's Community
10 Board 9's Housing Land Use and Zoning Committee.
11 Thank you for this opportunity to share Community
12 Board 9's budget priorities for the residents of
13 NYCHA's Manhattanville Grant and Audubon Houses.

14 Community Board 9's priorities are a reflection
15 of their needs and our belief that the residents of
16 Manhattanville Grant and Audubon Housing deserve
17 better and more.

18 The priorities forwarded to OMB address the
19 following: The privatization of Manhattan Borough
20 Houses. For the record, packs outreach to the
21 residents has been abysmal and is lacking
22 transparency or inclusion. CB 9's act is simple, the
23 voices of Manhattanville residents must be heard, in
24 its present state at Manhattanville Houses must be
25 paused until its residents are given a front and

1
2 center seat at the table. Under this umbrella, nor
3 can NYCHA be allowed to sell the air rights of 1450
4 Amsterdam Avenue, located on the ground of
5 Manhattanville houses. Attention must immediately be
6 given to the deliberate understaffing of
7 Manhattanville Houses management office and its
8 maintenance workers.

9 Our asks: Provide the fully functional staff
10 required that will meet the needs of its residents
11 and fulfill NYCHA's responsibility to provide decent
12 housing. Invest the capital. Manhattanville Houses
13 is also in dire need of capital repairs with proper
14 oversight. Our ask, implement the repairs, invest
15 the capital.

16 Last but not least is our Audubon Houses, which
17 is home to our seniors, where renovations are to
18 begin. Our ask -

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

20 ANNETTE ROBINSON: Please provide the oversight
21 required, which ensures our seniors are protected,
22 comfortable and not displaced. CB 9's NYCHA
23 residents deserve better and more. We at CB 9 stand
24 in support of them.

25 Thank you Lord. You all have a good one.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Annette. Next, we
3 will turn to Marine Collins.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, we will turn to
6 Randy Dillard. Next on the list, Uraldi Perez (SP?).
7 Next, I have Julie Colone.

8 Okay, I'm now going to turn to Panel 58, Darlene
9 Jackson, Grace Ortez, Michael Perlis, Jeff Lau,
10 Justice Laboy. So, we will start with Darlene
11 Jackson.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

13 DARLENE JACKSON: Sorry, uhm, thank you Chair
14 Brannan and the Finance Committee Members. My name
15 is Darlene Jackson and I'm a member of Freedom Agenda
16 and the Parent Leaders Live Action Network. I am
17 echoing every New York who calls for City Council to
18 reject the Mayor's Executive Budget proposal that
19 ignores the needs of his constituents and prioritizes
20 a carceral system.

21 A punitive system that continues to invest in job
22 that perpetuates mass incarceration. Overall, we
23 want to continually make the point that New York City
24 runs the most richly funded and richly staffed jail
25 system in the country yet delivers the worst results.

1
2 Those resources would be far better used outside of
3 the jail system to meet peoples needs and prevent
4 interaction with the justice system and correct
5 allocation of funds is urgent.

6 There are other urgent opportunities in this
7 years budget to shift from criminalization to support
8 prevention. For example, New York City must stop
9 funding nonprofits contracted through ACS, which
10 essentially is a conservation of surveillance towards
11 Black and Brown families and communities. We need to
12 reallocate funding towards trauma informed community
13 led solutions that addresses systemic racism and
14 inequality for our communities to thrive.

15 City Council cannot ignore the mismanagement of
16 our taxpaying dollars and the disinvestment of our
17 communities. I urge the City Council to shift funds
18 out of both the Department of Corrections and the
19 Administration Services and invest in a just
20 transition to expand and better compensate jobs
21 outside of the carceral and punitive system.

22 In addition, while lastly, expanding funding to
23 public defense organizations to adequately provide a
24 client center and holistic approach to effectively
25 advocate for a reduced caseload and a deeper

1
2 investment and early defense to prevent ACS filing a
3 petition in family court that separates and destroys
4 family and communities. Thank you for the
5 opportunity to speak and I hope that the Finance
6 Committee is actually here presently and listening to
7 the constituents and New Yorkers and I hope that they
8 have the political will and the political courage to
9 do what's right and not what's easy. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
11 turn to Grace Ortez.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

13 GRACE ORTEZ: Hi, good afternoon everybody. My
14 name is Grace Ortez. I am a member of Freedom
15 Agenda. I'm also a community organizer, reentry
16 specialist, a peer supporter and somebody living with
17 complex, post-traumatic stress disorder due to being
18 a survivor of pretty intense violence.

19 Everything I've heard today so far has really
20 enlightened me further in understanding how the
21 budget is absurdly misused. There's so many
22 incredible community projects going on and passionate
23 people waiting to be heard with such great ideas that
24 the city should and needs to invest in.

1
2 Earlier this year, a young woman died when she
3 was pushed onto the train tracks. The transgressor
4 that committed this murder was somebody who had been
5 cycled through shelters and jails for many, many
6 years. He has now been found unfit to stand trial
7 and is being held indefinitely in a psychiatric
8 facility. All this to say that our city continues to
9 fund the outcome of violence, rather than preventing
10 it. This is someone who is now in a psychiatric
11 facility after having taken a life and he had a
12 background of instability and not being taken care of
13 because of his mental health needs. And that's the
14 outcome of not investing in resources. People will
15 die.

16 Our city does not need more CO's, Correction
17 Officers. It's an absurd plan that the Mayor has to
18 again, only invest in the outcome of violence and
19 trust me, people will continue to die and I encourage
20 people to not wait until it's them or somebody that
21 you love. Because if you wait for that, trust me,
22 that hearing that there's more correction officers
23 and police officers responding to violence, it won't
24 make you happy. It won't return you to your loved
25 one. It won't undue the harm and damage that you've

1
2 endured. So, we need to start caring about victims
3 before the violent transgression occurs and that
4 happens through supporting people -

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

6 GRACE ORTEZ: With mental health needs who are in
7 desperate need of community support. And as a
8 reentry specialist, I know that those organizations
9 exist and they do incredible work and all they need
10 is to be funded. And that is the right way to
11 address the community violence that we're all so
12 urgently worried about. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
14 call on Michael Pearlis.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I will turn to Jeff
17 Lau.

18 JEFF LAU: Uh, can you hear me?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

20 JEFF LAU: Okay. Alright, hello everybody.
21 Let's support our human service workers with livable
22 wages and cost of living adjustments. New York City
23 needs to just pay.

24 Good evening everyone. Thank you to Speaker
25 Adams, Chair Brannan and members of the Finance

1
2 Committee for this opportunity to testify today. My
3 name is Jeff Lau and I'm the Director of the Adult
4 Literacy Program at the Chinese American Planning
5 Council. We call on the city to increase the
6 baseline funding for adult literacy programs to \$13.5
7 million. Restore the \$1.7 million cut in the prelim
8 budget. Extend the Adult Literacy Pilot Initiative
9 with \$5 million and renew the \$4 million
10 discretionary funding citywide.

11 Like so many adult literacy programs throughout
12 the city, CPC relies on city funding to provide
13 programming to our communities. It is meant
14 providing much needed wrap around services to our
15 community members too. Students learn English to
16 better assist their children's education, find
17 meaningful work and build relationships throughout
18 our community.

19 Students learn American Civics, learn how to
20 register to vote, what rank choice voting is and very
21 soon, learn about municipal voting in New York City.
22 Students learn about healthcare assistance and if
23 needed, receive services for domestic violence.
24 Classrooms provide information regarding rental and
25 food assistance and as Asian hate crimes ravage our

1
2 communities, students learn how to recognize
3 discrimination, racism and how to report crimes to
4 the authorities.

5 Through the Adult Literacy Pilot Initiative,
6 we've been able to triple the outreach of wrap around
7 services to our students, meaning more hours
8 dedicated to students seeking childcare, senior care,
9 housing, food assistance, insurance, college access
10 and workforce counseling. Modernizing aging,
11 technological and digital infrastructure has allowed
12 students to access our classrooms remotely and learn
13 digital literacy skills needed to be competitive.
14 This is not the time to cut.

15 Our communities are rebuilding out of this
16 pandemic. I urge the continued funding for adult
17 literacy programs. Schools are often the heart of
18 the community and adult literacy classes have stepped
19 up. In order to meet the needs of today and
20 tomorrow, we need to invest. Our students are ready
21 to lend their voices, eager to join the workforce and
22 ready to participate in our city with our vote and so
23 much more. I thank you for your time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Jeff and next, I
25 will call on Justice Laboy.

1
2 JUSTICE LABOY: Hello, thank you so much for your
3 time everybody. Time starts I believe, yeah, okay.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

5 JUSTICE LABOY: Okay, uh, I'm here representing
6 CBC Extension Project Reach. I am a Community Board
7 Member. I was once an employee and at one point, a
8 youth participant of Project Reach and I'm here to
9 speak of their graces. Project Reach has been since
10 1985 through the extension of CPC working with the
11 lower east side and beyond there. All five boroughs
12 of New York City to basically host social justice
13 clinics and they've been hosting clinics since around
14 that time but also providing young people, young
15 queer and trans youth with retreat space and safe
16 spaces throughout the year.

17 I'd like to go over some of their more prolific
18 events. They were the first ever citywide LGBT youth
19 retreat hosted at the [INAUDIBLE 8:50:25] Farm,
20 upstate New York giving young people refuge from the
21 city and a time away.

22 Also, also hosted in 2014, the first ever
23 citywide trans-youth retreat. That was in 2014.
24 Project Reach has been at the forefront and was even
25 given money last year to work with CPC and hosting

1
2 all over New York City anti-Asian violence trainings
3 and that includes Asian American history training,
4 which I feel has changed many lives. And I think
5 that kind of information needs to be supported, not
6 only needs to be supported by tooted to the highest
7 abilities.

8 With 20-seconds left, I also want to say that
9 Project Reach invites everyone here today to a social
10 justice clinic that will be hosted monthly throughout
11 the summer. We also plan on holding a summer camp
12 this summer with again, LGBTQ youth and older people
13 who are going to be organizing around anti-Asian
14 violence.

15 Also, Project Reach has been working across New
16 York City and schools to do anti-hate trainings
17 across many isims around racism, homophobia, sexism -

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

19 JUSTICE LABOY: Thank you so much for everyone's
20 time. Have a great day.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Justice and now, I
22 will turn to Panel 59, Ella Wheel, Ken Mi Ung and
23 Natasha Cappers. I will first turn to Ella Wheel.

24 Okay, I will turn to Ken Mi Ung.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will — our final
3 panelist Natasha Cappers. Okay, I don't see those
4 persons on. I am now going to turn to Panel 60,
5 Clenintine Palmberg, Ethan Cyrus, Faith Catherine
6 Jones, Leslie Gomez Rivera, and Samantha Vargais. We
7 will start with Clenintine Palmberg.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I will turn to Ethan
10 Cyrus.

11 ETHAN CYRUS: Uh —

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I heard you Ethan but I don't
13 hear you anymore.

14 ETHAN CYRUS: Hi, sorry.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There we go.

16 ETHAN CYRUS: Hello, my name is Ethan Cyrus. I
17 am a member of the Youth Food Advocates. I am in
18 10th grade at George Westinghouse Career and Tech
19 High School in Brooklyn. Today, I am here to ask for
20 your support to change the school food program and
21 improve the presentation of school food by investing
22 in the cafeteria redesign.

23 Currently, a big part of the issue is how lunches
24 look in schools. For example, in my school, the
25 school lunch is usually food that looks unappealing

1
2 or looks undercooked. I usually see people just grab
3 a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch and
4 avoid the other food due to how it looks. If
5 students don't like what they see, they are less
6 likely to try the food. School food is important
7 because most kids cannot bring food from home due to
8 varying reasons. This problem has been happening
9 even before the pandemic.

10 I care because on the days that I need to eat
11 school lunch, then I would hope that the food is
12 appealing for me to eat. This matters for me and for
13 all the students in my school and all the students in
14 New York City because there could be the chance that
15 one day we're depending on the schools lunch to eat
16 during this whole school day. The investment in
17 school cafeterias could change our lives by giving us
18 better options for us to eat when we can't bring our
19 own lunch and changing the way students see school
20 lunch.

21 This is why I'm here today to ask the City
22 Council to ensure that the budget includes an
23 investment in our school food program to invest in
24 our future by investing in the cafeteria redesign for
25

1
2 all middle school and high school cafeterias. Thank
3 you for your time.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I'm going
5 to call on Faith Catherine Jones.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 FAITH CATHERINE JONES: Hello, can you hear me?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes we can, go ahead.

9 FAITH CATHERINE JONES: Okay. Hi, my name is
10 Faith Jones and I am a current 9th grader at Brooklyn
11 Technical High School and a member of Youth
12 Advocates. I'm here today in support of the Enhance
13 Cafeterias in middle schools and high schools across
14 NYC. All students are to have enhanced cafeterias as
15 it allows for an important improvement when it comes
16 to current circumstances faced in most school
17 cafeterias.

18 I've seen many students opinions that have been
19 published online criticizing the environment of the
20 cafeteria. With most of the criticisms being aimed
21 at the cafeteria side. Students have expressed the
22 present stigma in the cafeteria as the lunch rooms
23 are seen as outdated and they are foreseen as
24 insufficient for eating.

1
2 As a result, students are belittled when being
3 seen getting lunch at the cafeteria. Consequently,
4 students may go hungry to prevent ridiculed.
5 Fortunately for me at Brooklyn Tech, we don't have to
6 experience that stigma thanks to the enhanced
7 cafeteria at our schools. I've that in our
8 cafeteria, participation increase from below 30
9 percent to an average of almost 50 percent. I've
10 asked a friend of mine about their thoughts about the
11 modern design cafeteria and they had told me that it
12 lead to an improvement and then compared to the
13 feeling that they get in the older lunch rooms. They
14 explained that they enjoyed the upbeat mood in
15 contrast to the feeling that they get in the outdated
16 cafeterias.

17 Additionally, the enhanced cafeterias allowed
18 them to be able to socialize with their peers and
19 friends because of the improvement and mood. Calls
20 for the visual aspects of their environment. My
21 friend explained how it is important that students
22 are able to socialize and make sure of the cafeteria
23 as a break in the academic school day.

