



Thursday, May 9, 2024

**STATEMENT OF EDWARD A. CABAN
POLICE COMMISSIONER
NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEES ON FINANCE AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
MAY 9, 2024**

Good morning. Speaker Adams, Chair Salaam, Chair Brannan, and members of the City Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Mayor's Executive Budget for the 2025 fiscal year. As always, it is an honor to share with you the outstanding work the members of the New York City Police Department do every day, and why this funding is critical to our core functions.

The NYPD's mission is simple to state: drive down crime and keep people safe. That is our job, what every officer and civilian member of our department has sworn an oath to do. But fulfilling that mission, and upholding that oath, is some of the most complex and demanding work in our society. Fortunately for New York City, though, the professionals who do this work in our five boroughs are among the best in the world. These are truly remarkable men and women, people who have chosen to dedicate their lives to helping others – people like Detective First Grade Jonathan Diller.

As you all know, since we last met in this chamber, our city lost a true hero. Detective Diller was a son, a brother, a husband, and a father. And he was also a great cop. Jonathan represented everything that is good about public service. A young officer with just three years of service, he had already set himself apart – willing to help, willing to go into harm's way, willing to do the job we asked him to do. But in an instant – in a sudden and senseless act of violence – he was gone. Murdered by a career criminal with no regard for human life, who carried an illegal gun and thought nothing of pulling the trigger. Murdered while protecting the people of our city.

This tragedy left us hurting, angry, and with many more questions than answers. It should never have happened, and it is our responsibility to Detective Diller – and to the families of every single member of our department – to make sure it never happens again. That is our solemn vow, and it means continuing the work that Jonathan started – fighting crime, reducing violence, and ridding our streets of illegal guns. We are honored to carry on that work in Jon's name, and every day, your NYPD officers are building on the tremendous legacy of all those we have lost. Our efforts are making a difference, and the data speaks for itself.

So far this year, violent crime in New York City continues to fall. Compared to the same time period in 2023, murders are down nearly 16%. Burglaries are down more than 12%. And total major felony crime has fallen around 3%. At the same time, major felony arrests are up another 10% – extending a 26-year high. Major crime is down in all areas of the city – from neighborhood precincts, to public housing, to our transit system. Our officers are addressing the community's

public-safety needs at every level.

And as we have said from the beginning of this administration: Our focus remains on ending gun violence, and protecting the lives of New Yorkers. To that end, both the number of shooting incidents and victims has continued to decline in 2024, prolonging the downward trend we have seen over the past two years. Shooting incidents have been reduced by about 17.5%, while victims have declined around 17.6%. These are much more than numbers, they are lives saved. Fewer victims of gun violence means fewer shattered families. And that is why the only acceptable number of shootings in our city will always be zero.

We are not there yet. But your NYPD officers are out there, in every neighborhood, changing our city for the better. So far this year, they have taken more than 2,300 illegal guns off our streets – and out of the hands of violent criminals. Add this to the incredible work done since 2022, and this administration has seized nearly 16,000 guns.

Every gun we take makes our neighborhoods safer – and will never again be used to harm another innocent person. So from our sector cops, Field Intelligence Officers, the Gun Violence Suppression Division, the Detective Bureau, our Community Response Teams, and so many more – we are all united in this effort, and relentless in this work. The people we serve demand it, they deserve it, and their cops are doing everything they can to deliver it.

The same goes for our city's subways. New York's transit system is the largest in the nation, with a fleet of nearly 6,700 train cars, running through more than 470 stations, across 665 miles of mainline track. The system has about 4 million daily riders – which, for context, is greater than the population of Los Angeles – and every single one of them deserves to be safe. So whenever there is an uptick in transit crime, our department will respond. And that is exactly what we did.

We deployed thousands of additional cops into the system every day, on top of the amazing work done by our Transit Bureau personnel. These officers conduct train runs, platform sweeps, and station inspections. They are posted at turnstiles and other points of entry. And their presence not only makes the system safer, it makes our riders feel safer, too. And now, paced by double-digit reductions over the past few months, crime in our transit system is down more than 4% for this year. We are committed to maintaining this turnaround, and it is no real mystery how: It is all about the cops.

None of this happens by accident – it is the direct result of the unmatched dedication of your NYPD officers. They truly are the best, and the work they are doing in the face of today's many challenges is further proof of that. These days, our world is more connected than ever before. And once again, we are seeing how events halfway around the globe have a direct impact on New Yorkers.

We are dealing with international conflicts, weekly mass protests, the dual threats of domestic and international terrorism, and housing and services for new migrants, to name a few. And all of this is on top of the day-to-day job of fighting traditional crime in the largest city in the nation. This directly impacts our personnel and patrol resources, which then effects every other element of our work. Despite this, your cops are always out there – wherever, and whenever, they are needed.

It should be clear that the NYPD fully supports the constitutional right to peaceful protest. But we will never tolerate assaults on our officers, the destruction of property – public or private – or the disruption of emergency services. And anyone who uses the cover of peaceful demonstration to mask criminal behavior will be held accountable.

Why? Because we have a sworn duty to ensure that all New Yorkers can exercise their constitutional right to free speech. Our job is to protect that right, but it is also our duty to protect the rights of residents trying to get around their neighborhood, the rights of small businesses to operate safely, and the rights of people to get to work, school, and anywhere else they need to be.

The vast majority of protesters understand this, and we work closely with them on a daily basis to ensure that their voices are heard, that they are protected while exercising those rights, and that the needs of their neighbors are respected. It is all a part of providing the highest levels of public safety for anyone and everyone in our city – and again, this does not happen by chance.

It is the cops, out there doing the work 24/7. They are the constant, they drive positive change, and they keep our city safe. More than 90% of our department's budget is allocated to personnel, and that is very purposeful. It may be a cliché, but it is no less true: You get what you pay for. And part of what you pay for is one of the most diverse police departments in the country. With every new class of police recruits, the NYPD is looking more and more like the people and the communities we serve.

From recruits to bureau chiefs, our officers come from every corner of the world. They are the children of immigrant families, and oftentimes they are immigrants themselves. They speak hundreds of different languages; represent all races and ethnicities; and span many religions, cultures, and creeds. In every way, our cops reflect the people they protect. And more and more, our officers are New Yorkers themselves. Since I became police commissioner in 2023, 70% of our recruit hires are city residents. This matters, because no one knows a neighborhood better than the people who live, work, and visit there. And I promise you, as long as my team is in place, this commitment to diversity in our ranks will never change.

Our ability to recruit and maintain this diversity stems directly from our community engagement efforts, which have never been more valuable to the work we do. From our schools to our senior centers, the NYPD is heavily invested in programs designed to bring the police and the people they serve closer together. Our relationship with the public must be strong, and it must be open and honest. So at every level of our department, we work to communicate and keep the lines of dialogue open.

After all, public safety is a shared responsibility – we are all in this together. I know the members of this council understand that, and we truly appreciate all the ways you support the men and women of the NYPD.

Now, taking a closer look at the figures when it comes to the Mayor's executive budget:

The NYPD's Fiscal Year 2025 Expense Budget is approximately \$5.8 billion – with \$5.3 billion, or 92%, allocated for personnel costs. The remaining \$446 million, or 8% percent, is dedicated to non-personnel costs – including technology that provides officers with immediate access to critical safety equipment, tools, and applications. Agency authorized headcount is 48,844 positions, of which 35,001 are uniformed members of the service, and 13,843 are civilian. The key highlight of the Executive Financial Plan for the department was the restoration of two additional recruit classes out of the five classes that were reduced in the November Financial Plan. The NYPD is still down approximately 8% from our pre-COVID active uniformed headcount, and the reinstatement of these July and October 2024 classes will help us offset attrition and keep driving down crime in the city.

Another key addition to the department's budget for fiscal year 2024 was \$160 million in overtime funding, primarily for migrant shelter security, enhanced transit safety, and deployment to protests. These are unprecedented events which no one could have planned for, and as a result spending for these activities is outside of our Adoption Financial Plan baseline. We are closely monitoring these figures internally, and with the Office of Management and Budget on a month-to-month basis.

Other changes in the Financial Plan include approximately \$28 million for support and licensing costs for critical IT infrastructure, \$9 million for auto parts to make critical repairs to our fleet, out-year funding for new leases for Detective Bureau functions, and collective bargaining and managerial wage increases.

At the start of my testimony, I talked about how challenging our work can be – and that is certainly true. But no matter the challenge, the NYPD will always work to find the solution. And at the end of every day, there is a thread running through all of this.

It is not policy innovation, it is not cutting-edge technology, it is not updated procedure. It is the cops. It is the officers on patrol, on post, working in our communities. It is the people who have made a very important choice to dedicate their lives to the service of others. And it is an undisputed fact that our city is safer because of them. This may sound simple in theory, but can be incredibly complex in practice. But what is not difficult to see or understand – because it is right there in front of you every day – is the commitment our officers have to the people of this city. The NYPD has been out there for nearly 180 years, and we will stay out there as long as the people of New York City need us.

I know our conversation today will be wide-ranging, but you should never lose that thread. Our cops make all the difference – and the best and most effective way to keep New York City safe is a fully staffed, well-funded New York City Police Department.

Thank you again for this opportunity to speak with you on behalf of the dedicated men and women of the NYPD. At this time, we welcome your questions.



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Jumaane D. Williams

**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY
MAY 9, 2024**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams, and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I would like to thank Chair Salaam and the members of the Committee on Public Safety for holding this important hearing.

The NYPD is by far the biggest and most expensive police department in the country, and often is called for social service functions that are not appropriate. The NYPD is often called to address issues of homelessness and mental health crises. We know that dispatching police to remove people perceived as being homeless or experiencing symptoms of mental health and acute mental illness hasn't worked long-term in the past, and that we must invest in non-police responses to people in mental health crises to address those in crisis and to help address substance abuse. The fatal consequences of what happens when police respond to a person in a mental health crisis was exemplified in March, when 19-year-old Win Rozario called 911 while in emotional distress. As revealed in recently released police body camera footage, the responding officers Tasered and then shot Rozario five times within three minutes of their arrival, after offering no help or attempting de-escalation—killing him.¹

In the past few weeks, we have seen aggressive policing on college campuses in the city in response to student encampments calling attention to the ongoing violence against Palestinians in Gaza. Many students, faculty, members of the media, legal observers, and bystanders have described witnessing unnecessary violence or being brutalized by the NYPD against individuals not resisting arrest. The scale of the police response to the encampments was disproportionate and inappropriate, and I am concerned that interactions between pro-Palestinian protestors and the NYPD will continue to escalate.

The CCRB has been continuously underfunded by the city, making it more difficult—and in some cases impossible—for the agency to provide oversight of the NYPD. Starting in January of this year, the CCRB has stopped investigating several categories of allegations due to budget cuts. An increasing number of complaints—a 50 percent increase from 2022 to 2023—has outpaced the number of CCRB staff, resulting in backlogs and delayed investigations. At the preliminary budget hearing, the CCRB said they require 73 additional investigators and 376 total

¹ <https://gothamist.com/news/video-shows-nypd-officers-killed-a-queens-teenager-minutes-after-he-called-911>

personnel to manage the current workload, with a total \$37.7 million budget. With the current CCRB budget and its inability to impose its disciplinary recommendations and its lack of direct access to body camera footage, the NYPD operates almost entirely without oversight—which is not only unacceptable but dangerous.

The mayor’s Subway Safety Plan has exacerbated a police overtime surge. It does not make New Yorkers safer to spend millions of dollars on overtime for police officers to remove people perceived as homeless or mentally ill from public spaces, or to stand around in subway stations looking at their phones. According to the City Comptroller, for FY 2024, the City has spent \$461 million through December on NYPD’s uniformed overtime, \$109 million more than spent for the same period in FY 2023, and is on target to spend about \$925 million for the year.² From 2022 to 2023, police overtime spending increased from \$4 million to \$155 million, while the number of crimes in the subway stayed about the same and even decreased in some categories, including grand larceny, robbery, rape, and murder.³

Despite the recent deployment of New York State Troopers and the National Guard to the city’s subways, a recent shooting occurred on the A train as it pulled into the Hoyt-Schermerhorn station—a station that houses a police station. It’s an almost too on-the-nose example that public safety does not equate to simple proximity to police officers. This underscores the need for the city to increase investment in the things we know prevent crime: housing support, mental health services, employment opportunities, crisis intervention, credible messengers, and education.

The mayor and I may often disagree on the most impactful ways to address crime and violence in our city, but I applaud his support of alternative solutions to violence, including violence interrupters and cure violence programs. The city’s Crisis Management System (CMS) is a network that deploys teams of credible messengers who mediate conflicts on the street and connect high-risk individuals to services that can reduce the long-term risk of violence. CMS provides non-punitive, wrap-around services including school conflict mediation, employment programs, mental health services, and legal services. We have evidence that these alternatives to policing work reduce violence: CMS data from 2010 to 2019 shows that the program has contributed to an average 40 percent reduction in shootings across program areas, compared to a 31 percent decline in shootings in the 17 precincts in New York City with the highest rates of violence.

Brownsville, Brooklyn’s 73rd Precinct exemplifies the success and necessity of cure violence programs. In December 2020, the police withdrew from their regular posts on Mother Gaston Boulevard for five days. Instead of a police presence, a cure violence group called Brownsville In, Violence Out watched over the two blocks between Pitkin and Sutter Avenues. No valid 911 or 311 calls were made during this pilot. A second round of this experiment a few months later saw the cure violence group and their community partners finding a missing 4-year-old and intervening in a fight brewing between groups of teenage girls, all without the help of police. This is what public safety should look like: an investment in communities, robust support services, and allowing

² <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/comments-on-new-york-citys-preliminary-budget-for-fiscal-year-2025-and-financial-plan-for-fiscal-years-2024-2028/>

³ <https://gothamist.com/news/nypd-overtime-pay-in-the-subway-went-from-4-million-to-155-million-this-year>

those closest to the problem to lead the solution.

It is also vital to adequately and robustly fund our public defender services. While free legal defender services for anyone who needs them are mandated by federal and local law, these organizations are consistently underfunded. It is low-income New Yorkers who ultimately face the consequences of a budget that favors district attorneys' offices, deprived of the robust legal representation that they need and deserve. In June of last year, the City Council sent a letter to the mayor asking for at least \$195 million for legal service providers to be added to the FY24 budget,⁴ and at the preliminary budget hearing in March, legal defense providers asked for \$133.5 million in funding for FY25—however, the proposed budget for FY25 only increases funding for city-supported lawyers by \$46 million.⁵ The city budget must ensure a high standard of quality legal representation for low-income New Yorkers.

Lastly, in 2021, my office released a report on reimagining safety in our schools, including phasing out School Safety Agents and policing infrastructure. Prior to the pandemic, there were roughly 5,000 SSAs assigned to schools; as of late last month, according to a report released by the Independent Budget Office, that number had decreased to 3,900. The IBO also reported no indication the city plans to significantly expand the safety division to pre-pandemic levels over the next four years. The presence of SSAs and police more broadly serve only as a reaction to violence or criminal behavior and do not create safety. This natural attrition of SSAs provides an opportunity for the city to invest in creating safe school environments by hiring more guidance counselors and social workers, expanding restorative justice and violence interruption programming, implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered school environments, sustaining and creating new Student Success Centers, and increasing youth employment opportunities.

Thank you.

⁴ <https://www.nydailynews.com/2023/06/19/nyc-council-urges-mayor-adams-to-increase-funding-for-legal-aid-providers/>

⁵ <https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2023/06/fiscal-year-2024-new-york-city-budget-numbers/388113/>



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The Center for Justice Innovation is a non-profit organization that seeks to transform the policies and practices of the justice system to make it fair, effective, and humane. The Center operates the following sites throughout New York City.

- Family
- Criminal
- Community Development
- Civil/Housing

Click on the name of any program to learn more.

STATEN ISLAND

- 1. Staten Island Justice Center

MANHATTAN

- 2. Harlem Community Justice Center
- 3. Headquarters
- 4. Manhattan Justice Opportunities
- 5. Midtown Community Court

MULTI-BOROUGH

- 6. Legal Hand (Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens)

BRONX

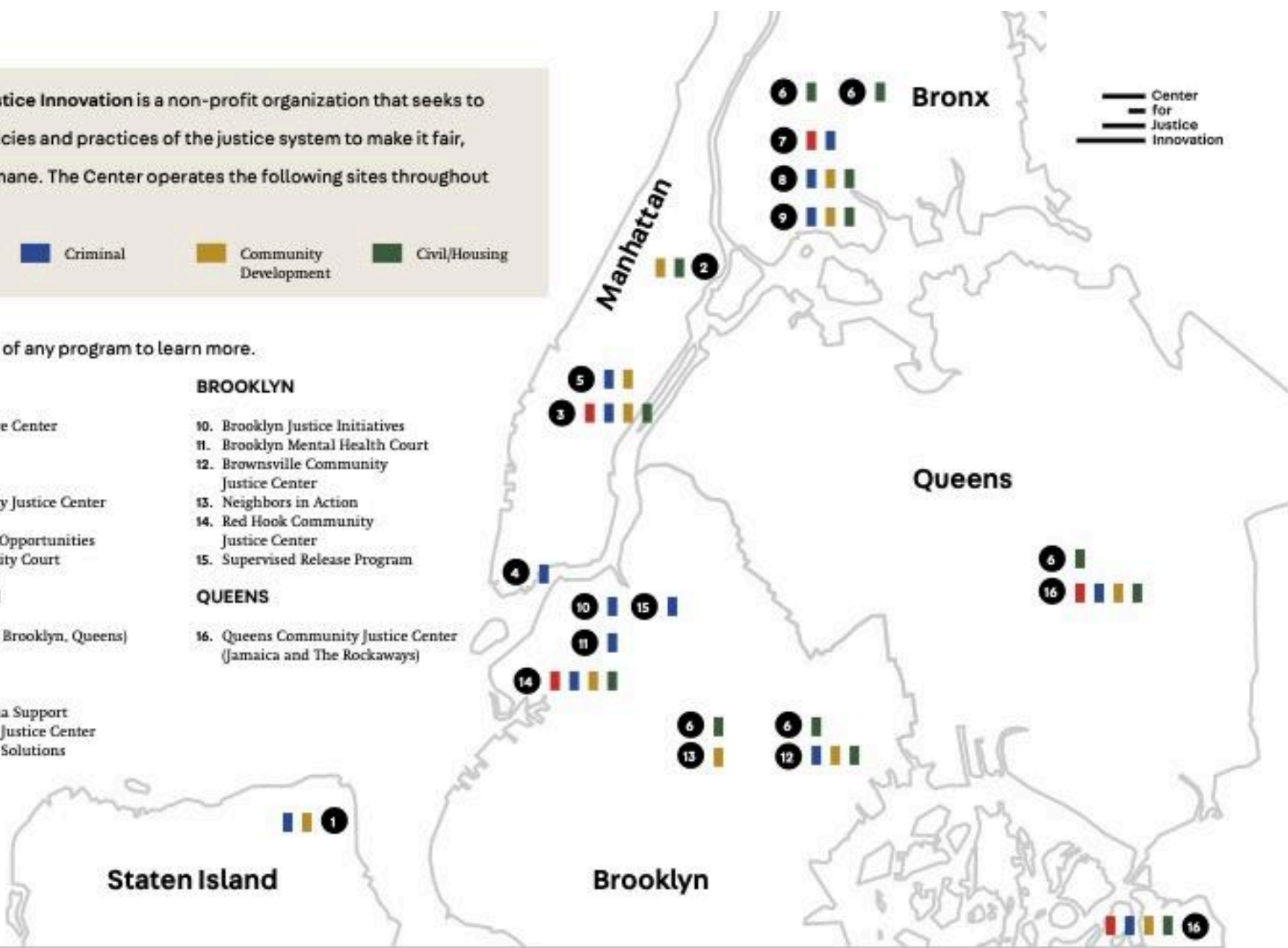
- 7. Bronx Child Trauma Support
- 8. Bronx Community Justice Center
- 9. Bronx Community Solutions

BROOKLYN

- 10. Brooklyn Justice Initiatives
- 11. Brooklyn Mental Health Court
- 12. Brownsville Community Justice Center
- 13. Neighbors in Action
- 14. Red Hook Community Justice Center
- 15. Supervised Release Program

QUEENS

- 16. Queens Community Justice Center (Jamaica and The Rockaways)



Citywide

- Access to Justice
- Alternatives to Incarceration
- Driver Accountability Program
- Gender and Family Justice
- Neighborhood Safety Initiatives
- Parent Support Program
- Project Reset
- Restorative Justice Practices
- RISE Project
- Strong Starts Court Initiative
- Youth Action Institute
- Youth Impact

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**Center for Justice Innovation
New York City Council
Committee on Finance
May 9th, 2024**

Good morning, Chairs Brannan and Salaam and esteemed members of the Committees on Finance and Public Safety. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Center for Justice Innovation (The Center).

The Center for Justice Innovation provides community-based programming that improves public safety and connects New Yorkers to crucial services, such as mental health and substance abuse counseling. In addition, we offer meaningful offramps to the criminal justice system that serve to reduce recidivism and change lives.

The Center recognizes the Administration's changes to the Executive Budget. However, substantial funding needs remain to continue building public safety across the City. Given the challenges the City is facing, it is imperative to make smart investments that can help decrease costs long-term. As the City continues to further invest in traditional public safety methods, it is vital to similarly build out offerings for preventative services and upstream responses to criminal justice involvement. Funding in these crucial areas help reduce recidivism by preventing justice system involvement in the first place, or, when necessary, connecting justice system-involved individuals with meaningful support so they can live productive lives, safely in the community.

Programs such as ours play an instrumental role in curtailing repetitive contact with the legal system, which can result in ballooning costs for our city and cause harm to already marginalized communities. Our programs are hyperlocal, making them more responsive to the needs and desires of the community. Traditional justice system responses are only available after harm has occurred. By working in partnership with the communities we serve across the city, we produce tangible benefits to public safety, often preventing harm before it even occurs. When crime does occur, our programming makes space for healing accessible, and provides accountability and support for individuals seeking to transform their lives. We are able to connect community members with comprehensive housing support, employment and educational resources, as well as substance abuse and mental health counseling, and more.

Backed by a skilled team of researchers, each of our programs address factors that can contribute to crime. Above all, data shows that these programs are successful at what they set out to achieve. Today, I would like to discuss a selection of our programming, ranging from

preventative, community-based services, to meaningful upstream interventions and justice-system off-ramps.

Community Development and Crime Prevention

Neighborhood Safety Initiative (NSI)

Neighborhood Safety Initiatives (NSI) supports the implementation of NeighborhoodStat (NSTAT), a resident-driven community organizing initiative and comprehensive strategy to enhance public safety and strengthen community well-being in 30 public housing developments.

NSI enlists residents, City agencies, and community-based partners to help move beyond enforcement and address the factors underlying safety – providing opportunities for work and play, health and well-being, and youth development; promoting activated, well-maintained spaces through community and human-centered design; and improving trust between neighbors with a responsive and just government. Their mission is to improve community safety in places impacted by historic disinvestment by creating opportunities for residents to identify key issues underlying crime and participate in the decision-making to address these priorities. Through NeighborhoodStat (NSTAT), we harness the collective expertise of residents, government, and community partners to drive meaningful dialogue, problem-solving, and, ultimately, create positive change at both the neighborhood and administrative levels.

NeighborhoodStat connects residents to social services and community resources; increases the security and quality of shared community space by working with residents to physically improve and maintain public space, thereby enhancing a positive sense of ownership; increases civic engagement; and enhances the capacity of residents to improve public safety and wellbeing in their communities. Adopting a participatory justice model, NeighborhoodStat works with local organizers to provide direct investment into historically underserved communities and ensures that those most affected and most marginalized, especially those who have been historically left out of these conversations, have a say in improving health and wellbeing, safety and justice, economic stability, physical space, and youth development policies that affect their lives.

The program has reached over 60,000 residents of the New York City Housing Authority utilizing the following strategies:¹

- **Invest in Residents:** Neighborhood Safety Initiatives hires, trains, and supports community organizers; recruits and organizes resident leadership teams; designs and implements social programs; manages community action plans; and implements data collection and evaluations. Social programs include youth mentorship, coding courses, music mentorship, adult entrepreneurship training and support, intergenerational green space stewardship, healing and justice events, public education campaigns like those

¹ Center for Justice Innovation. *Neighborhood Safety Initiatives*. New York, NY.
<https://www.innovatingjustice.org/programs/neighborhood-safety-initiatives/more-info>

around COVID-19, summer time basketball series, economic mobility events, and more. Neighborhood Safety Initiatives also respond to residents' immediate needs. The program coordinates collaboration across city agencies and other non-profit partners to answer food needs, connect residents to resources, and host conflict resolution events. In 2023, more than 465 intergenerational residents were actively involved in resident stakeholder teams, taking the lead in identifying both the issues plaguing their communities and driving positive change.

- **Transform Public Spaces:** Neighborhood Safety Initiatives works with residents to re-envision public spaces to make them more welcoming and promote people's well-being. In the last five years the program has designed and implemented a series of community gardens and recreational public spaces, wayfinding projects, murals, creative lighting installations, and a pop-up outdoor program with movable kiosks where partner agencies can provide information and supportive services to the community. Since 2017, Neighborhood Safety Initiatives has overseen the co-creation and implementation of over 65 built environment projects and social programs. These initiatives include murals, open plazas, community gardens, pop-up modular resource hubs, music programs for youth, and adult entrepreneurship programs in collaboration with NYCHA community stakeholders.

Reimagining Intimacy through Social Engagement (RISE) Project

The RISE Project transforms responses to intimate partner violence, focusing specifically on its intersection with gun violence. Gun violence and intimate partner violence are often viewed as separate problems that require different responses, but neighborhoods impacted by high rates of gun violence also have the highest levels of reported domestic violence incidents. Access to a gun makes it five times more likely that a partner experiencing abuse will be killed.²

The need for these services is increasing, as domestic violence related homicides are displaying startling upward trends. According to a recently released report from the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence, there were 71 domestic violence homicide deaths in New York in 2022, up nearly 15% from the year before.³ Black and Hispanic women were disproportionately affected, with Black women comprising 41% of the victims despite representing just 21% of the population and Hispanic women comprising 36% of the victims, despite making up just 28% of the population. This disproportionate effect also extends to the boroughs, with Brooklyn experiencing a 225% escalation in intimate partner homicides and the

² Jacquelyn C. Campbell et al., "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study," *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 7 (July 2003): 1089–97

³ Shwe, E., Carlson, S., & Pinder, H. (2024, February 10). In NYC, 2022 was a grim year for domestic violence homicide. Things have gotten worse. <https://gothamist.com/news/in-nyc-2022-was-a-grim-year-for-domestic-violence-homicide-things-have-gotten-worse>

Bronx experiencing a 57% increase.⁴ Seeing these disturbing data trends, it is imperative that we increase funding to these services, rather than decrease.

In neighborhoods across New York City, RISE implements community-centered interventions that build local capacity to respond to and prevent intimate partner violence. RISE works with people causing harm in their relationships to stop the violence and transform behaviors and offers people experiencing harm the support they need to navigate systems to obtain safety. RISE's program offerings seamlessly integrate public health, healing-centered approaches, and restorative justice strategies through the following:

- **Community Initiatives:** By engaging communities most impacted by violence, RISE builds capacity to co-create safety in the community and within our homes by changing the societal norms that tolerate intimate partner violence. RISE implements community healing, placemaking, and community organizing strategies that activate neighborhood spaces to prevent violence and support healthy relationships. Youth programming provides space for youth to understand how to maintain healthy relationships, develop youth advocacy projects, and build networks of peer support.
- **Prevention Strategies:** RISE engages community members to play a role in preventing, responding to, and ultimately ending intimate partner violence through workshops, youth programs, community events, and neighborhood-specific public education campaigns.
- **Capacity Building:** Through tailored training and technical assistance to community-based and gun violence prevention organizations, RISE builds community capacity to prevent violence, support healthy relationship norms, and reduce tolerance for intimate partner violence.
- **Crisis Response:** RISE responds to crises through immediate interventions and addressing existing service gaps that make it difficult for those most marginalized or impacted by intersectional violence to access support.
- **Youth Programs:** RISE engages youth to develop and implement projects focused on changing harmful behaviors around intimate partner violence. Youth learn about dating violence, consent, and navigating relationships through workshops, public education campaigns, arts initiatives, and community events.
- **Transformative Initiatives:** Community-based interventions engage individuals who cause harm in their intimate relationships. The goal for the individual is to stop causing harm, take accountability, and change their behavior to ultimately prevent abuse.
- **Individual Interventions:** RISE provides individual services to support participants in recognizing the root causes of their harmful behaviors and co-creates strategies to change behavior using an intersectional and restorative framework.

⁴ Graham, A. (2024, January 31). Domestic violence-related homicides skyrocket in NYC, according to new report. https://www.amny.com/news/domestic-violence-homicides-skyrocket-nyc/?oref=csny_firstread_nl

- **Group-Based Interventions:** RISE supports people to hold themselves accountable and to build networks of peer accountability through group interventions. Voluntary, neighborhood-based groups facilitated by trained staff provide accessible space to challenge harmful behaviors and beliefs around intimate partner violence.
- **Community Strategies:** RISE provides community healing circles and interventions to provide ongoing support when violence has been caused in the community. RISE also develops tools, trainings, and interventions to increase community engagement to challenge violence such as bystander intervention trainings, community-focused safety planning, and community campaigns.

Save Our Streets (S.O.S.)

The Save Our Streets (S.O.S.) program works in four New York City neighborhoods across the Bronx and Brooklyn, partnering with local organizations, faith leaders, residents, and the individuals most likely to be involved in a shooting. Our staff prevent gun violence from occurring by mediating conflicts and acting as peer counselors to people who are at risk of perpetrating or being victimized by violence. We work closely with neighborhood leaders and businesses to promote a visible and public message against gun violence, encouraging local voices to articulate that gun violence is unacceptable. These local voices are respected pillars of the community, adults that youth and their families know and trust.

Using public health strategies, S.O.S. seeks to prevent the spread of violence. Its key elements are:

- **Community Outreach and Hospital Response:** The program deploys outreach workers and violence interrupters who engage youth and adults in the community at risk of perpetrating or being victimized by violence. The staff, who all have intimate knowledge of life on the streets, serve as counselors, offering advice and guidance on how to respond to conflicts without violence. They use positive peer pressure to redirect high-risk individuals towards school or jobs and help them think and behave differently about violence. Violence interrupters' primary focus is to prevent shootings from occurring by engaging in mediation. Hospital responders partner with local hospitals to respond to shooting injuries, connecting with gunshot-wound victims and their families at the hospital to offer resources and prevent retaliation.
- **Public Education:** S.O.S. staff and volunteers distribute palm cards and posters with messages that promote peaceful conflict resolution, decry violence, and offer S.O.S. as a safe resource for people at risk of experiencing gun violence. Merchants have signs in their windows to support our "Stop Shooting. Start Living," message and count the number of days since the last shooting. Social media, texting, and e-mails keep the community updated and involved. S.O.S. campaigns are often designed particularly to reach youth with a specific, thought-provoking focus.

- **Faith-Based Leaders:** Faith-based organizations are an essential partner in the S.O.S. violence-reduction strategy. Faith-based leaders are encouraged to preach against gun violence from their pulpits, attend vigils, counsel people who are potentially involved in gun violence, and refer high-risk individuals to the program.
- **Community Mobilization:** S.O.S. has built strong relationships with local businesses and agencies to spread an anti-violence message and promote community collaboration. Staff, participants, and volunteers organize block parties, arts showcases, presentations, and trainings to advance the idea that gun violence is both unacceptable and preventable. The program organizes community forums, rallies and marches, speak-outs, and barbecues to advance a simple idea: our community is moving past gun violence. S.O.S. also organizes a rally or vigil in the location of every shooting to call attention to and denounce the tragic results of violence. Local residents work as canvassers to promote events and disseminate program information.
- **Working with Justice-Involved Youth:** S.O.S. Bronx is contracted through the Administration for Children's Services to work with young people in The Children's Center. The goal is to reduce violence by changing the mindsets of the youth we serve. Staff facilitate workshops, including Job Readiness, Know Your Rights, and Engaging in Mindfulness and Self-Awareness. In addition to this, staff facilitate activities informed by program participants and community residents that bolster pro-social behavior and provide them with support in navigating the legal system as needed.
- **Youth Enrichment Services:** School-based conflict mediation provides culturally competent programming to at-risk youth to reduce their involvement in violence while increasing attendance, academic progress, and other social measures. The program includes school-wide activities to change the culture around violence and to assist schools in their response to incidents in school or the community.
- **Anti-Gun Violence Employment Program:** This program is a seasonal employment program for participants 14- to 24-years-old. The program consists of two phases: a six-week summer program and a 25-week school-year program. Job responsibilities include community canvassing, asset mapping, data gathering, community outreach to engage and mobilize peers, and coordinating shooting responses.
- **Community Healing:** Therapeutic programming fosters a safe space for individuals in the community and participants to share and process trauma experienced by themselves or someone close to them. Through individual and group therapy, participants learn coping skills and other techniques such as mindfulness to incorporate in their daily lives.
- **Restorative Justice:** Restorative justice programming helps participants build understanding, encourage accountability and provide healing and repair to relationships through healthy conflict resolution.
- **Professional Mental Health Services:** A supportive service allocated by DYCD for our anti-gun violence programming to provide direct clinical and evidence-based mental health counseling services to participants at CMS provider sites.

- **Youth Council:** The Youth Council serves young people ages 16 to 24 by providing a safe space to develop leadership and community skills. Participants work to become positive contributors to their neighborhoods. Learning takes place through workshops, community meetings, and recreational activities. Goals include reducing violence and forming a healthy, vibrant peer culture.

S.O.S. Results

Our S.O.S. programs use data to develop strategies that work to identify neighborhood “hot spots” and the times and days of the week shootings occur. This allows our teams and resources to be focused most effectively to engage in those areas around specific times to reduce shootings. This strategy has resulted in reductions in gun violence in our target areas within Brooklyn and the Bronx.

Brooklyn: S.O.S. programs are located in the neighborhoods of Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant. An evaluation of the S.O.S. program in Crown Heights demonstrated that gun violence decreased six percent in the 77th Precinct (where S.O.S. operates) while increasing 20 percent in nearby precincts with similar demographics and crime rates. (Researchers concluded it was unlikely that the gun violence increase in nearby precincts was due to displacement of violence to surrounding areas.)

In 2018, S.O.S. Brooklyn outreach workers and violence interrupters de-escalated more than 106 violent conflicts, responded to 21 shootings, and forged over 200 peace agreements. There are up to 90 individuals enrolled in the S.O.S. Brooklyn program at any given time, with more than 80 percent of participants assessed as high risk for involvement in gun violence. Nearly 8,000 people attended more than 80 community events organized by S.O.S. Brooklyn designed to spread awareness and messages of peace and unity.⁵

The Bronx: S.O.S. Bronx operates programs in the South Bronx (Mott Haven) and Morrisania. An independent evaluation credited S.O.S. Bronx with reducing gun injuries by 37 percent when compared to a similar area not served by Cure Violence. The program has also reduced shooting victimizations by 63 percent.⁶

⁵ Center for Justice Innovation. (2022). “S.O.S. Brooklyn Fact Sheet”. Unpublished internal document.

⁶Delgado, Sheyla A., Laila Alsbahi, Kevin Wolff, Nicole Alexander, Patricia Cobar, and Jeffrey A. Butts (2017). The Effects of Cure Violence in the South Bronx and East New York, Brooklyn. In *Denormalizing Violence: A Series of Reports From the John Jay College Evaluation of Cure Violence Programs in New York City*. New York, NY: Research and Evaluation Center, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York.

Court Reform

In addition to our preventative work, the Center also offers supportive interventions through our Court Reform programming. The Center’s work follows a model of problem-solving justice, turning an arrest into an opportunity for change. Beyond just processing cases, our staff works to resolve the underlying issues that involve individuals in the justice system in the first place by connecting individuals in need with a range of services including counseling, drug treatment, employment, and housing help. Offering support early builds safety, restores lives, and saves money. By striving to make each engagement swift and meaningful, it makes the most of a participant’s brief—and hopefully last—contact with the system.

Alternatives to Incarceration (ATIs)

Each year, thousands of people with substance use disorders, serious mental illness, and other treatable issues cycle through our city’s jails. According to recent data, over 1,200 people in New York City jails have a serious mental illness, up 45% since the start of 2022. Often, these folks are returning to their communities destabilized, leading to more harm and ultimately, re-incarceration.⁷ With the goal of breaking that cycle, alternatives-to-incarceration (ATIs) link participants with mental health and substance use treatment, vocational and educational supports, individual and group counseling tailored to participants’ needs, as well as supervision and regular reporting to the court. ATIs reduce the court’s reliance on incarceration, lower the jail population, and allow people to remain in their communities while receiving the tools they need to avoid further justice involvement.

ATIs work to set defendants up for success upon completion of programming. Through significant staff training and quality assurance measures, we ensure our programs consistently adhere to evidence-based practices. As a result, our programs are successful in reducing re-offending and re-incarceration. In addition, our programs offer longer term services to participants on a voluntary basis following completion of their court-mandated program.

Utilizing these evidence-based practices results in shrinking some of the well-documented high costs associated with incarceration and detention. Ultimately, we can also reduce the potential harms of confinement, such as losing housing, critical benefits, or employment, protective factors that can be hard to regain once lost.

Our breadth of data-driven alternatives are evidence that it is possible to achieve lofty goals, such as closing Rikers Island, without compromising public safety. As Governor Hochul’s most recent crime report shows, significant progress has been made in decreasing crime in and around New York City.⁸ The Center executes these effective programs across several distinct

⁷ *A Safer, More Effective Option Than Rikers*, A More Just NYC: Independent Commission on NYC Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform, Oct. 2023, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b6de4731aef1de914f43628/t/6530056e07c0614a1a3d6655/1697645934489/1500+Secure+Treatment+Beds+to+Help+Close+Rikers+White+Paper.pdf>.

⁸ “Governor Hochul Details the First Comprehensive Overview of Crime Trends Across New York State for 2023.” *NY.Gov*, Governor Kathy Hochul, 9 Nov. 2023, [www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-details-first-comprehensive-overview-crime-trends-across-new-york-st ate-2023](http://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-details-first-comprehensive-overview-crime-trends-across-new-york-state-2023)

program sites and models. These programs have the capacity to make real, tangible advances in our efforts to improve public safety, ensure justice and accountability, and strengthen communities in the long run.

Manhattan Felony Alternative to Incarceration Court

Launched in 2019, the Manhattan Felony Alternative to Incarceration Court—an initiative of New York County Supreme Court—expands on the principles and successes of specialized drug and mental health courts to create alternatives to incarceration for all types of felony cases, including violent offenses. The court is among the first all-purpose felony alternative courts in the country. The Center’s Manhattan Justice Opportunities (MJO), partners with the Felony Alternative to Incarceration Court to realize its vision of reducing the harms caused by incarceration and supporting people to address the issues that often underlie their contact with the justice system.

MJO staff conduct independent assessments of the court’s prospective participants and develop individualized plans for services to address not just their mental health and substance use issues, but also their educational, housing, and employment needs. In certain cases, participants are offered an opportunity to repair the harm they caused through a restorative justice process engaging directly with the victim. These are all important determinants of a participant’s ability to live successfully and safely in community. However, these services are often unavailable to people in the carceral setting. Once participants formally enter the court, MJO social workers connect them to an extensive network of service providers across New York City. MJO provides ongoing case management until participants complete their mandate.

In 2023, participants were mandated to an average of 14 months with the program, and nearly 100 participants completed successfully. When our participants graduate, they are graduating with the support of a vast web of resources that continue to buoy them in a way incarceration does not, contributing to their ability to live safely and productively in their communities. Importantly, the vast majority also walk away without the burden and stigma of a criminal conviction on their record. In 2023, 70% of successful participants graduated with no criminal record, and 96% were able to avoid a felony conviction.⁹

In the words of one successful MJO participant, “Each time I was in court, I started to feel more seen. Judge Biben cared about me and always asked, ‘Do you have anything to say?’, and that let me speak from the heart and be remorseful for what I had done. As part of my mandate... I started with an anger management class. But I wanted to do more. So I started GED classes, and therapy...ATI Court... gave me a second chance to show who I really was, without the anger, and to be productive in society. Last October, I graduated from ATI Court... I remember feeling different than the woman who started there years before. I felt that the people

⁹ Center for Justice Innovation. (2024). Justice Center Application database. [Data file].

at court knew I was more than my trauma. They knew I had gone through hard times but that I could be successful. It took a lot of hard work to get to my graduation day. But when I got there, it was a day for celebrating and for smiles. Today, I have my own apartment. I have a steady job. I have a new computer, and I use it to take classes. I am reconnecting with my family, and my relationship with my mom is healing. And I still have support from the people I met at ATI Court.”¹⁰

Brooklyn Mental Health Court

Launched in 2002 as the first mental health court in NYC, Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC), based within Brooklyn Supreme Court, works to craft effective responses to crime committed by those suffering from severe mental illness, including those facing felony charges. In addressing both program participant treatment needs and community public safety concerns, the court links defendants with serious and persistent mental illness, who would ordinarily be jail- or prison-bound, to long-term community-based treatment as an alternative to incarceration. Cases are referred by judges, defense attorneys, and the Kings County District Attorney’s office.

The participants in our mental health courts often face numerous challenges, so being able to administer critical treatment services while preserving stability in participants’ community is of vital importance. To date, over 1,300 participants have received treatment, satisfied program requirements, and graduated, all outside of the carceral setting. Active participants boast a 73 percent compliance rate while in Brooklyn Mental Health Court. These participants see a 46 percent reduction in the likelihood of a rearrest and a 29 percent reduction in the likelihood of a re-conviction versus a comparison group.¹¹ This data shows that these programs are not just effective at administering treatment but also at improving public safety, features traditional incarceration often lacks. As evidenced by the reduction in re-arrests and convictions, these programs function in a way that is true to their name, working to solve the problems that result in justice system involvement to benefit individuals and communities for years to come while saving the city from increased incarceration costs.

Misdemeanor Mental Health Courts

In partnership with the New York State Unified Court System, the Center launched Misdemeanor Mental Health Courts in Brooklyn and Manhattan in 2022. The court helps people with mental health issues and co-occurring disorders to engage meaningfully in social services and reduce their involvement in the justice system. Our clients living with serious mental illness often face myriad and intersectional challenges. Following the model of Brooklyn Mental Health

¹⁰ New York State Unified Court System. (2024, February 27). *The State of the Judiciary 2024 - Transcript of Remarks*. NYCourts.gov. https://www.nycourts.gov/SOJ-2024/24_SOJ-Remarks.pdf

¹¹ Rossman, S.B., J. Buck Willison, K. Mallik Kane, K. Kim, S. Debus-Sherrill & P.M. Downey (2012, July). *Criminal Justice Interventions for Offenders with Mental Illness: Evaluation of Mental Health Courts in Bronx and Brooklyn, New York*. New York, NY: Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/25576/412603-Criminal-Justice-Interventions-for-Offenders-With-Mental-Illness-Evaluation-of-Mental-Health-Courts-in-Bronx-and-Brooklyn-New-York.PDF>

Court, the court works with participants to craft individualized responses that address both treatment needs of the client and public safety concerns of the community. Participants are connected with ongoing mental health and substance use services, benefits, and housing support. The court also helps clients build their relationships with family, friends, and community organizations, relationships that help clients avoid further justice system involvement. The Center has served over 290 individuals in programming through the Misdemeanor Mental Health Courts since their inception, with many clients electing to continue with voluntary services after they complete their mandate due to the effectiveness of services provided.¹²

Alternatives to Detention

After an effective pilot program showed that releasing more people from pre-trial detention does not compromise public safety,¹³ the Center now runs Supervised Release, an Alternative to Detention (ATD), in Brooklyn and Staten Island, playing an instrumental role in the success of the program. The Supervised Release model employs social workers and case managers who check in regularly with participants to not only help plan for upcoming court dates and address needs and barriers to court attendance, but also to connect them to community-based resources and services that can provide lasting support beyond the duration of a court case.

An independent evaluation found that Supervised Release is as effective as cash bail at preventing failure to appear in court without recourse to the documented harms of incarceration.¹⁴ In 2020, a citywide measure showed that since 2016, 87 percent of participants never missed a single court date while enrolled in Supervised Release. Court attendance remains high following major bail reforms in January 2020 which made all cases eligible for the program, with approximately 90 percent of scheduled court dates attended.¹⁵

The data shows that Supervised Release is a trusted pretrial option and bail alternative for the courts. In 2023, Brooklyn Justice Initiatives and Staten Island Justice Center worked with nearly 9,000 participants to provide them with supervision and resources in order to ensure their return to court and help them address any other needs.¹⁶

Pre-Arrest Diversion

¹² Center for Justice Innovation. (2024). Justice Center Application database. [Data file].

¹³Hahn, J. (2016, February). *An Experiment in Bail Reform: Examining the Impact of the Brooklyn Supervised Release Program*. New York, NY: Center for Justice Innovation.
<https://www.innovatingjustice.org/publications/experiment-bail-reform-examining-impact-brooklyn-supervised-release-program>

¹⁴ Bloom, H., C. Redcross & M. Skemer (2020, September). *Pursuing Pretrial Justice Through an Alternative to Bail: Findings from an Evaluation of New York City's Supervised Release Program*. New York, NY: MDRC.
<https://www.mdrc.org/work/publications/pursuing-pretrial-justice-through-alternative-bail>

¹⁵Center for Justice Innovation, New York City Criminal Justice Agency & CASES. (2021, October). *Supervised Release: A Proven Alternative to Bail*. New York, NY.
<https://www.innovatingjustice.org/publications/supervised-release-five-years-later>

¹⁶ Center for Justice Innovation. (2023). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

In recent years, a critical and growing part of the Center’s work has been an effort to develop proportionate responses that shrink the footprint of the justice system and minimize its harms. This has led to the launch of several early diversion programs which seek to provide offramps to individuals even further upstream than traditional system responses have allowed for. Two such examples are below.

Bronx HOPE

Bronx Heroin Overdose Prevention and Education (HOPE), an initiative of Bronx Community Solutions, addresses substance use issues with a harm reduction model at the precinct level. By giving clients the option of accessing community services instead of appearing in court, Bronx HOPE gives Bronx residents the opportunity for rehabilitation and connection to community rather than jail or options that don’t address the underlying issues.

The process begins when an individual is issued a Desk Appearance Ticket from the New York Police Department. The NYPD will forward this ticket to the Bronx District Attorney’s Office, which will review the individual for eligibility. Individuals who receive a ticket for drug possession will have the option to participate in the HOPE program. If an individual is eligible, they will be met at the precinct after their arrest by a peer mentor, who explains the program, provides a Naloxone kit and overdose prevention education; and connects the individual to Bronx HOPE case managers. If an individual chooses to participate, they must meet with a Bronx HOPE case manager within seven days of their arrest. Case managers then conduct an assessment and work with the individual to develop an individualized plan of care; help identify services that address an individual’s needs; and provide support in the completion of services.

Bronx HOPE demonstrates that eligible cases are more likely to engage in programming with peer presence at the precinct. In 2023, Bronx HOPE had a contact rate of 86 percent for dispatched cases. Of those cases that were dispatched, 92 percent completed their services, thereby preventing the need for those participants to appear in court and face criminal charges.¹⁷

Project Reset

Much like Bronx HOPE, Project Reset offers participants the option to avoid court and a criminal record by completing community-based programming. The Center operates Project Reset for adults ages 18 and older in all five boroughs with support from the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, New York City Council, District Attorneys’ offices, and the New York City Police Department. Police alert individuals arrested for low-level offenses that they may be eligible for Project Reset. Prosecutors then review each case. Those with eligible charges are offered the opportunity to engage in programming rather than going to court. Individuals may consult with a defense attorney at any time.

Participants complete an intake interview with program staff and engage in two-to-four hours of programming. Participants who successfully complete this intervention never set foot in

¹⁷ Center for Justice Innovation. (2024). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

a courtroom and don't get a criminal record. Instead, the local district attorney's office declines to prosecute their case and the arrest record is sealed. Project Reset programming varies by borough and the participant's age. Participants are offered interventions such as group workshops, restorative justice circles, arts programming, or individual counseling sessions. Through these interventions, participants gain a better understanding of the criminal justice system, personal accountability, and knowledge of the resources available to them in the community. All participants are offered voluntary referrals to social services, such as counseling, job training, or substance use treatment.

Since 2015, Project Reset has helped more than 6,000 participants avoid court and the consequences of a criminal record. As of 2023, the program has a 96 percent attendance rate of those scheduled.¹⁸ An evaluation of 16- and 17-year-old Project Reset participants in Manhattan found they were significantly less likely than defendants in a comparison group to be convicted of a new crime within one year.¹⁹ It also documented improved case processing times and case outcomes, as well as positive perceptions of the program. More than 95 percent of participants said they had made the right decision by entering the program and that they would recommend Project Reset to someone in a similar situation.

In addition, the Center is expanding offerings to provide same-day at-arraignment diversion services for individuals who were referred to Project Reset Bronx or Bronx HOPE pre-arraignment diversion programming, but who were not contacted or did not complete programming prior to appearing in court. Any other individuals deemed eligible by court stakeholders also have the opportunity to participate in this at-arraignment diversion program. Upon successful completion of the session, participants' cases are dismissed the same day and they are not required to return to court. This has offered relief from the collateral consequences participants might otherwise experience if arraigned for a low-level crime, while simultaneously reducing court backlog by resolving cases swiftly at their first appearance

Conclusion

These programs are successful in reducing recidivism and generating community safety. With funds still available, we cannot afford to divest these programs that provide crucial services to the communities they serve. By partnering together, we can turn the justice system into an institution that is truly meaningful and transformative to the lives it touches. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

¹⁸Center for Justice Innovation. (2024). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

¹⁹Cadoff, B. & K. Dalve (2019, January). *Project Reset: An Evaluation of a Pre-Arraignment Diversion Program in New York City*. New York, NY: Center for Justice Innovation.
<https://www.innovatingjustice.org/publications/projectreset-evaluation>

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

FY25 Center for Justice Innovation Proposals

- **#172167 - Center for Justice Innovation (formerly Center for Court Innovation) - \$750,000**

Innovative Criminal Justice Programs (Renewal/Expansion); Speakers Initiative

Description: This is an application to support the continuation of the Center for Justice Innovation’s innovative criminal justice responses, community-based public safety initiatives, and access to justice programs across all five boroughs in New York City. City Council’s support allows us to serve tens of thousands of New Yorkers with mental health services, family development, youth empowerment, workforce development, and housing, legal, and employment resource services. Our goal continues to be improving safety, reducing incarceration, expanding access to community resources, and enhancing public trust in government to make New York City stronger, fairer, and safer for all.

- **#170201 - Center for Justice Innovation (formerly Center for Court Innovation):
Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration, community-based interventions and rigorous judicial monitoring for those facing felony charges in Brooklyn Criminal and Supreme Court. - \$1,175,000**

Alternatives to Incarceration (ATIs) (Renewal/Redesign); Diversion Programs

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation (Center) seeks funding to support its Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration (FATI) programs for individuals arrested on violent and non-violent felony charges in Kings County. These FATI program operate in across two Center projects: Brooklyn Justice Initiatives and Brooklyn Mental Health Court, which offer holistic and individualized community-based interventions and rigorous judicial monitoring of participants on felony cases, thereby reducing the use of jail and prison sentences and leading to reduced criminal dispositions

- **#165625 - Staten Island Justice Center - Community Justice Center - \$987,087 (Renewal/Expansion)**

**Speaker's Initiative;
Innovative Criminal Justice Programs;
Alternatives to Incarceration (ATIs)**

Description: In response to growing need in the community, the Justice Center has worked in collaboration with the Richmond County District Attorney's Office to plan and begin operationalizing programming for a Staten Island Community Justice Center. This work puts the Justice Center on a path to replicate and launch community-based interventions and initiatives piloted and established at the Center for Justice Innovation's existing Community Justice Centers in other boroughs. Based on results of a comprehensive public safety assessment, several pilot initiatives for at-risk youth are being implemented in the spring of 2024, in addition to the reestablishment of Youth Impact. In FY25, the Justice Center will also have a dedicated community outreach van to allow for expanded recruitment. Staff will continue planning for the increased scaling of operations, working on program design, building data and technology infrastructure and strengthening partnerships. In response to the needs identified in the assessment, the Justice Center will continue planning for and launching additional initiatives in areas such as veterans support, housing assistance, and violence prevention.

- **#171694 - Center for Justice Innovation (formerly Center for Court Innovation): Driver Accountability Program - \$885,000**

**Diversion Programs (Renewal);
Alternatives to Incarceration (ATIs)**

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation's Driver Accountability Program works to improve street safety by changing driver behavior, while minimizing harms perpetuated by the criminal justice system's historically punitive responses. It does so by offering a proportionate and meaningful alternative to fines, fees, and short-term incarceration for vehicular offenses in criminal court; and by utilizing principles of restorative justice to address the dangerous behaviors that are the primary cause of pedestrian fatalities. With support from City Council, the program currently operates at six sites in all five boroughs. This application seeks funding to sustain those operations, as well as to sustain operations of its more intensive version, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims for a process of accountability and healing in cases where traffic crashes have caused critical injury or death.

- **#171747 - Bronx Community Solutions: Project Reset Expansion, expanding diversion opportunities in the Bronx - \$710,000**

Diversion Programs (Renewal/Expansion)

Description: Building on Bronx Community Solutions’ (BCS) success running the Project Reset pre-arraignment diversion restorative model for six years, and the robust support and collaboration of Bronx court system stakeholders, the Center seeks to renew funding to expand access to rapid diversion services for adults in the Bronx. To address the large gap in services caused by the inability to contact many Bronx Reset and Bronx HOPE (Bronx Heroin Overdose and Prevention Education) pre-arraignment diversion participants before their initial court date, and to remedy the growing backlog of low-level arrests in the Bronx Criminal Court system, BCS launched same-day at-arraignment programming that would give eligible individuals the opportunity to participate in diversion programming at their first court appearance and receive an immediate dismissal the same day. This application seeks to renew the previously awarded \$710,000 to continue to provide at-arraignment diversion programming and expand access to diversion services in the Bronx.

- **#170174 - Midtown Community Justice Center: Youth Weapons Diversion, a program based on a restorative framework for Weapons Possession Charges in Family Court - \$300,000**

Diversion Programs (New)

Description: Midtown Community Justice Center (MCJC), formerly the Midtown Community Court, in collaboration with the New York City Law Department Family Court Division , seeks a dedicated funding source to sustain and enhance its youth diversion pilot program for weapons possession charges: Youth Weapons Diversion . MCJC’s program, founded on restorative practices and culminating in a family support circle, was created to fill a gap in holistic alternative-to-prosecution diversion options for young people ages 14 to 17 arrested for gun and other weapons possession, providing an early off-ramp from the traditional Family Court process and building supportive connections for participants. Successful completion of the program results in a “decline to prosecute” with a sealed record, or for cases that have already been filed, the petition is withdrawn and the case sealed, thereby preventing a full criminal process, a criminal record, and many collateral consequences for young people at a pivotal age. In addition to providing a critical diversion opportunity that addresses the root causes of gun violence, this program will provide educational support and job skills development, offer

connections to health and wellness and other holistic services, and build youth connections to the community.

- **#168959 - Brooklyn Mental Health Court - \$100,000**

Speakers Initiative (Renewal/Expansion)

Description: Launched in 2002 as the first mental health court in New York City, Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC) is a specialized court that seeks to craft meaningful responses to the problems posed by defendants with mental illness in the criminal justice system. Addressing both the treatment needs of defendants with mental illness and the public safety concerns of the community, BMHC links defendants with serious and persistent mental illnesses (such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder), who would ordinarily be jail- or prison-bound, with long-term treatment as an alternative to incarceration. BMHC performs psychosocial assessments and psychiatric evaluations, comes up with treatment plans, monitors clients' adherence to treatment plans, and refers clients to community-based services.

- **Brooklyn Mental Health Court #168934 - \$150,000**

Court-Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal/Expansion)

Description: The Court-Involved Youth Mental Health initiative of Brooklyn Mental Health Court provides specialized support to youth ages 18 to 24, who have unique social and cognitive needs and who represent a growing percentage of the cases we serve. Since 2017, more than 162 youth in this age range have been served by Brooklyn Mental Health Court. Thanks to City Council support, we hired a new dedicated Youth Engagement Social worker who leads youth programming and fosters close relationships with our participants. Renewed funding will enable us to continue and strengthen our youth-focused programs, provide meaningful activities and healthy meals and snacks to our participants, continue essential training for staff, and maintain our critical Youth Engagement Social Worker.

- **#167064 - Queens Community Justice Center: UPLIFT - \$100,000**

**Court-Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal);
Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (Renewal);
Speakers Initiative (Renewal);
Community Safety and Victims Services Initiative;**

Description: To address the high levels of exposure to community violence and trauma among young men of color in Queens, the Queens Community Justice Center piloted UPLIFT in FY22, a program that provides trauma and healing services to justice-involved young men of color, ages 16-25. By offering client-driven individual therapeutic sessions and supportive group workshops, case management and victim services assistance, and advocacy and mentoring, participants are supported to recognize, process, and heal their own trauma, resulting in better life outcomes. Given the program's initial success, the Justice Center was able to fully implement and sustain the program, thanks to the ongoing support of City Council.

- **#169129 - Brownsville Community Justice Center: Brownsville Girls Collaborative - \$150,000**

Young Women's Leadership Development, Citywide (Renewal/Expansion)

Description: The Brownsville Girls Collaborative (BGC), a cornerstone of programming at the Brownsville Community Justice Center, is a leadership development program focused on the holistic empowerment of young women in the community. The program creates a safe space for young women from Brownsville, who are at high risk of violence or justice involvement, to engage with Justice Center staff, facilitators, and one another. Throughout the year, the Justice Center will work with BGC participants to address the root causes of trauma, violence, and risk behaviors to reduce justice system contact and develop participants into positive actors within the Brownsville community.

- **#169059 - Brownsville Community Justice Center: Placemaking and Community Cleanup Program - \$60,000**

NYC Cleanup, Citywide (Renewal/Expansion)

Description: Brownsville residents are disproportionately affected by major quality of life issues, which have a negative effect on public health and safety. The Brownsville Community Justice Center's Placemaking and Community Cleanup program will engage participants ages 16-24 in community service and placemaking activities, such as crime prevention through environmental design and various innovative and tested strategies, which address public safety concerns and build community. Participants attend regularly scheduled workshops, which provide training on environmental stewardship, leadership, communication, organizing, and strategies for reinvestment within the community. Youth will be involved in identifying, designing, and implementing community projects, in conjunction with the community board and local community-based organizations. Participants will work with Justice Center staff to plan, develop, and facilitate various

program projects to support community. Projects may include graffiti removal, art installations, greening, street cleaning, lighting projects, and more.

- **#169968 - Neighbors In Action: Youth Media Lab - \$50,000**

Digital Inclusion and Literacy (Renewal/Expansion)

Description: This is a request for funding for Neighbors in Action (NIA) to expand its Youth Media Lab to include a youth-led social enterprise. The Youth Media Lab's social enterprise will aim to promote, encourage, and create social change by addressing socio-economic challenges. To do this, the Youth Media Lab provides financially sustainable pathways for youth through the digital arts. With the support of City Council, NIA's Youth Media Lab social enterprise will provide 70 youth, ages 15-24, with paid interest-based internships in digital media, technology, entrepreneurship, and youth organizing. An additional 1,000 youth will be engaged through media lab workshops, open hours, and community events. Youth will receive training in media, production, design, social justice, community organizing, and entrepreneurship while building marketable skills in growing creative sectors. Upon program completion, youth can continue engagement through the Media Lab and as peer leaders.

Good morning, members of the committee, and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. My name is Pernel S. Brice, III and I am the VP for Policy & Advocacy for the Children's Health Fund (CHF).

At CHF, we lead a national network to bring comprehensive healthcare to children growing up in under-resourced communities and advocate for the health and well-being of all children. Based in New York City, our national network includes 24 programs in 15 states; Washington, D.C.; and Puerto Rico. Our network provides quality medical, dental, mental, and social services through a fleet of more than 50 mobile medical clinics, telehealth, and at more than 400 schools, homeless shelters, and other community sites. Since 1987, CHF's national network providers have had 7 million health encounters. Four of five children seen by our national network partners are Black or brown. All are living in low-income households.

We are heartened that Mayor Adams has restored several initial cuts to critical education funding. The restoration of upwards of 500 million dollars will help to maintain necessary funding for social workers, staffers in homeless shelters, and continue an expansion of preschool for 3-year-olds. With federal pandemic funding coming to an end, now more than ever do we need continued funding to support children and families. And that's why we are continuing to advocate for the restoration of additional funding to support our most vulnerable.

As many of this committee know all too well, the first three years of a child's life is crucial to their development. Every NYC child deserves and needs the opportunity to participate in 3-k and Pre-K programs and now is not the time to reduce funding for vacant seats for these critical programs. In addition, to ensure that communities are aware of these educational opportunities, funding for 3-k and Pre-k outreach efforts must also be restored. We are also concerned with continued cuts to libraries, a place where so many children and families learn and grow, particularly on the weekend.

Today, we would also like to speak about the importance of continued and increased funding for programming that critically supports schools and parents in ensuring that students are well positioned to thrive in school like our New York City Council funded program, Healthy and Ready to Learn (HRL).