24 Overall, voicing the opinions of scholars that
25 came before them, they have benefits of an improved

1 lunchroom environment. All in all, enhanced
2 cafeterias are needed to ensure that the students
3 attending school are able to experience a segment in
4 their day where they can feel relaxed. Take a break
5 from academics and socialize with their friends.
6

7 Based on the day at schools already with enhanced
8 cafeterias, it is proven that these benefits lead to
9 increase in school participation, which in turn lead
10 to a positive impact on the students academic
11 achievement –

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 FAITH CATHERINE JONES: And better mental health.
14 I hope to see the City Council Members support
15 improving the experience for all students in NYC for
16 allocating the \$250 million funding needed to be able
17 to update the cafeterias. Thank you for your time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
19 call on Leslie Gomez Rivera.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Leslie, you're unmuted, you
22 can go ahead.

23 LESLIE GOMEZ RIVERA: Sorry, uhm hi, I'm Leslie
24 Gomez Rivera, I'm a senior at [INAUDIBLE 8:57:49]
25 School and I'm a food advocate. I'm here to ask for

1
2 your support to fund the cafeteria enhancement in New
3 York City Schools.

4 I've been a part of New York City education
5 system for all my life and I've come to realize the
6 importance of school food for children in our
7 education. When my father was sick and my mother
8 would be at the hospital with him, I had to rely on
9 school food and I would make sure to get to school
10 early and get breakfast and make sure in my last
11 period class to ask permission to leave early to get
12 lunch before they close the kitchen. I didn't want
13 to be another burden on my mother.

14 This opened my eyes to the importance of school
15 food because it was accessible to me at the time that
16 I needed it the most. My freshman year at cafeteria
17 was the standard normal. There was the long white
18 tables, they are faced next to each other and the
19 experience with this cafeteria wasn't the most
20 pleasant because it was usually crowded and
21 unappealing. After the cafeteria design, we had a
22 booth where you could sit across from friends and it
23 was a much more inviting and comforting environment.
24 There were seats for just two people or the tables
25 went into individual seats.

1
2 The cafeteria was more colorful and appealing to
3 just sit there. With the remodeled cafeteria, the
4 number of people in the school lunch increased
5 dramatically. This year, I have had several meetings
6 with my school food manager and because our booths
7 and nice tables were not being used due to COVID
8 restrictions and now that we have our remodeled
9 cafeteria back, she noticed that there were much more
10 students eating school lunch once again. Midwood is
11 a school with over 4,000 students. The updated
12 cafeteria has had a big impact and more students are
13 getting the food they need.

14 So, just imagine the changes that all of you
15 could create for all middle schools and high schools
16 by supporting the redesigned cafeterias. More and
17 more children would feel better about eating school
18 lunch and it would overall improve mood, attention
19 and the quality of education across the board. Thank
20 you for your time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
22 turn to , Samantha Vargais.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, not seeing her. Sorry,
25 just bear with me one moment. Okay, not seeing her

1
2 in there. I will turn to Panel 61, Katelyn Wong, Liz
3 Accles, Shavani Shah, Katelyn Agear(SP?) and Ameer
4 Ahasser. We will start with Katelyn Wong.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 KATELYN WONG: Good evening honorable members of
7 the City Council. My name is Katelyn Wong.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 KATELYN WONG: Good evening honorable members of
10 the City Council. My name is Katelyn Wong, I'm a
11 Junior at Brooklyn Technical High School, the Event
12 Coordinator for Active Community Teamwork Club and
13 I'm also involved with Advocacy on Voting Rights,
14 Education Equity and more outside of school.

15 I'm here in partnership with youth food advocates
16 to support efforts to redesign school cafeterias and
17 enhance the lunch time experience for all high school
18 and middle school students in New York City public
19 schools.

20 In 2017 with the start of Universal Free School
21 Lunch citywide, the participation of Brooklyn Tech –
22 the participation at Brooklyn Tech was about 36
23 percent. When the enhanced cafeteria layout was
24 implemented in March 2018, participation increased an
25 average nearly 50 percent in the first year. These

1
2 enhanced cafeterias bring a more welcoming
3 environment for students and add a wide variety of
4 foods of that allow students to have hot and cold
5 options for lunch every day.

6 Personally, the cafeteria layout at Brooklyn Tech
7 has allowed me and my small group of friends to sit
8 in booths and have small and intimate conversations
9 during the lunch period while bigger groups are able
10 to occupy the longer lunch tables. I have made long
11 lasting friendships in our cafeteria. During my
12 freshman year, I knew no one in my lunch period.
13 However, the cafeteria fostered a welcoming
14 environment to socialize with other students which
15 led me to make new friends to sit with during lunch
16 every day.

17 Friendships made during my freshman year of high
18 school are friendships I still keep today. All in
19 all, I believe that having enhanced cafeterias for
20 all high school and middle school students schools in
21 New York City will increase the school lunch
22 participation in all school cafeterias by a
23 significant percentage.

24 Universal free school lunch was the first step to
25 lunch equity. The redesign cafeterias are the big

1 next big step to equity in New York City school food.

2 Thank you for your time.

3
4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and a name that I
5 always mispronounce but I should know how to
6 pronounce it, Liz Accles is next.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 LIZ ACCLES: Yes, you got it right Accles. Thank
9 you. It's like apples I say, just - thanks Malcom.

10 Thanks Chair Brannan and members of the Committee
11 and other members of the Council that are here today.
12 Thanks for the opportunity to testify. As you've
13 heard from our student partners, I'm here to talk
14 about the cafeteria enhancement and to thank Chair
15 Brannan for being a champion on this issue and thank
16 the Council Members. We've spoken to many of them on
17 your enthusiasm about scaling up the cafeteria
18 enhancement model to all high schools and middle
19 schools. As you know, we're asking for \$250 million,
20 which would cover the remaining \$500 cafeterias and
21 we want that included in the adopted budget.

22 The three key point are it's highly effective.
23 There's a 35 percent increase in participation. It's
24 cost effective only \$500,000 per school and it's
25 quick. There's a lot of preplanning but students

1
2 leave on a Friday once it's planned, students leave
3 on a Friday and they come back Monday and the
4 cafeteria is completely transformed.

5 I just wanted to point out, we as community food
6 advocates spearhead the Lunch for Learning Campaign
7 and work with many partners and have for many years.
8 That you've heard from DC37, UFT and CSA that this is
9 a priority issue for all of the school-based unions
10 and I also wanted to point in the testimony that I'm
11 submitting is that the Chancellors Parent Advisory
12 Committee has a letter of support as does the
13 American Academy of Pediatrics local district.

14 So, thank you for your time in this long day. I
15 appreciate it very much.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
17 turn to Shavani Shah.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 SHAVANI SHAH: Hi, I'm Shavani Shah and I'm a
20 Junior at Stuyvesant High School and I'm a member of
21 the Youth Food Advocates. So, today, I'm here to
22 advocate and secure the \$250 million funding toward
23 cafeteria enhancement in all of New York City middle
24 schools and high schools. Kids and teens eat with
25

1
2 their eyes, so the appeal of the school food matters
3 as much as the taste.

4 The appeal of the cafeteria matters as much as
5 the options. So, kids need fuel but what type of
6 fuel can they get. My schools an open campus and
7 many students go out to eat at the local fast food
8 chains such as McDonalds, Shake Shack, Subway and
9 Chipotle. Please launch decisions might look like
10 the choices of the students but really based on the
11 circumstances and opportunities, these decisions are
12 dictated by the traditional service line, limited
13 menu options and lack of seating.

14 Most students go out for lunch not because of a
15 better taste but because of the lack of options
16 within the daily menu. The cafeteria does not have
17 enough seating forcing many students to sit on fence
18 that outline the cafeteria does not have enough
19 seating forcing many students to sit on the fence
20 that outline the cafeteria and we'll wait until the
21 seat opens up.

22 Students cannot take lunch outside of the
23 cafeteria as eating in the hallways is prohibited.
24 This leaves students who don't appreciate a crowded
25 and overwhelming space with no place to go other than

1
2 outside. Many complaints from my peers such as, I
3 couldn't find a table or the food doesn't look
4 appealing would be resolved with cafeteria
5 enhancement. Cafeteria enhancement is crucial for my
6 school because it would add more daily hot and cold
7 menu options to the menu that students want to see
8 and make the food line more appealing. And it is
9 even more crucial for schools with lower funding to
10 ensure equity across all our schools.

11 Increasing lunch participation rates in middle
12 schools and high schools, helps nurture our young
13 minds. We are the same minds that will be battling
14 crisis's such as climate change, cancer, poverty,
15 etc. in the future. Through funding the cafeteria
16 enhancement, you are supporting our academic success,
17 empowering the youth and investing in our future.
18 Thank you for your time.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
20 call Katelin Degear.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, not seeing in the Zoom.
23 Our final panelist, Ameer Ahasser.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

25

1
2 AMEER AHASSER: Hi, my name is Ameer Ahasser and
3 I'm a Junior at Stuyvesant High School and a member
4 of Brooklyn [INAUDIBLE 9:07:03]. I'm here in support
5 of youth food advocates on behalf of all students in
6 New York City.

7 I am asking for your support in securing \$250
8 million in the budget for the cafeteria enhancement
9 in New York City for all middle and high schools.
10 From a young age, school lunch is always meant to be
11 a time for eating healthy and good food, as well as
12 socializing with others. However, as I have gotten
13 older, I've noticed that school lunches are no longer
14 enjoyed by my peers and it has been very
15 disappointing seeing so many students ditch school to
16 get some type of other food outside.

17 Our building is a fantastic cafeteria but without
18 appealing menu options and an overhaul, it does not
19 get used. For being outside during lunch hours, I
20 witness so many students that shut out cafeteria food
21 and I did the exact same thing. At times, if I
22 forget my wallet at home, I'd rather go home hungry.
23 If there was a modernization of the cafeteria system
24 in schools, I believe that the cafeteria would be a
25 better place for us to get healthy food quickly.

1
2 Instead of being forced to eat the food provided
3 for us, allowing for more choices would help the
4 cafeteria continue to be a place for friends. As a
5 member of a lower privileged community, I also
6 recognize that there are many people who cannot
7 afford the people who are eating outside. Due to
8 this, allowing for more options in the place, would
9 allow for the lower income students to enjoy lunch.
10 The healthier the student is, the healthier member of
11 the community and if we allow so many students to go
12 outside to eat lunch, we are opening the door to food
13 that are significant less delicious than the
14 possibilities in school. With your support for
15 funding, school cafeterias across the city will
16 become modernized and the school food less
17 stigmatized. As school food becomes more nutritious
18 and more for the students. Thank you for your time.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
20 Panel 61. I will now turn - I'm going to announce
21 Panels 65 and on, so folks know where - 66 and on, so
22 folks know where they are. Panel 66, Merble Regen
23 but I think I already called you, Cristy Teal, Brenda
24 Temple, Benjamin Holda.

1
2 Panel 67, Thomas Gogan, Molat Saum, Onsu Nujen,
3 Peggy Herrera, Keven Chone. Panel 68, David Jenkins,
4 Justin Yenki, Justin Wood, Kandra Clark and Martha
5 Larson. Panel 69, Marlow Boettcher, Melissa Magara,
6 Robert Gereski, Charlotte Ombretch, Christopher
7 Ashley. Panel 70, Natasha Santos. I already called
8 that name, Sammy Disu, Chamere Tanna, Arthur Strogus.
9 I will turn to Panel 62 Anna Lilla Araiza.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 ANNA LILLA ARAIZA: Hi, good afternoon. My name
12 is Anna Lilla Araiza, I am the Director of Youth
13 Leadership at Community Food Advocates and you've
14 heard from a lot of our youth. I won't take up too
15 much time, since Liz has already spoken about the
16 enhanced cafeterias as well and you'll continue to
17 hear from our young people. Some of them who had to
18 have off, you're going to get their written
19 testimony, so I do encourage everyone in the Council
20 to read through their testimonies as well.

21 The one thing that I want to add is that I don't
22 only work with the young people you see here. I do
23 visit schools around the city and talk to middle
24 schoolers and high schoolers across the city. And
25 what I realize is that as much as we know that there

1
2 is young people, I mean that the Office of Food
3 Administration Services is doing a lot of hard work
4 behind the kitchen counters, our young people are not
5 seeing that happen. They don't realize all of the
6 work that's going into the food and all of the
7 modernization that's been happening in the Office of
8 Food and Nutrition and we do want them to be able to
9 see that as well. The cafeteria should be a student
10 centered space and the enhanced cafeteria is really a
11 way of signaling to young people all of those changes
12 that are happening in their kitchens are coming
13 through for them in the cafeteria space. Thank you
14 for your time. I'll yield the rest of my time.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
16 turn to Ashley Yang.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: She has stepped off.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, she has, okay. I will
20 next go to Alexander Reho Martinez.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I will turn to
23 Ashley Liu.

24 ASHLEY LIU: Hello honorable members of City
25 Council. My name is Ashley Liu and I'm a Junior at

1
2 Brooklyn Technical High School as well as the
3 President of Active Community Teamwork and Activism
4 Club Ed Tech.

5 Our school cafeteria was redesigned in 2018, a
6 year before my Tech. I remember my first day seeing
7 the cafeteria and being in shock of how much cleaner
8 and organized it was compared to my middle school. I
9 was surprised that there were hot and cold lunch
10 options and I was most of all shocked by the communal
11 dining arrangement.

12 At Tech, I regularly see students racing to the
13 cafeteria to claim a booth or roundtable before
14 putting down their bags and getting school lunch.
15 For students at Tech, lunch is a time to refuel,
16 recharge and catch up with friends. This is largely
17 because of our enhanced lunchroom. Our enhanced
18 lunchroom helps create a sense of community and helps
19 students see school lunch in a new light. School
20 lunch is often stigmatized but students at Tech have
21 a much more positive association.

22 In preparation for this hearing, we asked
23 students at our school about their experiences with
24 our enhanced lunchrooms and one student said, "I've
25 been more willing to go to the cafeteria and actually

1
2 eat. I'm happy with the variety of choices the
3 cafeteria provides."

4 Another student said, "[LOST AUDIO 9:13:27] space
5 regardless of if you're alone or with friends." Our
6 enhanced lunchroom has helped increase lunch
7 participation and this is reflected in the data.
8 Lunch and tech is an integral part student life and
9 academic success. Good food is vital once students
10 are at Tech for seven or more hours a day. Lunch is
11 absolutely necessary to ensure that my peers and I
12 can be our best selves.

13 Students have the right to access resources
14 needed to succeed including destigmatize and
15 enjoyable school lunch. Students at Tech have
16 greatly benefitted from and enjoyed our enhanced
17 lunchrooms and I stand here in partnership with youth
18 food advocates to support access to enhanced
19 lunchrooms for all students in New York City. Thank
20 you for your time.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
22 call on Alisha Verbes.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Next on my list is
25 Aliza Porcella.