HRL was developed by Children's Health Fund in 2014 as a part of our mission of supporting kids so they can thrive. It was developed recognizing the importance of education in helping kids to reach their potential, and that they need to be their healthiest selves to take advantage of educational opportunities. The program is designed to help schools identify and address health issues (many rooted in social, racial, and economic inequities) that impact student learning. When students have their health needs met (ie., can see the board, hear their teacher, focus on schoolwork, and so on) they are more likely to learn and succeed in school; ultimately, translating into a greater likelihood of a productive and happy life. HRL started with a strong focus on screening and responding to what we call health barriers to learning, such as addressing medical issues like asthma, dental concerns, vision problems, and mental well-being. While we continue to address these health barriers to learning, we are focused more and more on a growing and worrisome need: childhood trauma. HRL, therefore, has evolved to

include supporting trauma sensitive school and home environments to better address the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and surrounding social issues like increases in overt racism and violence.

Through our current model, we leverage findings from our flagship school, PS 49 in the Bronx and in Councilwoman Diana Ayala's district (D-8), to inform materials and trainings that we conduct with educators and parents citywide and through our Resource and Training Center (RTC). Launched in 2017, RTC is an online platform that enables Children's Health Fund to scale our impact to reach students throughout New York City. Our online repository is equity and diversity focused and houses a broad library that includes infographics, fact sheets, interactive learning images, slide decks, external resource links. Here is a snapshot of RTC's and HRL's impact:

- Since 2017, nearly 44,000 users have accessed the website to request training curricula, view recorded workshops, and download free materials to support their health and education work.
- In FY 2023, our most recent, complete NYCC grant year, the RTC had 5,893 users.
- From January 2023 to the present, we trained in 27 schools in 18 districts—delivering 69 parent workshops, 10 student workshops, and 4 professional development workshops—reaching 2,276 individuals.

Our impact is clear and the demand for our programming continues to increase. To meet the growing need in our most vulnerable communities, our FY25 goals include the following:

- Expand into additional NYC school districts where teachers and parents need us most;
- Build more partnerships with non-profit organizations focused on early childhood care and education;
- Respond to the needs of communities most impacted by the ongoing migrant crisis;
- Increase and tailor our training to continue to meet specific needs of teachers and schools; and
- Communicate our efforts through social and traditional media, community outreach, and translating educational materials into multiple languages.

For these reasons, Children's Health Fund urges the New York City Council and the Mayor to include funding to secure critical investments for early childhood learning, mental health programming, and our Healthy and Ready to Learn initiative. These actions will expand access for thousands more students throughout the city, giving them the best chance of succeeding in school and life.

Family Legal Care's Testimony to the New York City Council's Public Safety Committee

Thursday, May 9, 2024
Council Chambers, City Hall
Yusef Salaam, Chairperson

My name is Cathy Cramer and I am the Chief Executive Officer at Family Legal Care, formerly LIFT. Thank you to Chairperson Salaam and members of the Public Safety Committee for the opportunity to testify about the issues families with cases in New York Family Court are facing.

On behalf of Family Legal Care, I'd like to thank the New York City Council for its continued support and focus on issues impacting New York's parents and caregivers in Family Court. Without funding from the New York City Council we could not do our vital work to assist families confronting issues at the heart of their well-being, including **child support, custody and visitation, parentage/paternity and domestic violence**. If families are provided upstream support and services to address these issues in an efficient and careful way, we can help prevent future problems for children and families.

But despite the pivotal role we play to increase access to justice, Family Legal Care is facing an **anticipated loss of \$145,000** in critical funding due to a transition of our contract from the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice to the Mayor's Office to End Gender Based Violence. **We urge the Council to increase discretionary funding allocations for Family Legal Care in the upcoming budget cycle to ensure continuity of services for the thousands of parents and caregivers who rely on us.**

Family Legal Care's mission is to increase access to justice in New York State Family Court. We combine legal guidance, easy-to-access technology, and compassionate support to help unrepresented parents and caregivers self-advocate on critical family law issues, while working on reform that improves the system for everyone.

We are the only organization in New York State dedicated solely to empowering parents and caregivers to represent themselves in New York Family Court. Each year we help over 27,000 parents and caregivers to self-advocate for positive outcomes in Family Court. The demand for free, expert legal advice has never been greater, continues to grow, and Family Legal Care is the only organization in New York City filling this need.

The New York City Family Courts have been under-resourced and overburdened for decades, and 80% of litigants come to Family Court without a lawyer. These unrepresented litigants are disproportionately low-income, from communities of color, often undocumented immigrants, or speak monolingual Spanish or some other language. Because the family courts are understaffed, there is a justice gap for many of the litigants. Organizations like Family Legal Care and others have worked closely with the Court to close this justice gap, but serious issues remain. The underinvestment in the family courts, and particularly the failure to prioritize child support cases, has significant effects for families in NYC. **Investing in organizations like Family**

Legal Care to help parents address their child support concerns will increase financial stability of NYC families and have upstream effects on the public safety of our city.

As of 2021, 1 in 6 children in NYC live in a household receiving child support¹. Child support is a literal lifeline for many of the most impoverished families in NYC, but it is not uncommon for custodial parents to receive none of the money they are entitled to. Many parents turn to the Family Court for help: 1 in 3 cases in New York Family Court deals with child support, but the Courts do not give child support cases the weight they are due. Litigants do not have a right to attorney unless for imprisonment over nonpayment but the pro se litigants are held to the same standards as lawyers and are expected to offer evidence, cross examine witnesses, and understand other court procedures, like service. Pro se litigants, a disproportionate number of whom self-identify as people of color, are navigating the complex Court and legal systems completely on their own, and the stakes for their families are high. Child support is not just about money – it is about housing, healthcare, and food on the table.

Family Legal Care helps by

- Offering legal advice and consultations from staff attorneys with expert knowledge on family law topics.
- Operating bilingual phone, email, and live chat Helplines that provide information to litigants and pro se litigants on family law issues.
- Regularly conducting legal education workshops, presentations, and webinars on common family law issues.
- Developing over 60 multilingual legal information materials on child support and other family law issues, which are available online and in each of the city's borough courthouses.
- Connecting unrepresented litigants with pro bono attorneys for video consultations through our Pro Bono Program.
- Developing innovative digital tools that make legal information and court documents easy to access, understand, and be completed on a mobile device.
- Connecting those impacted by the digital divide in our Brooklyn, Queens and Bronx Tech Hubs to the equipment and stable internet connection they need to access the hybrid courts.

The communities with the fewest resources, a disproportionate number of whom identify as people of color, are bearing the brunt of the Court's systemic failures. The Court's decisions touch the lives of thousands of children and families with profound, long-lasting effects on their safety, economic security, health, and well-being.

Strong families are essential building blocks for a thriving city, and we believe we have a powerful upstream impact in this unique space through Family Court. Family Legal Care helps families self-advocate for the financial resources to which they are entitled, that will help

¹ New York City Human Resources Administration Office of Child Support Services. August 2021.

them to care for their children, and remain in their homes and communities. With increased support from the City Council, Family Legal Care can continue to be part of the solution.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF LOCAL 372 | NYC BOARD OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES
DISTRICT COUNCIL 37 | AFSCME
TO THE FY 2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARING ON PUBLIC SAFETY
MAY 9, 2024
12:30 PM

Public Safety Committee Chairman Yusef Salaam and distinguished members of the committee, I am Donald Nesbit, Executive Vice President of Local 372 - NYC Board of Education Employees, District Council 37 - AFSCME. It is the honor of Local 372 to present this testimony on behalf of the approximate 2,100 Level-I and 80 Level-II School Crossing Guards we represent under the leadership of our President, Shaun D. Francois I. **Local 372 respectfully requests: the City to restore the School Crossing Guard positions that were cut from the previous budget to fill the priority school crosswalks, City funding to support the promotion of a city-wide public awareness campaign to stop the violence against School Crossing Guards, and permanent reforms to conform School Crossing Guard pay practices to that of other DOE support staff titles.**

School Crossing Guards are often the first line of defense to improve the safety for students who walk, bicycle, or take public transportation to school. Student-pedestrians often face major safety traffic hazards everyday caused by double-and-triple parked cars at bus stops, in front or near the school building. These workers have risked their own health, safety, and lives to perform these vital services to the community. This role often places School Crossing Guards in vulnerable positions with no immediate assistance on hand. Just last year, two of our members in Queens were struck by moving vehicles, and unfortunately one School Crossing Guard tragically lost her life.

Cases like these are sadly becoming a common occurrence, and it is essential that the City of New York increase funding for the additional hiring of School Crossing Guards. When such instances happen, an on-duty School Crossing Guard would have to leave their post to cover the recently vacated station, thus leaving a school crosswalk vacant and vulnerable to accidents. The City cannot continue shuffling our members around when the number of School Crossing Guards are not enough to keep each school crosswalk safe. As the number of School Crossing Guards continue to decline, the number of unprotected school crosswalks continue to rise, leaving thousands of school children crossing main intersections without any supervision, putting our children's safety in jeopardy. **Local 372 respectfully requests** that the City restore the School Crossing Guard positions that were cut from the previous budget to fill the priority school crosswalks. We have heard a lot in the news recently about violence against transit workers. What we have not heard about is the similar risk of violence that School Crossing Guards face on a daily basis. That is why **Local 372 respectfully requests** City funding to support the promotion of a city-wide public awareness campaign to stop the violence against School Crossing Guards.

While increasing the number of School Crossing Guard positions solves the staffing and safety issue; however, it does not solve the equity problem that our members are currently facing. School Crossing Guards work daily at a 25-hour capped part-time schedule that includes early morning, lunch time and after school hours to serve 957,438 public-school children. Our members do not get paid for snow days and certain holidays (days where the schools shut down but the City remains open), leaving their paychecks dependent on the whims of the weather. A snow day might just be the determining factor as to whether a School Crossing Guard can put food on the table. For many New Yorkers who are living paycheck to paycheck, like School Crossing Guards, any

one unanticipated day off from work can be the difference between making ends meet and financial ruin.

Despite working under the New York Police Department (“NYPD”), School Crossing Guards are functionally analogous to school support staff titles working under the New York City Department of Education (“DOE”). Likewise, School Crossing Guards and DOE school support staff should also share the same privileges and pay rights. Just as DOE school support staff are currently compensated for this lost time, so too should School Crossing Guards be equally compensated. On top of the equity concern, it also poses a retainage issue. Due to the danger that comes with the position and not having the same pay benefits as other DOE support staff titles, the current pay practices for School Crossing Guards are harmful to these vital workers. Within the School Crossing Guard membership, 90% are woman, 85% are Black and Latino, and many of our members are at higher risk because they are older, with 33% of the membership are over 55 years old. **Local 372 requests** permanent reforms to conform School Crossing Guard pay practices to that of other DOE support staff titles.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and for your continued support on behalf of Local 372’s School Crossing Guards. I will now answer any questions you may have.



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**Testimony of
William Juhn, Senior Staff Attorney
on behalf of the Disability Justice Program
at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
before the Council of the City of New York
Committee on Public Safety
May 9, 2024**

My name is William Juhn and I am a Senior Staff Attorney with the Disability Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (“NYLPI”). Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today regarding public safety. On March 27th, the NYPD officers fatally shot Win Rozario in Queens, who was 19 years old, while he was experiencing a mental health crisis for which he had called 911 for help. How many more individuals must die by the hands of police before we finally adopt a more humane, peer-led, and person-centric approach to mental health crises?

NYLPI is deeply concerned about the City’s dangerous and illegal practices relating to the involuntary removal of individuals perceived to have mental illness diagnoses for psychiatric evaluation. We also oppose the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (“B-HEARD”) Program, a deeply flawed pilot that diverts resources desperately needed for non-police response to mental health crisis into a program that continues the criminalization of disability. NYLPI urges the City Council to mandate significant changes to the B-HEARD so that it becomes a truly non-police response system that dispatches teams of peers—individuals with lived mental health experience—and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) who are not City employees.

THE MAYOR MUST IMMEDIATELY RESCIND HIS POLICY OF FORCIBLY REMOVING INDIVIDUALS PERCEIVED TO HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS DIAGNOSIS AND PERCEIVED TO BE “UNABLE TO CARE FOR THEIR BASIC NEEDS,” BUT WHO DO NOT PRESENT A DANGER TO THEMSELVES OR OTHERS

The Mayor's Involuntary Removal Policy launched in November 2022, allows a police officer to detain an individual by force, and remove the individual to a psychiatric hospital, solely because the officer believes the individual has a mental disability and is unable to meet "basic needs" -- without any indication that the individual is a danger to themselves or others.

The Policy is both illegal and immoral. By failing to mandate that an individual is "conducting himself or herself in a manner which is likely to result in serious harm to the person or others," the Involuntary Removal Policy runs afoul of Section 9.41 of New York's Mental Hygiene Law, as well as myriad other federal and state constitutional and statutory provisions, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and New York City Human Rights Law.

Mayor Adams' statements, as well as the City's November 28, 2022 press release, entitled "Mental Health Involuntary Removals," make clear that city agencies have aggressively instituted involuntary removals by police officers who have little to no expertise in dealing with individuals with mental disabilities and who will be required to determine whether an individual should be forcefully detained against their will. The examples cited by Mayor Adams at his press conference illustrate how difficult it is for police officers to make these sorts of determinations and how likely it is that the rights of New Yorkers will be violated by the Involuntary Removal Policy. Mayor Adams' example of "the shadow boxer on the street corner in Midtown, mumbling to himself as he jabs at an invisible adversary," does not describe someone who is unable to care for their basic needs, let alone describe someone who meets the standard of serious danger to themselves or others. The City's Involuntary Removal Policy also contains no information about how an officer would even go about determining whether such shadow boxers are unable to take care of their basic needs or are merely exercising. Even though the City touted the success of the policy one

year after its launch, the City offered no data on its implementation, including whether people of color are being disproportionately targeted.

The City must rescind the Involuntary Removal Policy to ensure that no New Yorkers are subjected to unlawful detention and involuntary hospitalization just for exhibiting behavior perceived by a police officer to be unusual—whether the individual has a mental disability or not.

Relatedly, Governor Hochul recently announced in March 2024 that she is directing \$20 million to the Subway Co-Response Outreach Team (SCOUT) program, which permits the use of force against people with mental health challenges with wholly insufficient procedural safeguards, not only violates the rights of people with disabilities, but is entirely unnecessary. People experiencing mental health challenges do not need more police on subways or in subway stations, and neither does anyone else. People with mental health challenges are no more likely to be violent than those who do not have disabilities, and especially with crime being down in the subways and citywide, New Yorkers do not need to be “protected from” people with mental disabilities who are wrongly perceived of as a menace.

Instead, people experiencing mental health challenges need supports and services such as the successful *non-police* Safe Option Support (SOS) *health* teams in the subways. To the extent individuals are undergoing a mental health crisis and also pose a threat of imminent danger, the SOS teams are trained to bring in the police to assist them. It should not be in the discretion of the police to deploy SCOUT teams, which are authorized to use force.

We ask that you urge the Governor to utilize the \$20 million she allocated for establishing SCOUT teams to instead provide individuals with mental health challenges with much-needed *voluntary* mental health treatment, respite care, food, clothing, and shelter.

THE CITY MUST WHOLLY TRANSFORM ITS RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES BY ELIMINATING POLICE AND REPLACING THEM WITH A PEER-LED HEALTH RESPONSE

The City must join other cities across the country – including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Albuquerque, Denver, New Haven and many more – to **remove police** entirely from the equation, and **ensure that healthcare workers respond to healthcare crises**. According to NYLPI and Human Rights Watch’s [joint-research](#), there are at least 160+ emergency response programs nationwide that engage in crisis response activities without police as the initial responders or as automatic co-responders.

Closer to home, New York State is already taking action. The state legislators are working to pass a bill known as Daniel’s Law (Senate Bill [S2398](#)/Assembly Bill [A2210](#)), which would establish a statewide emergency and crisis response system where police are no longer the default first responders to health emergencies. Under Daniel’s Law, the state will only fund emergency response plans where mental health experts and peers control the response to a health emergency, and the role of police would be strictly limited to situations involving imminent risk of serious physical harm to the public. The bill currently has 33 sponsors in the Assembly and 18 sponsors in the Senate. Importantly, New York State’s Fiscal Year 2025 budget has allocated funds for a Daniel’s Law pilot program in Rochester. This program will dispatch healthcare workers as the primary responders to mental health or substance use issues, instead of police.

Likewise, the City must establish a system whereby individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and which will ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals to receive such training are peers and health care providers.¹ Police officers, who are trained to

¹ See Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, “When There’s a Crisis, Call a Peer: How People With Lived Experience Make Mental Health Crisis Services More Effective,” (2024), <https://www.bazelon.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Bazelon-When-Theres-a-Crisis-Call-A-Peer-full-01-03-24.pdf>; Martha Williams Deane, *et al.*, “Emerging Partnerships between Mental Health and Law Enforcement,” *Psychiatric Services* (1999), http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/abs/10.1176/ps.50.1.99?url_ver=Z39.88-

uphold law and order, are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises, and New York's history of its police killing 20 individuals who were experiencing crises in the last eight years alone, is sad testament to that. Eliminating the police as mental health crisis responders has been shown to result in quicker recovery from crises, greater connections with long-term healthcare services and other community resources, and averting future crises.²

The scores of people experiencing mental health crises who have died at the hands of the police over the years is a microcosm of the police brutality around the world. Disability is disproportionately prevalent in the Black community and other communities of color,³ and individuals who are shot and killed by the police when experiencing mental health crises are disproportionately Black and other people of color. Of the 20 individuals killed by police in the last eight years, 17 – or greater than 80% -- were Black or other people of color. The City Council simply cannot stand by while the killings continue. Now is the time to remove the police as responders to mental health crises – and certainly we must all oppose the Mayor's efforts to increase the role and funding of the NYPD as it relates to people with mental disabilities. Lives are literally at stake.

[Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC](#) has developed the needed antidote. Modeled on the [CAHOOTS](#) program in Oregon, which has successfully operated for over 30 years without *any* major injuries to respondents or responders – let alone deaths -- the CCIT-NYC proposal is positioned to make non-police responses available to those experiencing mental health crises in

[2003&rft_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rft_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed&#/doi/abs/10.1176/ps.50.1.99?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rft_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rft_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed.](http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/ps.50.1.99?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rft_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rft_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed&#/doi/abs/10.1176/ps.50.1.99?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rft_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rft_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed)

² Henry J. Steadman, *et al.*, "A Specialized Crisis Response Site as a Core Element of Police-Based Diversion Programs," *Psychiatric Services* (2001),

[http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.52.2.219?utm_source=TrendMD&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Psychiatric_Services_TrendMD_0.](http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.52.2.219?utm_source=TrendMD&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Psychiatric_Services_TrendMD_0)

³ Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, "Accessible NYC" (2016),

[https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/accessiblenyc_2016.pdf.](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/accessiblenyc_2016.pdf)

New York City. The proposal avoids the enormous pitfalls of the City's B-HEARD pilot, which the City inaccurately refers to as a non-police model. Hallmarks of the CCIT-NYC proposal are:

- teams of trained peers and emergency medical technicians who are independent of city government;
- teams run by culturally-competent community organizations;
- response times comparable to those of other emergencies;
- 24/7 operating hours;
- calls routed to 988 rather than the city-operated 911; and
- oversight by an advisory board of 51% or more peers.

The full text of the CCIT-NYC proposal can be found at <https://www.ccitnyc.org/ourproposal>

THE CITY MUST ENTIRELY REVAMP THE B-HEARD PILOT AS THE PILOT AUTHORIZES EXTENSIVE POLICE INVOLVEMENT AND IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE OR EVEN INCREASE THE RATE OF VIOLENT RESPONSES BY THE NYPD

The City, via its Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health (formerly ThriveNYC), introduced a pilot program in 2021 that it contends is responsive to the need to cease the killings at the hands of the police of individuals experiencing mental health crises. Unfortunately, that is simply not the case, despite the City's glowing description of the program. Among B-HEARD's grim statistics are the following:

- In Fiscal Year 2023 (July 2022 through June 2023), about **79% of all mental health calls** in B-HEARD precincts were still **directed to the NYPD**, and B-Heard responded to only about **21% of total mental health calls** in the pilot area.
- Even when all kinks are ironed out, the City anticipates continuing to have about **50% of all mental health calls directed to the NYPD.**

- Moreover, **all mental health calls continue to go through 911**, which is under the NYPD's jurisdiction.
- The entire **program is run by the NYPD, the Fire Department and other City agencies**, with **NO role whatsoever for community organizations**. And there is not even any delineation of the lines of authority and communication among the various city agencies.
- **The crisis response teams are composed of emergency medical technicians (EMTs) who are City employees** (from the Fire Department) **who are deeply enmeshed in the current police-led response system**. Peers do not trust these EMTs. The other team members are *licensed clinical* social workers. The licensure and clinical orientation requirements are unnecessary and they also preclude a vast array of potential candidates who have excellent skills and a long history of working with people experiencing crises.
- B-HEARD has **NO requirement to hire peers**.
- **The training of the teams does NOT require a trauma-informed framework, need NOT be experiential, and need NOT use skilled instructors who are peers or even care providers**.
- The anticipated **response time for crisis calls could be as long as half an hour**, and when last reported averaged over **fifteen minutes**,⁴ which is not even remotely comparable to the City's response times for other emergencies of 8 to 11 minutes.
- **The pilot operates only sixteen hours a day**.
- **There are no outcome/effectiveness metrics**.
- **There is no oversight mechanism**.

⁴ Regrettably, the average response time was not even collected for the last reporting period.

A comparison of the CCIT-NYC proposal, which is based on the CAHOOTS model with a stellar track record, and the B-HEARD program, which is not aligned with any best practices, is illustrated in the following chart:

Critical Attributes of a Mental Health Crisis Response System	CCIT-NYC's Proposal	NYC's B-HEARD Proposal
Removal of police responders	YES	NO (currently, around 79% of calls are still responded to by police, and even when all kinks are removed, 50% of calls will still be responded to by police)
Three-digit phone number such as 988, in lieu of 911.	YES	NO
Response team to consist of an independent EMT and a trained peer who has lived experience of mental health crises and know best how to engage people in need of support	YES	NO (licensed clinical social worker and EMT employed by the New York City Bureau of Emergency Medical Services)
Crisis response program run by community-based entity/ies which will provide culturally competent care and will more likely have a history with the person in need and can intervene prior to a crisis	YES	NO (run by New York City Police Department and other City agencies)
Peer involvement in all aspects of planning/implementation/oversight	YES	NO
Oversight board consisting of 51% peers from low-income communities, especially Black, Latinx, and other communities of color	YES	NO
Creation/funding of non-coercive mental health services ("safety net"), including respite centers and 24/7 mental health care to minimize crises in the first place and to serve those for whom crisis de-escalation is insufficient	YES	NO

Response times comparable to those of other emergencies	YES	NO (Most recently reported response time of over 15 minutes -- compared with average response time of 8 to 11 minutes for non-mental health emergencies)
Response available 24/7	YES	NO (Response only available 16 hours/day)
Training of the teams to use a trauma-informed framework, be experiential, and use skilled instructors who are peers	YES	NO

NYLPI therefore urges the Council to ensure that the money previously allocated for a non-police mental health crisis response be utilized solely for a truly non-police response, mandating substantial modifications to the B-HEARD program by including the critical components of the CCIT-NYC proposal.

THE CITY COUNCIL MUST ENSURE THAT NEW YORKERS HAVE ACCESS TO A WIDE RANGE OF VOLUNTARY NON-HOSPITAL, COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES THAT PROMOTE RECOVERY AND WELLNESS, AS WELL AS A FULL PANOPLY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES, INCLUDING HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION, BY ALLOCATING FUNDING FOR SUCH PROGRAMS

Since NYLPI was established nearly 50 years ago, we have prioritized advocating on behalf of individuals with mental health conditions, and we have consistently fought to ensure that the rights of individuals with mental health conditions are protected by every aspect of New York’s service delivery system. Core to our work is the principle of self-determination for all individuals with disabilities, along with the right to access a robust healthcare system that is available on a *voluntary, non-coercive* basis.

We have long been on record opposing mandatory outpatient and inpatient treatment for insufficiently safeguarding the rights of persons with mental health concerns and failing to offer

appropriate healthcare. Quite simply, there is no place for coercion. Forced “treatment” is not treatment at all, and it has long been rejected by health practitioners -- to say nothing of the disability community – in favor of numerous best practices strategies that offer assistance even to those who have previously resisted offers of care.⁵ There are multiple less invasive models of care⁶ that New York City must invest in to avoid the tragedy and enormous cost of forced treatment. At the heart of these models are trained peers, who are ideally suited to implement effective harm reduction and de-escalation techniques, especially during crises.

We know how to help those with the most severe mental illness, but we fail to do so, instead providing services that are insufficient or not held to the highest accountability. We face complete system failure, yet we have done little to correct the failure, and even point our fingers at those most affected by the system failure. We must stop the finger pointing and fix the system. We must invest in innovative, voluntary health programs. And we must invest in supportive housing and not cart people off to a psychiatric ward or to jail.

Any proposal that facilitates the ability to force people into in-patient or out-patient “treatment” must be seen in the context of whom we’re entrusting to “remove” these individuals. As we now surely know all too well, the police, who are steeped in law and order, are not well-suited to deal with individuals with mental health concerns. The Mayor’s policy includes an outsized role for the police, and the City Council must halt it immediately.

Forced “treatment” must also be seen in the context of existing racial disparities. Of the 19 individuals killed at the hands of New York City police in recent years, 16 were people of color. This systemic racism also underlies the disproportionate prevalence of disability in the Black

⁵ See, e.g., de Bruijn-Wezeman, Reina “Ending Coercion in Mental Health: The Need for a Human Rights-Based Approach,” Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Doc. 14895 (May 22, 2019), <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=27701&lang=en>.

⁶ See the attached list of long-term, voluntary programs that have excellent track records.

community and other communities of color.⁷ The racial disparities in the application of forced outpatient treatment (also known as Kendra’s Law) are also vast.

While there is extensive literature supporting voluntary treatment, there is no support for the success of forced evaluation and treatment.

CONCLUSION

NYLPI respectfully requests that the Council:

- Halt the Mayor’s policy of forcibly removing individuals perceived to have a mental illness diagnosis and perceived to be “unable to care for their basic needs,” but who do not present a danger to themselves or others.
- Mandate changes to the B-HEARD program to align it with the truly non-police, peer-led CCIT-NYC model.
- Ensure that New Yorkers have access to a wide range of non-hospital, community-based mental health services that promote recovery and wellness, as well as a full panoply of community services, including housing, employment, and education, by allocating funding for such programs.

Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached at (212) 244-4664 or wjuhn@nylpi.org, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how best to respond to the needs of individuals experiencing mental health crises in New York City.

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About New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

For nearly 50 years, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) has been a leading civil rights advocate for New Yorkers marginalized by race, poverty, disability, and immigration status. Through our community lawyering model, we bridge the gap between traditional civil legal services and civil rights, building strength and capacity for both individual solutions and long-term impact. Our work integrates the power of individual representation, impact litigation, and comprehensive organizing and policy campaigns. Guided by the priorities of our communities, we

⁷Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, “Accessible NYC” (2016), https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/accessiblenyc_2016.pdf.

strive to achieve equality of opportunity and self-determination for people with disabilities, create equal access to health care, ensure immigrant opportunity, strengthen local nonprofits, and secure environmental justice for low-income communities of color.

NYLPI's Disability Justice Program works to advance the civil rights of New Yorkers with disabilities. In the past five years alone, NYLPI disability advocates have represented thousands of individuals and won campaigns improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Our landmark victories include integration into the community for people with mental illness, access to medical care and government services, and increased accessibility of New York City's public hospitals. Working together with NYLPI's Health Justice Program, we prioritize the reform of New York City's response to individuals experiencing mental health crises. We have successfully litigated to obtain the body-worn camera footage from the NYPD officers who shot and killed individuals experiencing mental health crises. In late 2021, NYLPI and co-counsel filed a class action lawsuit which seeks to halt New York's practice of dispatching police to respond to mental health crises, and in the context of that lawsuit, seeks relief on behalf of individuals affected by the Mayor's Involuntary Removal Policy.

Community Voluntary Long-Term Innovations for At-Risk Individuals

Residential

Crisis Respite – Intensive Crisis Residential Program: OMH program: “a safe place for the stabilization of psychiatric symptoms and a range of services from support to treatment services for children and adults. are intended to be located in the community and provide a home-like setting.” <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/bho/docs/crisis-residence-program-guidance.pdf>.

Crisis Respite (shorter term and less intensive): OMH Program: “Crisis Respite Centers provide an alternative to hospitalization for people experiencing emotional crises. They are warm, safe and supportive home-like places to rest and recover when more support is needed than can be provided at home. The Crisis Respite Centers offer stays for up to one week and provide an open-door setting where people can continue their daily activities. Trained peers and non-peers work with individuals to help them successfully overcome emotional crises. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/crisis-emergency-services-respite-centers.page>.

Peer Crisis Respite programs: OMH funded; Peer operated short-term crisis respites that are home-like alternatives to hospital psychiatric ERs and inpatient units. Guests can stay up to seven nights, and they can come-and-go for appointments, jobs, and other essential needs. Offers a “full, customizable menu of services designed to help them understand what happened that caused their crisis, educate them about skills and resources that can help in times of emotional distress, explore the relationship between their current situation and their overall well-being, resolve the issues that brought them to the house, learn simple and effective ways to feel better, connect with other useful services and supports in the community, and feel comfortable returning home after their stay.” <https://people-usa.org/program/rose-houses/>.

Housing First: a housing approach that prioritizes permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness and frequently serious mental illness and substance use issues. Supportive services including substance use counseling and treatment are part of the model, but abstinence or even engagement in services is not required. <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/housing-first/>.

Soteria: a Therapeutic Community Residence for the prevention of hospitalization for individuals experiencing a distressing extreme state, commonly referred to as psychosis. We believe that psychosis can be a temporary experience that one works through rather than a chronic mental illness that needs to be managed. We practice the approach of “being with” – this is a process of actively staying present with people and learning about their experiences. <https://www.pathwaysvermont.org/what-we-do/our-programs/soteria-house/>.

Safe Haven: provides transitional housing for vulnerable street homeless individuals, primarily women. “low-threshold” resources: they have fewer requirements, making them attractive to those who are resistant to emergency shelter. Safe Havens offer intensive case management, along with mental health and substance abuse assistance, with the ultimate

goal of moving each client into permanent housing. <https://breakingground.org/our-housing/midwood>.

Family Crisis Respite: trained and paid community members with extra space in their homes provide respite for individuals who can thereby avoid hospitalization.

Living Room model: a community crisis center that offers people experiencing a mental health crisis an alternative to hospitalization. health crises a calm and safe environment. The community outpatient centers are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and people receive care immediately. Services include: crisis intervention, a safe place in which to rest and relax, support from peer counselors; intervention from professional counselors including teaching de-escalation skills and developing safety plans, Linkage with referrals for emergency housing, healthcare, food, and mental health services. https://smiadviser.org/knowledge_post/what-is-the-living-room-model-for-people-experiencing-a-mental-health-crisis.

Crisis Stabilization Centers: 24/7 community crisis response hub where people of all ages can connect immediately with an integrated team of clinical counselors, peer specialists, and behavioral health professionals, as well as to our local community's health & human service providers, to address any mental health, addiction, or social determinant of health needs. People use the Stabilization Center when they're experiencing emotional distress, acute psychiatric symptoms, addiction challenges, intoxication, family issues, and other life stressors. <https://people-usa.org/program/crisis-stabilization-center/>.

Parachute NYC / Open Dialogue: provides a non-threatening environment where people who are coming undone can take a break from their turbulent lives and think through their problems before they reach a crisis point. Many who shun hospitals and crisis stabilization units will voluntarily seek help at respite centers. Parachute NYC includes mobile treatment units and phone counseling in addition to the four brick-and-mortar respite centers. <https://www.nyaprs.org/e-news-bulletins/2015/parachute-nyc-highlights-success-of-peer-crisis-model-impact-of-community-access>.

Non-residential

Safe Options Support teams: consisting of direct outreach workers as well as clinicians to help more New Yorkers come off of streets and into shelters and/or housing. SOS CTI Teams will be comprised of licensed clinicians, care managers, peers, and registered nurses. Services will be provided for up to 12 months, pre- and post-housing placement, with an intensive initial outreach and engagement period that includes multiple visits per week, each for several hours. Participants will learn self-management skills and master activities of daily living on the road to self-efficacy and recovery. The teams' outreach will facilitate connection to treatment and support services. The SOS CTI Teams will follow the CTI model – a time-limited, evidence-based service that helps vulnerable individuals during periods of transitions. The teams will be serving individuals as they transition from street homelessness to housing. https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/rfp/2022/sos/sos_cti_rfp.pdf.

Intensive and Sustained Engagement Team (INSET): a model of integrated peer and professional services provides rapid, intensive, flexible and sustained interventions to help individuals who have experienced frequent periods of acute states of distress, frequent emergency room visits, hospitalizations and criminal justice involvement and for whom

prior programs of care and support have been ineffective. MHA has found that participants, previously labeled “non-adherent,” “resistant to treatment” or “in need of a higher level of care” and “mandated services,” become voluntarily engaged and motivated to work toward recovery once offered peer connection, hope and opportunities to collaborate, share in decisions and exercise more control over their lives and their services and supports. their treatment plans. Engaged 80% of people either AOT eligible or AOT involved. <https://www.mhawestchester.org/our-services/treatment-support>.

NYAPRS Peer Bridger™ program: a peer-run and staffed model providing transitional support for people being discharged from state and local hospitals, with the goal of helping people to live successfully in the community, breaking cycles of frequent relapses and readmissions. The program include inpatient and community based intensive one on one peer support groups, discharge planning, connection to community resources; provides access to emergency housing, wrap around dollars and free cell phones and minutes. <https://www.nyaprs.org/peer-bridger>.

NYC Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health Intensive Mobile Treatment teams: provide intensive and continuous support and treatment to individuals right in their communities, where and when they need it. Clients have had recent and frequent contact with the mental health, criminal justice, and homeless services systems, recent behavior that is unsafe and escalating, and who were poorly served by traditional treatment models. IMT teams include mental health, substance use, and peer specialists who provide support and treatment including medication, and facilitate connections to housing and additional supportive services. <https://mentalhealth.cityofnewyork.us/program/intensive-mobile-treatment-imt>.

Pathway Home™: a community-based care transition/management intervention offering intensive, mobile, time-limited services to individuals transitioning from an institutional setting back to the community. CBC acts as a single point of referral to multidisciplinary teams at ten care management agencies (CMAs) in CBC’s broader IPA network. These teams maintain small caseloads and offer flexible interventions where frequency, duration and intensity is tailored to match the individual’s community needs and have the capacity to respond rapidly to crisis. <https://cbcare.org/innovative-programs/pathway-home/>.

Testimony of Liz Roberts, CEO, Safe
Horizon

Before the Committees on Public Safety and
Finance

On the Mayor's FY25 Executive Budget
Proposal and the need to fully restore a \$3
million PEG to Safe Horizon's Crime
Victim Assistance Program (CVAP)

New York City Council

May 9, 2024

Good afternoon, Chairperson Salaam, Chairperson Brannan and members of the Public Safety and Finance Committees. My name is Liz Roberts, and I am the CEO of Safe Horizon, the nation's largest nonprofit victim services organization.

Safe Horizon offers a client-centered, trauma-informed response to 250,000 New Yorkers each year who have experienced violence or abuse. We use a lens of racial equity and justice to guide our work with clients, with each other, and in developing the policy positions we advocate.

My testimony today will be brief and to the point: we need the help of these Committees and the full City Council in urging the Mayor to reverse a \$3 million PEG to our Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP.) If this cut goes through, it will dramatically curtail Safe Horizon's ability to respond to victims of violence and abuse across all five boroughs.

At a time when New Yorkers are deeply concerned about shootings, transit crime, sexual assault, hate crimes and other forms of violence, we need a deeper investment in victim services. The last thing we need is unnecessary budget cuts to essential programs that help individuals and families heal.

Who does CVAP serve? In FY23, CVAP provided services to over 26,000 domestic violence victims, over 27,000 crime victims (other than domestic violence) and 811 sexual assault survivors, reaching a total of nearly **54,000 victims**.

Because our CVAP advocates are in all 77 police precincts, nine Police Service Areas and all five Special Victim Division precincts, we proactively respond soon after the incident, reaching crime victims in every neighborhood, every community and every borough.

Our advocates help connect New Yorkers impacted by crime to critical services, including trauma-focused counseling, safety planning, shelter, community-based services, orders of protection and so much more. We help victims navigate the complexities of the legal system, and advocate on their behalf within the precinct.

The loss of \$3 million in funding will mean:

- 11,000 crime victims who could have had our help will not receive it;
- 20 precincts that currently have on-site advocates would no longer have that support; and
- 50 full-time staff positions will be impacted

Mayor Adams has emphasized the importance of public safety. **But true public safety requires a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of violence and supports those who have been impacted by it.** By providing survivors with the resources they need to heal and thrive, we can help break the cycle of violence and create a safer, more resilient city.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any of your questions.

**Testimony Before the New York City Council
Executive Budget Hearings**

Public Safety

May 9, 2024

Tanya Krupat, VP, Policy & Advocacy

Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations
Osborne Association



Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Tanya Krupat, and I am the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for the Osborne Association's Center for Justice Across Generations. Osborne offers a wide range of diversion and reentry programs at sites in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem, Buffalo, and Newburgh, as well as services at 41 New York State prisons and on Rikers Island. We serve more than 10,000 New Yorkers a year. We are grateful for the Council's ongoing support and look forward to continued collaboration.

In March, a colleague testified about our work with the NYPD and community-based organizations throughout the City to safeguard children when a parent is arrested (for a reason unrelated to the parent-child relationship). The City Council is the sole funder of this work and we are very grateful for the past support, and have submitted a discretionary funding request for continued support, which is needed to continue to bring training and tools to NYPD's more than 30,000 members of service.

When the City Council passed the law in 2019 that became Administrative Code §14-181, and then Patrol Guide section 208.02, it mandated NYPD to adopt guidelines for safeguarding children present during an arrest, to develop and implement training (in collaboration with a community-based partner) for officers, and to provide families with information about services in the community to help children process the arrest of a parent. To date, we have made significant inroads, but we have so much more to do.

Children are deeply affected by a parent's arrest, yet it is rare to find a law enforcement agency that provides training to officers on child development and interacting with children. Osborne served as an advisor for the International Association of Chiefs of Police model protocol on safeguarding children at the time of a parent's arrest issued in 2013. Since then, we have developed curricula for and trained the Albany, Buffalo, Cheektowaga, and Hudson Police Departments, and the Erie County Sheriff's Department, which have each also issued written policies. The size of the NYPD makes the endeavor to train all members of service more challenging and requires more time and creative strategies which we are developing with NYPD. We are working to create tailored trainings (for recruits, Sergeants, Detectives, and more) as well as on a sustainable, institutionalized training plan. The curriculum being used and tailored is being developed and refined with input from law enforcement, community providers,

trauma specialists, and young people and families, and also incorporates research on child development, brain science, and trauma.

The importance of this work cannot be overstated. Each year in NYC, tens of thousands of children experience a parents' arrest,¹ with thousands witnessing the arrest. Not only do children and young people often carry this experience with them without ever speaking about it, but it also shapes their view of law enforcement, immediately and into the future.

Witnessing a parent's arrest is a traumatic experience. Research tells us that trauma negatively affects the brain and that having an incarcerated parent (almost always preceded by a parent's arrest) is the fourth most common Adverse Childhood Experience,² which increases the likelihood of children developing long-term negative health and mental health outcomes.³

We also know that protective factors can lessen the harmful effects of these experiences, and that police officers and community partners can be protective factors for children. Efforts to safeguard children at the time of arrest have the potential to build new and strengthen existing community-police partnerships while signaling to families that the police and their community will do everything possible to minimize trauma for a child whose parent is arrested. Thus, it is critical to ensure this local law is effectively implemented, and for NYPD and community partners to receive the necessary training to safeguard children.

Currently, there is no data on how many children are present when a parent or caregiver is arrested in NYC, although we are currently working with NYPD to change this. We are also working with NYPD to develop a roll call training that precinct Training Sergeants will deliver, and we have recently added children's props (such as toys, school bags, stuffed animals) to the scenario-based training recruits go through so that they practice taking intentional steps to consider and minimize trauma to children who are present or may be present. To date, we have trained more than 2,900 members of service, including recruits, newly promoted Sergeants,

¹ Those interviewed by CJA in 2019 indicated they provided care or support to more than 60,347 children in New York City, making it clear that this work is critical for safeguarding many of New York City's children.

² National Survey of Children's Health, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/data/national-surveys>

³ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, [Adverse Childhood Experiences, www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/riskprotectivefactors.html](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/riskprotectivefactors.html)

Training Sergeants, and Youth Coordinating Officers. A list of our accomplishments to date is included below.

A unique and critical aspect of our work here is engaging young people to share not only their experiences but their recommendations. The saying “out of the mouths of babes” remains true: the young people we have spoken to have practical and concrete suggestions. They have the answers we need. These include:

- Providing children with basic information about what is happening and what will happen to them and their parent;
- Separating them from the arrest scene so they don't have to witness what is happening;
- Taking extra steps to consider children on the scene;
- Recognizing that children's view of police is being shaped in these moments. This can be a chaotic moment but it leaves a lasting impression on a child.

The NYPD Commissioner has provided a letter of support for our funding request and we hope that the Public Safety Committee and members of the Budget Negotiating Team will support this unique and important work continuing.

One final note about public safety: Osborne has been providing services for more than 90 years. These decades have taught us that public safety is an outcome of investing in people and communities. Today, this means prioritizing alternatives to arrest, jail, and prison whenever possible, working to decarcerate, and closing Rikers Island. The City and State must develop, implement and fund responses to our City's challenges that are rooted in public health, family well-being, and trauma-informed and anti-racist approaches that recognize our shared humanity. This means closing Rikers, expanding mental health supports, and investing in youth programs, victims services, and housing. All of these are not only more effective in the short and long runs, but they are less expensive than arresting and incarcerating people. Our children are counting on us to shift our focus to solutions that support rather than harm them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Accomplishments

To date, thanks to City Council funding, we have:

With the NYPD:

- Revised Patrol Guide Procedures 208-02, 208-03, 215-01, and 215-03, providing guidance to arresting officers;
- NYPD added a checkbox to the aided card to capture when a child is in need of shelter, and we are urging NYPD to collect data on the number of children who witness an arrest and clarify the “child in need of shelter” question;
- Listed community-based partners on the NYPD Intranet so that Officers can provide information about services to families;
- Developed a one- and two-hour training module for recently promoted Lieutenants and Sergeants;
- Trained 351 newly promoted Sergeants and Lieutenants;
- Included questions about interacting with children and implementing the law that are now included on the NYPD Sergeant and Lieutenant exam;
- Delivered a two-hour virtual training for 90 Training Sergeants on the new protocol and interacting with children of various ages.

With Community Partners

- Provided training and technical assistance to ten community-based children’s mental health partners that have agreed to accept referrals post-arrest, with four trainings conducted so far; and
- Convened quarterly meetings with partner organizations to develop revised intake processes to identify parental arrest or incarceration as issues among families seeking services, identify their capacity needs, and offer technical assistance to equip them to meet the needs of children and families of arrested parents.

Materials and Knowledge Development

- Trained the Albany, Buffalo, and Hudson Police departments, informing and strengthening the curricula for NYPD;
- Created two training videos, one focusing on the experiences of children whose parents were arrested and the other including law enforcement perspectives on why

safeguarding children is important;

- Collaborated with the University of Buffalo School of Social Work's Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care to create a training video for police about trauma and vicarious trauma; and
- Created a Safeguarding Protocol checklist and a Communicating with Children fact sheet.

Despite all of this, our efforts have yet to reach most of the 36,000 uniformed members of service who are interacting with individuals and children on a daily basis.

Work underway by Osborne includes:

- Updating and adapting existing curricula and developing a training plan for new recruits in the Academy;
- Collaborating with the NYPD Training Bureau to develop a sustainable training plan;
- Reviewing existing NYPD curricula to identify areas where safeguarding children material can be infused;
- Delivering an updated in-person training for Training Sergeants;
- Partnering with the Office of Collaborative Policing on implementing the law, data collection, and collaborating on an NYPD-produced refresher training video for roll call and in-service training;
- Providing training and technical assistance for community-based partners, including quarterly meetings, as well as expanding the number of community partners engaged in this work; and
- Collaborating with NYC Well to list the partner organizations in its directory, and exploring how to partner with 311.



**THE POLICE COMMISSIONER
CITY OF NEW YORK**

January 16, 2024

Speaker Adrienne Adams
New York City Council
250 Broadway Ste. 1880
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Adams:

I have been informed that the Osborne Association has applied for continued New York City Council discretionary funding for its work with the New York City Police Department ("NYPD") on implementing practices and developing training regarding the Child-Sensitive Arrest protocol delineated in New York City Administrative Code section 14-181.

This law was enacted in 2020, specifically to reduce the trauma children and families may face when NYPD officers arrest the caregiver of a minor child. Last year, Osborne received City Council funding which allowed it to assist the NYPD with the implementation of this protocol, which requires training and follow-up support. The law specified that the NYPD should include a nonprofit partner to participate in the process, however, no funding was allocated to accomplish this. I understand that the City Council provided funding to Osborne through which Osborne was able to hire a full-time staff. Further, Osborne was able to make additional staff available to NYPD to develop training materials and establish a network of partner referral organizations, as required in the above mentioned law.

We are in the process of working with Osborne to tailor training to a wide variety of personnel, including recruits, police officers and various ranks of supervisors. We welcome Osborne's role in educating uniformed members of the service about the impact of parental arrest, along with practical ideas for implementing policies designed to lessen trauma at, and following, an arrest including providing and connecting children to safe settings when caregivers are taken into custody.

We would request that you give the Osborne Association's funding application all due consideration for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2025 budget as it supports a significant City interest.

Sincerely,


Edward A. Caban
Police Commissioner



New York City Council Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearings – Public Safety
May 9, 2024

Good afternoon, Chairs Brannan and Salaam and members of the Finance and Public Safety committees. I'm Nadia Chait, the Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy at CASES, a leading provider of services to New Yorkers with involvement in the criminal legal system. At CASES, we provide a range of programs and services that offer hope and healing to over 10,000 New Yorkers annually, most of whom are low-income Black and Brown people in overpoliced and under-resourced neighborhoods. We ensure community safety by meeting the needs of our clients, including mental health care, employment services, education, career enhancement, case management and supervised release.

Fully Fund Alternatives to Incarceration

We oppose the proposed cuts to alternative to incarceration, supervised release, and reentry programs funded through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ). We are pleased to see some restored funding compared to the preliminary budget for ATI and reentry, but these programs still face significant cuts. We operate a range of ATI programs that receive funding from MOCJ, including:

- Nathaniel ACT ATI: an innovative program that serves people with serious mental illness facing felony charges and at least one year of incarceration. Participants receive intensive mental health services, peer support, housing assistance, employment services and nursing, from a team that coordinates directly with the court and the Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center. In just the first 8 months of FY24, we enrolled 22 new clients, 75% more than our contract's goal.
 - among people who entered the program on a violent felony charge, there were no new violent felony convictions in the two years after they completed the program's mandated services
 - 94% of all participants had no new felony conviction of any kind in the two years after they completed the program
 - 70% decrease in homelessness from program intake to program exit
 - 50% decrease in psychiatric hospitalization from program intake to program exit
- NewSTART: a short-term ATI that includes individual and group cognitive behavioral interventions, referrals to treatment, engagement in employment-readiness workshops and community service. We expect to serve over 1,300 clients in FY24. NewSTART disrupts patterns of frequent, low-level court involvement and short jail stays by targeting common barriers to wellness and stability in the community, including untreated behavioral health conditions and unemployment. Services begin at arraignment and continue at CASES's community offices. After completion of their mandate, clients can engage in voluntary services, including specific services for youth and young adults.
- Nathaniel Community Success (NCS): an ATI and ATD for individuals with mental health needs and/or substance use disorders. We expect to serve over 350 clients in FY24. Services begin with a specialized clinical assessment to develop an individual plan for

each client, with services including motivation interviewing, skill building and linkages to services in the community. NCS coordinates closely with CASES's Nathaniel Clinic, which provides mental health, substance use, primary care and peer services in Central Harlem and the South Bronx. This program is funded by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, with annual funding of \$2,853,596.

- ROAR (Reframing Opportunity, Alternatives & Resilience): an ATI for youth and young adults 16-27 which aims to help young people achieve success and avoid further court involvement. We have served 237 clients so far in FY24, more than our budgeted caseload. Each young person in ROAR has an individual success plan and works with a multidisciplinary team including a youth development coach, employment specialist, therapist, and criminal justice liaison. We provide a range of services depending on the young person's needs, including high school equivalency classes & test, college admissions support, mental health services, primary care services through our partnership with the Institute for Family Health, family therapy provided in the home, & work readiness and employment programs. This program is funded by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, with annual funding of \$3,381,835.

It is critical that ATI funding be fully restored and baselined for future years. However, simple restoration of funds will not achieve the community safety that New Yorkers deserve, and it is not sufficient to achieve the City's legal mandate to Close Rikers by 2027. Instead, the budget should significantly increase investments in ATIs and ATDs to scale these programs to fully meet the need. Twenty percent of individuals incarcerated in NYC jails have a serious mental illness. Rather than incarcerating these individuals in a jail that has consistently shown an inability to provide even basic mental health care or ensure the safety of incarcerated individuals, the City should fund ATIs, like Nathaniel ACT and Nathaniel Community Success, that are proven to provide to improve public safety by providing these individuals with the mental health care they need, along with access to housing and other essential supports.

Additionally, ATI funding must be increased to support the staff who provide this essential work. We were thrilled to see the City recognize the value of the nonprofit workforce with an agreement to fund a 9% COLA over 3 years. This is a critical step in support our workforce, who have been undervalued in city contracts for decades. ATI funding must be increased to ensure that staff receive the COLA as committed to by the City.

Restore Funding for B-HEARD

The recent, tragic death of Win Rozario has shown, yet again, that the NYPD is not able to provide a safe response for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. When New Yorkers call 911 for help, they should be met by trained, caring professionals who can assist them. Instead, time and time again, individuals asking for help are shot and killed. Many individuals also experience non-lethal physical harms, including being tased and beaten. New Yorkers deserve better. We urge the Council to restore funding to B-HEARD, so that there is a trained alternative to police for these situations. B-HEARD teams should also be modified to include mental health peers, who are often the most effective individuals at deescalating situations and connecting with people in crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Nadia Chait
Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy, CASES
Nchait@cases.org



Testimony of:

The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, Legal Aid Society, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, New York County Defender Services and Queens Defenders

Presented before

**The New York City Council Finance Committee
Jointly with the City Council Committee on Public Safety**

May 9, 2024

This testimony is submitted jointly by The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Legal Aid Society, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, New York County Defender Services, and Queens Defenders. As New York City’s public defenders, we serve hundreds of thousands of low-income people, overwhelmingly Black and brown New Yorkers, each year.

Sixty-one years ago, our country’s modern public defender system was born when the United States Supreme Court handed down its landmark decision in *Gideon v. Wainwright*, ruling that states must provide people arrested and accused of a crime with a lawyer if they are unable to afford one. As the Court explained, “[L]awyers in criminal courts are necessities, not luxuries...This noble ideal cannot be realized if the poor man charged with crime faces his accusers without a lawyer to assist him.”

This historic ruling was a significant step forward for the rights of people facing the severe penalty of loss of liberty. Our organizations are incredibly proud to have made the “noble ideal” a reality in NYC. Our organizations and dedicated interdisciplinary staff have led the way nationally by providing excellent services and serving as a critical resource to low-income people in New York City.

Despite never having had sufficient funding, we have evolved and expanded what it means to be a “public defender” by adding social work services, investigators, paralegals, and a broad range of related services, such as attorneys to handle the immigration consequences facing our clients. We have supported the enhancement of resources in communities, taken a strong stand against

deplorable jail conditions, and fought for fair laws that would end unnecessary mass incarceration. And more.

Last year, we testified before the City Council about the difficulties we have in retaining our exceptionally dedicated staff due to the low pay scales we have been forced to maintain under our current funding. We also discussed significant technology needs, partly due to the discovery laws passed in 2019, which still need to be fully implemented and what is necessary in the new norm of the hybrid work environment.

We have recently been advised that \$50 million in capital monies has been re-appropriated to NYC to cover discovery and other technology needs for the prosecutors and defenders across the city. Since this money was unspent last year, the defenders are requesting that the City move quickly and allocate 50% of these funds to defenders so they can be spent in the current fiscal year.

New York City and New York State share the obligation to fund public defense services. While New York State has stepped up over the past few years due to a lawsuit establishing this obligation statewide, New York City has not increased defense funding in many years.

It is for this reason that the defender offices jointly ask the city for an increase of **\$ 133.5M** in Fiscal Year 25 to:

1. Allocate \$25 million of the \$50 million state appropriation to the New York City defender offices.
2. Provide a 25% increase on the personnel budgets for our baselined contracts to raise existing salaries and allow us to pay our staff competitive wages that value their work for their clients and society. **This cost is \$60M.**
3. Additional funding of **\$4.5M** is needed to cover the 10% increase in health insurance on our baselined contracts.
4. Additional funding of **\$4M** is needed to cover the 10% increase in occupancy and OTPS costs on our baselined contracts, which reflect many years of increases without additional funding.
5. Additional funding of **\$15M** on our contracts to represent people accused of the most serious allegations—Murder.

We also ask that the city:

- Continue the Workforce Enhancement Initiative (WEI) on our baselined contracts.
- Expand WEI to the City Council discretionary contracts of defender offices to assure equal pay and resources to all our staff, no matter how they are funded.

Recruitment and Retention

We Continue to Experience Attrition and Obstacles to Recruitment Due to Low Salaries and High Workload

New York City's public defenders continue to experience staff attrition due to unsustainable salaries. While the funding provided in FY24 allowed our organizations to increase wages to some extent and negotiate union contracts for those of us with a union, the increase is far outpaced by the continued high cost of living and inflation. Some of our offices continue to see attrition rates over 15%. We are also often unable to hire sufficient staff at the starting level to guarantee replacing staff, often due to low starting salaries combined with the high cost of living in New York City.

It is not just the sheer number of attorneys and other advocates who are leaving; it is of grave concern that the colleagues leaving are some of our most experienced. Many departing attorneys have between 5 and 10 years of experience, and some have more. These are our most seasoned and most skilled attorneys. The loss of experienced attorneys is particularly concerning given the nature of current cases in New York's criminal courts. The caseload trend over the past several years has been that felony cases, with most felony cases charged as violent felony offenses, have increased dramatically. The greater the number of felony cases, the greater the need for experienced attorneys, social workers, investigators, and other advocates who can represent and support clients facing these charges.

Sadly, some experienced attorneys are now leaving our offices for the assigned counsel (18B) panel, given the increase in the hourly rate to \$158/hour.

Losing staff members, particularly attorneys and social workers, is challenging. It impacts the client and delays cases. However, transferring caseloads to other attorneys and social workers makes the job less sustainable for the remaining staff and increases attrition.

We have repeatedly heard from departing staff, including those with years of experience, that low salaries – salaries often markedly lower than those with equivalent experience in the prosecution or other government offices and the courts – are a significant factor in the decision to leave public defense work. No one goes into public defense work expecting to get rich. But public defenders need to earn a living wage – a wage that enables them to support themselves and their families and recognizes their critical work. While the city where we live and work may be magnificent, it is also expensive. When recruiting candidates from other jurisdictions, we routinely hear that New York City is simply too costly, given the salaries we offer.

The chronic low pay of public defenders in our city is an embarrassment. Cities across the country, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, Seattle, and Atlanta (and even Minneapolis and Houston) all pay their public defenders higher starting salaries than New York City. And the pay differences are stark. While our offices strive to pay \$80,000 to starting attorneys, the Los Angeles, Oakland and Seattle public defender offices all start their trial attorneys at over \$100,000. To bring our salaries in line with other major cities across the country, we require an additional \$60 million in funding.

We also know that the insufficient technology and support for reviewing body cam footage and other discovery materials contributes to attrition. Access to discovery allows defenders and clients to see and analyze police reports and other documentary evidence early in a case and to use that information to make fully informed decisions during plea negotiations and trial preparation. The expansion of access to this information removed the discovery blindfold that grossly prejudiced people accused of a crime and their attorneys for years. However, the volume of discovery material, including significant digital discovery, such as body-worn camera videos and other video surveillance, is tremendous. Attorneys, advocates, and investigators must thoroughly review and digest this material to prepare motions, challenge certificates of compliance, respond to motions for protective orders, develop case theories and defenses, counsel clients, and prepare mitigation and negotiation strategies. The resources needed to support this work are long overdue, including the technology necessary to share and store data and additional personnel to assist with discovery processing and compilation.

With the increasing workload and low salaries experienced by our attorneys, attrition will likely continue, potentially eroding our excellent work for our clients. These issues must be remedied this year.

We Need More Financial Resources from the City

While we each spend countless hours of staff time in recruitment, we are seeing more and more applicants respond with a “no” than ever before. As this was almost unheard of a few years ago, we are clear that we need additional resources to address the staffing crisis and allow us to (re) build and maintain fully staffed, exceptional defender office.

New York City public defenders require additional financial resources to increase salaries, hire personnel to implement discovery reform, and improve discovery-related technology. We conservatively estimate that an across-the-board pay correction of 25% is needed to bring our salaries to where they need to be for the current year, with guarantees of COLA increases each year to ensure our salaries keep pace with inflation. We also urge the city to continue the Workforce Enhancement Initiative (WEI), which has been helpful over the past year.

In addition, we seek funding to realize the benefits of discovery reform and to relieve the overwhelming workloads that our offices currently sustain. We seek to hire, train, and retain paralegals at a ratio of one paralegal to every three attorneys. Paralegals are vital to assisting in organizing, reviewing, and maintaining the voluminous discovery that our criminal defense practices now navigate – discovery critical to our clients’ cases and our work on their behalf. We similarly request additional funding to improve technology necessary to fully recognize discovery reform implementation within our offices as well as enable us to build secure systems to function in the hybrid environment that is the reality for our offices and the courts – technology that ranges from additional cloud storage space to software to assist with discovery review and organization. The defenders are asking for \$25 million to cover access to the NICE system which is being implemented by the DA’s offices as well as other technology and personnel needs to assure staff can organize and review the evidence in their cases effectively as well as laptops and other equipment needed for today’s work environment.

Homicide Representation

Our offices were awarded homicide contracts in January 2019 after a long negotiation with New York City. During this negotiation, it was clear to us and the city that the funding was inadequate. At that time, the mayor’s office stated its intention to revisit the funding for homicides regularly to build a data-based sustainable program. Unfortunately, the follow-up from these early agreements never came to fruition.

In addition, the following developments have occurred since then:

1. The caseload estimate we were working with, which was based on about 300 homicide cases per year, has now turned out to have been way lower than the homicide rate the city has experienced every year since then.
2. The pandemic delayed the resolution of cases for years and years, and the compounding effect of court stagnation has caused the pending caseloads to balloon to numbers greatly exceeding even what we had predicted.
3. The quantity of evidence has multiplied. With the welcome changes in the discovery laws, videos and investigatory documents are provided in enormous data dumps of about 80 Gb each (as compared to under 2 Gb for an average non-homicide felony) that can take weeks or months to organize and review.

Homicide Stats by Calendar Year

2017 and 2018 – under 300

2019 – 319

2020 – 462

2021 – 485

2022 – 433

2023 – 386

Using these numbers, during the five years of the homicide contract implementation, the average number of cases per year was 417. Compared to 300 cases per year on which the funding was based, there has been a sustained increase of about 40% over the course of the program as compared to what was planned for and predicted in 2018.

But this is only part of the story. In 2020 and 2021, the homicide numbers were solidly 60% more than was predicted when these programs began. The attorneys reached full caseloads much faster than we thought they would due to this large influx of cases, and then, due to the pandemic delays, they could not resolve any of them. Even though the numbers have started to go down, in 2023, it was still almost 30% more than what the funding was predicated upon. Meanwhile, our offices are still facing the impact of the surge years because many of those cases still need to be resolved.

Our homicide programs have come on the heels of a disgraceful number of exonerations, many of which derived from poor-quality legal representation. Our mission is to make sure every case is fully investigated, from the facts of the case to the nature and character of the accused. Every legal issue must be researched and argued before the court, ranging from the admissibility of evidence to compliance with the discovery laws. In almost every case, there is extensive consultation with experts such as DNA and forensic experts or those who can attest to the accused's mental state at the time of the incident.

Our offices have proven our commitment to the highest level of legal work, something residents of New York City deserve. Our attorneys have access to supervisors and other experienced attorneys for collaborations; we have mitigation specialists/social workers on staff working as a team with attorneys to help expedite potential pleas and reduce ultimate sentences; we have a streamlined process for retention of experts as well as on-staff forensic expertise; and we can provide collateral and legally required resources. In the complex environment of interdisciplinary criminal defense representation, the homicide practices we created are setting the standard for excellence in representing people facing a life sentence for these very serious accusations.

To get our caseloads down to about 8-9 per attorney and return to intake at full strength, we require an infusion of about \$15 million. This will allow us to hire attorneys who can begin to take cases while those with a full caseload can work exclusively on their pending load. We will also hire investigators, social workers, mitigation specialists, and other staff to continue building and sustaining the necessary comprehensive teams for homicide cases.

“Flat Funding” Isn’t Flat, It’s A Budget Cut That Harms Clients

In addition to salary increases and the need for staffing and technology for discovery, our flat contract budgets also do not cover year-over-year cost increases for healthcare premiums, utilities and space, and other OTPS costs, which have continued to rise. We have managed these cost increases by decreasing staff to raise money for increased rent, employee benefits, and other non-negotiable increases.