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

3 ALIZA PORCELLA: Hi, I'm Aliza Porcella, a
4 current 11th grader at the International
5 Baccalaureate School for Global Education and a
6 member of the Youth Food Advocates. I'm here to
7 advocate for the \$250 million in funding to be used
8 for cafeteria enhancement in New York City public
9 schools. It is imperative to a successful school day
10 for the average student and the New York City public
11 system – public school system boast 1.1 million
12 students. Many of which do land school food. Aside
13 from just eating school lunch, cafeterias are also
14 supposed to be a safe and comfortable environment
15 where students can take a break from thinking about
16 classroom assignments. Students deserve an
17 environment where they're able to focus on eating
18 their lunches and socializing.

19 As someone who often relied on school food and my
20 single mom didn't have time to pack me a lunch, I
21 really always wanted to see improvements that allowed
22 for the next generation of students who need school
23 food to be happy and not hungry. There's a lot of
24 stigma surrounding eating school lunch and the
25 quality hasn't been preferable making it so that many

1
2 students go hungry during lunch. I personally never
3 have enough time to eat in the morning and often find
4 myself waiting for lunch. It's incredibly
5 disappointing when I finally get to sit down and eat
6 and the school lunch lacks options and doesn't look
7 appealing.

8 I'm distracted for the rest of the day and have
9 trouble focusing on my assignments. Increasing food
10 participation isn't just for the physical health of
11 students, it's for our mental health too. Students
12 have to stress about their meal. Students won't have
13 to stress about their meals and will be able to focus
14 on furthering their education. With this, I want to
15 advocate for the needed funds to transform all middle
16 and high school cafeterias to enhance cafeterias.
17 Enhanced cafeterias will give hungry students the
18 ability to choose what they get to eat and allow them
19 to eat enough to sustain through the rest of the
20 school day. This could improve focus, health and
21 happiness for so many students. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
23 Panel 62. I will now turn to Panel 63, which was
24 Tracey Fu, Yuri Kavalerchik, Kim Noble Houston,
25

1
2 Melanie Gruveles, Jamila Elder. We will start with
3 Tracey Fu.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 TRACEY FU: Hi, my name is Tracey Fu. I live in
6 Queens and I am a member of DSA's New York City
7 Chapter. I am here to voice my opposition to Mayor
8 Eric Adams Executive Budget and to call the City
9 Council to pass a budget that meets the needs of all
10 New Yorkers.

11 Two years of the pandemic, working class New
12 Yorkers are in crisis. COVID crisis are surging,
13 landlords are astronomically raising rents and
14 families are struggling to stay in their homes. But
15 the Mayor continues to favor the wealthy and the
16 powerful over every day New Yorkers. His budget
17 makes devastating cuts to vital city services like
18 housing, healthcare, sanitation and education while
19 leaving the NYPD's \$10 billion budget intact.

20 Today, I urge the City Council to fight against
21 the Mayor's program of austerity and punishment.
22 Instead of cutting funding for housing, the Council
23 must invest \$4 billion into permanent affordable
24 housing, including \$1.5 billion for NYCHA and \$2.5
25 billion for HPD. The Council must also reject Adams

1
2 cuts to our public education system by investing \$122
3 million into CUNY and funding DOE mental health
4 counselors and social workers, rather than filling
5 school police vacancies.

6 I also urge the Council to act on two deadly
7 crises facing our city, climate catastrophe and the
8 overdose epidemic. We need \$3.1 billion for the
9 streets plan, \$1.8 billion for green public schools
10 and \$250 million for Fair Fares and \$10 million to
11 expand life saving safe consumption sites to all five
12 boroughs. And finally, the City Council must reject
13 the mayors aggressive return to law and order. I
14 urge the City Council to reject the proposal to add
15 hundreds of new CO's for solitary confinement, a
16 practice the UN defines as torture.

17 I also urge the Council to demonstrate their
18 commitment to racial justice by cutting the failed
19 NYPD criminalization programs like the ineffective
20 and violent plain clothes units, the so-called Subway
21 Safety Plan and ending all NYPD response to mental
22 health calls.

23 Thank you Council Members and Committee Chair
24 Brannan for hearing my testimony.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Tracey. Next, I'll
3 call on Yuri Kavalercik.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 YURI KAVALERCIK: Hi, I'm Yuri, I'm a New York
6 City resident. I'm also a member of the DSA's New
7 York City Chapter. I also want to voice an
8 opposition to Mayor Eric Adams's Executive Budget and
9 I want to call on the City Council to pass a budget
10 that will meet the needs of all of us New Yorkers.

11 Two years we're in crisis. COVID cases are still
12 surging, landlords are still raising rents and people
13 are struggling to stay in their homes. But our city
14 and our Mayor are still favoring wealthy and powerful
15 over every New Yorkers. His budget is making
16 devastating cuts to vital city services like housing,
17 healthcare, sanitation and education. And he's
18 leaving the NYPD's \$10 billion budget intact.

19 Today, I'm urging the Council to fight against
20 the Mayor's program of austerity and punishment.
21 Instead of cutting funding for housing, the Council
22 must invest \$4 billion into permanent, affordable
23 housing, including \$1.5 billion to NYCHA and \$2.5
24 billion for the HPD. The Council should also reject
25 Adams's cuts to our public education system and

1
2 invest \$22 million into CUNY and fund the DOE mental
3 health counselors and social workers, rather than
4 filling school police vacancies.

5 Also, I urge the Council to act on two deadly
6 crises facing our city, climate catastrophe and the
7 overdose epidemic. We need \$3.1 billion for the
8 Streets Plan. \$1.8 billion for public schools, \$250
9 million for Fair Fares and \$10 million to expand
10 lifesaving, safe consumption sites to all five
11 boroughs.

12 And finally, the Council must reject the Mayor's
13 regressive return to law and order. I urge the
14 Council to reject the proposal to add hundreds of new
15 CO's for solitary confinement, which is a practice
16 the UN defines as torture. I also urge the Council
17 to demonstrate their commitment to racial justice by
18 cutting failed NYPD criminalization programs, like
19 the ineffective and violent plain clothes units, the
20 so-called Subway Safety Plan and also, I want them to
21 end all NYPD responses mental health calls.

22 Thank you Council Members and Committed Chair
23 Brannan for hearing my testimony.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
25 turn to Kim Noble Houston.

1

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

2

3

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I have Melanie
Gruveles.

4

5

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on my list I have Jamila
Elder.

7

8

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, that concludes Panel
63. I'm going to turn Panel 64, Jennifer James,
Julie Bowen, Kay Gabriel, Melissa Kagle, and Araceli
Mena. I will start with Jennifer James.

10

11

12

13

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14

15

16

17

18

19

JENNIFER JAMES: Hello, my name is Jennifer
James. I am a Substitute Teacher at New York City
Schools and I'm also a member of the DSA. I'm here
to voice my opposition to Mayor Eric Adams Executive
Budget and call on the City Council to pass a budget
that meets the needs of all New Yorkers.

20

21

22

23

24

25

Two years into the pandemic, working class New
Yorkers are in crisis. COVID cases are surging. I
see it every day in my classrooms. As a Substitute
Teacher, I am the one filling in when teachers are
out. Families are struggling. I see it in the
students. The students are struggling but the Mayor

1
2 continues to favor the wealthy and powerful over
3 every day New Yorkers. His budget makes devastating
4 cuts to vital city services like housing, healthcare,
5 sanitation, education and while leaving the NYPD's
6 \$10 billion budget intact.

7 Like others, DSA members before me, I urge the
8 City Council to fight against the Mayor's program of
9 austerity and punishment. Instead of cutting funding
10 for housing, the City Council must invest \$4 billion
11 into permanent affordable housing, including \$1.5
12 billion for NYCHA and \$2.5 billion for HPD. The
13 Council must also reject Adams cuts to our public
14 education system by investing \$122 million into CUNY
15 and funding the DOE mental health counselors and
16 social workers, rather than filling school police
17 vacancies.

18 I also urge the Council to act on two deadly
19 crisis's facing our city, climate catastrophe and the
20 overdose epidemic. We need \$3.1 billion for the
21 Streets Plan and \$1.8 billion for green public
22 schools, \$2,500 million for Fair Fares and \$10
23 million to expand lifesaving safe consumption –

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
3 turn to Julie Bowen.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I will turn to
6 Kay Gabriel.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 KAY GABRIEL: Hi Council Members and Committee
9 Chair Brannan. My name is Kay Gabriel. I am a
10 Queens resident. I'm also a member of DSA and I'm an
11 Adjunct Instructor at NYU. I'm also calling on the
12 Council to reject Mayor Adams's Executive Budget.
13 You've heard a lot about austerity today and it's not
14 just a buzz word. Austerity in budgets means that
15 people will die. People die because of bad budgets.
16 They die because they don't have adequate housing.
17 They die because they don't have access to overdose
18 prevention clinics. That's what this means. That's
19 what this is about. This is about New Yorkers lives.
20 It's about like failing to adequately prepare for the
21 climate catastrophe. It means that people will die.
22 So, when we say, please reject this awful budget
23 that slashes desperately needed programs, it's not
24 abstract and it's not just moralistic. It's because
25 people – it's because New Yorkers deserve a budget

1
2 that meets our needs. So, I just want to echo
3 everything that my comrades and neighbors have said.
4 I want to echo things that people have said all day,
5 desperately asking for the City Council to
6 demonstrate principle and pass a budget that meets
7 New Yorkers needs. I want to especially ask the
8 Council to reject Mayor Adams's proposal to increase
9 corrections officers for to staff solitary
10 confinement units, which the solitary confinement to
11 the UN defines as torture.

12 We need a budget that actually meets our needs
13 and I want to say thank you for hearing my testimony.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
15 turn to Melissa Kagle.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 MELISSA KAGLE: Melissa Kagle, I'm a New York
18 City resident. I'm also a member of DSA's New York
19 City Chapter and a 20 plus year educator. I'm here
20 to voice my opposition to Mayor Eric Adams Executive
21 Budget and to call on the City Council to pass a
22 budget that meets the needs of all New Yorkers. This
23 budget gives the most money to the people and
24 entities that need it the least.

25

1
2 Two years into the pandemic, working class New
3 Yorkers are in crisis. COVID-19 cases are surging,
4 landlords are raising rents and families are
5 struggling to stay in their homes but the Mayor
6 continues to favor the wealthy and powerful over
7 every day New Yorkers. This budget makes devastating
8 cuts to vital city services like housing, healthcare,
9 sanitation, education, while leaving the NYPD's \$10
10 billion total budget intact.

11 I urge the Council to fight against the Mayor's
12 program of austerity and punishment. Instead of
13 cutting funding for housing, the Council must invest
14 \$4 billion into permanent, affordable housing,
15 including \$1.5 billion for NYCHA and \$2.5 billion for
16 HPD. The Council must also reject Adams cuts to our
17 public education system. He should invest \$122
18 million into CUNY and fund DOE mental health
19 counselors and social workers rather than filling
20 expensive police, school police vacancies.

21 Finally, the Council must reject the Mayor's
22 regressive return to law and order. I urge the
23 Council to reject the proposal to add hundreds of new
24 CO's for solitary confinement. This is a practice
25 the UN defines as torture. We absolutely cannot set

1
2 ourselves up to go back to such barbaric practices
3 through a hiring practice like that.

4 I also urge the Council to demonstrate the
5 commitment to racial justice by cutting failed, NYPD
6 criminalization programs like the ineffective and
7 violent plain clothes units, the so-called Subway
8 Safety Plan, and ending NYPD response to mental
9 health calls. Thank you Council Members, Committee
10 Chair Brannan for hearing my testimony. Please,
11 please reject this horrific budget.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
13 call Araceli Mena.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
16 LANGUAGE 9:27:38-9:29:43]-

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
19 LANGUAGE 09:29:44-29:49].

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Steven, could you - we didn't
21 know she was going to need translation services.
22 Could you ask her, we'll go ahead and unmute you,
23 hold on. Sorry, could you ask her to start again and
24 if you can provide and just let her know that that's
25 what's happening please?

1
2 STEVEN MALDONADO: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
3 9:30:05-9:30:08].

4 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
5 LANGUAGE 9:30:09].

6 STEVEN MALDONADO: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
7 9:30:09-9:30:25].

8 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
9 LANGUAGE 9:30:26-9:30:32]

10 STEVEN MALDONADO: Good afternoon. My name is
11 Araceli Espejel Mena. I am a mother.

12 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
13 LANGUAGE 9:30:41-9:30:43].

14 STEVEN MALDONADO: Of four kids.

15 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
16 LANGUAGE 9:30:46-9:30:52].

17 STEVEN MALDONADO: I am a leader and parent, uh,
18 leader for parents in District 9 in the Bronx.

19 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
20 LANGUAGE 9:30:58-9:31:02].

21 STEVEN MALDONADO: And parent leader for the
22 Community of Action for a New Settlement.

23 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
24 LANGUAGE 9:31:09-9:31:16].

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

STEVEN MALDONADO: I am an Ambassador for healing in the school of my kids and I work in group for healing.

ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 9:31:24-9:31:32].

STEVEN MALDONADO: I think the ambassador program is very important because for me personally, this has helped me a lot.

ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 9:31:39-9:31:45].

STEVEN MALDONADO: And my family has helped us easier to identify the move that my kids and my husband are going through.

ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 9:31:54-9:32:00].

STEVEN MALDONADO: We have better communication and can easier - can express our feelings a lot easier.

ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 9:32:07-9:32:09].

STEVEN MALDONADO: And the mood that we are feeling.

ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 9:32:13-9:32:18].

1
2 STEVEN MALDONADO: The workshops in the schools
3 that we have gone to have also helped us to get to
4 know ourselves.

5 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
6 LANGUAGE 9:32:25-9:32:31].

7 STEVEN MALDONADO: Just like the other parents
8 have expressed that it has helped them also with
9 their own families.

10 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
11 LANGUAGE 9:32:38-9:32:46].

12 STEVEN MALDONADO: Furthermore, parents that have
13 gotten to know each other just by site, by seeing
14 each other at the schools.

15 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
16 LANGUAGE 9:32:54-9:33:01].

17 STEVEN MALDONADO: We did not speak to each other
18 considering that we spoke different languages.

19 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
20 LANGUAGE 9:33:07-9:33:13].

21 STEVEN MALDONADO: Now we great each other and we
22 help each other with telling us, have a good day.
23 How are you feeling? How has everything been? Good
24 morning, good evening, good afternoon.

1
2 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
3 LANGUAGE 9:33:26-9:33:29].

4 STEVEN MALDONADO: I think it's also a way for
5 creating like a brotherly unity within other races
6 and ethnicities.

7 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
8 LANGUAGE 9:33:38-9:33:44].

9 STEVEN MALDONADO: It's been an incredible
10 experience being part of this ambassador program
11 concentrating and healing.

12 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
13 LANGUAGE 9:33:52-9:33:58].

14 STEVEN MALDONADO: And I ask the city as well as
15 the DOE of the City of New York -

16 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
17 LANGUAGE 9:34:03-9:34:08].

18 STEVEN MALDONADO: For this year to continue the
19 investment and expanding it, this program, the
20 Ambassador program for parents.

21 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
22 LANGUAGE 9:34:17-9:34:20].

23 STEVEN MALDONADO: To develop an ambassador, a
24 youth ambassador program.

1
2 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
3 LANGUAGE 9:34:27-9:34:31].

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
6 LANGUAGE 9:34:32.

7 STEVEN MALDONADO: The finance programs that
8 support and don't punish the students within the
9 schools.

10 ARACELI ESPEJEL MENA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER
11 LANGUAGE 9:34:44].

12 STEVEN MALDONADO: Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and thank you
14 Steven, appreciate it.

15 STEVEN MALDONADO: Muchas Gracias.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That concludes Panel 64. I'm
17 now going to turn to - oh, there's one more person, I
18 apologize, Rob Katz.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 ROB KATZ: Hello and thank you for having me. My
21 name is Rob Katz. I am a member of the New York City
22 Democratic Socialists of America and a member of
23 Ridgewood Tenants Union. I'm here to voice my
24 opposition to Mayor Eric Adams Executive Budget and
25 to call on the City Council to pass a budget that

1
2 invests in all New Yorkers. Uhm, the budget makes
3 devastating cuts to vital city services that working
4 class New Yorkers use every day. That's housing,
5 that's our healthcare, sanitation, our parks
6 department and education.

7 While still stuffing \$10 billion a year into the
8 NYPD and its needless to say that the community is
9 hit the hardest by COVID-19. Largely communities of
10 color are the ones who need those defunded services
11 the most. Today, I urge the Council respectfully to
12 fight against the Mayor's program of austerity and
13 punishment and instead chart a rave path forward for
14 the rest of the country. Instead of cutting funding
15 for housing, investing \$4 billion into permanent,
16 affordable housing.

17 Instead of cutting our public education who
18 investing into CUNY and into our public schools,
19 funding DOE mental health counselors and social
20 workers, not more school safety officers. We need \$3
21 billion for safe streets. We need \$2 billion for
22 green public schools. We need a quarter of a million
23 dollars for Fair Fares. We need to expand safe
24 consumption sites across the city and we need to get
25 one percent of the budget to our parks department at

1
2 least. So, I am also demanding forcefully that the
3 Council reject the Mayor's return to law and order
4 demagoguery. Reject the proposal to add hundreds of
5 new corrections officers for solitary. Cut VICE, cut
6 the SRG. Make transformative investments in all of
7 New York City's wellbeing and that is what will make
8 our community -

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

10 ROB KATZ: Thank you Council Members and
11 Committee Chair Brannan for hearing my testimony.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and I'm going to -
13 before I turn to Panel 66, I will announce Panels -
14 I've already announced 69. 70-75. Panel 70 Natasha
15 Santos, Peggy Herrera, Sammy Desu, Shamere Tanna and
16 Arthur Scrogus. Panel 71, Dash Sammy Nemere
17 Olivares, Zade Haobsh, Brian Kepple.

18 Panel 72, Lucas Osmian, Paul Lee, Bracish
19 Cheriman. Panel 73, Eric Seligman, Glenn Valaski,
20 Glenny Renosos and Kennan McClone and Crystal
21 Gooding. Panel 74, Madeleine Jackson, Mimi Shelton,
22 Willie the Genius, Deigo Brown, Torren Fenally. And
23 Panel 75, Jessica Marshal, Charaya Hardy, Joy Clarke,
24 Amy Tsai, Deloris Cannella. Starting with Panel 66,
25 we'll start with Merble Regan.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, that's a duplicate, Merble already testified on Panel 22. Next, we are calling on Cristy Peel.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

KEVIN WOLF: Cristy actually had to step away, so I'm going to be speaking in her place. My name is Kevin Wolf and I'm the Senior Government Affairs Manager at the Center for New York City Neighborhoods and we are one of the largest homeowner service organizations in New York City. We're here today because we have two very important issues that we wanted to address at this hearing.

The first is that we want to restore existing, affordable, homeownership funding that has been cut out of the Mayor's Executive Budget and then the second is that we'd like to implore the Council to continue its long time support of my organizations home service efforts.

The COVID-19 crisis actually continues to destabilize thousand of New York City homeowners and foreclosure is still a major threat. Two years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, mortgage delinquency rates actually dwarfed those that were

1
2 seen at the height of the 2008 financial crisis. 80
3 percent of the homeowners that we serve are Black and
4 Brown and Black and Brown communities are among the
5 hardest hit by the pandemic and we actually see –
6 they're also most vulnerable to loss of income, which
7 precipitates the loss of a home.

8 So, we must fight and preserve affordable
9 homeownership at a time in the city where the racial
10 wealth gap and income inequality have actually
11 increased over the past decade. So, we're asking the
12 City Council to call on the Mayor to restore critical
13 funding before closure prevention or climate
14 resiliency and for home repair and in addition, we'd
15 like for the City Council to fully fund the centers
16 budget request in order to make sure that homeowners
17 can keep their homes and make their homes green, safe
18 for them and their families and their tenants. We
19 have three programs that we provide as our flagship
20 that conduct outreach as well as home repair that the
21 City Council funds directly. Our homeowner hub which
22 serves 3,000 homeowners annually. Our homeowner help
23 desk, which meets homeowners directly in their
24 communities and finally, our home fixed repair
25 program that provides low interest to no interest

1
2 loans to homeowners. So, once again, we're asking
3 you to fully fund affordable homeownership in New
4 York City and thank you very much for your time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
6 call Brenda Temple.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I have Benjamin Holda.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 BENJAMIN HOLDA: Good afternoon, thank you so
11 much for allotting me this time to speak Council
12 Members. It has been a very long day for you I am
13 sure, so I appreciate that. I am here specifically
14 to speak about diverting funding from the SRG unit of
15 the NYPD. I'm speaking about this as somebody with
16 substantial academic and personal experience working
17 with human rights. The SRG, both through its
18 intention and practice exists to brutalize protestors
19 in a way that completely dismantles their ability to
20 share their political opinions to associate political
21 society and their ability to really just flourish and
22 direct the course of this punitive democracy.

23 In a more grand census, I've sat through the
24 testimonies of varies other organizations. It is
25 unconscionable that New York City continues to fund

1
2 the SRG to the degree that it does. We've seen a
3 seven fold bloat in its budget since 2015 while so
4 much demonstrable good could be done by diverting
5 those millions of dollars into our schools, into our
6 public transit, into economic initiatives, into
7 nutritional initiatives. These are things that have
8 demonstrable, positive impacts on the society and as
9 has been said, a budget is a profoundly moral
10 document.

11 So, the decision at hand is one to divert those
12 funds into a system that exists to cause pain and to
13 subdue or one that promotes flourishing for New York
14 City as a community. And I hope you will make the
15 choice to divert that funding and fight against Mayor
16 Adams budget. So, thank you so much.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
18 turn to Thomas Gogan.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on the list, I have
21 Malat Seyoum.

22 MALAT SEYOUM: Good evening honorable Chairperson
23 and distinguished members of the New York City
24 Council Committee on Finance. My name is Malat
25 Seyoum and I'm the Worker Co-op Policy Advocate for

1
2 the New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives,
3 also known as NYCNWC, the local trade association
4 representing worker cooperative businesses and
5 democratic workplace in the New York City
6 metropolitan area.

7 I am here alongside my colleague from the
8 Democracy at Work Institute and the NYCNWC Advocacy
9 Council Members representing nine other organizations
10 that make up the Worker Cooperative Business
11 Development Initiative.

12 Asking New York City Council Members to continue
13 supporting the expansion of Worker ownership in next
14 years budget and firmly into the future. Since the
15 inception of the initiative, we have created over 175
16 new cooperative businesses and approximately 1,000
17 new jobs that are not only providing higher hourly
18 wages but also building wealth and assets for
19 individuals who are overwhelmingly BIPOC women and
20 immigrants. We have seen firsthand how the
21 initiative has served to bolster our sector,
22 strengthening existing cooperative businesses and
23 creating new ones, which are overwhelmingly immigrant
24 and women owned.

1
2 The initiative partners have collectively worked
3 to create a comprehensive ecosystem of support for
4 cooperative businesses that not only ensures the
5 creation of new cooperatives in low-income areas, but
6 also the technical assistance needed to sustain
7 businesses and create jobs as well as the education
8 and outreach needed for communities, interested
9 entrepreneurs and allied organizations.

10 We ask the City Council to enhance our funding to
11 five million twelve thousand in order for our
12 initiative to double down on the essential long-term
13 economic recovery for cooperative businesses that we
14 will need to claw ourselves out of this crisis.

15 We thank the City Council for the opportunity to
16 testify and we hope that you will consider our budget
17 priorities and recommendations during this years
18 budget negotiation process. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
20 call on Onsu Nucha (SP?), Democracy at Work Institute.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I will call on Peggy
23 Herrera.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next on the list, we have
3 Kevin Cho. Okay, that concludes Panel 67. Next, I
4 will call Panel 68, David Jenkins, Justin
5 Yankwee(SP?), Justin Wood, Candra Clark, Martha
6 Larson. I'll first turn to David Jenkins.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 DAVID JENKINS: Hello, my name is David Jenkins.
9 I'm a lifelong New York resident living in Flatbush,
10 a union member and a member of NYC DSA. I'm here to
11 voice my opposition to Mayor Adams Executive Budget
12 and to call on the City Council to pass a budget that
13 meets the needs of all New Yorkers. Right now,
14 working class New Yorkers are in crisis and the
15 Executive Budget makes devastating cuts to vital city
16 services like housing, healthcare, sanitation and
17 education while leading the NYPD's \$10 billion budget
18 intact.

19 Today, I urge the Council to fight against the
20 Mayor's program of austerity and punishment. Instead
21 of cutting funding for housing, the Council must
22 invest \$4 billion into permanent affordable housing
23 including \$1.5 billion for NYCHA and \$2.5 billion for
24 HPD. The Council must also reject Adams cuts to our
25 public education system by investing \$122 million

1
2 into CUNY and funding DOE mental health and social
3 workers, rather than filling school police vacancies.
4 I also urge the Council to act on two deadly crises
5 facing our city, climate catastrophe and the overdose
6 epidemic.

7 We need \$3.1 billion for the streets plan, \$1.8
8 billion for green public schools, \$250 million for
9 Fair Fares and just \$10 million to expand proven,
10 lifesaving safe consumption sites to all five
11 boroughs. Finally, the Council must reject the
12 Mayor's regressive return to law and order. I urge
13 the Council to reject the proposal to add hundreds of
14 new CO's for solitary confinement, a practice as
15 we've repeated the UN defines as torture.

16 I also urge the Council to demonstrate their
17 commitment to racial justice by cutting failed NYPD
18 criminalization programs like the ineffective and
19 violent plain clothes units, the so-called Subway
20 Safety Plan, ending all NYPD response to mental
21 health calls and to disband the brutal strategic
22 response group used primarily to suppress protest and
23 abuse the unhoused rather than its original mission
24 of keeping us safe from terror.

1
2 Thank you Council Members and Committee Chair
3 Brannan for hearing my testimony.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we will
5 turn to Justin Yankwee.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we have Justin Wood.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I have Kandra Clark.
10 Next, I have Martha Larson.

11 MARTHA LARSON: I'm a New York City resident.
12 I'm a member of DSA. I'm a city worker and I'm a
13 social worker in the public hospital system.

14 So, I'm also here to speak about against this
15 austerity budget that keeps the astronomical NYPD
16 budget while cutting the vital city services. As a
17 public hospital social worker, I keep having patients
18 come in my office every day that are losing their
19 housing or at risk of losing their housing and it is
20 a crisis and it's unacceptable. We can't just keep
21 putting these people in shelters. It's just not
22 acceptable, so we really need an investment in
23 affordable housing and to adequately fund the public
24 hospital system.

1
2 The idea of cutting any funds from the public
3 hospital system during a pandemic is unacceptable. I
4 see cops everywhere I look in the city at this
5 moment. They're on the subway, everywhere. This is
6 not what keeps us safe. You know, we need investment
7 in the things that actually keep us safe like,
8 everybody having a safe home. Having fully funded
9 schools, hospitals, etc..

10 So, I want you to you know, just urge you to vote
11 against this austerity budget. Thank you so much.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
13 turn to Marlowe Boettcher.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 MARLOWE BOETTCHER: Hi, my name is Marlowe
16 Boettcher. I am a New York City resident, attorney,
17 a member of DSA and proud graduate of CUNY School of
18 Law. I am also here to speak against Mayor Adams
19 austerity budget. It's simply unconscionable to be
20 adding more CO's to solitary confinement. I have
21 worked with victims of torture as a part of CUNY
22 School of Laws legal point and I can tell you that
23 there is a reason the UN declares that solitary
24 confinement is torture.

1
2 Moreover, just generally, at a time when so many
3 New Yorkers are struggling to stay in their homes, to
4 have proper access to healthcare, to simply maintain
5 the NYPD's budget while sacrificing all of that, is
6 terrible. A budget is an important thing. This is
7 peoples lives that this City Council holds in balance
8 and I urge the Council to do the right thing. Thank
9 you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
11 call on Melissa.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: [INAUDIBLE 9:53:32].

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Malcom, can you repeat that?
15 You were cut off.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Charlotte Ombretch (SP?). The
17 final panelist I have on 69 is Christopher Ashley.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I will now turn to
20 Panel 70, Natasha Santos, Peggy Herrera, Sammy Desu,
21 and Shamere Tanna and Arthur Scrogus. Natasha
22 Santos.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Peggy Herrera. Sammy Desu.
25 Shamere Tanna. Arthur Scrogus. Okay, I am next

1
2 going to call Panel 71, Dash Sammy Nemere Olivares,
3 Zade Haobsh, Brian Kepple. We'll first start with
4 Dash. Okay, next, turning to Sammy Nemer Olivares.
5 Next on the list is Zade Haobsh.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 ZADE HAOBESH: Hi, I'm Zade and I am a Brooklyn
8 resident and a member of DSA's NYC Chapter, as well
9 as a Hunter College Graduate and John Jay College
10 Staff member. I'm here to call on the City Council
11 to pass a budget that meets the needs of all New
12 Yorkers.