This is not the same for city agencies or District Attorneys. The city automatically pays the costs of increases, including any adjustments made as part of the city’s negotiated increase to the city’s unionized workforce. For legal services providers, funding adjustments for collectively bargained salary increases, fringe benefits, and utility and space costs have to be negotiated as part of our contract. Yet, these expenses have stayed the same for years.

Supporting our offices will help reduce the harm of the criminal legal system by allowing us to fight police abuse, overreach by prosecutors, overuse of incarceration, and many more harms.

We thank the City Council for hearing our request and for its support of the people of the City of New York.

LDF Oral Testimony

Public Safety Preliminary Budget Hearing

May 9th, 2024

Good morning and thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Kimberly Saltz, speaking on behalf of the Legal Defense Fund. We urge the City Council to divest from the harmful policing entities that disproportionately target our Black communities, and instead invest increased funding toward the social services and mental healthcare for communities that have been most negatively impacted by police practices in New York.

The city should end its investment in co-responder models. The city's plan to train police to respond to emotional distress calls and pair officers with mental health workers is a backward and failed approach. In 2021, at least 104 people were killed after police responded to someone "behaving erratically or having a mental health crisis". Nothing illustrates this point more than the recent tragic and preventable death of Win Rozario. Win was a 19-year-old who called emergency services for help during a crisis, and his call should have been met by unarmed, trained mental health emergency responders. Instead, he was met by police, who tased and shot him in front of his family in their home.

The Mayor's budget calls for a 24 percent decrease in funding to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Meanwhile, one in five New Yorkers experiences a mental health episode each year. Our city has deep racial and economic disparities in regards to the quality and access to mental health care. Black and Latinx New Yorkers are less likely to be connected to mental healthcare than their white counterparts, and people from the city's lowest income neighborhoods are twice as likely to be hospitalized for mental illness, compared to residents from the highest income neighborhoods.

In the last few years, the city has increasingly relied on criminalization and emergency hospitalization of those in need of crisis intervention, rather than connecting them to long-term support or holistic community-based services. For example, in 2022, the mayor rolled out a widely criticized initiative that authorized first responders to forcibly detain New Yorkers for psychiatric evaluation if they were deemed to lack the ability to care for themselves. According to the NYPD's own figures, 47 percent of people who are subjected to involuntary mental health removals are Black. The NYPD is not equipped to conduct mental health outreach services. People experiencing a mental health crisis require a healthcare-centered response, with the mental health system taking the lead.

The city should direct funding toward Respite Centers, which offer a safe space for crisis recovery. They have a documented success rate in helping individuals recover from psychiatric episodes and get connected to ongoing care and support. We also need increased funding for Community-Based Programs, such as short-stay apartments, walk-in urgent care centers, and drop off centers scattered throughout communities so that they are readily accessible to people in all neighborhoods.

The mayor's plan to slash funding for social services threatens the vital services that the most vulnerable New Yorkers rely on most. LDF urges the City Council to take a different, more effective path by investing in communities and developing effective strategies for public safety.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY

The New York City Council
Committee on Finance

Re: NYC Executive Budget: Eliminate Harmful Policing Units and
Mental Health Co-Response Teams

Legal Defense Fund
40 Rector Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10006

May 9, 2024

Dear Speaker Adams, Chairperson Brannan, Chairperson Salaam, and Councilmembers of the Finance and Public Safety Committees:

On behalf of the Legal Defense Fund (LDF),¹ we thank the committee for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding New York City's proposed executive budget. Since LDF's inception, we have sought to remedy and prevent law enforcement violence and racial discrimination towards Black communities and have long worked to remove legal impediments to accountability for law enforcement misconduct. Through this long history of work, we have seen the ways that law enforcement violence and racial discrimination threatens communities' safety. Unfortunately, since Mayor Adams and Police Commissioner Caban took office, these threats to community safety have increased. The current administration has fought against efforts to expand accountability,² refused to meet with families of victims of police violence like Allan Feliz, who would have turned 36 this year,³ and vetoed City Council legislation to provide greater transparency for policing in our communities.⁴ LDF has outlined the changes we believe are needed to create an effective system of safety that respects people's dignity and freedom to thrive in our Framework for Public Safety.⁵ Achieving true public safety requires building a corps of unarmed civilian responders, expanding and institutionalizing restorative justice programs, and increasing investments in community resources and ensuring economic security. We urge the City Council to end the years of budget exceptionalism shown to the New York City Police Department (NYPD), and invest in alternative responders, restorative justice strategies that address the root causes of violence, promote economic security, and equip our communities with the resources and tools needed to mitigate potential crisis in safe and trauma informed ways.

1. Specialized units, like Neighborhood Safety Teams and the Strategic Response Group, have a history of racially discriminatory and other unconstitutional conduct in New York.

Aggressive policing is rampant in Black communities across New York. Since the Mayor took office and established policing entities like Neighborhood Safety Teams, the NYPD is making more arrests, mostly for non-violent offenses.⁶ Most of this policing is highly concentrated in Black and Brown communities that are economically disadvantaged.⁷ While Mayor Adams and the NYPD purport that these units are meant to decrease gun violence, they have been used mostly

¹ LDF is the nation's first and foremost civil rights and human rights law organization. Since its founding over eighty years ago, LDF has worked at the national, state, and local levels to pursue racial justice and eliminate structural barriers for the Black community in the areas of criminal justice, economic justice, education, and political participation. As part of that work, LDF has also forged longstanding partnerships with local advocates, activists, and attorneys to challenge and reform unlawful and discriminatory policing in New York City.

² The New York Times, Mayor Adams Vetoes Police Transparency and Solitary Confinement Bills, January 2024

³ CBS News, Family of man fatally shot by NYPD officer in 2019 calls for more action, March 2024

⁴ ABC News, New York City Council overrides Mayor Eric Adams' vetoes on solitary confinement ban, police transparency bill, January 2024

⁵ **Link to framework**

⁶ The Guardian, The 'clearances paradox': could less policing actually reduce gun violence in New York?, 22 June 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jun/22/nypd-fewer-arrests-reduce-crime-new-york>

⁷ Monitor's Nineteenth Report – NYPD's Neighborhood Safety Teams, June 2023

to target Black and Brown New Yorkers for low-level offenses.⁸ Due to public outcry after abusive conduct, these specialized units have been disbanded repeatedly to only be re-established under different names by future administrations. While the NYPD plainclothes Street Crime Unit was initially disbanded in 1999 after the killing of Amadou Diallo,⁹ a version of it was reinstated in 2015, again disbanded in 2020,¹⁰ and re-established under Mayor Adams.¹¹ Meanwhile, the Mayor has prioritized budget cuts to public health and social service agencies like Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), which endured 3 percent cuts in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 budget modification,¹² and another 10 percent in cuts during the FY 2024 modifications.¹³ The Mayor placed the blame for these cuts on the influx in asylum seekers,¹⁴ a sentiment that has been refuted by many within the city, including NYC's comptroller Brad Landers.¹⁵ The NYPD, by contrast, only received a 1.2 percent budget cut in FY 2023 and was exempt from the January 2024 modifications.¹⁶ The chronic trend of prioritizing funding for NYPD that perpetuates harmful policing practices over necessary public services threatens the health and safety of our communities.

Specialized units in New York continue to be deeply harmful and counter-productive to promoting safety. New iterations like the Neighborhood Safety Teams (NST) and Strategic Response Group (SRG) have continued to target our most marginalized citizens and cause fear, instability, and too often death. Neighborhood Safety Teams are placed in predominantly Black economically disadvantaged communities such as those surrounding NYCHA housing, and they continue the abusive and inhumane policing tactics akin to NYPD's Stop and Frisk Program which was deemed unconstitutional in 2013.¹⁷ In 2020, a federal monitor (Monitor) overseeing the NYPD found that the agency had failed to make court-ordered reforms to end racially discriminatory trespass enforcement and unconstitutional stops and searches.¹⁸ In 2023, the Monitor's 19th report found that 97 percent of people stopped by NST were Black and Latinx.¹⁹ The report also showed that NST officers failed to show reasonable suspicion before conducting 1 out of every 4 of their

⁸ Nineteenth Report of the Independent Monitor

⁹ The New York Times, Police Commissioner Closing Controversial Street Crime Unit, April 2002

¹⁰ CNN, *The NYPD has resurrected its controversial anti-crime unit. Success will be determined by avoiding mistakes of the past*, January 2022

¹¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/nyregion/nypd-anti-crime-units-training-tactics.html>

¹² Spectrum News One, City unveils budget cuts that will impact libraries, police, sanitation and education, November 2023

¹³ Mayor Adams Releases November 2023 Financial Plan Update - <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/875-23/mayor-adams-releases-november-2023-financial-plan-update>

¹⁴ Amid Deepening Asylum Seeker Crisis, Mayor Adams Announces New Steps to Stabilize City's Budget as Required by Law <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/650-23/amid-deepening-asylum-seeker-crisis-mayor-adams-new-steps-stabilize-city-s-budget-as>

¹⁵ Statement by New York City Comptroller Brad Lander on FY 2024 Modified Budget - <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/statement-by-new-york-city-comptroller-brad-lander-on-fy-2024-modified-budget/>

¹⁶ ABC News 7, Police, fire and sanitation departments will be exempt from next round of NYC budget cuts, November 2023

¹⁷ ACLU, Stop and Frisk Found Unconstitutional, August 2013

¹⁸ Legal Aid Society and Legal Defense Fund, <https://legalaidsnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/10-29-20-Federal-Monitor-Report-After-Seven-Years-NYPD-Still-Failing-to-Make-Court-Ordered-Reforms-to-End-Racially-Discriminatory-Trespass-Enforcement-and-Unconstitutional-Stops-and-Searches.pdf>, October 2020

¹⁹ Monitor's Nineteenth Report – NYPD's Neighborhood Safety Teams, June 2023

stops making these stops unlawful.²⁰ The NST should be disbanded, just like its prior iterations, and funds should be instead be used for grants for community groups that have developed alternative response models, such as the Brownsville Safety Alliance, and services to connect people with following an initial response to address their underlying need that would prevent another call to 911.

SRG’s share the same discriminatory practices as NST, and their involvement in violence against Black bodies is well documented. Saheed Vassell, for example, was killed by SRG officers in 2018.²¹ Moreover, it is well documented that the SRG has used violent and aggressive tactics—including arrests, kettling, and use of force—against demonstrators who peaceably assemble to exercise their constitutional rights.²² This took place during the 2020 racial justice uprisings,²³ as well as the protests surrounding the killing of Jordan Neely last year at which photojournalist Stephanie Keith was arrested,²⁴ and most recently during protests calling for a ceasefire between Israel and Gaza over the last six months.²⁵ The deployment of SRG to curtail peaceful protest is a devastating blow to the civil liberties of New Yorkers, and it has disproportionately impacted Black people. The New York Civil Liberties Union’s investigation into this unit has found that, among all complaints filed against SRG officers from 2015 to 2021 with the Civilian Complaint Review Board, 66 percent of impacted individuals were Black, 21 percent were Latinx, and only 9 percent were white.²⁶ SRG has also assisted in the “homeless sweeps” that have dismantled encampments of unhoused people and disposed of their belongings, resulting in reports of excessive arrests and uses of force.²⁷ As for the financial cost, it is unacceptable that New Yorkers pay hundreds of millions of dollars, through both the budget and settlements of lawsuits filed after officers’ misconduct, to fund the staff and activities of this unit whose practices curtail their constitutional rights.²⁸ During a hearing, the NYPD estimated that it allocates \$68 million of its budget towards the SRG.²⁹ However, according to January 2024 Departmental Estimates, the

²⁰ Monitor’s Nineteenth Report – NYPD’s Neighborhood Safety Teams, June 2023

²¹ New York Times, www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/nyregion/police-shooting-brooklyn-crown-heights.html, 2014

²² Ali Watkins, An Unprepared N.Y.P.D. Badly Mishandled Floyd Protests, Watchdog Says, N.Y. Times (Dec. 18, 2020), www.nytimes.com/2020/12/18/nyregion/nypd-george-floyd-protests.html.

²³ NYCLU, Memo: We’ve reached a landmark settlement that holds the NYPD to its oath to protect New Yorkers’ right to protest, September 2023

²⁴ Kevin Gosztola, NYPD Arrest Photojournalist Who Was Covering Their Response To 'Justice For Jordan Neely' Vigil, Dissenter (May 9, 2023), thedissenter.org/nypd-arrest-photojournalist-justice-for-jordan-neely-vigil/

²⁵ <https://hellgatenyc.com/nypd-crack-down-pro-palestine-protests>.

²⁶ New York Civil Liberties Union, *Why We Must Disband the NYPD’s Strategic Response Group*, www.nyclu.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/202109_nyclu_srg_2pager.pdf.

²⁷ Marian Jones, The Police Are Really Bad at Solving Crime, AJ+ (May 7, 2022), www.ajplus.net/stories/article-the-police-are-really-bad-at-solving-crime; Samira Asma-Sadeque

²⁸ *Edwards v. South Carolina*, 372 U.S. 229, 235 (1963) (“[I]t is clear to us that in arresting, convicting, and punishing the [protesters] under the circumstances disclosed by this record, South Carolina infringed the petitioners’ constitutionally protected rights of free speech, free assembly, and freedom to petition for redress of their grievances.”)

²⁹ N.Y.C. Council Comm. on Pub. Safety, Hearing on March 20, 2023, at 00:52:25, [legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=1081360&GUID=9BCBD908-D217-4E65-9032-0AA79767D289&Options=info&Search=\[hereinafter “Public Safety Hearing”\]](https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=1081360&GUID=9BCBD908-D217-4E65-9032-0AA79767D289&Options=info&Search=[hereinafter%20Public%20Safety%20Hearing]).

NYPD actually allocated \$75,460,196 to the SRG.³⁰ That number has increased to \$77,695,053 in the FY 2025 budget.³¹

The NYPD, the largest police department in the country, costs taxpayers a staggering \$29 million per day.³² The NYPD is budgeted \$41,345,117 in overtime pay and another \$465,847,121 in uniformed overtime for FY³³25. The NYPD is also budgeted to receive \$7 million in FY 2025 for reimbursable overtime from federal grants. That amounts to \$514,192,238 in total overtime expenses budgeted for FY³⁴25. NYPD overtime expenses are typically double what is budgeted.³⁵

In total, the proposed budget allocation for the NYPD for FY 2025 is 8 percent higher than the budget originally proposed for FY 2024. The current planned NYPD budget for FY 2024 is approximately one billion dollars more than what was originally proposed.³⁶ We must stop allowing the NYPD to continue to spend money unchecked. There must be accountability for the expenditure of our city's resources, especially when so many community needs are unmet.

2. The city should eliminate NYPD Mental Health Co-Response Teams and remove law enforcement from other mental health and escalation responses.

The mayor's executive budget calls for a 23.82 percent decrease in funding to DOHMH.³⁷ One in five New Yorkers experiences a mental illness each year,³⁸ but the resources to deal with mental health issues are not accessible to all. New York City has deep racial and economic disparities in quality and access to mental health care. Black and Latinx New Yorkers are less likely to be connected to mental healthcare than their white counterparts.³⁹ National studies show that Black people can be half as likely as white people to receive community-based mental healthcare, but twice as likely to be hospitalized.⁴⁰ People from the city's lowest income neighborhoods are twice as likely to be hospitalized for mental illness, compared to residents from

³⁰ The City of New York Fiscal Year Estimates, Departmental Estimates, January 2024

³¹ The City of New York Fiscal Year Estimates, Departmental Estimates, January 2024

³² NYCLU, THE NYPD IS ALREADY TOO BIG, SO CUT ITS BUDGET: WHAT ARE NEW YORKERS GETTING FROM SPENDING \$29 MILLION DAILY ON COPS?, May 2023

³³ The City of New York Fiscal Year Estimates, Departmental Estimates, January 2024

³⁵ NYC Comptroller, NYPD Overspending on Overtime Grew Dramatically in Recent Years, March 2023

³⁶ NYC Office of Management and Budget, FY 2025 Preliminary Budget Function Analysis, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan24-bfa.pdf>; NYC Office of Management and Budget, FY 2024 Executive Budget Function Analysis, www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/exec23-bfa.pdf.

³⁷ New York City Office of Management and Budget, FY 2025 Preliminary Budget Function Analysis, www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan24-bfa.pdf.

³⁸ NYS Department of Health Priority Area: Mental Health/Substance Abuse - Mental Health www.health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/mental_health_and_substance_abuse/mental_health.htm#:~:text=Mental%20disorders%20continue%20to%20be,work%2C%20family%20and%20school%20life.

³⁹ mentalhealth.cityofnewyork.us/dashboard/

⁴⁰ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Racial/Ethnic Differences in Mental Health Service Use among Adults www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/MHServicesUseAmongAdults/MHServicesUseAmongAdults.pdf

the highest income neighborhoods.⁴¹ There is clearly a need for more mental health services, and the over reliance on the NYPD to fill these gaps is deeply concerning.

Nothing illustrates this point more than the recent tragic and preventable death of Win Rozario. Mr. Rozario was a 19-year-old who called emergency services for help during what appeared to be a mental health crisis.⁴² When police officers arrived and met his little brother, they disparagingly asked if Mr. Rozario is a “bipolar schizo.” And rather than deescalating the situation, the officers did the opposite by tasing and ultimately shooting him in front of his family in their home. Had unarmed, trained mental health emergency professionals responded to Mr. Rozario’s call, he may very likely be alive today.

In the last few years, we have seen an increase in criminalization and emergency hospitalization of those deemed in need of crisis intervention, rather than connecting people to long-term support or holistic community-based services. In 2022, the Adams administration rolled out a highly problematic initiative that authorized first responders to forcibly detain mentally ill New Yorkers for psychiatric evaluation if they deemed that those individuals lacked the ability to care for themselves.⁴³ In testimony to the Committee on Public Safety, Mental Health, Fire and Emergency Management and Hospitals, the NYPD Chief of Training stated that officers were trained on this new initiative with a 25-minute presentation during roll call and a video.⁴⁴ The NYPD is not equipped to conduct mental health outreach services. Rather than continuing to fund failed mental health response strategies that deploy police for mental health crises, the City should invest in proven public health solutions that rely on clinicians, psychiatrists, peer advocates, and health care and other professionals for this role.

The city should end its investment in co-responder models which are not effective in meeting people’s mental health needs.⁴⁵ The NYPD Mental Health Co-Response Teams (CRT) consist of two police officers and one mental health professional.⁴⁶ In 2021, at least 104 people were killed after police responded to someone “behaving erratically or having a mental health crisis.”⁴⁷ Nearly a third of New Yorkers with mental illness, and nearly a quarter of Black New Yorkers, experience direct exposure to police violence.⁴⁸ According to the NYPD’s own figures, 47 percent of people who are subjected to involuntary mental health removals are Black.⁴⁹

⁴¹ NYC Mayor REPORT: UNDERSTANDING NEW YORK CITY’S MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE www.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/press-releases/2015/thriveNYC_white_paper.pdf

⁴² Claire Fahy, Body Cameras Show Police Fatally Shooting Queens Man Holding Scissors, New York Times (May 3, 2024) <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/03/nyregion/win-rozario-shooting-body-camera-nypd.html>.

⁴³ www.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/press-releases/2022/Mental-Health-Involuntary-Removals.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery

⁴⁴ www.nyclu.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/exhibit_h_1.pdf

⁴⁵ <https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-LDF-Bazelon-brief-Community-Based-Services-for-MH48.pdf>

⁴⁶ mentalhealth.cityofnewyork.us/program/co-response-teams

⁴⁷ Vera Institute for Justice, We Need to Think Beyond Police in Mental Health Crises, 2022

⁴⁸ Brooklyn Movement Center, Invest in Black Futures: A Public Health Roadmap For Safe NYC Neighborhoods, at 11, issuu.com/bkmovement/docs/bmc_blackfuturesreport_v5

⁴⁹ <https://gothamist.com/news/despite-new-directive-nypd-isnt-transporting-more-people-with-mental-illness-to-the-hospital>

Regardless of training, the NYPD should not have a role in mental health response. When people experience a mental health crisis, there should be a healthcare-centered response, with the mental health system taking the lead.

The city spent \$5.7 million of the FY 2024 budget on the co-responder model. This program should be eliminated, and the money should be invested in increasing the number of non-police, community-based mental health service providers. Investing in mental health means investing in a workforce that is trained to deliver effective and compassionate care. Instead of spending money to train and deploy police to address mental health, New York should address the workforce pay disparity and workforce shortage in mental health service works by:

- **Increasing Training for Peer- Specialists.** There is a serious shortage of mental health workers, especially Black, Latinx, and other mental health workers of color that can provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care to New Yorkers in diverse communities.⁵⁰ We are in need of more peer-specialists who can draw on lived experience and are proven to be effective in helping individuals experiencing crisis.⁵¹ The city should increase funding for peer-specialist training as a catalyst to increase trauma informed mental health service workforce.
- **Approving a 6 percent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Mental Health Service Workers.** Most mental health service providers in New York City are currently operating with a 15-20 percent vacancy rate due to the high turnover of staff.⁵² This severely hinders their ability to provide high-quality services to New Yorkers. Mental Health service workers, including social workers, mental health and substance abuse counselors, and social service assistants, are predominantly workers of color (75 percent) and women (70 percent). They make 20-35 percent less than the median annual wages of workers in comparable positions in the government and private sector.⁵³ Additionally, 15 percent of these workers qualified for food stamps.⁵⁴

Instead of relying on a patchwork of criminal legal and emergency services, the city should invest in mental health services that have a proven track record of centering dignity, self-determination, social connection and assistance for people living with serious mental illness, helping them to recover and achieve long-term stability. Some of these solutions include:

- **Respite Centers:** Respite Centers are a successful alternative to emergency hospitalization for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis that are voluntary, home-like environments that often include 24-hour support from peers, as well as wraparound

⁵⁰ New York Daily News, New York City must get mental health help to people of color, May 2022

⁵¹ Bazelon Center, When There's a Crisis, Call a Peer How People with Lived Experience Make Mental Health Crisis Services More Effective www.bazelon.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Bazelon-When-Theres-a-Crisis-Call-A-Peer-full-01-03-24.pdf

⁵² NYC Comptroller, Understaffed, Underserved Impact of Staff Vacancies on Agency Performance, March 2023

⁵³ City Limits, Amid Inflation and Increased Demand, Human Services Workers Struggle with Burnout, September 2022

⁵⁴ Olivia Bensimon, Amid Inflation and Increased Demand, Human Services Workers Struggle with Burnout, City Limits (September 5, 2022) <https://citylimits.org/2022/09/05/amid-inflation-and-increased-demand-human-services-workers-struggle-with-burnout/>.

services. These programs have a documented success rate in helping individuals recover from psychiatric episodes and get connected to ongoing care and support.⁵⁵ They are also much more cost-effective than hospital-based care.⁵⁶ There are currently only eight respite centers in New York City, which is woefully inadequate given the number of New Yorkers that are in need of emergency psychiatric care. The number of respite centers should be increased to ease the burden on the existing centers and increase access to communities in need.

- **Community-Based Programs:** Community-based programs move beyond managing a person’s symptoms toward providing a range of holistic services and leveraging peer relationships to restore a person’s dignity, agency, and self-determination that allows them to reintegrate into their community and thrive. In 2023, LDF and the Bazelon Center for Mental Health released the report *Community-Based Service for Black People with Mental Illness: An Alternative to Police*, which outlines how alternative responses should be supplemented by a sufficient array of facilities that are available for crisis care.⁵⁷ We recommend developing resources such as short-stay apartments, walk-in urgent care centers and drop off centers scattered through urban areas so they are readily accessible to people in all neighborhoods, particularly in Black and Latinx communities. These approaches incorporate psychiatric and psychosocial support and a range of services including long-term housing, intensive case management, peer support services, Assertive Community Treatment, and supported employment..⁵⁸ People with lived experience working as peers can be involved in—and lead—the delivery of all of these services. The city should increase the number of hospital beds for those who need inpatient care and short-term detox facilities that offer treatment of substance use disorders upon and following discharge.

3. Increased investments in community resources are a necessary and effective way to advance public safety.

Rather than relying on specialized crime-suppression units and hyper-surveillance, which have disproportionately harmed Black and Brown communities,⁵⁹ the city should make substantial investments to enable impacted communities to direct and determine the resources necessary to

⁵⁵ Bouchery EE, Barna M, Babalola E, Friend D, Brown JD, Blyler C, Ireys HT. The Effectiveness of a Peer-Staffed Crisis Respite Program as an Alternative to Hospitalization. *Psychiatr Serv*. 2018 Oct 1;69(10):1069-1074. doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201700451. Epub 2018 Aug 3. PMID: 30071793.

⁵⁶ Bouchery EE, Barna M, Babalola E, Friend D, Brown JD, Blyler C, Ireys HT. The Effectiveness of a Peer-Staffed Crisis Respite Program as an Alternative to Hospitalization. *Psychiatr Serv*. 2018 Oct 1;69(10):1069-1074. doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201700451. Epub 2018 Aug 3. PMID: 30071793.

⁵⁷ Community-Based Services for Black People with Mental Illness: An Alternative to Police, LDF and Bazelon Center for Mental Health (January 2023) <https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-LDF-Bazelon-brief-Community-Based-Services-for-MH48.pdf>.

⁵⁸ LDF, Bazelon, *COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES FOR BLACK PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS Advancing An Alternative to Police*, <https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-LDF-Bazelon-brief-Community-Based-Services-for-MH48.pdf>; Red Hook Initiative, *Youth-Led Community Building is Violence Prevention: A 2023 Progress Report*, www.rhicenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Youth-Led-Community-Building-is-Violence-Prevention-A-Progress-Report-1.pdf

⁵⁹ Invest in Black Futures, Brooklyn Movement Center

ensure the safety and prosperity of their neighborhoods. We must stop our generational divestment from NYCHA housing and provide financial investment and tangible resources to constituents living in public housing, who have historically been disproportionately targeted by surveillance and “broken windows” policing.⁶⁰ We must add financial backing to the changes passed in the Fair Chance for Housing Act,⁶¹ decrease the barriers to supportive housing, and address housing discrimination, especially for New Yorkers who use drugs or have had contact with the criminal legal system. We must ensure that vacant supportive housing units are filled.⁶² The city should also enact common sense tenant protections, such as Good Cause, to promote stability among Black and Brown New Yorkers.⁶³

If we want communities to be truly safe, we must prioritize investments in mental health resources, and quality of life resources like education, housing, workforce development and employment opportunities for our neurodiverse populations.⁶⁴ We must invest in proven health-based approaches for responding to people’s mental health needs in the same way we expect our healthcare system to respond to people’s physical health needs.

To achieve the safety and prosperity we need, we must invest in youth educational and employment services for young people up to the age of 24.⁶⁵ Black and other marginalized youth should have the same opportunities to thrive as other youth. The proposed budget calls for a 15.40 percent reduction in youth and community development services.⁶⁶ This is a huge disservice to our Black and Brown youth, who too often are denied access to resources, only to be subjected to aggressive police surveillance and enforcement practices like the NYPD Criminal Group Database.⁶⁷ We must ensure that students with disabilities, students in foster care, and English language learners have the supports and services that they need. Our schools need \$75 million to hire 500 community members into supportive positions including youth advocates, parent coordinators, paraprofessionals, community outreach coordinators, counselors, and social workers, as well as staff to greet students at the door and check-in visitors. Another \$75 million should be budgeted to baseline and continue to hire additional social workers at competitive rates to support the needs of all students, including newcomer asylum seekers, and achieve a ratio of 1:150 across schools and 1:50 for high-need schools.

⁶⁰ April 2023, DOI’S OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR THE NYPD ISSUES REPORT EXAMINING NYPD’S USE AND OPERATION OF THE CRIMINAL GROUP DATABASE

⁶¹ legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?GUID=1081D9A0-5626-4DE4-BB6A-142AB373A4AF&ID=5755059

⁶² NYC Comptroller, Housing First A Proven Approach to Dramatically Reduce Street Homelessness, June 2023

⁶³ Dr. Sandhya Kajeepeta, EVICTIONS ARE A RACIAL JUSTICE CRISIS The Promise of Good Cause Protection in New York, www.naacpldf.org/evictions-racial-justice-good-cause-protection-new-york/

⁶⁴ Red Hook Initiative, Real Rites Research Project, January 2019.

⁶⁵ LDF Thurgood Marshall Institute, The Truth About Crime Statistics: Avoiding Distortions and Improving Public Safety Avoiding Distortions and Improving Public Safety, www.tminstitutelfd.org/publications/the-truth-about-crime-statistics-avoiding-distortions-and-improving-public-safety/

⁶⁶ New York City Office of Management and Budget, FY 2025 Preliminary Budget Function Analysis, www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan24-bfa.pdf.

⁶⁷ LDF Responds to Department of Investigation’s Findings Regarding the NYPD’s Criminal Group Database, April 2023

These investments could be accomplished with the elimination of funding for Neighborhood Safety Teams, SRG, and commonsense reductions in NYPD overtime.

4. Conclusion

The Mayor's misplaced blame of asylum seekers for the City's financial concerns is unjust and potentially dangerous for our immigrant communities.⁶⁸ Rather than taking accountability for a preventable crisis, the Mayor sought to cut 15 percent of social services, stoking fear, and threatening the vital services New Yorkers rely on most. He has prioritized the restoration of funds to the NYPD over agencies that have faced consistent disinvestment for years, while ignoring the rampant harmful policing practices that have taken place under his watch. The Legal Defense Fund urges City Council to invest in our communities and effective strategies for public safety identified in our Framework for Public Safety⁶⁹ and end the NYPD's budget exceptionalism.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Saltz
Legal Fellow, Justice in Public Safety Project
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

Obi Afriyie
Community Organizer, Criminal Justice
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

David Moss
Legal Fellow, Justice in Public Safety Project
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

⁶⁸ Amid Deepening Asylum Seeker Crisis, Mayor Adams Announces New Steps to Stabilize City's Budget as Required by Law, Statement by Mayor Adams, September 2023. www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/650-23/amid-deepening-asylum-seeker-crisis-mayor-adams-new-steps-stabilize-city-s-budget-as

⁶⁹ LDF, JUSTICE IN PUBLIC SAFETY PROJECT FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

Hello,

My name is Maryam Khaldi, and I'm testifying on behalf of the Arab American Association of New York. Today, I stress once again the urgent need to take immediate action and disband the NYPD's Strategic Response Group (SRG). This is the only viable way to address the rampant police brutality perpetrated by the unit.

The SRG's actions at Columbia University, CCNY, NYU, and various Pro-Palestine protests and encampments across our city have been nothing short of horrifying. From violently assaulting peaceful protesters - beating up protestors with batons, using tasers and pepper spray, body slamming peaceful protesters into concrete causing concussions, brain injuries, and fractured joints, to targeting minors and pulling hijabs off of Muslim women, the SRG's behavior is a clear violation of our civil liberties and human rights.