13 Two years into the pandemic, working class New
14 Yorkers are in crisis. COVID cases are surging,
15 landlords are raising rents, and families struggle to
16 stay in their homes. This budget makes it clear that
17 the wealthy and powerful are favored over every day
18 New Yorkers. This budget makes devastating cuts to
19 vital city services like housing, healthcare,
20 sanitation and education while leaving the NYPD's \$10
21 billion intact.

22 Today, I urge the Council to fight against the
23 Mayor's program of austerity and punishment. Instead
24 of cutting funding for housing, the Council must
25 invest \$4 billion into permanent affordable housing

1 including \$1.5 billion for NYCHA and \$2.5 billion for
2 HPD. The Council must also reject Adams's cuts to
3 our public education system by investing \$122 million
4 into CUNY and funding DOE mental health counselors
5 and social workers, rather than filling school police
6 vacancies.
7

8 I also urge the Council to act on two deadly
9 crises facing our city, climate catastrophe and the
10 overdose epidemic. We need \$3.1 billion for the
11 Streets Plan, \$1.8 billion for green public schools,
12 \$250 million for Fair Fares and \$10 million to expand
13 lifesaving safe consumption sites.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If you want to wrap up your
16 thought Zade. Okay, going to turn to Brian Kepple.

17 BRIAN KEPPLER: Hi, my name is Brian Kepple. I'm
18 an independent budget analyst and member of New York
19 City DSA.

20 My parents both grew up in the city. My father
21 is from the Bronx, where he drove a cab and went to
22 night school to teach special education. He doesn't
23 vote anymore. He doesn't participate because he's
24 convinced that our elected leaders simply don't care
25 about people like him or my family or my mother, who

1
2 will never be able to retire. And so, I'm here today
3 to say that the actions that the Council Members
4 take, it actually matters. It's more than just a
5 political game about who gets to advance the next
6 piece of legislation if they vote yes. Some of you
7 are going to be casting your first ever votes on the
8 city's budget and a lot of you were elected because
9 the people of this city are tired. All we get is
10 less, you know if we have deficits, we get cuts. If
11 federal funding expires, we get cuts.

12 Even when we have \$6 billion in rainy day funds,
13 we get cuts and the police just get bigger and bigger
14 and bigger, combined it's - they have a larger
15 headcount than sanitation health, CUNY Parks, DHS,
16 DYCD, Department for the Aging, Social Services and
17 HPD combined. It's become unmanageable. It's too
18 much. So, I'm urging the Council Members to remember
19 that they have to go back up for reelection in a year
20 and you were voted to bring change to change the
21 direction of this city. That is what the city wants.

22 So, even if you don't care about the city, you
23 should care about yourselves because we'll remember
24 the budget vote in a year. So, \$4 billion for
25

1
2 affordable housing, overdose prevention and a budget
3 that prioritizes New Yorkers.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 BRIAN KEPPLER: Because it's bad out here. It's
6 bad uhm, and we need help and we need you to help us.
7 Thank you for listening and thank you for the Council
8 Members who made it through all these many hours.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and that concludes
10 Panel 71. I will now call Panel 72, Lucas Osmian,
11 Paul Lee, Bracish Cheriman. I'll start with Lucas
12 Osmian.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'll next turn to Paul Lee.
15 Next I will turn to Brachish Cheriman. Okay, before
16 I turn to Panel 73, I will announce Panels 76-80.
17 Panel 76 Jazzy Rivera, Judith Bautista, Naomi
18 Williams, Nicki Mia Brownfield, Sirameni Obulal and
19 Donna Bunilla.

20 Panel 77, Alma Rocha, Ava Thompson, Deborah Humes
21 Jordan, Denise Frederick, Harriet Mugwuji. Panel 78,
22 Jacque Ori, Ludy Delva, Marissa Senteno, Sunita
23 Hamal, Daniella Contreras. Panel 79, Naja
24 Ugecka(SP?), Robert Jereski. Sorry everyone, the
25 screen froze.

1
2 Carol Verdi, Dave Tallivan(SP?). Panel 80,
3 Gloria Manzano, Joy Clark, Rosa Rodriguez, and
4 Jeremiah Schlotman. I'll first turn to Panel 73 Eric
5 Seligman, Glenn Valaski, Glenn Renosos, Kennan
6 McClone Crystal Gooding. We'll first turn to Eric
7 Seligman.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 ERIC SELIGMAN: Hello, my name is Eric Seligman,
10 I am an Economics Professor at CUNY's John Jay
11 College of Criminal Justice and a New York City
12 resident and a member of DSA's NYC Chapter. I'm here
13 to voice my opposition to Mayor Eric Adams Executive
14 Budget and to call on the City Council to pass a
15 budget that meets the needs of all New Yorkers.

16 Two years into the pandemic, working class New
17 Yorkers are in crisis. COVID-19 cases are surging,
18 landlords are raising rents and families struggle to
19 stay in their homes, but the Mayor continues to favor
20 the wealthy and powerful over every day New Yorkers.
21 His budget makes devastating cuts to vital city
22 services like housing, healthcare, sanitation and
23 education while leaving the NYPD's \$10 billion budget
24 intact.

1
2 Today, I urge the Council to fight against the
3 Mayor's program of austerity and punishment. Instead
4 of cutting funding for housing, the Council must
5 invest \$4 billion into permanent, affordable housing,
6 including \$1.5 billion for NYCHA and \$2.5 billion for
7 HPD. The Council must also reject Adams cuts to our
8 public education system by investing \$122 million
9 into CUNY and funding DOE mental health counselors
10 and social workers rather than filling school police
11 vacancies.

12 I also urge the Council to act on two deadly
13 crises facing our city, climate catastrophe and the
14 overdose epidemic. We need \$3.1 billion for the
15 Streets Plan, \$1.8 billion for Green Public Schools,
16 \$250 million for Fair Fairs and \$10 million to expand
17 lifesaving, safe consumption sites to all five
18 boroughs. Finally, the Council must reject the
19 Mayor's regressive turn to law and order.

20 I urge the Council to reject the proposal to add
21 hundreds of New CO's for solitary confinement. A
22 practice the UN defines as torture. I also urge the
23 Council to demonstrate their commitment to racial
24 justice by cutting failed NYPD criminalization
25 programs, like the ineffective and vibrant plain

1
2 clothes units. The so-called Subway Plan and ending
3 all NYPD response to mental health calls. Thank you
4 Council Members and Committee Chair Brannan.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 ERIC SELIGMAN: Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, we'll turn
8 to Glen Velaski.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I will turn to
11 Glenny Renosos.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I will call Kennan
14 McClone. Next, Crystal Gooding. Okay, I'm now going
15 to turn to Panel 74, Madeleine Jackson, Mimi Shelton,
16 Willie the Genius, Deigo Brown, Torren Fenally. I
17 will first call on Madeleine Jackson.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 MADELEINE JACKSON: Can you hear me?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can. Go ahead.

21 MADELEINE JACKSON: Okay, evening. Uhm, I and
22 my two siblings are college educated, second
23 generation public housing resident. We support the
24 full funding of Section 9. While I support the
25 funding of Section 9, I feel I need to speak to the

1
2 why and the how. Two generations are still living in
3 public housing, which was supposed to be temporary.

4 We can't talk about this unless we talk about
5 systemic racist practices that has kept Black and
6 Brown communities within the public housing system.
7 According to our own government, research shows that
8 African Americans have historically been denied
9 financial resources, competitive jobs and have been
10 locked out of neighborhoods that would help sustain
11 us.

12 Section 9 is the answer to the pushback to all
13 forms of economic hostility of the Black and Brown
14 communities. One way to fund NYCHA is to access the
15 funding scheme devised by Battery Park City. There
16 is money from their tax revenue since 1998. Where is
17 that money?

18 Instead of using the Preservation Trust, which
19 depends on building luxury development, which will
20 further push surrounding community prices up, I
21 advise that you look into the history of Battery Park
22 City, which started out with the same vision as the
23 Preservation Trust. Battery Park City is now one of
24 the most expensive places to live. Market rate
25 apartments on the lower east side where I live is

1
2 \$3,725, which you would have to make \$150,000 to
3 live. Way over the means of most city workers.

4 My fear is when the funding is shifted from the
5 federal government to the state, NYCHA will be at the
6 mercy of changing policies and schemes from whatever
7 political party, a politic politician is elected.
8 Federal government would be and is the safeguard. I
9 support the Citywide Council President -

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 MADELEINE JACKSON: For the proposal for the full
12 funding of NYCHA through Section 9 and stop
13 privatization to the preservation trust. Thank you
14 very much and have a good evening.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Madeleine and next,
16 we will turn to Mimi Shelton.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 MIMI SHELTON: Awesome, can you hear me?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

20 MIMI SHELTON: Okay, awesome. Good evening
21 Council Members. My name is Mimi Shelton and I'm a
22 Black transgender woman and a New York resident
23 living in Greenpoint Brooklyn and working in the
24 South Bronx. I moved to the city in August of 2017
25 and I was born and raised in Virginia.

1
2 I, like many before me, disagree with Mayor
3 Adams's current city budget and ask that you all
4 consider reallocating funds toward housing
5 initiatives. Like Audrey Lorde Project's Trans-
6 Justice Initiative. One that was mentioned earlier
7 by a colleague of mine, a partner of mine, a roommate
8 Akong and away from unreasonable NYPD and school
9 police expenditures.

10 As a trans man to this city, I've witnessed an
11 already over expensive exclusionary and problematic
12 housing system, that come even more so when the
13 aftermath of mandated quarantine and an evolving
14 global pandemic. In my occupation as Director of
15 Transgender Initiatives and Services at Destination
16 Tomorrow, the LGBTQ Plus Center of the Bronx, I am
17 exhausted daily by the economic, educational, social
18 and medial disadvantages our clients rustle with in
19 the city and state that begrudgingly and often
20 performatively provides inadequate housing protection
21 and an institutional support to its LGBTQ plus
22 populations.

23 We are living in a context of global suffering
24 and an epidemic of violence against trans and gender
25 expansive BIPOC communities. Watching individuals,

1
2 many of whom identify as BIPOC LGBTQ plus navigating
3 substance use on the streets, sleeping on trains with
4 poor hygiene, due to the lack of systemic care and
5 adequate housing they're offered, begging for change
6 and food on subways and also my own clients, trying
7 to utilize our services for a better opportunity
8 while also having to suffer in their personal lives,
9 is a devastating –

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 MIMI SHELTON: That I will never unsee and not
12 remember. I call on you Committee Members to offer
13 housing equity for all New York City citizens,
14 especially those that are BIPOC, LGBTQ plus members
15 to offer housing equity for all New York City. Oh,
16 excuse me, because in doing so and supporting
17 initiatives like Trans Justice with the Audrey Lorde
18 Project, the foundation of any flourishing life can
19 then actually begin with a reliable home and a space
20 to call that home. Thank you and have a great one.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and I also just
22 want to say for the record, we have been joined by
23 Council Member Cabán. Next on the list is Willie the
24 Genius.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 WILLIE THE GENIUS: Good evening to all of you,
3 my distinguished members of City Council. My name is
4 Willie Dean and I am an Entertainer, a Producer, and
5 Community Resource Advocate, professionally known as
6 Willie the Genius. I'm also a graduate of the Trans
7 Justice Community School, hosted by the Audrey Lorde
8 Project.

9 I think we can all agree that adequate access to
10 affordable housing is one of those essential and
11 alienable rights afforded to each of us by the US
12 Constitution. For seven years, I suffered from an
13 addiction to crystal methamphetamine that threatened
14 to take my life, as well as my housing security.
15 Crystal meth is currently a rising epidemic among
16 Black, queer and trans community.

17 In 2016, the US Center for Disease Control
18 reported that in their lifetime, one out of every two
19 Black, gay men will become HIV positive. Thanks to
20 programs like HASA, which provides low to no cost
21 housing for people living with the HIV virus here in
22 the City of New York, I was able to remain housed
23 while in the addition and climb from under the
24 unbearable weight of oppression and marginalization
25

1
2 long enough to achieve being two years and 11 months
3 sober.

4 Openly HIV positive playwright Donya R. Love,
5 wrote his 2019 stage play one and two, to raise
6 awareness while living with me in our Bedstuy
7 apartment, located within the 36 District. I am
8 crystal clear that my former drug addition was
9 directly linked to my contracting the HIV virus. I
10 am asking that you, Chi Ossé, as well as everyone
11 else voting on this Committee, to vote to allocate
12 funds to affordable housing for more LGBTQ 2IA folks,
13 so that others who may be suffering in any capacity
14 can have their lives saved as well.

15 This is not hyperbole. Thank you for your time
16 and attention.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
18 turn to Deigo Brown.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 DEIGO BROWN: Hello, I'm Deigo Brown. I live in
21 Woodside Queens and I am a Real Estate agent in the
22 town Manhattan. I am a member of the Audrey Lorde
23 Project, helping to serve the BIPOC and LGBTQ
24 community.
25

1
2 Like many members of – like many members here
3 have spoken about, I understand the constant battles
4 our community has to face with the housing crisis.
5 Homelessness is a high factor for the LGBTQ community
6 and a lot of that is rooted in the fact that society
7 doesn't always accept everyone that's in the LGBTQ
8 community as well as our families.

9 The result of the high levels of homelessness in
10 our community has resulted in increased levels of
11 depression and anxiety and these factors can lead to
12 things such as increased drug use, unsafe sexual
13 practices and higher rates of suicide for our
14 communities.

15 Mayor Adams has said that it is important for him
16 to crack down on the high crime levels in the city
17 but in order for him to do that, it is important that
18 we increase services for homelessness, as well as for
19 the mental health crisis that our nation is facing.

20 It is important for us to have equitable housing
21 to do this because giving vulnerable members of our
22 community a place to be rooted in and our home to
23 feel safe, allows them to better improve themselves
24 and to better connect and serve their communities.
25

1
2 So, housing equity isn't just important for the
3 LGBTQ community, but it's important for a healthy
4 society.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

6 DEIGO BROWN: Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, uh, our
8 final panelist on Panel 74 Torren Benaly.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I'm going to turn
11 to Panel 75, Jessica Marshal, Charaya Hardy, Joy
12 Clarke and Amy Tsai. We will first turn to Jessica
13 Marshal.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next I have Charaya
16 Hardy.

17 CHARAYA HARDY: Hi, good afternoon everyone. My
18 name is Charaya Hardy. Can anyone hear me?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

20 CHARAYA HARDY: Okay, my name is Madam C. Hardy.
21 I am the Recording Secretary for the CEC, the
22 Community Education Council of District 23, Acting
23 Vice President of Presidents Council and PTA
24 President of PSIS 155.
25

1
2 In these roles, I was introduced to a group
3 catering to healing schools and families. This
4 initiative has brought to us from the DOE, family and
5 community wellness collective department and with the
6 support of the Healing Centered Schools Working
7 Group, I became a family healing ambassador in
8 District 4 East Harlem. I was able to take this
9 train into District 23 in Brooklyn where I now reside
10 and my children attend school.

11 Being an advocate has allowed me to inform
12 families who have experienced trauma and teach them
13 how to cope and deal with these issues. This program
14 DOE created shed light on mental health, social,
15 emotional learning and how it has been impacted by
16 COVID-19. Due to this forum, parents were able to be
17 vulnerable and honest to get the best needs and
18 services for their families.

19 I am honored to be part of a program that caters
20 to helping and rebuilding the confidence and safety
21 of our scholars. In this role, I have also been able
22 to help my own family. During the passing of my
23 grandmother, my family and I were able to honestly
24 speak on losing someone and how to deal. I was happy
25 to teach my children their feelings and emotions were

1
2 valid and real using the mirror method I learned in
3 my training.

4 Being a reflection for your children helps them
5 just as much as it helps the parent. I am so blessed
6 to continue this work. I am asking for the City
7 Council to please support the initiative and the
8 budget to keep it going and growing for all our
9 school community members citywide.

10 Thank you for allowing me to testify. With love
11 Madam C. Hardy.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I'll turn
14 to Joy Clarke.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 JOY CLARKE: Good evening to the Committee
17 Members left. My name is Joy Clarke, I'm a tenant
18 and member of the TIL Interim Lease Coalition. I'm
19 here to request your assistance in helping the
20 tenants of the TIL program realize their home
21 ownership dreams by funding the TIL program.

22 The TIL program was established in 1978 as an
23 agreement between the City of New York and its
24 tenants residing city owned buildings. Under the TIL
25 program, tenants did a work of managing and

1
2 maintaining these properties in exchange for the
3 State of New York fully funding the conversion of
4 these buildings into cooperatives with the tenants
5 purging the apartments for a low cost. Tenants enter
6 into this program with the understanding that in
7 exchange for their work and managing and maintaining
8 the property, the City of New York would fully fund
9 the cost of rehabilitations but we have upheld our
10 end of the bargain by maintaining our buildings with
11 little to no help from HPD.

12 We maintain these buildings and contribute to our
13 neighborhoods when no one else would live here, long
14 before these neighborhoods were gentrified. Despite
15 the decades of work put into maintaining these
16 buildings by the tenants, the City of New York and
17 HPD has now decided to remake on this agreement and
18 forcibly replace the TIL program with the affordable
19 neighborhood cooperative program, ANCP. ANCP is
20 anything but affordable. Sadly low-income Black,
21 Brown and senior residents with insurmountable debt
22 via mortgage and no clear path to home ownership.
23 ANCP was not created for the benefits of tenants,
24 your constituents but with the interest of third
25 party developers who track on exorbitant understudy

1
2 fees in addition to providing construction
3 rehabilitation.

4 As you are aware, home ownership is a path to
5 generational wealth, which is what the intention of
6 the TIL program. Without your help, ANCP will not
7 honor the agreement, as they are waiting for us to
8 die off so these buildings can be a money grab for
9 developers.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

11 JOY CLARKE: We ask that the abuse of ANCP
12 program be defunded and monies be transferred into
13 the TIL Program creating affordable home ownership,
14 something severely lacking in New York City.

15 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Joy. I know
16 you've been here almost all day waiting to testify.
17 So, thank you so much. We appreciate your patience
18 and thank you.

19 JOY CLARKE: Thank you for staying. Have a good
20 evening.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Joy. Thank you
22 Chair. Next, I will turn to Amy Tsai followed by
23 Deloris Cannella but we'll first turn to Amy.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

25 AMY TSAI: Can you hear me?

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

3 AMY TSAI: Thank you. Evening Chair and Members
4 of the Committee on Finance. My name is Amy Tsai and
5 I'm a parent leader of the New Settlement Parent
6 Action Committee. At today's hearing, I would like
7 to touch on two points, very important campaigns on
8 education, CRSE Cultural Response and Sustaining
9 Education and Healing Centered Schools.

10 The engagement and involvement with students,
11 parents, educators, community experts and the New
12 York City Department of Education are necessary in
13 reimagining a better, healthier and stronger public
14 school system in each and every neighborhood of New
15 York City.

16 The work around CRSE and Healing Centered
17 Schools, began several years before COVID. The
18 systemic issues of racism, gender biases, inequities
19 and language access, lack of diversity in school
20 faculties, non-existent cultural stories in books in
21 diverse authors and so much more.

22 The unprecedented pandemic of COVID-19 simply
23 highlights and earmark these symptoms in reality. As
24 COVID-19 effected everyone across the city and
25 nation, we parent leaders recognize there is more we

1
2 can do to contribute to our communities that are
3 grieving from the loss of a loved one and financial
4 stability and self-health and emotions.

5 Leaders and advocates collectively came together
6 to demonstrate a culture response towards a diverse
7 curriculum for students that can relate to their
8 identity, nationality, ability and more. Bring
9 students to light on being interested to come to
10 school and learn. The DOE has committed \$500 million
11 between this school year and the next two school
12 years to co-create a CRSE, Cultural Responsive
13 Sustaining Education and an implementation of the
14 plan. The DOE refers to the mosaic curriculum.
15 Personally no movement is happening with mosaic.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 AMY TSAI: Now, the human centered schools
18 working group has grafted a portfolio to DOE,
19 Department of Culture Climate and Wellness. We, a
20 coalition of healing ambassadors are asking for
21 funding and the implementation of the program to
22 support social, emotional and mental health
23 wellbeing.

24 The Healing Centered Schools members will include
25 Public Advocate Williams and City Councilman Riley in

1
2 this recommendation. I ask that the city elected
3 officials to support and oversee investments of CRSE
4 and the Healing Centered Schools program actually
5 happen in the upcoming school year.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

7 AMY TSAI: This is what our children need and
8 deserve. Thank you for the opportunity to speak
9 tonight. Have a good night.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, our final
11 panelist for Panel 75 Deloris Cannella.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next I will turn to
14 Panel 76 Jazzy Rivera, Judith Bautista, Naomi
15 Williams, Nicki Mia Brownfield, Sirameni Obulal and
16 then Donna Bunilla. I'll first start with Jazzy
17 Rivera.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

19 JAZZY RIVERA: Good evening. My name is Jazzy
20 Rivera and I am the Family Healing Ambassador of
21 PS123 and the District Healing Ambassador of District
22 32.

23 I am the President of Presidents Council of
24 District 32, the Treasurer of Brooklyn High Schools
25 Presidents Council and the CPAC Recording Secretary.

1
2 I serve as PTA President in PS123 IS383 and Nelson
3 Mandela's School for Social Justice. My Councilwomen
4 are Jennifer Gutierrez and Sandy Nurse. I would like
5 to thank the DOE for their support in launching the
6 healing ambassador program. Working collectively
7 with all healing ambassadors in the 19 schools in my
8 district, as well as in my school community, it was
9 and is a great pleasure to work with the school
10 administration to be able to provide the parents with
11 different workshops, support groups to assist them
12 with their mental health and having a space to be
13 able to talk and gain ideas from others on activities
14 and events. We may participate and to find our own
15 wellbeing.

16 During the pandemic, I have learned from my
17 community that most just need guidance assistance and
18 a safe place to get to where they feel supported and
19 assisted. Personally, I am a single mom of four boys
20 who during the pandemic, received knee and neck
21 surgery due to an accident that took place right
22 before lockdown. And before the launch of this
23 program, I took it as an opportunity to move forward
24 and assist my families and my community with
25 resources to maintain and provide them the mental

1 health and wellness. And so that they know that they
2 were not alone.

3
4 Extending this program with parent ambassadors
5 and youth ambassadors will allow us as a community to
6 be with each other and support and with the support
7 of everyone, including staff, students, parents, we
8 would know that moving forward we often face issues
9 that are similar as others and we can share
10 strategies to help us as we may help others with
11 things that they may also feel like they are alone.

12 Thank you for your time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
14 turn to Judith Bautista.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
17 10:27:38-10:10:27:41]—

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
19 10:27:42-10:27:43]. Steven, I unmuted you.

20 STEVEN MALDONADO: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
21 10:27:51-10:27:59].

22 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
23 10:28:00-10:28:08].

24

25

1
2 STEVEN MALDONADO: My name is Judith Bautista; I
3 am a Leader for the Alliance of Workers. [SPEAKING
4 IN OTHER LANGUAGE 10:28:14].

5 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
6 10:28:15-10:28:20].

7 STEVEN MALDONADO: And a great leader for Will
8 Rise, We will Rise in Spanish.

9 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
10 10:28:25-10:28:31].

11 STEVEN MALDONADO: Four years of struggling to
12 correct the great error that happened in the past.

13 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
14 10:28:37-10:28:41].

15 STEVEN MALDONADO: Where they excluded the home
16 workers of their human rights.

17 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
18 10:28:46].

19 STEVEN MALDONADO: On purpose.

20 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
21 10:28:51-10:28:54].

22 STEVEN MALDONADO: And finally, the approved
23 Intro. 339.

24 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
25 10:28:59-10:29:01].

1
2 STEVEN MALDONADO: But this is only the beginning
3 of the travel of the path.

4 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
5 10:29:06-10:29:11].

6 STEVEN MALDONADO: Like I told my son, an
7 umbrella only works if you open it when it's raining.

8 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
9 10:29:17-10:29:21].

10 STEVEN MALDONADO: The same thing with this law,
11 it works only if it's open to the public.

12 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
13 10:29:26-10:29:30].

14 STEVEN MALDONADO: And the homeworkers are
15 recognized for the work that they do.

16 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
17 10:29:36-10:29:40].

18 STEVEN MALDONADO: 20 years as a professional
19 babysitter and I never knew that I had rights.

20 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
21 10:29:45-10:29:49].

22 STEVEN MALDONADO: Home workers are essential.

23 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
24 10:29:52-10:29:55].

1
2 STEVEN MALDONADO: We are the ones that move the
3 economy for this country.

4 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
5 10:29:59-10:30:03].

6 STEVEN MALDONADO: Making it possible that other
7 work is possible.

8 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
9 10:30:07-10:30:09].

10 STEVEN MALDONADO: While each of you go out to
11 work -

12 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
13 10:30:13-10:30:19].

14 STEVEN MALDONADO: A nanny or someone or home
15 healthcare worker that takes care of the adults,
16 allows you to be able to do your work that you do
17 without any concern.

18 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
19 10:30:29-10:30:30].

20 STEVEN MALDONADO: Which are your loved ones.

21 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
22 10:30:34-10:30:40].

23 STEVEN MALDONADO: I also suffered something the
24 time when I chose to become a mother.

1
2 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
3 10:30:46-10:30:53].

4 STEVEN MALDONADO: And that's why I'm here, so
5 that it doesn't happen to someone else what happened
6 to me, if this law is approved.

7 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
8 10:31:03-10:31:07].

9 STEVEN MALDONADO: Thank you for allowing me to
10 give testimony today.

11 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
12 10:31:11-10:31:15].

13 STEVEN MALDONADO: And I ask all of you at the
14 City Council who are present -

15 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
16 10:31:20-10:31:24].

17 STEVEN MALDONADO: To please approve the budget.

18 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
19 10:31:28-10:31:40].

20 STEVEN MALDONADO: And so that the homeworkers
21 are aware and as well as the employees that are aware
22 of their rights and there are laws that protect us.

23 JUDITH BAUTISTA: [SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE
24 10:31:49-10:31:51].

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

545

STEVEN MALDONADO: Thank you very much to everyone and have a good night. Gracias.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Judith. Steven, don't go anywhere, I have to call a few more names but they're not on the Zoom but I have to call them anyway and then we're going to go to [INAUDIBLE 10:32:05].

STEVEN MALDONADO: No problem.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uhm, Naomi Williams is next on our list.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Nickie Mea Brownfield. Sarah Mane [INAUDIBLE 10:32:36] and then Donna Bonilla. Okay, I'm going to move onto Panel 77. Panel 77 has Alma Rocha, Ava Thompson, Deborah Humes Jordan, Denise Frederick, Harriet Mugwiji. But we're first going to turn to Alma, so Steve, if you could let her know that we'll go ahead and unmute her and she can begin her testimony please. Uh, I think we remuted you, sorry. Okay.

STEVEN MALDONADO:[SPEAKING IN OTHER LANGUAGE 10:33:30-10:33:36].

ALMA ROCHA: Yes, I'm ready but I would like to speak in English. Thank you so much.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, thank you. You can
3 uhm, give us just one more – just give us one moment
4 please.

5 ALMA ROCHA: Hello, good evening.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hold on one – hold on one
7 moment. Everybody just bear with us one moment.
8 Okay, can we go ahead and reunmute Alma please.
9 Okay, go ahead Alma.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 ALMA ROCHA: Okay, thank you. Thank you, good
12 evening. My name is Alma Rocha, I am a proud member
13 of the National Alliance Domestic Worker and I have
14 been a nanny since 15-years-ago. Last year, domestic
15 worker to be included in the New York City Human
16 Rights Law. Many domestic workers in New York City
17 still don't know about their basic rights. We have a
18 this right but we want to make sure that other
19 workers and especially employers, know about the
20 rights of domestic workers.

21 We want all the domestic workers to be treated
22 with dignity and respect. We cannot do it in the
23 city with 3,000 domestic workers if we don't have
24 this funding and ongoing support.

1
2 Today, we need a city, an activity joint campaign
3 with the Mayor and [INAUDIBLE 10:34:56]. And
4 together with the organization, hand and hand. Thank
5 you very much and I hope that you give it all your
6 support. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Alma. I'm - next
8 on Panel 77, Eva Thompson.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

10 EVA THOMPSON: Good evening. My name is Eva
11 Thompson. I'm a proud member of the National
12 Domestic Workers Alliance, NDWA and a nanny for over
13 24 years. I am also a leader worker with NDWA. As a
14 caregiver, we fought so hard to ensure domestic
15 workers have human rights. So, last year, domestic
16 workers like myself, fought to be included in New
17 York City's Human Rights law.