I can't begin to fully convey the depth of the trauma and injustice inflicted by the SRG. But what I can emphasize is that the time for accountability is now. We cannot allow this cycle of violence and abuse to continue unchecked.

Disbanding the SRG is not just about ending a single unit; it's about dismantling a culture of impunity within the NYPD. It's about reallocating resources to community-led initiatives that prioritize genuine public safety and well-being.

Since its establishment in 2015, the SRG has exponentially increased its spending, with the current estimate of its annual spending being \$133 million. The SRG has been involved in many civil rights abuses and lawsuits since its formation, resulting in enormous costs to New Yorkers to settle these cases. The violent crackdowns on recent protests are just the latest in SRG's pattern of civil rights violations and escalations targeting communities of color, despite the NYPD's clarifications that it is to be used only as an anti-terror force that will not be deployed at protests.

New Yorkers deserve better. We deserve a police force that serves and protects all residents, not one that brutalizes and terrorizes marginalized communities.

I urge you to listen to the voices of your constituents and take decisive action to disband the SRG. I believe that by taking swift action today, we can move towards building a city where justice, equality, and respect for human dignity prevail.

Sincerely,
Maryam Khaldi
Arab American Association of New York

May 12, 2024

Dear Chairs Brannan and Salaam, Speaker Adams and Council Members,

I am a native New Yorker (Upper West Side), a professor at Barnard College, Columbia University, and a Jew. I am offering this written testimony to ask you to withdraw police from Columbia's neighborhoods and to defund the SRG.

As a professor of education, I have been teaching all semester about the school-to-prison pipeline and harmful, inequitable, and sometimes violent impacts of police in K-12 school contexts. I could not have imagined I would be reporting now on the stories my students have told me of the way they have been made unsafe by the presence of police on our college campus. I too feel much less safe in our neighborhood than I did before.

Since April 30th, the second time this spring that police were invited onto Columbia's campus to arrest peacefully protesting students, I have had numerous students visit my office or email me to share their experiences from that night and since. Students who were not involved in the protest at Hamilton Hall were nevertheless prevented from returning to their dorm rooms that night. One student, an international student from China, told me she returned to the neighborhood after an orthodontist appointment and was not let onto the street where her Barnard dorm is. She went back and forth with police officers trying to prove her identity and residence; eventually, one escorted her to her building. She said the police were yelling at her and pushing her during this "escort" to her home.

Another student, a freshman, was unable to persuade the police to let her return to her residence. Terrified and with nowhere else to go, she told me she sat in Riverside Park alone for hours listening to the student reporting of the arrests on WKCR. She was shaking and in tears knowing her peers were being violently brutalized and unsure whether she would have to sleep in the park if she continued to be kept out of her dorm because of the police barricades.

Teenage students being pushed by cops as they simply try to return to their dorms or stranded in a city park in the middle of the night. This is not safety on campus.

As a Jewish person, I am aware of antisemitism as an urgent and scary concern in our country. But I do not believe this is a pervasive issue on campus or among the peacefully protesting students. From my experience on Columbia's campus as a Jewish person, I can tell you that the alleged threats to some Jewish people's safety have been dramatically misrepresented and exploited to justify a massive police mobilization. It is that police mobilization that has resulted in actual violence and threatens the safety of us all. We should treat antisemitic speech with education and existing anti-discrimination/hate procedures, not arrests. More police are not making Jewish students or faculty any safer. In fact, they are making us less safe. And this is especially true for the Black and Brown members of our campus and neighborhood community.

I am especially dismayed by the idea of adding funds to SRG while so many cuts are being made to the services that support our communities, in particular the devastating cuts to the NYPL. I have a one-year old and have been looking forward to developing a weekend library ritual with him. How can I as a full-time working parent with a child in full-time daycare ever introduce him to the public library system if they are closed on the weekends?

On behalf of Jewish and non-Jewish members of the Columbia, Morningside and Harlem communities, I ask that you:

1. Defund and disband the strategic response group (and put that money towards services that support education and community engagement within our neighborhood).
2. Intervene to halt the militarization of our campus and our city by removing the police that have flooded the neighborhood.
3. Prohibit police from returning unless there is a credible threat of violence.
4. Demand accountability for the police violence that has already occurred in campus neighborhoods across the city
5. Challenge the mayor's false statements and the NYPD's misleading statistics about who was arrested where.
6. Provide the public with information needed to evaluate all of these activities, including their cost to taxpayers.

Thank you,



Nora Gross

Assistant Professor of Education, Barnard College, Columbia University
Residence: 1400 5th Avenue, Apt. 7P, New York NY 10026



Dear Chairperson Salaam and Council Members,

My name is Abdul Nasser Rad. I'm a graduate of CUNY, former NYC public servant, and proud son of a life-long NYC cab driver. Currently, I serve as the Managing Director of Research and Data at Campaign Zero, an organization committed to ending police violence and advancing restorative and effective solutions to improve public safety. Previously, I was a staffer in the NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and have also advised law enforcement agencies across the US on comprehensive strategies to improve public safety while at the Vera Institute. We're here in community and in partnership with Communities United for Policing Reform and coalition members.

We're profoundly disturbed by the recent actions of the NYPD against student protesters on NYC campuses. The NYPD has displayed a violent, militarized response to peaceful student protests. This has not only exacerbated tensions but also contradicts the First Amendment principles of free speech and peaceful assembly. Borrowing from a Prof. Aziz Huq (UChicago), you can characterize the health of a democracy by the way it employs and deploys police. What does it say for the health of NYC democracy that our first line of response to student protest was a militaristic deployment with a callous disregard for the health and well-being of college students? We want to ensure that peaceful protests can remain peaceful and believe hate has no place anywhere. Period. But the police response did not improve the situation. Instead, it escalated tensions and reduced safety.

To this end, we have five (6) focused demands:

1. **First, there needs to be an immediate ban on the deployment of NYPD SRG units** until there has been an independent investigation into the NYPD response to student protests on NYC campuses.
2. **Second, it is crucial to immediately end police intervention on NYC Campuses** and take tangible measures to protect faculty attempting to engage in peaceful discussions with students.
3. **Third, NYC Council should urge all five NYC District Attorney Offices to drop all criminal charges** on nonviolent protests. Also, we urge the waiving of all civil fines.
4. **Third, NYC Council needs to support students who have been wronged by demanding university administrators across all NYC campuses to immediately reverse any disciplinary actions** imposed on nonviolent student protests and provide financial assistance for any damages or harms.
5. **Finally, NYC Council needs to fund and develop an alternative response model.** Advised by the NYC ONS and the NYC OPHC, the Council should fund OATH or DOHMH to develop an alternative responder model that employs visibly recognized individuals who are professionally trained in conflict resolution and hate interruption to support demonstrations effectively and compassionately.

NYC needs to lead the way on alternative responses. Will it continue to criminalize dissent and respond in this manner whenever large groups of individuals exercise democratic practices? How we move forward as a city will dictate the health of NYC's democracy. Let the recent punitive responses not be forgotten; let it serve as the start of a commitment to developing, deploying, and maintaining an alternative responder model that ensures voices are heard and respected rather than silenced. We're inspired by those university campuses across the US that have responded in a healthy way that is consistent with our democratic values, treated students with dignity, and allowed peaceful dissent. We have complete faith that we can do it as well.

Abdul Nasser Rad
Managing Director, Research & Data



**Testimony of Catholic Migration Services Before the New York City Council Joint Committees
on Finance and Public Safety**

May 9, 2024

Honorable Chairs Salaam and Brannan, my name is Raluca Oncioiu and I am the Managing Attorney of the Immigration Department at Catholic Migration Services. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning the safety of newly-arrived immigrants to our city.

Catholic Migration Services provides free legal services and information to low-income New York City residents in three main areas: immigration, workers' rights, and housing. Our agency's mission is to welcome "the stranger in our midst" by providing high quality legal services and education to empower and advance equality and social justice in New York City. In particular, we have provided immigration legal services for more than five decades, helping thousands of New Yorkers adjust their immigration status, obtain asylum, become naturalized citizens, and receive other immigration benefits.

For the last year and a half, Catholic Migration Services has been a member of the Pro Se Plus Project (PSPP), a collaborative of non-profit immigration legal service agencies and community-based organizations that provide legal orientations, screenings, legal advice, and pro se assistance with applications for asylum, Temporary Protected Status, work permits, and a variety of immigration court motions to immigrants who have not been able to find legal representation. Through PSPP, Catholic Migration Services has had direct contact with thousands of newly-arrived immigrants over the last sixteen months.

I am here today to raise awareness about what we have witnessed in our work with newly-arrived immigrants since the beginning of the year and in particular since the adoption and implementation of the 30- and 60-day shelter rules.

First, we have seen fear about personal safety mount when individuals and families have been ordered to evacuate from shelters. People have slept outside and in subway stations, where they are vulnerable to robbery, verbal harassment, and physical attacks. When they have to pack all of their belongings and lug them around on public transportation and through our streets from one borough to another, they do so in fear that their property – including important information for their immigration cases - may be stolen. One community member descends into subway tunnels to find a place to hide the bag with his immigration court documents and evidence for his asylum case when he is in between shelters.

Second, there is an increasing number of immigrants who speak languages other than Spanish and who find it hard to communicate with other New Yorkers or with law enforcement. They wander the streets and public transportation hubs confused and unable to communicate. Inability to communicate effectively when homeless, hungry and without basic resources can escalate normal

encounters. Community members report feeling harassed by people who talk to them in English, become frustrated that they cannot understand or answer, and start yelling at them.

Many of the new arrivals who have been evicted from shelters sleep in train stations, on the street, in parks and other public spaces, which leaves them vulnerable to attacks - from verbal abuse to robbery to physical assault. Due to language barriers and fear of law enforcement instilled by life under repressive regimes in their home countries, many new migrants tend not to report crimes. When they recount their stories to our staff and we advise them to report that they had been attacked, they shake their heads in disbelief. Even if we can persuade them to do it, we unfortunately do not have the resources to advocate for them with law enforcement or assist them through the process of filing a report and collaborating with an investigation.

Third, many of us who regularly use the subway have seen children and families selling candy in stations and on the trains. Sometimes, children are by themselves in one car, while the adult is in another car. This not only puts children in vulnerable situations, but may be a sign that they – and the adults in their families - are being trafficked before our very eyes. Distrust of law enforcement stemming from experiences in their home countries, combined with isolation exacerbated by a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment in New York City, leaves many newly-arrived immigrants vulnerable to trafficking.

Last but not least, the 30-day shelter rule for single adults and adult families is especially hard for people who are in the process of getting their work authorization because they need a stable address to receive notices for fingerprints and later their physical work permits and social security cards. For those who have been fortunate enough to have already received their work permits, life on the street is not conducive to finding and keeping a new job. It is a shame to see the free immigration legal help provided by the City through the Asylum Application Support Center fail to lead to self-sufficiency due to a lack of shelter.

Ideally, the city would provide stable housing until immigrants can work legally and save money to make other housing arrangements. Access to language services and case management in shelters, and to free legal immigration services, would also help those who speak languages other than English or Spanish to get their bearings, understand our systems better, and realize they have rights – including to protection by law enforcement – in our city. Thirty days in a shelter is simply not enough time for someone who suffered persecution and endured a dangerous journey to begin to make the transition to life in the United States, let alone navigate our complex immigration system. If we are going to devote resources to these newest New Yorkers, we should provide enough to put them on a path to succeed. At the very least, we ask for compassion and understanding from law enforcement in their interactions with newly-arrived immigrants. Even minor arrests that stem from misunderstandings aggravated by language barriers can potentially have a negative impact on their immigration cases, and in particular on their ability to get work permits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Raluca Oncioiu

Raluca Oncioiu
Catholic Migration Services
191 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201

CCIT-NYC

CORRECT CRISIS INTERVENTION TODAY

FIGHTING TO TRANSFORM RESPONSES TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES

My name is Alex Brass and I am a peer in recovery from mental health and substance abuse issues. I am also one of the newest members of the CCIT-NYC (Correct Crisis Intervention Today - NYC) Steering Committee, and I present this testimony on behalf of CCIT-NYC.

Thank you, Chair Salaam, Chair Brannan, and Council Member Holden, for intently listening to my testimony on Thursday, after sitting through a long/intense day at City Council.

Upon hearing about the tragedy of Win Rozario it took me over a week to muster the courage to watch the police body camera footage. It was much more difficult to watch than I anticipated, and I have still been unable to watch the footage from the second police camera as the first one made me extremely emotional and reflective of all the anguish being experienced by the beautiful souls suffering mental health crises, as well as their families and communities. What makes me particularly upset about this situation is that Win called the police himself, and there is no reason the situation needed to escalate as it did. Fellow Steering Committee member Sheina Banatte's cousin was another of the 20 beautiful souls who were killed at the hands of the police in the last nine years, and listening to Sheina speak about her cousin Eudes Pierre saddens me every time.

While I believe the NYPD certainly does much good for New York City, they are clearly ill-equipped to handle mental health crisis response. We have tried to work with the police for many years, and my fellow Steering Committee member James Mutton tried to train police with Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training approximately ten years ago, unfortunately with little success. It seems like the failure of the training was not the training itself, but the fact that the police have a certain embedded culture. As someone who experienced a mental health crisis in January of 2022, and had a police response, I know firsthand how it feels to have had the police 'come after me' during a time when I was most vulnerable and simply needed someone to listen to me and be there to support me. The mere presence of police and their uniforms (before any words or actions were taken by them) created a sense of fight/flight response for me. My experience with the police only further exacerbated my mental health crisis and led to a three-week stay at Mt. Sinai, forced injections, and forced medications (despite reading in the hospital that I was supposed to be able to refuse medications without fear of reprisal). The aftermath of my experience further deteriorated my mental health and increased my distrust for the police and our

systems at large, leading me to the worst stint of my mental illness. This evolved into pain so deep that on August 17th 2023, I almost traded my life for \$2 worth of fentanyl, for which it took two hits of Narcan to bring me back to life.

While I have thankfully been able to make immense strides in my recovery, many of the beautiful souls I met in the hospital have not been so fortunate. One of my closest friends from the hospital has had 15 police interactions following mental health crises and has lost all trust in police, our systems, and society at large. While I think about her and pray for her weekly, I am distraught that until the systems change, she will likely continue to have negative interactions with the police and have difficulty integrating back into society.

The one thing that gives me hope for my friend, and the countless other individuals suffering mental health crises and police responses, is that CCIT-NYC has robust solutions. I have faith that if we continue to share stories of those who are no longer with us or suffering too much to share their own story, and highlight what has worked in other cities, that change is possible and beautiful vulnerable souls no longer need to experience unnecessary suffering and death.

The B-HEARD Pilot program has so much potential to alleviate this unnecessary death and suffering, but we must work diligently to improve and expand the pilot programs already in place. Unfortunately funding for B-HEARD has gone from \$112 million proposed by Mayor De Blasio to \$50 million, then \$30 million and as low as approximately \$12 million in Mayor Adams' budget. Since mental health crisis response is still routed through 911, and B-HEARD has limited capacity, only slightly more than 20% of mental health crisis responses in B-HEARD pilot areas actually received a B-HEARD response. That means approximately 80% of calls still result in a police response! We must and we can do better! The lagging implementation of 988 is critical to ensure the best care of these vulnerable individuals, as the statistics make it clear that 911 dispatchers are not prepared to properly determine when police should be sent to a mental health crisis versus B-HEARD teams. Additionally, B-HEARD response times lag that of traditional crisis response systems, and the recent PEG cuts do not set up B-HEARD to operate at its best. The areas where B-HEARD is operating are not even available 24/7. With Governor Hochul putting \$33 billion in the budget to provide necessary supports to individuals with a history of mental illness, the resources are clearly available, and a few million dollars is just a drop in the bucket. Investing more in B-HEARD would not only decrease unnecessary death and trauma, but it would also save money by avoiding unnecessary hospital stays and long-term care addressing said trauma for individuals and their families.

While the B-HEARD structure of a social worker and an emergency medical technician (EMT) is an astronomical improvement over the police, peers (individuals with lived mental health experience) are much better equipped than social workers to be a part of the response teams. Social workers lack the lived experience that peers have, and there is still an inherent power dynamic when approached by a social worker. Peers, on the other hand, are at an even playing field to the vulnerable individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and are best equipped to de-escalate and avoid unnecessary additional trauma and hospital stays.

All of this being said, CCIT-NYC has **two simple asks** of City Council for this year:

1. Swap out social workers for peers in the B-HEARD teams

2. Restore PEG cuts to B-HEARD

While the CCIT-NYC Steering Committee and I would like to address all of the issues necessary to appropriately transform the City's response to mental health crises which I have outlined in this testimony (the full text of the CCIT-NYC proposal can be found at <https://www.ccitnyc.org/ourproposal>), any small progress forward would be helpful. These asks seem more than reasonable. I humbly ask for you to reflect on recent events, think of Win Rozario, Eudes Pierre, and the other 18 beautiful souls no longer with us (and their families) as well as people like my friends who are still suffering the aftermath of their police interactions, and do what is within your power to bolster and improve the B-HEARD program. Let us work together and protect our most vulnerable New Yorkers and not let Win's or Eudes' deaths be in vain.

Thank you for considering the urgency of what is occurring on our NYC streets and the two simple asks that we have of you. We are committed to building trust back into New Yorkers/our communities and together we CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us to learn more about our recommendations, the B-HEARD program, and/or information of non-police models that have proven to be successful in other cities across the country. New York City is often regarded as the best city in the world, and I feel we have an obligation to lead by example and show the difference some simple measures can make on individuals suffering through mental health crises, their families, and our communities. The Daniel's Law Coalition, a statewide initiative, has recently successfully urged the State Legislature to fund a peer-led mental health crisis response pilot program in Rochester and/or Buffalo. Daniel's Law (Senate Bill [S2398](#)/Assembly Bill [A2210](#)) has 33 sponsors in the Assembly and 17 sponsors in the Senate. Let's follow suit and show what NYC is capable of.

With an Abundance of Gratitude,

Alex 'Loony Bin' Brass on behalf of the CCIT-NYC Steering Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Brass". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leo Ferguson - NYCC Public Safety Committee Hearing testimony
5/9/2024

Chairs Brannan and Salaam, Speaker Adams, and council members.

My name is Leo Ferguson, and I am the Director of Strategic Projects at [Jews For Racial & Economic Justice](#). And a member of Communities United for Police Reform.

I'm here to talk about an out of control and dangerous NYPD that the city continues to pour precious resources into at the same time as we contemplate cutting education, libraries and we chronically under-fund social services.

Just look at the past few months.

We saw the body cam video of Win Rozario's murder — a sickening, tragic scene. NYPD officers entered a situation in which everyone was safe, immediately escalated the situation, ignored the desperate pleas of Win's family and then, with ample opportunity to retreat or deescalate, they shot and killed him in front of his family. Anyone who looks at that video would conclude that Win would be alive today if the NYPD had not responded. The NYPD did not make Win safer — they made him less safe.

Earlier today a Councilmember — CM Joseph I believe — asked, “what have we learned” about situations like this one? Well in April we heard that after the NYPD stonewalled and obstructed the CCRB investigation into the murder of Kawaski Trawick, it was refusing to impose even the most basic discipline on the officers who killed him. And then they lied and attempted to shift blame about its own institutional cowardice. The NYPD is clearly not interested in “learning” anything.

At Columbia and on other campuses throughout the city, the NYPD Strategic Response Group has gone on a local college tour, imposing *their* violence on non-violent protesters and leaving chaos in their wake. Who is this for? This administration can't claim to care about Jews and antisemitism when they unceremoniously fire Hassan Naveed, the highly respected director of the Office for Hate Crime Prevention in the middle of this crisis. The notion that this was somehow to protect *us* is ludicrous when so many of the students endangered by the SRG were Jewish. It was the students who set up first aid stations and organized food and water for their peers; it was the NYPD that slammed them to the ground and knocked students down stairs; it was the NYPD who entered with guns drawn and left a bullet hole in the wall of Hind (Hamilton) Hall. The fact that no one was killed by that NYPD SRG officer should offer no consolation at

all — a child could just as easily be dead today and it is sheer luck that we dodged that *particular* bullet.

Since then we've watched the NYPD — enabled by Mayor Adams — go wild on social media, making incredibly irresponsible, partisan, and frankly *bizarre and paranoid* posts that make it impossible to conclude that the NYPD is an apolitical institution that even pretends to serve all New Yorkers equally.

Normally I would end with a demand but I want to end with questions instead:

Whose safety is improved when the NYPD systematically ignores CCRB recommendations and refuses to hold its own officers accountable for murder?

On whose behalf did the NYPD kill Win Rozario? It wasn't his family who were begging them to not shoot. It wasn't the officers, who were free to retreat unmolested. Who was that *for*, and why are *we* funding it?

Whose safety is improved by the estimated \$200,000 it cost the NYPD to assault Columbia University or the \$53 million it has spent harassing and endangering students and other protesters since 10/7?

Whose safety is improved by the \$2.2 billion dollars the city has thrown away in NYPD misconduct payouts over the past decade, including the \$32.7 million spent paying for officer misconduct and incompetence the last time the SRG was let loose on protesters in 2020?

How can these be better investments for our public dollars than investing in mental health care, supportive housing, fully funding our agencies and educating our children?

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Freedom
Agenda

Testimony to the City Council Committee on Public Safety

Submitted May 9, 2024 by Darren Mack

Thank you Chair Salaam and Council Members, for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Darren Mack, and I am Co-Director of Freedom Agenda. We are led by our members who are survivors of Rikers like myself, and impacted family members. We're one of the organizations leading the [Campaign to Close Rikers](#), and I'm glad to testify here today.

New York City has committed to closing Rikers Island because mass incarceration undermines public safety, by destabilizing communities and draining resources we need for housing, healthcare, work opportunities, and more. Rikers is legally required to close by 2027, and our City budget must put all the necessary resources in place to give people the support they need, close the pipelines that feed incarceration, and shift to a smaller borough jail system.

Unfortunately, Mayor Adams is planning to do the opposite, through an executive budget proposal that would cut social services while continuing to funnel billions to the Department of Correction and NYPD.

The Mayor's proposal to slash millions from alternatives to incarceration and re-entry services should be a big concern for all New Yorkers committed to public safety. New York City has an incredible network of alternative to incarceration providers, who are far more successful in preventing re-arrests than Rikers. Some providers have success rates of over 90% in preventing felony re-arrests for their clients within two years. ATIs cost between \$8,000 and \$22,000 per person per year, while exposing someone to the brutality of Rikers costs \$556,539 per year. Rather than cutting their funding, the Mayor should be directing the Office of Criminal Justice to actively encourage judges and prosecutors to utilize supervised release and alternatives to incarceration instead of bail, remand, or city sentences. Expanding the use of these alternatives is even more urgent when we consider that nearly 90% of people at Rikers have not been convicted, and over 50% have a mental health concern. It's unconscionable that the Mayor proposes cutting funds for evidence-based programs, while maintaining a \$5M public relations budget for the NYPD, and agency that uses those resources to attack civil rights reforms and undermine the presumption of innocence. The NYPD's public relations budget should be cut by at least half, and they should not be allowed to add 1,200 recruits to their uniformed headcount.

We have heard the administration say they are expecting the jail population to rise, but what they neglect to say is that it's their own policies that are designed to create that outcome, by slashing social services, and ramping up criminalization of poverty & mental illness. This City

Council knows that the safest communities are the ones with the most resources, not the most incarceration, and I want to thank you for emphasizing alternative public safety investments in your preliminary budget response. In the written testimony that we submit, you'll see a [full budget analysis](#) from the Campaign to Close Rikers that outlines necessary amendments to the FY25 budget.

If the Council cannot achieve these restorations and investments through negotiations with the Mayor, we urge you to use every power you have, including passing a budget amendment, to ensure a just budget for our city.

Darren Mack

Co-Director, Freedom Agenda

Dmack@urbanjustice.org

[attached – Updated FY2025 Campaign to Close Rikers Budget Analysis]

CLOSE RIKERS

DECARCERATE * DEFEND * DIVEST & REDISTRIBUTE

FY2025 Budget Analysis & Priorities

Mayor Adams' proposed budget is a recipe for keeping Rikers open by maintaining DOC budget bloat while cutting funds for alternatives to incarceration (ATIs) and re-entry services, and failing to adequately fund supportive housing and community-based mental health treatment. The budget also proposes cuts to a wide range of social services and violence prevention initiatives.¹ In order to follow through on the legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, City Council must secure a budget that will improve community safety and reduce our City's overreliance on incarceration.

DOC's budget is still bloated:

- The Mayor has proposed spending [\\$2.6 billion](#)² on jail operations in FY2025.
- Most of DOC's costs are driven by overstaffing. Their ratio of uniformed staff to incarcerated people is more than [4 times higher than the national average](#).
- DOC anticipates cost savings from [1,451 uniformed vacancies in FY2025](#), but plans to budget for [7,060 uniformed officers through FY2028](#)³. By that time, New York City is required to close Rikers Island and shift to a borough jails system with [approximately 4,000 beds](#). Uniform headcount reductions are consistent with a lower jail population and closing Rikers - in fact, these reductions should have started years ago when the jail population started to decline.
- DOC's projected overtime costs have ballooned to over \$274M this year,⁴ 105% above [their adopted budget](#).

The administration seems to be planning either to continue overusing incarceration, or to employ almost twice as many correction officers as people in custody. Either option makes no sense, morally or financially.

Commitments in the Close Rikers plan are still inadequately funded:

- In the [Points of Agreement on Closing Rikers](#), the administration agreed to establish 380 more units of [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#), a model that has been hugely successful in reducing jail, shelter, and hospital stays, and generating substantial cost savings. But funding rates proposed in the RFP issued were so low that [qualified providers have not applied](#), and operators of the existing 120 units are struggling to keep them open.
- [The Close Rikers Plan](#) also promised "A new community-based mental health safety net." This administration has clearly fallen short of that goal - the number of people in Rikers diagnosed

¹ Including large cuts to DSS, DYCD, and DOHMH, outlined here: [GJNY Look inside the DOC FY25 Budget.pdf \(vera-advocacy-and-partnerships.s3.amazonaws.com\)](#)

² Including expenses, associated fringe benefits, pensions, and debt service. "A Look Inside the FY 2025 DOC Budget." Vera Institute of Justice. February 2024.

³ Financial Plan of the City of New York. Fiscal Years 2024 - 2028. Full time and full time equivalent staffing levels.

⁴ Per IBO, April 29, 2024.

with a serious mental illness has [increased by more than 40% since January 2022](#) without sufficient investments in community-based interventions and care, and there are long waiting lists for services like Forensic Assertive Community Treatment teams.

Alternatives to incarceration and re-entry supports face cuts:

- The administration is proposing [\\$2.1M in cuts to alternatives to incarceration programs](#).⁵ Opportunities to divert people from Rikers should be fully utilized, in collaboration with the Jail Population Review Initiative that the Council established last year through Local Law 75-2023. Expanding alternatives to incarceration was also a key commitment in the [plan to close Rikers](#).
- The administration is proposing [\\$2.6M in cuts to re-entry services](#), while a key commitment in the [plan to Close Rikers](#) was to “Enhance Reentry and Discharge Planning Services Available to Everyone Leaving City Jails,” as [evidence recommends](#).
- The above programs are funded under the Office of Criminal Justice (formerly MOCJ).

Jail oversight cuts are proposed:

- DOC continues to [violate minimum standards](#) established by the Board of Correction, and strong oversight is crucial. BOC needs more staff to fulfill its mandate, but the Mayor proposes [reducing their staff from 35 to 29 positions, and cutting BOC's budget by \\$459,953 \(12%\)](#).

What should happen in this year’s budget

I. Reduce DOC uniformed headcount to 5,110

- Eliminate vacancies for uniformed staff.** The Department of Correction currently employs about [6,041 uniformed staff](#) (1,019 vacancies)⁶ and anticipates cost savings based on an average of [1,451 uniformed vacancies in Fiscal Year 2025](#), but they have not made a plan to rightsize this agency in alignment with closing Rikers.
 - Hold staff accountable for chronic absenteeism.** The Nunez Federal Monitor reported in October 2022 that DOC had [identified 1,029 officers as chronically absent](#),⁷ and in the March 2023 preliminary budget hearing, DOC could not report if these staff had returned to work or been held accountable.⁸ If approximately 50% (500) of these officers are terminated and 50% return to work to avoid termination, we can reduce jail operations spending by \$55.8M.⁹
- Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center.¹⁰
 - Allocate an additional \$19.4M to meet housing and mental health needs,** and fulfill commitments in the Close Rikers plan, including:

⁵ “The City of New York Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2025. Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG)”. January 2024. P. 30 - 31.

⁶ Per IBO, as of April 29, 2024

⁷ Martin, Steve J et al. “Second Status Report on DOC’s Action Plan by the Nunez Independent Monitor.” October 28, 2022. p53.

⁸ Martin, Steve J et al. “Status Report on DOC’s Action Plan by the Nunez Independent Monitor.” November 8, 2023. p. 99.

⁹ Based on \$111,660 per officer, as calculated by the Vera Institute, [GJNY Look inside the DOC FY25 Budget.pdf](#) ([vera-advocacy-and-partnerships.s3.amazonaws.com](#)).

¹⁰ In response to Council Member questions in the March 23, 2023 budget hearing.

- a. Establish a separate line-item for JISH in the DOHMH budget, and [allocate an additional \\$6.4M](#) to increase service funding rates for 380 new and 120 existing units.
 - b. \$2.9M more to enable 5 more state-funded Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams to operate as Forensic ACT (FACT) teams (\$575K per team).
 - c. \$6M more to fully implement Local Law 118-2023, supporting the establishment of four new crisis respite centers.
 - d. Ensure adequate funding to fully implement Local Law 119-2023 by establishing at least five new clubhouses (21 citywide), and take steps to prevent closures of existing sites
4. **Fully restore cuts to the Office of Criminal Justice for ATIs and re-entry programs, and expand funding.** While the Executive Budget includes partially restored cuts to these programs, there is still a vital need to restore \$2.1M for alternatives to incarceration still and \$2.6M for re-entry services. The budget should go further, to add \$1.1M for these programs as requested by the [ATI/Reentry Coalition](#).
5. **Increase Board of Correction headcount** to at least 1% of DOC’s headcount. This type of linked budget exists for other oversight agencies [like the CCRB](#). Increasing BOC headcount to 1% of DOC’s would add 35 BOC staff positions, but would only add approximately \$4M to the overall expense budget.¹¹

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the Department of Correction have a staff shortage?

No. In fact, they are overstaffed. The Department of Correction’s ratio of uniformed staff to incarcerated people is more than [4 times higher than the national average](#), and NYC’s is the only jail system among the nation’s 50 largest cities that has as many officers as people in custody. Reducing their headcount now is an important first step to [rightsizing](#) the department.

If they are not understaffed, why is there a shortage of officers to cover posts and provide basic services?