18 I have seen what happens when workers go to work,
19 not understanding their rights. I talk to workers
20 all the time who are too scared to speak up because
21 they don't know where to go or who to talk to. Many
22 don't know that the city has offices and agencies
23 ready to help them. Worse, when they get there, they
24 feel powerless to tell their story.

1
2 We want these victories but we want to be certain
3 that other workers and employers know about Domestic
4 Worker rights. I want all domestic workers to be
5 treated with dignity and respect. In my borough,
6 there are over 50,000 domestic workers. Many of them
7 are care workers like myself. The Bronx is very big
8 and our organization needs funding and support to
9 reach out to all of them. Having access to support,
10 having access to resources, will enable us to become
11 even more productive to the families we take care of.
12 So, we are asking the National Domestic Workers
13 Alliance and the New York City Coalition for Domestic
14 Workers partners are asking for \$300,000 to engage in
15 education or to reach referrals -

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 EVA THOMPSON: Domestic workers and employers.
18 Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, we'll
20 turn to Deborah Humes Jordan.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 DEBORAH HUMES JORDEN: Hi everyone and good
23 afternoon. My name is Deborah Humes Jordan. I am a
24 proud member, leader of National Domestic Workers
25 Alliance and of We Dream in Black, the Black domestic

1
2 workers organizing program of NDWE. I have been a
3 home caregiver for 15 years.

4 Last year, domestic workers like myself, fought
5 to be included in the human rights law. And so many
6 domestic workers in New York City still don't know
7 about their basic rights. We want this right but we
8 want to make sure that other workers and especially
9 employers know about domestic worker rights.

10 In 2021, I was doing organizing work to teach
11 domestic workers about their rights and helping them
12 come forward with their cases of wage theft. I was
13 learning that there was so many domestic workers that
14 still didn't know about their rights and needed
15 someone who had experienced what they had experienced
16 in order to trust the next step in exercising their
17 rights.

18 I will take the time to have long conversations.
19 To build that trust. I would have to help explain
20 the process of sharing their story with government
21 agency.

22 I would also be there to advocate when they did
23 not know how to advocate for themselves. With the
24 City Council funding National Domestic Workers
25 Empowerment Initiative there could be more domestic -

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

3 DEBORAH HUMES JORDEN: Leaders like myself.

4 Reaching out to domestic workers, teaching them about
5 their rights and resources. Please, please pass the
6 Domestic Workers and Empowerment Employment
7 Initiative. We can do much more for all the workers
8 who take care of New York City. Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next we'll turn
10 to Denise Frederick.

11 DENISE FREDERICK: Hello, good evening. My name
12 is Denise Frederick and I'm a proud member of the
13 National Domestic Workers Alliance and I'm also a
14 professional nanny currently working in Brooklyn.
15 Last year, domestic workers like myself fought to be
16 included in the New York City Human Rights Law and so
17 many domestic workers in New York City still don't
18 know about their basic rights.

19 We won this right but we wanted to make sure that
20 other workers, especially employers knew about
21 domestic worker rights. During the middle of the
22 pandemic, when so many domestic workers lost their
23 jobs all at once, I was part of a group of worker
24 leaders who reached out to several thousand of
25 domestic workers to let them know about possible

1
2 resources and financial in available today. So many
3 new information and I was so grateful to have the
4 connection.

5 We weren't able to reach out to everybody and
6 eventually our reach as a group of worker leaders was
7 limited. With the city's ongoing support, we can
8 make sure there is funding to education and outreach.
9 I was having conversations with hundreds of workers
10 who just wanted to know what their rights were. Who
11 needed someone to talk to and needed support during
12 such a critical time. The crisis is not over. We
13 are going to back to work but that doesn't always
14 mean back to good work conditions. The Domestic
15 Worker Employer Empowerment Initiative can be a step
16 in the right direction for connecting workers with
17 support and resources. Please fund the Domestic
18 Worker Initiative for \$300,000 so we can see even
19 more domestic worker initiative groups. Thank you
20 for hearing my testimony.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and our final
22 panelist on Panel 77 is Harriet Mugwuji.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

24 HARRIET MUGWUJI: Uhm, can you hear me?

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can.

1
2 HARRIET MUGWUJI: Good evening. Thank you for
3 the space. My name is Harriet Mugwuji and I'm a
4 proud member leader of the National Domestic Workers
5 Alliance and a [INAUDIBLE 10:42:19] organization.

6 I have been a nanny for 12 years. Last year,
7 domestic workers like myself fought to be included in
8 the New York Human Rights Law and so many domestic
9 workers in New York still don't know their basic
10 rights. We want this right but we want to make sure
11 that other workers and especially employers know
12 about domestic worker rights. We want all domestic
13 workers to be treated with dignity and respect. We
14 can't do that in a city with 200,000 domestic workers
15 if we don't have the funding and ongoing support.

16 Last year, I was part of the New York Coalition
17 Domestic Workers and I was given the opportunity to
18 educate Council Members about care work and domestic
19 workers - about care work and domestic workers
20 rights.

21 This year, I would like to ensure that we are
22 educating everyone about care work and domestic
23 workers rights. The pandemic has shown us how we as
24 care workers are important to many families and as
25 some families decided to have their nannies live with

1
2 JACKIE ORIE: It's correct. Thank you. For this
3 opportunity to testify today. My name is Jackie Orié
4 and I am the We Dream Black New York Organizer for
5 the National Domestic Workers Alliance, NDWA. We
6 Dream in Black is NDWA's organizing program for Black
7 identifying domestic workers. I am also a former
8 domestic worker of over 20 years' experience. I am
9 here to testify in support of the Domestic Workers
10 and Employers Empowerment Initiative in this years
11 Schedule C budget proposal.

12 NDQA is the nations leading voice for domestic
13 workers in building power, dignity, and raising
14 standards for the nannies, house cleaners and care
15 workers across the country. In New York alone, we
16 have over 200,000 domestic workers who provide
17 essential care to an estimated \$1 million employers.
18 It is so important to invest in domestic workers.
19 Invest in our care economy and to provide the
20 resources for employers of domestic workers to be up
21 to date with the latest standards and laws for
22 domestic employment.

23 We are urging the New York City Council to
24 support the passage of the Domestic Worker and
25 Employer Empowerment Initiative introduced in the

1
2 2023 New York City discretionary budget. Our
3 coalition is only asking for \$300,000. It will
4 provide much needed funding to support outreach,
5 education and direct services to thousands of
6 domestic workers and employers in our city.

7 Last year, we won historic changes in the
8 domestic worker rights with the passage of Intro. 339
9 Human Rights Inclusion of Domestic Workers and
10 Legislation to obtain the city's paid safe and sick
11 leave to bring domestic workers up to the city's
12 standards. All of this would be for nothing if we
13 don't also ensure the resources to implement, educate
14 and reach out to the thousands of workers and
15 employers, getting them connected to city agencies
16 and understanding the new standards of domestic work.

17 We urge New York City Council to pass this
18 initiative and to place value in the workers that
19 care for all of us. Thank you so much for your time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
21 call on Ludie Delva.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I will call on Marissa
24 Senteno.

1
2 MARISSA SENTENO: Good evening. Good evening
3 Committee Chair Brannan and member of the Finance
4 Committee. Well, we just sort of decided to bring
5 the energy back to the Finance Committee because
6 we're really passionate about ensuring that domestic
7 workers voices are seen and heard. My name is
8 Marissa Senteno and I'm representing the National
9 Domestic Workers Alliance as our New York Director
10 and representing the New York Chapters Domestic
11 Worker base. NDWA works for the respect, recognition
12 and right for nannies, house cleaners and home care
13 workers who do the essential work caring for loved
14 ones in our home, uhm in our homes. NDWA and NYC
15 Coalition for Domestic Work are present here today to
16 ask for \$300,000 to create what would be in New York
17 City's first ever Domestic Worker and Employer
18 Empowerment Initiative in this years discretionary
19 fund.

20 And we already heard some stories about how these
21 funds would be used and why. And what I wanted to
22 really express is that you know, why do we want to
23 make sure that domestic workers and employers across
24 the city are educated about rights and about the much
25 needed services. Well, there are over 200,000

1
2 domestic workers who live and work in New York City
3 and their families total about 680,000 people.
4 That's about eight percent of the city's overall
5 population. Domestic workers do the work that makes
6 all the other work possible. They care for our
7 children, the aging, and the disabled. Over one
8 million households across the city depend on domestic
9 workers and one in eight women of color in New York
10 City is a domestic worker.

11 One in six immigrant woman of color is a domestic
12 worker. And so, I will provide a more nuance
13 analysis of who are domestic workers across the city
14 but I want to say that there isn't a household that
15 doesn't need care, care work and when we're thinking
16 about initiatives and funding that is going to
17 address gender, pay gap and pay disparities, we need
18 to think about like how are we framing the resources
19 for women of color.

20 And in one solution that we have, is to really
21 support and invest in our care future and in domestic
22 workers. So, by passing this initiative, we can
23 fully bridge the gap with the wage disparity, the
24 gender wage disparity because for every domestic
25 worker that is educated in power, just like you've

1
2 heard from our members here tonight. We have workers
3 that can more effectively raise standards in the
4 domestic workplace. In a city that upholds the right
5 to standards of domestic workers is also investing in
6 its care, the future of care work and the future of
7 all of us. Thank you and good night.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the next
9 panelist I will call on Sonita Hamal.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, next, I will call on
12 Daniella Contreras.

13 DANIELLA CONTRERAS: I already testified earlier.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I thought so, thank
15 you. The names are starting to blur but I thought
16 so. Okay, uhm, next, Vishna Vugika. Uhm, next is
17 Robert Jereski. Okay, next Carol Verde. Okay, next
18 I will call on Dave Tallivan.

19 DAVE TALLIVAN: Hi guys.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You're unmuted. We can hear
21 you.

22 DAVE TALLIVAN: Can you hear me?

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

24 DAVE TALLIVAN: Okay, mainly calling whatever for
25 the SRG. They need to be disbanded, defunded,

1
2 whatever. I'm working right now, so I'm a little
3 distracted but uhm, I was going to say, look on Page
4 22 of the manuals that came out like last April.
5 There's like planned arrests. This is not about
6 public safety. Uhm, they do talk about budgets on
7 Page 21. Like, they seem to have a lot of overtime
8 if you ask me.

9 Uhm, but I've been a protest Marshal at tons of
10 protests and I'm talking about safety. Nothing in
11 that manual indicates anything about safety or crowd
12 control, protecting any people who are you know may
13 have mobility problems. Uhm, the other thing is
14 that, like the way they ride their bikes, it's
15 designed to terrorize people.

16 As for uhm, you know like I've seen horrific
17 stuff. Uhm, at that same thing that Victoire was
18 mentioning, I saw a guy fall on the back of his head.
19 It could have been like that guy in buffalo who
20 cracked his skull open. I mean, it's ridiculous and
21 there's no need for it. I've seen them pull
22 journalists onto the sidewalk and you know to arrest
23 them. I've seen them club and beat people, so it's
24 whatever but I'm going to spend money, spend it on
25 Right to Counsel Local Law 53 and uhm, yeah, that's

1
2 it for now. I'm sorry, I'm on a deadline but
3 whatever. But disband them, it's just not worth it
4 and they can't fight for shit.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, Gloria
6 Manzano.

7 GLORIA MANZANO: Hi, good evening. I'm speaking
8 on Family Healing Ambassadors. I just wanted to say
9 that being a Family Healing Ambassador for District
10 31 here in Staten Island. First of all, I've seen -
11 I've been on the meeting with your guys since ten
12 o'clock off and on and I've seen very few people
13 speaking on Staten Island in general and I just want
14 to say for District 31, we absolutely need the Family
15 Healing Ambassadors Program to continue. Our kids
16 really need mental health. COVID came in and they
17 have really been traumatized and damaged in ways that
18 they don't even recognize.

19 So, I would just really ask that Family Healing
20 Ambassador Program does stay in effect or does be
21 considered for next year as well and continue on with
22 the DOE. That's all I had to say.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and just bear with
24 me everyone. Next, I'll turn to Rosa Rodriguez.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, Jeremiah Schlotman.
3 Okay, next, uhm, Nudita Kumar. Okay, next on the
4 list, Angie Perez. Next, I have Richard Perez.
5 Okay, next I have Namrata Pradhan.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 NAMRATA PRADHAN: [INAUDIBLE 10:57:58].

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Oh, okay, there we go. I
9 just wanted to make sure we could hear you, sorry.

10 NAMRATA PRADHAN: Thank you so much, yeah. Hi,
11 my name is Namrata, I'm an Organizer at Adhikaar,
12 working as a nanny. I was a previous nanny and I'm
13 here testifying on behalf of our leader. [INAUDIBLE
14 10:58:21-10:58:23].

15 So, yes, my name is Namrata Pradhan, I'm an
16 active domestic worker of Adhikaar. A community and
17 a worker center that solves and organizes the Nepali
18 speaking community.

19 Today, I am here representing the 200,000
20 domestic workers working NYC. I have been working as
21 a domestic worker for 21 years and I face many
22 injustice at my workplace. For example, employees
23 telling me things like, you are a person from a poor
24 country. You are a servant and you have to listen to
25 whatever we tell you. You're not supposed to sit on

1
2 the sofa and all, it made me feel small and less than
3 human. I couldn't even take a day off when my child
4 was sick and I had to find someone to take care of
5 him so I could go to work.

6 This is not my story. This story is similar to
7 200,000 domestic workers working NYC. Our work is
8 just anyone else on the road. Someone's home is my
9 workplace. Our work is important as many other work.
10 That is why we formed organization Adhikaar NDWA
11 Association and Hand and Hand. The Domestic
12 Employees Network raised our voice and were
13 successful in passing the Intro. 39 in NYC last year
14 as part of the NYC Care Campaign.

15 With this bill, we now are protected under NYC
16 Human Rights Discrimination Law. I feel like we are
17 now recognized as domestic workers like any other
18 jobs. I'm thankful to each one of you who voted in
19 favor of this bill and support to pass the bill but
20 our work is not finished. Just passing a bill is not
21 enough. As we, Adhikaar have learned throughout our
22 experience, organizing for workers and human rights.

23 Our bill is only as good as if it's enforcement
24 and implementation.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

1
2 NAMRATA PRADHAN: Just give me one second. So, I
3 strongly urge the City Council to invest resources
4 from the body to the NYC Coalition for Domestic work
5 and create a new initiative, the Domestic Worker
6 Employer Empowerment Initiative. With this new
7 initiative, we will be able to continue and most
8 importantly expand our fight for domestic worker
9 injustice and for justice and for rights. Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And next on the
11 list, we have Rosa Peña.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I have Kieran Clarke.