For three main reasons:

1. **Officers often leave their assigned posts or don’t fulfill their duties.** [Investigations](#) found that many officers who *are* at work are *not* at their assigned posts – including some found hanging out in locker rooms. Multiple death reports from the Board of Correction, including their [most recent report](#), indicated that insufficient touring and staff leaving their posts contributed to tragic deaths in custody, including those of William Johnstone, Curtis Davis, and Manish Kunwar. The Nunez federal monitor in their [November 8 report](#), stated “Definitive measures to ensure that staff are available in sufficient numbers and that they stay on post are obviously necessary. It is equally critical that staff *actually do their jobs* [emphasis in original]... Too often, staff are present and yet fail to enact or enforce even the most basic security protocols.”¹²

¹¹ The FY2024 projected budget allocates \$3.8M to BOC, for 35 staff; 68 staff would constitute 1% of a 6,822 person uniformed DOC workforce (1,722 civilian - as projected by the administration and 5,100 uniformed - as we recommend).

¹² Martin, Steve et al. Status Report on DOC’s Action Plan by the Nunez Independent Monitor. November 8, 2023. P 25.

2. **There are too many officers assigned to non-jail posts.** There are [hundreds of officers each day](#) who work in non-jail posts either because they are prevented from working directly with incarcerated people due to an ongoing disciplinary case, they are being ‘medically monitored,’ or they have been assigned to a different job like working in the laundry room or as a secretary to a warden - tasks that are performed by civilians in other jail systems. These posts have been widely used in DOC as rewards to officers favored by supervisors, and officers who have these posts have [strongly resisted](#) being transferred to posts in the jails.
3. **Too many officers don’t come to work.** Uniformed DOC staff have unlimited sick leave. As of December 2023, [DOC sick leave rates](#) remained at nearly twice the pre-Covid rates within the department (8.49%), and more than double the rates of NYPD and FDNY - agencies that also offer unlimited sick leave.¹³ Another 3.4% of officers are out on [long term sick leave, which is often abused](#).

Does DOC need to replace officers who are retiring?

Reducing the uniform headcount would not prevent DOC from replacing some officers who quit, retire, or are terminated. It would require DOC to more effectively supervise and manage their very large staff.

How is the money being spent?

The FY2025 budget projects that [88.3% of DOC expenses](#) will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits.

How does NYC’s jail spending compare to other cities?

In 2021, [New York City spent 350% more](#) per incarcerated person ([\\$556,539](#)¹⁴ per year) than Los Angeles or Cook County, Illinois, and yet, people in DOC custody are subjected to some of the worst jail conditions in the nation. The *Nunez* federal monitor also reported in their [October 2023 report](#) “The Department’s staffing complement is highly unusual and is one of the richest staffing ratios among the systems with which the Monitoring Team has had experience.”

What will we do about those jobs? Aren’t a lot of correction officers people of color, and women?

The choice to invest so much of New York City’s budget in incarceration has meant that DOC has become a path to the middle class, including for many women and people of color.¹⁵ New York City could and should make a different choice - to invest in and raise salaries, for example, for [EMS workers](#), [green jobs](#) that can help us meet our goals for a vibrant and climate resilient city, and [human services jobs](#) that address community needs. Black and Brown workers deserve jobs with good wages and benefits that aren’t dependent on the incarceration of their neighbors and families. We must invest in a [just transition](#) to expand and better compensate jobs outside of law enforcement - for example, human services, a sector in which more than 80% of workers are women of color, and which is subject to constant budget cuts that have resulted in lost jobs and depressed wages.

¹³ “Preliminary Mayor’s Management Report.” January 2024.p 411.

¹⁴ For FY2021. “NYC Department of Correction, FYs 2011-21 Operating Expenditures.” *New York City Comptroller’s Office, Budget Bureau*. December 2021

¹⁵ New York City correction officers are paid \$92,000/year after 5.5 years on the job, and receive generous benefits. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/jointheboldest/officer/salary-benefits.page>

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Public Safety Chair, & staff:

I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget, and I believe safety means #CareNotCuts, #CareNotCriminalization, and cuts to NYPD bloat.

The NYPD is over budget, spending an estimated \$715 million on overtime by March 2024 and \$115 million on abuse and misconduct lawsuits, and Mayor Adams is paying for it by cutting more than \$1B from public schools, \$58 million from libraries, \$94 million from CUNY colleges, and \$400 million from 3K pre-kindergarten and childcare programs. His priorities are upside down. The safest communities have the most resources, and the mayor's proposed cuts to our schools, libraries, and health care undermine public safety at the most basic level.

First, the Council must divest from harmful policing and NYPD overspending. We demand divestments from harmful policing and NYPD overspending, including disbanding SRG, cutting NYPD vacancies, hiring freezes for DOE, DPR, DHS, and NYPD "co-response" teams, and cutting the DCPI/NYPD comms by 50%. By making these divestments, we can reinvest these funds into the essential services impacted by Mayor Adams budget cuts.

Additionally, the NYPD's typical overtime budget and abuse lawsuits, which are not [entirely] budgeted through the normal budget process, is about \$1B — about the amount that education (\$700M) is being cut (through PEGs) by for the upcoming budget. The Department of Corrections spends millions also on lawsuits and abuse by officers that remain on the payroll at the expense of taxpayer money and safety for people in custody.

I urge the council to reject these harmful budget cuts and instead, invest in a people's budget and real public safety budget. That means restoring education, childcare, CUNY, and libraries, and investing in Homes Now, Homes for Generations. That also means investing funds in mental health crisis response, and restoring funds to Office of Neighborhood Safety including the Crisis Management System, Office to Prevent Gun Violence, and Precision Employment Initiative, a jobs training program that targets neighborhoods with high rates of gun violence.

We obviously hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure these key funding priorities are in any budget that passes.

Bright Limm

bdlimm@gmail.com

Jamaica, New York 11435

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Dana Greenfield

dg2085@gmail.com

New York, New York 11201

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Daniela Trapani
daniela.trapani13@gmail.com

Woodside, New York 11377

Dear Chairs Brannan and Salaam, Speaker Adams and Council Members,

I am a professor at Barnard College and Columbia University and a member of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice. I am testifying to ask you to withdraw police from Columbia's neighborhoods and to defund the SRG.

As a Jewish person, I am passionate about combating antisemitism and all forms of hate, and I feel for the Jewish community members who are feeling unsafe as Jews in these challenging times. But we must treat antisemitic speech with education and existing anti discrimination procedures, not arrests. More police are not making Jewish students or faculty any safer. In fact, they are making us less safe. This is especially true for black and brown community members.

We have been dismayed for over six months by the increased police presence on and around our campus. As you know, recently, things got much worse when police came to end a brief student occupation of a campus building.

It is hard to describe the horrors of that night. Hundreds, possibly a thousand, police suddenly descended and took over our streets. Many marched in riot gear into the campus gates while the Strategic Response Group's massive ladder truck fed others into Hamilton Hall.

The police and university ensured that few witnesses were inside by locking almost everyone either out of campus or in buildings, including the press, legal observers and medics. We have since learned that police pushed students down the steps. At least one was knocked unconscious by the fall and lay there with no first aid. Students were handcuffed, thrown to the ground, and then kicked in the face. And they heard an officer discharge a gun in the building.

Since then, the NYPD has dramatically increased its presence. New clusters of officers are stationed on and off campus on a 24-hour basis. Police have kept some public streets blockaded and stay at every corner keeping even pedestrians out.

Mayor Adams has fueled this police fervor with his public lies about "outside agitators." He portrays students' civil disobedience as violent terrorist acts to justify all of this.

It doesn't have to be this way. In Washington DC and in Philadelphia, police forces refused to arrest students because, they observed, the students were demonstrating peacefully. Our students have been peacefully demonstrating too.

On behalf of Jewish and non-Jewish members of the Columbia, Morningside and Harlem communities, I ask that you

1. Defund and disband the strategic response group.
2. Intervene to halt the militarization of our campus and our city by removing the police that have flooded the neighborhood.
3. Prohibit police from returning unless there is a credible threat of violence.
4. Demand accountability for the police violence that has already occurred in campus neighborhoods across the city
5. Challenge the mayor's false statements and the NYPD's misleading statistics about who was arrested where.
6. Provide the public with information needed to evaluate all of these activities, including their cost to taxpayers.

I feel much less safe in our neighborhood than I did before. From my experience at the center of this as a Jewish person, I can tell you that the alleged threats to some Jewish people's safety have been dramatically misrepresented and exploited to justify a massive police mobilization. It is that police mobilization that has resulted in actual violence and threatens the safety of us all.

Debbie Becher

Hello my name is Devon Krishnaswami, and currently this is not my first time here, but given the taking place, this is going to be one, if not of my many times that I'll be here to discuss the absolute brutality of the NYPD and the SRG, and the fact that we have not yet been able to actually take accountability for the actions they have caused many individuals such as myself they still maintain a huge budget, and they are still draining other resources from the city so they can use those funds to what I can only describe it as brutality to protesters and general people living in the city. There needs to be an end to this constant over funding, and from what I've seen, they have more than enough too much to where we can easily redistribute that to other parts of our city, in addition however, we are still seeing high levels of police brutality at these protests that I can only describe is dehumane, and you have heard them out differently. It is very obvious they are allowed to lie and they can get away lying if it benefits their look. Once again I uphold the fact that very little accountability is being placed on the NYPD and SRG as a whole and for me this council has not actually taken up any stance towards actually pushing through legislation that would ensure that protesters are protected from harm caused by the SRG, I end this by urging this council to disband this unit, to redistribute funds back into the city, but also ensure that there is no way the NYPD has the ability to brutally arrest protesters for unlawful reasons.

Dominique Hood
Testimony for 5/9/24 Public Safety Committee
Social Control, Use of State Force & The SRG

As a lifelong resident of this city and a citizen who lives underneath the social control apparatus of the NYPD I am here today to call upon my city council to disband the Strategic Response Group in response to the calamitous failures in its abilities on display these past several months. I am calling upon the city council to use its budgeting powers to redirect the funding for the SRG into ways which will help, not harm New Yorkers. The SRG's budget has ballooned from \$13 million dollars to \$90 million dollars all the while their interactions with protesting New Yorkers have become more dangerous and violent while any attempts at deescalating are continually put aside in favor of "cracking down" on the right to assemble peacefully.

The SRG must be disbanded immediately for the safety of New Yorkers. We do not decrease protest involvement by increasing our reactions to the assembled New Yorkers and ratcheting up our reprisals. We solve the underlying issues of civil unrest in order to return to a state of equilibrium in human society and the more we believe that an idea, or a movement can be tampered with force the more we will see American society assert its right to peacefully assemble in ever greater numbers.

These past months have seen rallies in parks and city squares violently broken up, only to return to those same meeting places in greater numbers, we have seen roadways and bridges forcibly cleared only to have further marches on those same streets week after week, we have watched the police department arrest hundreds of student activists and tear down encampments only to have those same students and encampments return the very next day. Time and time again this year, we have borne witness to the systematic failure of the police department to reach its desired goal and stated intention of social control over us as citizens and residents of this city.

It is time to acknowledge the undeniable failure of the NYPD of obtaining their stated goal with their chosen instrument. It is time to disband the Strategic Response Group. No matter where you stand on any issue being marched for in the streets. \$90 million dollars so our cops can play dress up in riot gear and push people around with no effect is a bad deal for New Yorkers, thank you.

Members of New York City Council,

I am eae Benioff, a resident of Manhattan and a staff member at Barnard College who witnessed the NYPD's Strategic Response Group violently break into Hind Hall at Columbia's Campus on April 30th, 2024.

For the weeks and months prior to April 30th, the Columbia and Barnard administrations had been surrounding our campus and the Morningside neighborhood with police. As a trans, anti-Zionist Jew, I feel no safety around police, the NYPD in particular. In my experience, police have little respect for trans people, especially trans women, and are legally empowered to violate us as they see fit, which they do with relish. For the last several months, I have also witnessed the NYPD persistently target, harass, and brutalize New Yorkers expressing solidarity with Palestine and condemning the genocidal actions of Israel in Gaza. They target people they believe are the smallest and weakest for beatings and petty arrests, kettle protesters, and force marches into dangerous traffic conditions. The only thing I have seen the NYPD do is make conditions more violent and less safe for everyone involved.

This was no different on the night of April 30th, 2024, when the SRG raided Hind Hall. In the hours prior, the NYPD and SRG flooded Morningside by the hundreds, shutting down streets for blocks all around Columbia's campus to public pedestrian traffic. (Meanwhile, when literal white supremacists and fascist Proud Boys marched on Columbia's campus several days prior, the police response was comparatively fractional.)

The blockade was terrifying, manufactured an air of fear, and created danger rather than safety. They ensured no one would be able to get to campus or get close enough to prevent or to witness the violence they would eventually carry out during the raid. Many people that night had gathered peacefully on the sidewalk beside the hall to express our solidarity with the students and with the people of Gaza. At around 9 PM, we were declared unlawfully assembled on the sidewalk and told to disperse or be arrested. The SRG then began arbitrarily snatching people up until the street was cleared. I saw the SRG also send away the EMS teams that were on site at Columbia, parked at 115th beside Hind Hall shortly before this, a decision which can only be understood and anticipatory and punitive, intended to ensure those they were about to injure would have to wait as long as possible for medical attention (especially given the state of blockade). After EMS were dismissed, and the street had been cleared, the SRG began to breach the hall through the doors inside campus and the windows outside.

It was disgusting and horrifying to watch a military force enter a building full of young people - who the SRG well knew would offer no physical resistance and had no weapons - and shoot stun grenades and deliver beatings that sent 3 students to the hospital. A friend, who was arrested outside campus during the dispersal, shared a cell with one of students who was inside the hall and reported their face was completely swollen from being kicked in by the SRG. Is this what our tax dollars pay for: for the SRG to violate us, to endanger us, to deter people from democratic political engagement because they will get beat, shot at, permanently injured?

The proposed \$150 million dollar increase to the budget of the SRG is shameless and wasteful, when we have people living houseless on the street, when we have children sick and starving in our own city, when the mayor continually defunds the school system, when healthcare access is better than most states and still abysmal. SRG must be defunded and disbanded. It has no function except to brutalize New Yorkers. Further, investment in the NYPD - which is not a police department but effectively an army - must be rolled back so we can invest in actual community infrastructure. Y'all can pay people to ruin our lives or you can spend money so we can build better lives. It's, in fact, not that complicated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

~ eae

[REDACTED]

From: Mara Green <elizabethmaragreen@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 12, 2024 2:21 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FY25 Executive Budget Hearing: Committees on Finance and Public Safety

[REDACTED]

My name is Elizabeth Mara Green; I am a Barnard professor who teaches classes both at Barnard and Columbia. I also live in the neighborhood. I am writing because I am deeply troubled by the recent police actions of the NYPD, including the SRG, on my campus and in my neighborhood.

I am also writing as a Jewish woman. My identity has been invoked countless times to support crackdowns on pro-Palestinian protests and to justify the police's presence and actions. I want to be clear that a multiracial and multireligious coalition of students and others demanding an end to the Israeli state's genocide of Palestinians does *not* make me unsafe. This is not to deny specific instances of anti-Semitic speech – which the protest leadership on our campus has also denounced. What does make me, and my community, unsafe is the presence of the police – particularly a police force with a known history of racism – and their particular actions. This includes the April 18th arrest of protestors who by the NYPD's own admission were peaceful. I am close to a student who is still dealing with the emotional repercussions of having been arrested at that time.

These actions also include the April 30th police raid on Hamilton Hall which had been occupied by unarmed protestors. Sitting only a few blocks from campus, I watched footage on CNN of the police marching onto campus with riot gear. I listened on the radio to student journalists explain how they were forced to leave the area where they were trying to report, and then were threatened with arrest if they left the building into which they had been corralled. I sent texts and emails to students trying to ensure that they were physically safe – something I had *not* needed to do during any of the students' protests.

I later watched footage filmed by individuals of police tossing a student down the stairs and failing to offer medical help and of a policeman texting that he thought, but wasn't sure, that someone had been shot by the police. I have seen photographs of students' injuries, shared with the students' permission by professors I personally know. I recently spoke with a student who described sheltering a friend in her dorm room because her friend feared being arrested if she attempted to return to her own dorm. The police's actions have caused physical harm and emotional damage, despite their claims to have conducted themselves entirely professionally and without causing injuries.

Moreover, the continuing presence of the NYPD on campus creates a space that threatens our community. The NYPD has a known history of racial profiling. In the immediate moment, I have been told of young women getting catcalled by the police on campus. Students and colleagues of various identities – Black, Brown, Asian, Jewish, white, straight, and gay – have expressed their sense of outrage, fear, and violation. There are police barricades along Morningside Drive. Are we a neighborhood or a police-occupied territory?

How terrible that the estimated \$150 million dollars the NYPD spent to invade our campus could not have been spent by the city on feeding people, creating programs to welcome and house immigrants, cleaning our parks, offering recreation over the summer to youth, and facilitating mental health services for all who need them.

The SRG should be defunded and disbanded. The millions of dollars spent funding the NYPD should be invested in our schools, public colleges, libraries, social services, parks, affordable housing, and other

community-based organizations, not in support of a militarized police force. Communities United for Police Reform has offered a detailed, researched plan for change. I urge you to follow it.

Good afternoon, my name is Hadeel Mishal and I am the Lead Organizer at the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP). Our mission at AVP is to empower lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, gender non-conforming, and HIV-affected communities and allies to end all forms of violence through organizing, education, advocacy, and counseling. AVP was founded in 1980 as a resource for community when other agencies did not and would not show up for us. So we kept us safe and started our 24/7 hotline as an alternative for community. A huge part of our organizing capacity goes into police accountability and transparency; the NYPD essentially functions as a military force within our city. The NYPD has a budget that is larger than most militaries in the world- yet the police fail to keep our communities safe. The police fail to serve as the main component of public safety and it is time for us to reimagine what true public and community safety can look like. With the ongoing college campus encampments, the NYPD has displayed violence towards protestors. College protests have largely been peaceful – with folks camping in community, sharing in storytelling and dance, and chanting for their colleges to divest from Israel. However, whenever the NYPD shows up, instead of supporting the young people, we have seen them escalate and harm.

The city of New York has invested \$10.8 billion into the NYPD for the fiscal year of 2024. That is about 10% of the city's budget going to policing. When education, housing, and our health systems are not properly-funded, it is ludicrous to know that the NYPD has billions allocated to them. That there are still officers on the force who have unjustly murdered people that are still on the force, such as Kawaski Trawick's killers, Herbert Davis and Brendan Thompson.

At Columbia University, a student was thrown down the steps of Hamilton Hall, which students occupied as "Hind's Hall," and when a fellow student and medic attempted to aid, they were blocked by an NYPD officer (The City). On another day, NYPD injured 3 protestors and arrested 109 more protestors (NBC). Does the NYPD have nothing better to do than to terrorize college students? With the billions that the NYPD gets from the city, the standards should be higher. Because it is evident that the NYPD is failing to keep people safe. There are many alternates to police responses for public safety. If the NYPD were to disband the SRG, it would save our city \$133 million. If the NYPD were to significantly cut down their PR team, it would save our city \$3.5 million. If the NYPD were to cut their VICE unit, it would save our city \$25 million. If the NYPD were to cut their mental health co-response team, it would save the city \$6.1 million. Instead, we should invest in growing Citywide initiatives that support community members, and that support Community Based Organizations that understand these communities that are most impacted by violence, that can offer culturally competent services and that can speak their language. We can invest in the city-wide Hate Violence Prevention Initiative and growing the Office of Prevention of Hate Crimes. We can invest in funding to support Legal services; the city is seeing an influx of asylum seekers who are fleeing danger. And we can invest more in our education system to support and foster their eagerness to fight for a just and peaceful world, and a place for us to live in a just city.

When the NYPD was called in to clear out the occupied Hamilton Hall from student protestors, an officer gun was allegedly “accidentally fired” (NPR). No one was struck, but this happening was intentionally covered up by the NYPD to protect themselves. Students at these encampments have shared stories of the brutal force used against them by NYPD, with students being beat, concussed, pepper sprayed, and tasered. Hundreds of students were arrested for utilizing their first amendment rights. In no version of reality should armed military-like forces be sent in to break up peaceful student protests.

In no version of reality should we have a military-like police force raining down on our city. In no version of reality should we have homeless and food insecure people, but billions to fund our police force. In no version of reality should we struggle so immensely with public safety and see the NYPD as the only solution to that problem.

[REDACTED]

From: Hannah Chazin <hannah.chazin@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 12, 2024 11:58 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FY25 Executive Budget Hearing: Committees on Finance and Public Safety

[REDACTED]

Dear Chairs Brannan and Salaam, Speaker Adams and Council Members,

I am an assistant professor at Columbia University and a member of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice. I am writing to ask you to withdraw police from Columbia's neighborhoods and to defund the Strategic Response Group (SRG).

As a Jewish person, I am personally committed to combating antisemitism and all forms of hate. Nevertheless, more police do not make Jewish students or faculty safer -- they make us and other people in our communities less safe.

I was dismayed and alarmed by the escalated police response on Columbia's campus. Hundreds, possibly a thousand, police suddenly descended and took over our streets. The police and university ensured that few witnesses were inside by locking almost everyone either out of campus or in buildings, including the press, legal observers and medics.

We have since learned that police pushed students down the steps. At least one was knocked unconscious by the fall and lay there with no first aid. Students were handcuffed, thrown to the ground, and then kicked in the face. And an officer discharged a gun in the building.

Since then, the NYPD has dramatically increased its presence. New clusters of officers are stationed on and off campus on a 24-hour basis. Police have kept some public streets blockaded and stay at every corner keeping even pedestrians out.

Mayor Adams has made this terrible situation worse with his public lies about "outside agitators." He portrays students' civil disobedience as violent terrorist acts to justify all of this.

It doesn't have to be this way. In Washington DC, Chicago, and Philadelphia, police forces refused to arrest students because, they observed, the students were demonstrating peacefully. Our students have been peacefully demonstrating too.

On behalf of Jewish and non-Jewish members of the Columbia, Morningside and Harlem communities, I ask that you:

1. Defund and disband the strategic response group.
2. Intervene to halt the militarization of our campus and our city by removing the police that have flooded the neighborhood.
3. Prohibit police from returning unless there is a credible threat of violence.
4. Demand accountability for the police violence that has already occurred in campus neighborhoods across the city.
5. Challenge the mayor's false statements and the NYPD's misleading statistics about who was arrested where.
6. Provide the public with information needed to evaluate all of these activities, including their cost to taxpayers.

The expanded police presence does not make me feel safer in the neighborhood around campus or on campus. The alleged threats to some Jewish people's safety are being misrepresented and exploited to justify a massive police mobilization. Not only does this not prevent actual instances of antisemitism, it is the police mobilization that has been the source of actual violence and threatens everyone's safety.

Hannah Chazin

[REDACTED]

From: Heidi Sokol <heidiso2@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2024 10:14 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Dangerous Antisemitic anti-Israel protests.

[REDACTED]

As a New York City resident I find your inaction regarding the dangerous anti-Israel antisemitic protests inexcusable. You should be doing your jobs and protecting Jews in our city who are under daily attack. We need to be safe! Calls for violence and physical intimidation targeting the Jewish community and Jewish students have no place in our city or anywhere else in America.
Do your jobs.

Heidi Sokol
Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From: Jack Halberstam <jh3641@columbia.edu>
Sent: Friday, May 10, 2024 10:58 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony about safety on campus

[REDACTED]

My name is Jack Halberstam, I am a professor of English and Gender Studies at Columbia university. I work on histories and representations of gender variance and I have taught classes on sex and gender and the Holocaust. I am Jewish and the only time I have felt unsafe on campus is when the university has called the police on our students or when Zionists have sent me hate mail describing in vivid detail what they believe Hamas would do to me as a queer person if I ever stepped foot in Gaza!

Like others, I watched in horror last week as a massive police presence built on campus only to culminate in a made for TV armed operation to remove some students from Hamilton Hall where they had broken a window and set up some sleeping bags. The police, on the other hand, broke every door in the building while arresting supposedly “violent” protestors. As we have seen time and again in this country, violence is projected onto all those who critique the state and yet the state reserves the right to use violence in response to any form of resistance issued by those whom the state has deemed a threat - immigrants, Black people and now pro-Palestinian protestors.

We are currently in the midst of a national crisis over peaceful protests on campus. Students across the country have gathered to speak out about the Israeli bombardments of civilian populations in Gaza. Rather than applauding the students’ sense of responsibility and solidarity, we are punishing them, arresting them and expelling them. As many of us have pointed out repeatedly, the political and discursive maneuvers that use charges of anti-Semitism as a cover for academic reform, are putting the future of higher education in serious jeopardy.

Jack Halberstam
The David Feinson Professor of the Humanities Professor of English and Gender Studies Columbia University

May 9, 2024

Statement to the Committee on Finance:

My name is Jaime S. Coan. I'm a current faculty member at Rutgers University-New Brunswick and an alumni of The City College of New York (class of 2010) and The CUNY Graduate Center (2020). I was present at the raid of the City College student encampment on April 30th, 2024. I would like to share my experience of the encampment and the raid that ended it. From the beginning of the encampment on the preceding Thursday morning, I felt completely safe. I was also inspired by the competent leadership of the students, which including academic and cultural programming, prayer, community meetings, and the well-organized provision of food and hygiene supplies. I was personally involved in the creation and maintenance of a safety team, scheduled 24/7, that looked out for the safety and well-being of the community. Primarily, we were concerned about harassment and violence from Zionists, many of whom proved to be intensely Islamophobic and racist. At all times, we had a police liaison on duty who was in communication with CCNY public safety officers.

While I am aware that NYPD was called in by CCNY administration to raid the encampment, I am also aware that the NYPD is expected to act with, as they themselves say, "the lightest touch." What I witnessed was unnecessary force and intimidation against a small group (approximately 40-50) of mostly students, alumni, and faculty, with a few community supporters present as well. There were, from my estimate, about 150 NYPD (including SRG) officers in full riot gear that entered the encampment to arrest those who remained. While those who remained were prepared to be arrested, it was planned to be a peaceful act of civil disobedience. We had locked arms and announced to officers that we were not resisting arrest. Despite that, I witnessed several students get terrorized by police officers. A female undergraduate student next to me was punched in the face, tackled, and violently restrained into handcuffs. She did nothing to provoke this treatment. We were then held in restraints for over 7 hours, and received ill-treatment at 1 Police Plaza, including no access to bathrooms or water. At least one Muslim student was forced to remove her hijab while being processed (a violation that the NYPD has already been successfully sued for).

Perhaps most concerning in all of this, is that NYPD did not allow any legal observers or press to be present for these arrests, which means that anything could have happened. The majority of those arrested were young people of color who are already more at risk for harassment and surveillance by the NYPD. This experience has caused mental and physical trauma to the students and their supporters that will have a lasting effect. I call for the disbanding of the SRG, which routinely escalates and uses excessive force at protests. Please help us to keep our students safe and ensure that peaceful protest is still a right that New Yorkers can exercise.

Sincerely,



Jaime S. Coan,

[REDACTED]

From: Jared Kannel <jared.kannel@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 10, 2024 11:38 AM
To: Testimony
Cc: Debbie Becher
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony about Police Use of Force

[REDACTED]

Hello City Council,

I am a Jewish master's student at Columbia University. Contrary to what many in the media are saying, the protests on behalf of Palestinian liberation and an end to the violence in Gaza do not make us unsafe. I have been an active participant in the protest movement for months, do not try to hide the fact that I'm Jewish, and I am met with an outpouring of love and support from my fellow protestors, especially when they hear that I'm Jewish. Even students who show up to counterprotest are generally ignored by the protestors, despite them trying to provoke and engage us.

I am passionate about this identity because for too long, the state of Israel has been using Judaism as a cover for their horrific actions. When people justifiably protest in outrage against the brutal state sponsored violence being committed by Israel, the state and it's allied in the U.S. levy the term "antisemitic" against the protesters to try to discredit their message. I feel like it is my duty as a Jewish person, who stands against violence and oppression, to stand up to the state of Israel, especially because it is claiming to commit it's horrific acts in the name of my religion. Many of my fellow Jewish students feel the same way, and Jewish people around the world have shown up by the thousands to protest in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

We have not done so without risk. My fellow Jewish protesters and I have been threatened, harassed, doxxed, suspended, and arrested all for speaking out against atrocities committed in our name. The irony of arresting Jewish students in the name of "keeping Jewish students safe" is astounding.

Many of my fellow students witnessed firsthand the violence committed by the Strategic Response Group against Columbia University Students. When calling in the team, Columbia did not let in press or legal observers, suggesting that they knew that the police would be violent. It is only because of the bravery of students filming from the dorms and students who were involved stepping up to tell their story that we know the extent of the violence committed by the SRG:

- At least three students have concussions after NYPD officers stomped and kicked them in their face. One person has an orbital bone fracture from being kicked
- A student was thrown down the stairs
- A student was knocked unconscious
- A student received a severe leg injury and requires stitches
- Another student received torso lacerations and requires stitches.

The list goes on.

As a Columbia student, as a Jewish student, and as a Morningside Heights resident, the actions of the NYPD and the SRG do not make me feel more safe. They have arrested and harassed too many Jewish protestors for anyone to even pretend that this is in the interest of Jewish safety. The City of New York can not in good conscience give more money to a police force that unleashes violence on peaceful protestors, especially when our libraries have to cut back hours due to lack of funding.

I demand that you disband and defund the SRG, instruct NYPD to stay off of college campuses where they endanger students, and transfer money away from the violence of the NYPD and towards libraries, schools, and social services, all of which actually keep New Yorkers safe.

Thank you for listening to me. Do better.

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

I am submitting written testimony for public record as a former NYC public school teacher and current CUNY adjunct professor and graduate student. I support a #PeoplesBudget, and I believe safety means #CareNotCuts! #CareNotCriminalization! and cuts to NYPD bloat.

The NYPD is over budget, spending an estimated \$715 million on overtime by March 2024 and \$115 million on abuse and misconduct lawsuits, and Mayor Adams is paying for it by cutting more than \$1B from public schools, \$58 million from libraries, \$94 million from CUNY colleges, and \$400 million from 3K pre-kindergarten and childcare programs. His priorities are upside down. The safest communities have the most resources, and the mayor's proposed cuts to our schools, libraries, and health care undermine public safety at the most basic level.

First, the Council must divest from harmful policing and NYPD overspending. We demand divestments from harmful policing and NYPD overspending, including disbanding SRG, cutting NYPD vacancies, hiring freezes for DOE, DPR, DHS, and NYPD "co-response" teams, and cutting the DCPI/NYPD comms by 50%. By making these divestments, we can reinvest these funds into the essential services impacted by Mayor Adams budget cuts.

Additionally, the NYPD's typical overtime budget and abuse lawsuits, which are not [entirely] budgeted through the normal budget process, is about \$1B — about the amount that education (\$700M) is being cut (through PEGs) by for the upcoming budget. The Department of Corrections spends millions also on lawsuits and abuse by officers that remain on the payroll at the expense of taxpayer money and safety for people in custody.