14 KIERAN CLARKE: Good evening everyone. My name
15 is Kieran.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting.

17 KIERAN CLARKE: Good evening everyone. My name is
18 Kieran Michelle Clarke. I am a Member/Leader of the
19 National Domestic Workers Alliance and a member
20 leader We Dream in Black New York, New York. NDWA's
21 organizing program for Black identifying domestic
22 workers. I have worked for the care sector for 21
23 years and I have many domestic worker colleagues
24 throughout the City of New York.

1
2 I have been actively involved in the Domestic
3 Worker Campaigns to ensure human rights protections
4 for domestic workers. It is good to see the changes
5 in New York City's legislation. It is a good step
6 forward. I also saw that during the pandemic,
7 domestic workers were left without resources and
8 knowledge of their rights. As many of them became
9 unemployed all at once.

10 In New York City, one in eight women of color are
11 domestic workers. We want the laws that we passed to
12 have real effect in the homes where we work. That
13 means the city should pass the Domestic Worker and
14 Employment Employer Empowerment Initiative. I want
15 all domestic workers in New York City to know their
16 rights and have the kind of access to information
17 that I have had.

18 I teach other workers about their rights and we
19 can teach so much more with the support from New York
20 City Council and administration. I have experienced
21 workplace conditions that do not respect my humanity
22 as a domestic worker and I know what it means to be
23 connected with resource and to feel empowered.

24 We care for all of you and it is time for you to
25 care for us too. Please pass the \$300,000 proposal

1
2 for Domestic Worker and Employer Empowerment
3 Initiative.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

5 KIERAN CLARKE: Thank you so much for your time.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
7 call on Gail Haywood.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 GAIL HAYWOOD: Good night everyone. My name is
10 Gail Haywood and I am a member with the National
11 Domestic Workers Alliance. In the past few years, I
12 have become highly involved in NDWA and have served
13 as a facilitator and has newly been elected to the
14 Board of Cleaners Council to serve all of New York
15 City.

16 I have worked as a housekeeper for over five
17 families in the past 20 years. I have also had
18 extensive knowledge of the nanny industry, having
19 worked as a nanny for over two decades. In the last
20 12 years, I have focused on house cleaning solely for
21 my survival. In March of 2020 when the pandemic
22 strike, I had witnessed house cleaners all across the
23 city lose their jobs and had no money for basic
24 necessities such as putting food on their tables,
25 rent, utilities, etc..

1
2 I also became a victim of this tragedy. Domestic
3 work is hard work period and we deserve fair pay and
4 better wage treatments. We should not have to fight
5 time and time again for this. It is high time that
6 employers keep up with the loss around domestic
7 workers. Funding is needed for domestic workers like
8 myself to thrive.

9 I am asking all of you, please, please, pass
10 300,000 proposal for domestic workers and Employer
11 Empowerment Initiative. Thank you so much and God
12 Bless you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and next, I will
14 call on Fred Recardi.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, I will call on Marque
17 Jenkins. Okay next, uh next, I will call on Lonnie
18 Portus. Next, I will call on Diverse Wuton(SP?).
19 Okay, that represents all of the panels. There are
20 still people in the Zoom and there are those who were
21 not on the Zoom when we called their name or if we
22 had missed anyone, now is the opportunity to use the
23 raise hand function in Zoom. I will call on you in
24 the order with which you raised your hand. If you
25 have already spoken, there is no second round of

1
2 testimony, so we will only be calling on those hands
3 for persons who have not had an opportunity to speak
4 this evening and bear with me one moment, I want to
5 make sure.

6 Steven, I just unmuted you. Sorry, Steven. We
7 hadn't unmuted you in time, so if you could just let
8 folks know that for anyone who was not called on or
9 who may have missed their name, if they could use the
10 Zoom raise hand function now and we will call on them
11 to give testimony.

12 STEVEN MALDONADO: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH 11:07:19-
13 11:07:53].

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Steven. Uhm, the
15 first hand I have up is Jennifer Downes.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, op, there you go. You're
18 unmuted now, sorry.

19 JENNIFER DOWNES: Thank you. Thank you City
20 Council Members for the opportunity to testify.
21 Hello, my name is Jennifer Downes. I am a New York
22 City resident and I am here to urge the City Council
23 to remove the funding of the NYPD's Strategic
24 Response Group entirely from the police budget. The
25 Strategic Response Group was founded in 2015 with a

1 budget of \$13 million. It's budget ballooned to \$90
2 million in its first year. The unit has been a
3 consistent presence at protests across New York City
4 ever since known for escalating and bringing violence
5 to protestors in our streets.
6

7 In 2020, the units brutality was in public view
8 as members of the unit deployed militarized tactics
9 against protestors in the highly documented and
10 visible protests. I personally witnessed violent
11 escalations by the SRG unit. I witnessed a multitude
12 of unjustified escalations at nonviolent protests
13 from disproportionate number of officers deployed,
14 military grade equipment including the LRAD to
15 unprovoked physical violence against individual
16 protestors.

17 I will never be able to scrub the visceral image
18 of a nonviolent protestor being slammed face first
19 into the ground, less than a foot in front of me from
20 my mind and my experience is not unique. The SRG has
21 been central to many lawsuits and investigations
22 related to the NYPD's abuse of protestors throughout
23 2020. The SRG's violence isn't a coincidence. The
24 units training overwhelmingly focuses on use of force
25

1
2 and members of the unit are trained to treat racial
3 justice protestors as enemy combatants.

4 In the SRG Bike Squad's manual, protest groups
5 are divided into two categories, peaceful and
6 violent. Examples of violent protestors are Black
7 Lives Matter Movement, Occupy Wallstreet and Anti-
8 Trump demonstrators. The SRG is an unbearable source
9 of sanctioned, racialized violence in our city and
10 they inflict this trauma on New Yorkers with
11 impunity.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

13 JENNIFER DOWNES: The City Council must put an
14 end to the SRG's abuse by disbanding the unit and
15 removing its funds from the hands of the NYPD and
16 reinvesting those funds into our communities. Thank
17 you for your time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. The next hand for
19 those who have not spoken, Natasha Kappers will be
20 next.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

22 NATASHA KAPPERS: Hello, I am Natasha Kappers,
23 the Director of the New York City Coalition for
24 Educational Justice and a mother of two Black public
25 school students in high school.

1
2 As a nation, we have witnessed and lived through
3 the mass murdering of Black, Latinx and Asian people
4 across the country daily for nearly two weeks. From
5 church goers in California to the elderly buying
6 groceries in Buffalo New York and countless more from
7 coast to coast. All of these murders were racially
8 motivated. The Buffalo shooter wrote a manifesto on
9 how Black and Brown people are replacing White then
10 murdered them while livestreaming on Twitch.

11 But what does this have to do with public
12 education in New York City? Public education and
13 curriculum is a major lever in ending systemic racism
14 and White Supremacy. Nearly a year ago, the New York
15 Department of Education pledged to create the
16 universal Mosaic curriculum. It was to be built by
17 educators, parents and students, be culturally
18 responsive, anti-racist for ELA, English Language
19 Arts and from K-12 to date.

20 The new administration has done little to nothing
21 to bring this curriculum to fruition. This Council
22 ensured that they had over \$200 million needed to
23 make this happen and they have done nothing. They
24 have not even released a public plan or promise not
25 to reallocate that funding.

1
2 We are pleading with the Council to hold the
3 Department of Education accountable for two very
4 simple things. One, ensure that no money is
5 reallocated from the universal mosaic curriculum,
6 even if it is to go to things like ethnic studies,
7 which is social studies curriculum.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 NATASHA KAPPERS: And for them to publicly
10 release a multi-year implementation plan for the
11 universal mosaic curriculum for ELA and math, along
12 with a family engagement plan.

13 This Council must hold them accountable to their
14 promises and to do the right thing for our children
15 in the future. Thoughts and prayers are not nearly
16 enough. In fact, it's nothing. It is time for the
17 Department of Education and the Council to do its
18 part to end systemic racism and this is one clear and
19 concrete way to create our new powerful and equitable
20 future. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you and the final hand
22 that we have up for persons who have not testified
23 today from the Cypress Hills local Development
24 Corporation Ryan Chavez.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 RYAN CHAVEZ: Good evening Chair Brannan and
3 members of the Committee. Thank you for the
4 opportunity to speak today. My name is Ryan Chavez,
5 Program Director of the Basement Apartment Conversion
6 Pilot program at Cypress Hills Local Development
7 Corporation. We're a nonprofit community development
8 organization and Settlement House based in East New
9 York Brooklyn.

10 I am here to request that \$250,000 of expense
11 funding be allocated to the FY23 budget to support
12 ongoing work on the Basement Apartment Conversion
13 Pilot Program. This program launched in early 2019
14 to help small homeowners in East New York convert
15 their basements into safe, legal and affordable
16 rental units.

17 This pilot was also designed to demonstrate the
18 feasibility of basement conversions in New York City
19 and lay the foundation for a citywide program.
20 However, in Spring 2020, all remaining expense funds,
21 around \$2.3 million were eliminated from the program
22 forcing us to scale back dramatically. Now, we did
23 manage to successfully file several plans at the DOB
24 last year and are currently working through out
25 challenging approval process. We expect these

1
2 properties to receive the required approvals by early
3 fall so construction can begin, however, no expense
4 funds have been allocated to cover the programs most
5 basic administrative costs.

6 The program needs \$250,000 in FY23 to cover its
7 essential staffing, overhead and insurance costs
8 through the end of construction. This will allow us
9 to finish our work in East New York while providing
10 the city with lessons for how basement conversions
11 can be done on a larger scale. As we saw during
12 tropical storm IDA last year, the city can no longer
13 afford to ignore the existence of basement units.
14 This is now a matter of life or death.

15 We repeat our request for FY23 expense funds to
16 complete our work in East New York and thank you once
17 again for the opportunity to comment.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Chair Brannan,
19 that concludes the public portion of our hearing.
20 Everyone who has not spoken, received an opportunity
21 to by raising their hands and just so we have it for
22 the record, I want to make sure that we have all the
23 Council Members that we've been joined by today.
24 Brannan, Farias, Louis, Kagan, Hudson, Joseph,
25 Barron, Sanchez, Carr, Brooks-Powers, Moya, Ossé,

1
2 Powers, Brewer, Velázquez, Ayala, Cabán and I'll let
3 you announce the last one.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Council. Before
5 we close out, I want to give Speaker Adams a chance
6 to speak.

7 SPEAKER ADAMS: My goodness. Thank you Chair
8 Brannan and thank you to our Committee Counsel Malcom
9 Butehorn for an amazing job today. In this final
10 day, which is to us on the Council, the most
11 important day out of all of them that we have spent
12 in these joint Council hearings over these past few
13 weeks. You have been heard and before I talk about –
14 before I thank you all, I just want to thank my
15 colleagues who have hung out all day long. This
16 hearing begun at approximately 10 a.m. this morning
17 and it is an annual event, my 5th time in this annual
18 event, which I figure is one of the greatest honors
19 in being a part of this City Council. Thank Council
20 Member Joseph, Council Member Cabán. Those are the
21 two that I see that are still hanging out with your
22 Finance Chair this evening. Thank you for hanging
23 out all day long. Thank you to all of our amazing
24 advocates, our nonprofits, all of our partners that
25 continue to make your wishes known to this historic

1
2 City Council. We hear you. We trust that you will
3 continue and have done your due diligence in speaking
4 up to your Council Members, just as you have taken
5 this time today to make sure that you were heard. As
6 a part of this Panel, make no mistake about it, your
7 testimony goes in the history books for the New York
8 City Council for this 5/25/2022 today, you have been
9 heard across the City of New York and you, are in the
10 history books for your testimony. We appreciate you
11 so much for all of the work that you do. For all of
12 the causes that you continue to champion.

13 Most importantly for your stamina, your
14 commitment to your causes that you truly believe in
15 and the fact that you took enough time to bring it to
16 this Council and to this hearing at this almost 9:30
17 hour on tonight. I appreciate you all so very much
18 for your testimony, for your words, for your
19 heartfelt commitment to all of your causes and like I
20 said, this Council hears you. This Council hears
21 you. We ask for you to continue to reach out. For
22 your individual Council Members continue to reach out
23 to us and we will try our best to meet your needs as
24 you have brought them to this Finance Committee this
25 evening.

1
2 Thank you again to all of the Finance unit staff.
3 Thank you to all of our Sergeants at Arms. Thank you
4 Malcom once again. Thank you to all of our Council
5 who have been here and who stuck it out. Thank you
6 Rasheeda, I see you snapping up there. Thank you for
7 that, we need that too. We need that too, we're
8 human too. Thank you for that.

9 So, we just want to thank you all again for
10 sticking it out with us. We are going to continue to
11 do our very best for you, for the City of New York.
12 I am going to give it back to our Chair Brannan, who
13 I know, if he hasn't been drinking coffee all day - I
14 don't know but I trust that he has had a cup or two
15 over these hours.

16 So thank you for an amazing job Finance Chair
17 Brannan. I yield back to you and good night.

18 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Speaker. Over
19 the last ten days, this Committee has heard from 20
20 agencies, authorities, boards and offices but today,
21 like the Speaker said, it was really the most
22 important day because it's when we hear from the
23 people of the city. The people that put their trust
24 in us, their faith in us to do the right thing and we
25 are their neighbors and they elect us to deliver for

1
2 them and that's why today is so important because
3 we're hearing directly from you and now, as we turn
4 to budget negotiations and we work towards not only a
5 balanced budget but a budget that's guided by
6 fairness and equity for every New Yorkers in every
7 zip code. And I think we heard from people from just
8 about every neighborhood today, which was really
9 meaningful and powerful.

10 And also, of course, I want to echo the tireless
11 work of the staff and especially Malcom for stepping
12 up and stepping up to really be our captain here over
13 the past month. We started these hearings back on
14 May 6th and here we are now on May 25th, almost 12-
15 hours after we started this hearing this morning.

16 And uhm, and with that, I will close out this
17 first series of hearings for the FY23 budget. The
18 first series of hearings under Speaker Adams and with
19 this historic Council. Thank you all so much. Thank
20 you everyone for your patience. Everyone that stuck
21 around today to make their voices heard. With that,
22 I will adjourn this hearing. Thank you. [GAVEL]
23 Good night everybody.
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date August 14, 2022