I urge the council to reject these harmful budget cuts and instead, invest in a people's budget and real public safety budget. That means restoring education, childcare, CUNY, and libraries, and investing in Homes Now, Homes for Generations. That also means investing funds in mental health crisis response, and restoring funds to Office of Neighborhood Safety including the Crisis Management System, Office to Prevent Gun Violence, and Precision

Employment Initiative, a jobs training program that targets neighborhoods with high rates of gun violence.

We obviously hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure these key funding priorities are in any budget that passes.

Jennifer Queenan

jqueenan@gmail.com

Bronx, New York 10458

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Keanu Arpels-Josiah

keanuarpelsjosiah@gmail.com

New York, New York 10013

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Lauren Comito

librariancrafter@gmail.com

New York, New York 11222

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Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget, and I believe safety means #CareNotCuts! #CareNotCriminalization! and cuts to NYPD bloat.

The NYPD is over budget, spending an estimated \$715 million on overtime by March 2024 and \$115 million on abuse and misconduct lawsuits, and Mayor Adams is paying for it by cutting more than \$1B from public schools, \$58 million from libraries, \$94 million from CUNY colleges, and \$400 million from 3K pre-kindergarten and childcare programs. His priorities are upside down. The safest communities have the most resources, and the mayor's proposed cuts to our schools, libraries, and health care undermine public safety at the most basic level.

First, the Council must divest from harmful policing and NYPD overspending. We demand divestments from harmful policing and NYPD overspending, including disbanding SRG, cutting NYPD vacancies, hiring freezes for DOE, DPR, DHS, and NYPD "co-response" teams, and cutting the DCPI/NYPD comms by 50%. By making these divestments, we can reinvest these funds into the essential services impacted by Mayor Adams budget cuts.

Additionally, the NYPD's typical overtime budget and abuse lawsuits, which are not [entirely] budgeted through the normal budget process, is about \$1B — about the amount that education (\$700M) is being cut (through PEGs) by for the upcoming budget. The Department of Corrections spends millions also on lawsuits and abuse by officers that remain on the payroll at the expense of taxpayer money and safety for people in custody.

I urge the council to reject these harmful budget cuts and instead, invest in a people's budget and real public safety budget. That means restoring education, childcare, CUNY, and libraries, and investing in Homes Now, Homes for Generations. That also means investing funds in mental health crisis response, and restoring funds to Office of

Neighborhood Safety including the Crisis Management System, Office to Prevent Gun Violence, and Precision Employment Initiative, a jobs training program that targets neighborhoods with high rates of gun violence.

We obviously hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure these key funding priorities are in any budget that passes.

Lauren Fox
foxlauren96@gmail.com

Adelaide, South Australia 05086

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget, and I believe safety means #CareNotCuts! #CareNotCriminalization! and cuts to NYPD bloat.

I am tired of seeing my taxes go towards policing poor people, subways, and protestors while I can't even go to a single library in NYC on a Sunday.

The NYPD is over budget, spending an estimated \$961 million on overtime and \$200 million on abuse and misconduct lawsuits, and Mayor Adams is paying for it by cutting more than \$1B from public schools, \$58 million from libraries, \$94 million from CUNY colleges, and \$400 million from 3K pre-kindergarten and childcare programs. His priorities are upside down. The safest communities have the most resources, and the mayor's proposed cuts to our schools, libraries, and health care undermine public safety at the most basic level.

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Leib Leaderman

leadwermanbray@gmail.com

New York, New York 11213

Council General Testimony,

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Mallory Huxford
mallory.huxford@icloud.com

BROOKLYN, New York 11221

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Melissa Saenz Gordon

m.gordon2030@gmail.com

New York, New York 11231

[REDACTED]

From: Michael <orkryvchyk@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 10, 2024 12:20 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] testimony regarding the NYPD's intervention in the Columbia neighborhood

[REDACTED]

RE: FY25 Executive Budget Hearing: Committees on Finance and Public Safety

Dear Chairs Brannan and Salaam, Speaker Adams and Council Members,

I am a professor of mathematics at Columbia University and a signatory of [the letter from Jewish faculty in support of academic freedom](#), sent to Columbia President Nemat Shafik and other members of the Columbia and Barnard administrations in advance of President Shafik's Congressional hearing. I am writing to protest the decision to send the NYPD, and specifically the Strategic Response Group, into the Columbia neighborhood as a response to student protests on the Columbia campus, and the continuing misrepresentation by Mayor Adams and the media of the peaceful nature of the encampment.

This weekend I am planning to make a pilgrimage to Mt. Lebanon Jewish Cemetery in Queens to visit the grave of my grandfather, who died when I was only one year old. As a Jewish person, I have a deep, personal, and occasionally painful familiarity with antisemitism, going back to my childhood in Philadelphia in the 1960s, and I can testify that what I saw at the encampment at Columbia was not antisemitism. On the contrary, the encampment, many of whose organizers were Jewish students, went out of its way to provide a welcoming space for Jewish as well as Muslim practices, including a table of food that was kosher for Passover and regular Passover seders. The encampment was established in response to the ongoing Israeli war in Gaza; Chief of Patrol John Chell himself stated that the protestors "were saying what they wanted to say in a peaceful manner."

The repeated claims by Mayor Adams about "outside agitators" are particularly absurd. Apparently these are primarily based on the brief presence in the encampment of retired schoolteacher Nahla al-Arian. I have read that she spent all of one hour in the encampment, and if that is true, then roughly 1/3 of her time was spent conversing with me, about our impressions of the encampment and about the imprisonment of her husband who, contrary to what has been claimed in the press, was never found guilty of terrorism or any other crime. I am calling on the City Council to demand that the Mayor cease these inflammatory accusations and issue a correction.


I was walking on the east side of Amsterdam Avenue on the evening of April 30, near the entrance to the Columbia campus at 116th St., when I was shocked to see a column of several hundred police marching in my direction, preceded by a loudspeaker announcing that everyone in the vicinity — every pedestrian, in other words — was interfering with pedestrian traffic and was therefore subject to immediate arrest. Officers on the scene herded all passers-by behind barriers along the avenue. It was from behind the barrier on 114th St. that I witnessed the SRG's massively disproportionate, and undoubtedly massively expensive, response to the occupation of Hamilton Hall and the encampment.

The only documented incidents of violence in connection with recent events at Columbia are those connected with the SRG's intervention in our neighborhood. Over the years I have witnessed incidents of police violence in a number of

countries, including France, Israel, India, and the former Soviet Union. These incidents were not intended to protect anyone's safety but rather to intimidate protestors as well as random bystanders. The SRG's intervention at Columbia, and the continuing aggressive police presence in my neighborhood, are of exactly the same nature. They have done nothing to enhance safety in my neighborhood.

At a time when budgets for schools, libraries, social services, and affordable housing are facing severe cuts, and when police misconduct settlements have already cost the city \$540 million over the past six years — and will inevitably cost more in the wake of the documented abuses of the last few weeks — the proposal to increase the SRG's budget is nothing short of scandalous.

Sincerely,
Michael Harris


New York, NY 10027

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

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Michael Zingman

mzingman1030@gmail.com

Brooklyn, New York 11238

New York City Council
Committee on Finance
Committee on Public Safety

May 9, 2024

My name is Michelle Harris.

I am here to testify about the Mayor's budget cuts to Safe Horizon's Crime Victim Assistance Program, or CVAP.

I would just like to share what Safe Horizon means to me. They helped me get back on my feet after a long battle with domestic violence.

I was too ashamed to reach out to my friends or family for assistance. At Safe Horizon I met Rosanna. With funding for victims, she was able to provide me with over \$700 in assistance, including help with my utilities such as Con Ed, National Grid, my phone bill, also household items and hygiene products.

If there was no Safe Horizon, I wouldn't feel supported to be able to stand up for myself and take back my life. People need to feel that they aren't alone. Cutting CVAP funding would mean people like your loved ones couldn't find the support I found. Your daughter or sister might be suffering in silence and feel too ashamed to come to you. Cutting CVAP funding would mean that they would have no safe place.

You never know who can benefit from these services. Keep CVAP Funded.

Thank you for listening to what I have to say.

[REDACTED]

From: Nara Milanich <naramilanich@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 12, 2024 2:44 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FY25 Exec Budget Hearing public comment

[REDACTED]

To Whom It May Concern:

I write as a Professor of Latin American History and a Jewish faculty member at Barnard College, Columbia University to offer my public comment about the presence of the NYPD on the Columbia campus.

I have taught at Barnard for the last twenty years. The last three weeks have been the most distressing time I have ever witnessed on this campus.

I am a Latin American historian with no personal expertise or experience in the politics of the Middle East. I have not been personally involved in the protests concerning Gaza that have taken place on our campus. However, I spent considerable time observing the two encampments and have a number of students who have participated in them.

I can state unequivocally, as a Jewish campus member, that the student protesters were entirely peaceful and that I never once felt “unsafe” in their presence. In fact, I have consistently found the student protestors with whom I have spoken to be well informed, thoughtful, and eager to engage on the issues.

It was only once President Shafik called in the NYPD to arrest students on April 18 that campus began to feel increasingly tense. We watched as groups of non-affiliates congregated outside campus with a variety of agendas and political positions. We then watched as a parade of right-wing politicians arrived to make inflammatory statements—and a notorious white nationalist appeared in a crowd on campus, followed by still more self-identified Christian nationalist protesters attracted to the melee.

Following the arrests, my students began writing me that they felt unsafe walking onto campus both because of these outside protesters and because of the heavy police presence (many of my students are Latinx). They opted to attend our last class meetings on zoom.

On April 30, hundreds of riot police descended on campus. When the operation began, I was on 125th St and watched as police closed off access south. I listened to the student journalists broadcast the police incursion on the radio.

In the days after, I heard the testimony of several graduate students who had been on campus that night, including one with whom I work closely, about what they witnessed. Their first-hand accounts were horrifying. They witnessed multiple acts of violence and brutality against peaceful students.

In the days after the second mass arrest, the NYPD continued to occupy campus. Faculty and students were prohibited from entering. The campus had been ceded entirely to the police. In the name of safety, the university had abandoned its educational mission.

Meanwhile, the NYPD turned out propagandistic videos glorifying their incursion onto campus. Needless to say, the videos gave a sanitized version of what happened outside and inside Hamilton Hall. They did not mention the students

pushed down steps, the student unconscious on the ground, the student with a broken eye socket, or the accidental discharging of a firearm in the building. A police force that produces propaganda for public consumption reminds me of fascist regimes in history.

Indeed, what I have witnessed on campus in recent weeks has caused me to reflect on the 1970s dirty wars in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, when military dictatorships sent police and military onto college campuses in the name of safety. This is a history I teach in my classes. I never dreamed I would witness it on my own campus here in New York City in the twenty-first century.

I urge the city to defund and disband the notorious SRG unit of the NYPD. Rather than wasting tens of millions of dollars to send in hundreds and hundreds of riot police to arrest a few dozen peaceful protesters charged with misdemeanors, the city should spend these funds on mental health services, homeless services, affordable housing initiatives, and education—infrastructure that ACTUALLY contributes to a safer and more livable city.

Respectfully submitted,

Nara Milanich

Professor of History
Barnard College
naramilanich@gmail.com

Nikolai Mishler - NYCC Public Safety Committee Hearing testimony 4/9/2024

Thank you Chairs Brannan and Salaam, Speaker Adams, and council members for the opportunity to testify. My name is Nikolai Mishler and I am a Jewish New Yorker testifying as a member of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and Communities United for Police Reform.

My recent encounter with the Strategic Response Group (SRG) reaffirmed to me that our taxpayer dollars should not be funding this unit, and that for the safety of all New Yorkers, it must be disbanded. Last week, I went to the City College Campus to support the encampment of student protestors. In exercising their First Amendment Rights, I was blown away by the students' (including many Jewish) remarkable commitment to creating a space filled with emotional care, support, cultural understanding, and their deep rooted commitment to peace and justice for all.

I returned to the campus the evening the NYPD swept the peaceful encampment as if it were a warzone. Earlier today, the NYPD testified that they swept Columbia's encampment "precisely" and "as safely as possible." What I witnessed at City College was that the NYPD were the ones *making* students and the community at large, unsafe. When I got there, the energetic but peaceful and stationary crowd, outside of the campus, had already been barricaded by the NYPD. After randomly grabbing a few people and arresting them out of nowhere, SRG started to kettle the group on my side of the sidewalk, which quickly escalated into a full-on charge. Some were able to escape the NYPD's attack, but about 50 SRG officers wearing helmets and batons entrapped and started to violently push the crowd backwards.

The police were yelling "you have to move back," and people in the crowd were responding, "we're trying! Let us move back." They proceeded to push and rush us, making it impossible to move. I saw them grab a frail old woman—someone said she's 76 years old—and they essentially trampled her. *We* helped her out of the way; *the SRG officers did not help her*. Her shoe fell off, so she was stumbling without her shoe. I looked one of the officers in the face and said, "she's missing a shoe," and he completely ignored me. I asked the old woman if she was ok, and she said, "no." It was terrifyingly apparent that the NYPD SRG officers were not there for our safety.

There was a young person in front of me, sobbing, saying, "you're supposed to be protecting us. Why are you here, why are you doing this?" We were all learning in real time that, to SRG officers, we weren't human, or citizens to protect, but "things" that needed to be gotten rid of.

Shortly after, a legal observer in the crowd next to me—very clearly identified as such—was shoved by a cop backwards into a chair in a restaurant's outdoor seating enclosure. He fell to the ground, and the SRG trampled over him. When I stayed back from the crowd to help him, a cop yelled "MOVE!" and painfully yanked me away from him which made me stumble to the ground. Who are the SRG helping when they behave this way?

If SRG is not making us safer, and in fact, actively endangering us, then what are we paying them for? My own, frankly traumatic, account of coming into contact with SRG is just one of many of New Yorker's terrifying experiences with the unit. We must disband the SRG and we must invest the SRG budget in vital services that actually keep New Yorkers safe: like affordable housing, mental healthcare and public education.

May 9, 2024

RE: FY25 Executive Budget Hearing: Committees on Finance and Public Safety

Dear Chairs Brannan and Salaam, Speaker Adams and Council Members,

I am a Professor of Journalism at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, a native New Yorker and a resident of Morningside Heights for the last 20 years.

I am writing to you to ask you to immediately withdraw the NYPD from Columbia's neighborhoods and to defund the SRG.

As a Jewish person, I am concerned about the rise of antisemitism and all forms of hate speech. As a documentary photographer and a journalist who has researched hate groups, and has photographed many protests in NYC over the past three decades, I have come to the conclusion that the police force, and especially the SRG unit, operate with bias, undue aggression and a growing hostility towards journalists.

That these officers are now stationed across my campus and in my neighborhood in the name of defending against antisemitism is an insult to me and to my community.

I have watched our neighborhood transformed into a militarized base with helicopters, drones, multiple deployments, prison vans, and barricades. One night I required 3 different officers to escort me across an intersection because? No answer. No answer is ever given.

We need a full and transparent report on what the NYPD has been doing in and around Columbia's campus since April 17. What information have they collected? What technologies have been used against our community? What is the relationship between the NYPD and the state of Israel? Why are New York City officers trained in Israel?

These are important questions which go beyond the particular incidents in Morningside Heights.

For years, New Yorkers have been seeking more police accountability. Yet we get the opposite. On the night the NYPD and the SRG unit raided Hamilton Hall they removed both credentialed and student press from the area. Why are press prevented from their vital role of being witnesses and watchdogs? Instead, we have an increasingly aggressive, unhinged propaganda arm of the NYPD producing their own video footage while denying the press their first amendment rights.

We are now weeks past the Hamilton Hall raid. Yet the NYPD are still here. What are they doing? How much are they costing us? I see them laughing and playing on their phones, or slouching and bored, taking up space while just a block away a NYPL branch is threatened with closure for lack of funds. When there are so many New Yorkers in need, it is an insult to us all that our taxpayer dollars are being used to fund the NYPD, whose many members do not even live in New York City!

On behalf of Jewish and non-Jewish members of the Columbia, Morningside and Harlem communities, I ask that you

1. Defund and disband the strategic response group.
2. Intervene to halt the militarization of our campus and our city by removing the police.
3. Prohibit police from returning unless there is a credible threat of violence and be transparent as to what that threat actually is.
4. Demand accountability for the police violence that has already occurred in campus neighborhoods across the city
5. Challenge the mayor's false statements and the NYPD's misleading statistics about who was arrested where.
6. Provide the public with information needed to evaluate all of these activities, including their cost to taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Nina Berman

[REDACTED]

New York, NY 10025

Council General Testimony,

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Phillip Hope

phillip.hope@gmail.com

New York, New York 10009

[REDACTED]

From: sarah haley <sh4210@columbia.edu>
Sent: Sunday, May 12, 2024 4:01 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: FY25 Executive Budget Hearing: Committees on Finance and Public Safety
Attachments: haley testimony 5.12.pdf

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your consideration of the attached testimony.

Sarah Haley
Associate Professor of Gender Studies and History
Columbia University
[REDACTED]

Outline
Headings you add to the document will appear here.

Sent via email to: testimony@council.nyc.gov
RE: FY25 Executive Budget Hearing: Committees on Finance and Public Safety

Dear Chairs Brannan and Salaam, Speaker Adams and Council Members,

I am a professor at Barnard College and Columbia University and a member of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice. I am testifying to ask you to withdraw police from Columbia's neighborhoods and to defund the SRG.

As a Jewish person, I am passionate about combating antisemitism and all forms of hate, and I feel for the Jewish community members who are feeling unsafe as Jews in these challenging times. But we must treat antisemitic speech with education and existing anti discrimination procedures, not arrests. More police are not making Jewish students or faculty any safer. In fact, they are making us less safe. This is especially true for black and brown community members.

We have been dismayed for over six months by the increased police presence on and around our campus. As you know, recently, things got much worse when police came to end a brief student occupation of a campus building.

It is hard to describe the horrors of that night. Hundreds, possibly a thousand, police suddenly descended and took over our streets. Many marched in riot gear into the campus gates while the Strategic Response Group's massive ladder truck fed others into Hamilton Hall.

The police and university ensured that few witnesses were inside by locking almost everyone either out of campus or in buildings, including the press, legal observers and medics. We have since learned that police pushed students down the steps. At least one was knocked unconscious by the fall and lay there with no first aid. Students were handcuffed, thrown to the ground, and then kicked in the face. And they heard an officer discharge a gun in the building.

Since then, the NYPD has dramatically increased its presence. New clusters of officers are stationed on and off campus on a 24-hour basis. Police have kept some public streets blockaded and stay at every corner keeping even pedestrians out.

Mayor Adams has fueled this police fervor with his public lies about "outside agitators." He portrays students' civil disobedience as violent terrorist acts to justify all of this.

It doesn't have to be this way. In Washington DC and in Philadelphia, police forces refused to

31
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[REDACTED]

From: Susan Bernofsky <susan.bernofsky@columbia.edu>
Sent: Saturday, May 11, 2024 7:50 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: FY25 Executive Budget Hearing: Committees on Finance and Public Safety

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

I am writing as a faculty member at Columbia University to testify to the effect the presence of NYPD on and around the Columbia campus has had on me and on our community.

On April 18, I had just finished teaching and came outside to eat my lunch on a bench on Columbia's main quad. I was shocked to see a large number of NYPD officers wearing what looked like military helmets lined up on the lawn where students had set up a group of small tents in protest of the bombing of Gaza. I had never before seen a large NYPD presence on the Columbia campus, and it was a terrifying sight. The students had all come out of their tents and were sitting in a circle on the grass with their arms linked. They weren't doing anything scary or dangerous, just sitting there looking at the police surrounding them. And then police officers marched up to them and began lifting, carrying, and dragging one student after the other out of the circle and putting zip ties on them. It was a terrifying, traumatic sight. The protest they had been carrying out was completely peaceful, and it was held in the zone officially designated by the University for political protests. As a Jewish member of the Columbia community, I did not see anything dangerous or anti-Semitic about their protest. I even attended a Shabbat ceremony organized by some of the many Jewish students who were part of the protest.

The trauma of April 18 was nothing compared to what followed on April 30, when NYPD's Strategic Response Group returned to our campus for the terrifying, violent arrests of many of our students. This time, too, the protest was peaceful and nonviolent – even though students were breaking multiple University rules by occupying a classroom building. They did break one square of windowpane to enter the building after hours, but that does not justify the assault on them by many hundreds of SRG in riot gear. Students who were there that night tell stories of terrifying violence. Tear gas and flash bang grenades were used, as well as a huge ladder truck that knocked down a bus stop kiosk; also a gun was fired inside the building. At least three of our students were thrown downstairs, many reported being kicked in the face or having their heads slammed against the pavement, and at least six suffered concussions. At least two were knocked unconscious. I heard that one also suffered an orbital fracture (broken eye socket). Police trained to deal with violent, dangerous criminals unleashed all this deadly force on a group of nonviolent young people. But NYPD should not have been on our campus in the first place. Hamilton Hall is a building that has been traditionally and repeatedly "occupied" by students during political protests, and in the past, these occupations usually ended via negotiations between the students and University administration. The violent, unnecessary clearing of the occupation by SRG has completely traumatized the entire University community.

Now it makes me flinch every time I see the large number of police stationed on and around our campus. Based on the violence SRG inflicted on our students, I don't believe SRG has any place in a normal urban setting. They used a level of force appropriate to a war zone in a peaceful civilian setting. I can't think of any moment in NYC history when such a level of force would have been necessary. Why do we need SRG at all? If the City Council funds all their military-grade weapons, they will have to find ways to use them to justify the expense, but to me these weapons are not needed in our city, and the expense of maintaining them is not justified. I would like to see SRG defunded and disbanded, and NYPD

removed from all our university campuses in the absence of true emergencies. Most of the money currently being spent on police should instead be spent on things our communities truly need: libraries, schools, social services, care for the mentally ill, affordable housing, and community-based organizations that actually keep New Yorkers safe.

Susan Bernofsky

Professor of Writing

Writing Program

Columbia University School of the Arts

415 Dodge Hall, MC 1804

2960 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

(212) 854-4391

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget, and I believe safety means #CareNotCuts! #CareNotCriminalization! and cuts to NYPD bloat.

The NYPD is over budget, spending an estimated \$961 million on overtime and \$200 million on abuse and misconduct lawsuits, and Mayor Adams is paying for it by cutting more than \$1B from public schools, \$58 million from libraries (weekend service may have to be shut down entirely if these cuts go through), \$94 million from CUNY colleges, and \$400 million from 3K pre-kindergarten and childcare programs. His priorities are upside down. The safest communities have the most resources, and the mayor's proposed cuts to our schools, libraries, and health care undermine public safety at the most basic level.

First, the Council must divest from harmful policing and NYPD overspending. We demand divestments from harmful policing and NYPD overspending, including disbanding SRG, cutting NYPD vacancies, hiring freezes for DOE, DPR, DHS, and NYPD "co-response" teams, and cutting the DCPI/NYPD comms by 50%. By making these divestments, we can reinvest these funds into the essential services impacted by Mayor Adams budget cuts.

Additionally, the NYPD's typical overtime budget and abuse lawsuits, which are not [entirely] budgeted through the normal budget process, is about \$1B — about the amount that education (\$700M) is being cut (through PEGs) by for the upcoming budget. The Department of Corrections spends millions also on lawsuits and abuse by officers that remain on the payroll at the expense of taxpayer money and safety for people in custody.

I urge the council to reject these harmful budget cuts and instead, invest in a people's budget and real public safety budget. That means restoring education, childcare, CUNY, and libraries, and investing in Homes Now, Homes for Generations. That also means

investing funds in mental health crisis response, and restoring funds to Office of Neighborhood Safety including the Crisis Management System, Office to Prevent Gun Violence, and Precision Employment Initiative, a jobs training program that targets neighborhoods with high rates of gun violence.

We obviously hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure these key funding priorities are in any budget that passes.

Upasna Saha
upasnasaha@gmail.com

Flushing, New York 11355

Committee on Public Safety Thursday, May 9, 2024

Good afternoon, Committee and Speaker on Public Safety. My name is Victor M Herrera, a member and leader of Freedom Agenda and Treatment Not Jails. My testimony before you today is a critical one for myself as a person with mental health trauma. 911 and mental Distress First Response is critically costing lives on account of the misconception and belief that any call direct from the community to 911 is to be accorded NYPD response, when Public safety should demand that 911 Emergency response should focus on financing the call centers needed for Be heard and Psychiatric intervention 988 to prevent the NYPD as first responders in any given call of an emotionally distressed incident.

NYPD is again attempting to continue criminalizing the Mentally distressed community by attempting to convince this committee that CCIT along with Center for Urban Community Services (CUCAS) training, which even in all of the years of training received from CUCS has not prevented or led to any changes in the practice of wrongful and criminally negligent homicides in such responses. NYPD does not need any financing beyond their own budget and no training would change the present preemptive criminalization as was the case in Win Rozario death, a child whose life was taken prematurely at the continued financing of NYPD ideas.

NYPD should never gain entry and the community should be informed of the Right to keep them from entry in such responses until mental health professionals and peers takes on a more active and responsive effort in any public health related mental health crisis, along with Peer specialist working not from the confines of a Police Department rather FDNY EMS stations located throughout many of the City and privates Hospitals. 911 is an Emergency response call center, not an NYPD call taking center. Such an idea is declaring that all calls at 911 are more criminal than trauma based.

Yesterday was my 58th Birthday, and just seeing the body cam footage of the deadly shooting caused me so much distress. No matter how much information the NYPD receives, personal experience even on August 1, 2023 during a pretext stop, the Sergeant and Police officer were made aware of my own condition, disabled and solely on account of a license suspension, applied an arrest process that is common with extreme force, which was followed by an abusive practice of being processed, reported as Emotionally distressed and again forcefully medicated by hospital staff, ignoring the obvious implications of no examination or evaluation solely to accommodate the practices promoted by the behaviors and bias of the law enforcement community under Broken windows and the criminalization of mentally distressed community should be broken by defunding the ideas of the NYPD and diverting the funds to Be Heard and Peer professional programs intended to prevent further harm or death as the most recent tragic death of a young child, Win Rozario.

Victor M Herrera

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff,

I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget, and I believe safety means #CareNotCuts! #CareNotCriminalization! and cuts to NYPD bloat.

The NYPD is over budget, spending an estimated \$715 million on overtime by March 2024 and \$115 million on abuse and misconduct lawsuits, and Mayor Adams is paying for it by cutting more than \$1B from public schools, \$58 million from libraries, \$94 million from CUNY colleges, and \$400 million from 3K pre-kindergarten and childcare programs. His priorities are upside down. The safest communities have the most resources, and the mayor's proposed cuts to our schools, libraries, and health care undermine public safety at the most basic level.

First, the Council must divest from harmful policing and NYPD overspending. We demand divestments from harmful policing and NYPD overspending, including disbanding SRG, cutting NYPD vacancies, hiring freezes for DOE, DPR, DHS, and NYPD "co-response" teams, and cutting the DCPI/NYPD comms by 50%. By making these divestments, we can reinvest these funds into the essential services impacted by Mayor Adams budget cuts.

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Neighborhood Safety including the Crisis Management System, Office to Prevent Gun Violence, and Precision Employment Initiative, a jobs training program that targets neighborhoods with high rates of gun violence.

We obviously hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure these key funding priorities are in any budget that passes.

Ximena Frankel
ximena.hihnyc@gmail.com

Forest Hills, New York 11375

Good afternoon.

My name is Daria and I am a first-year undergraduate student. I recently graduated from Stuyvesant High School in June of 2023 before moving to France for an affordable college education. Leaving New York City was one of the hardest decisions I've ever made... My parents are here, my little brother is here, my mentors are here, my entire community is here. It truly is my home. I love New York, but I despise what **Eric Adams**, his senseless investment into the **police**, and your **pacificity** have done to the fabric of my city.

I am here today to not only urge the City Council to **hold the NYPD's Strategic Response Group accountable for its abuse**, but also to push to **disband the unit**. The SRG was founded as a counter terrorism unit, yet they continue to be deployed at **peaceful protests** despite consistently being known for their violent strategies and ever more militarized tactics. The ACLU [documentation shows that the SRG is, at best, an escalating force, and, at worst, the source of this violence](#). Even the **CCRB** and our own **legal system agrees**, as the SRG has been central to many lawsuits and investigations related to abuse of protesters throughout 2020 and beyond, which has only led to massive financial costs to **all parties** to settle these cases. **Seems redundant, don't you think?**

For as long as I can remember, I have been a local organizer and activist. Fundraising for reproductive rights, resource distribution to arriving migrants, overdose management education, COVID-19 test redistribution... you name it. I love coming together for a cause and I love giving back to my neighbors. But I often asked myself, why is it that people are neglected in the first place? Why does the system fail to provide adequate social programs, or even basic housing rights? With every passing moment, it becomes increasingly evident to me that it's because we give the vast majority of our funding to the police. **Instead of giving New Yorkers what we need to survive, our government officials utilize cops to criminalize our differences and then punish our outrage.**

Aren't we **all** citizens? Doesn't **all** suffering concern public safety?

This spring break, I came home to continue that fight – to exercise my first amendment right to protest the appalling genocide of the Palestinian people that is fueled by the **hypocrisy** of my very own government. I see so many **parallels between our struggle and theirs**, so I came out to Union Square this past March 8th to spread that rhetoric, that we have to stand up and fight against injustice wherever we see it. It filled me with joy to be back with **my people**, fighting for the things I believe in.

When I graduated from Stuy, I received an award from the City Council, commending me for my outstanding civic engagement and dedication to bettering the circumstances of New York City residents. Yet when I came **home to continue doing exactly that**, I was met with a brutal, wrongful arrest at the hands of the SRG. **Don't you find it dreadfully ironic?** On March 8th, of all days, I watched as **more than 60** of my fellow New Yorkers were kettled, beaten, and violently arrested. But of course Happy International Womens' day! Let's celebrate by **throwing**

citizens to the ground and beating them unconscious so their limp bodies could be handcuffed more easily.

Is this how you say thank you?

It is unacceptable to be toasting to the tenacity and resilience of young students like me just to turn around and throw them up against the hood of a car for “walking in the street with sidewalk available”. There is absolutely no excuse for the SRG to be trained to consider any protest concerning justice inherently violent. **Tell me, what are you going to do about this?**

As I walked through the gates of 1 Police Plaza on the evening of March 8th, SRG officer Elvis Salas looked over at me and said “Stay safe.” I’m sure he had good intentions, but the fact of the matter is that I had to spend the next couple days on the phone with a lawyer, instead of with my family. I could’ve gone and seen a movie with my mother, or spent time with my 6 year old brother, but instead I was **left on my own**, figuring out how I was to show up for my summons when I **needed** to go back to school. Aren’t cops supposed to be there to prevent crime... to make sure kids stay in school?

Is that what you call staying safe? Is that what you call “protecting and serving”?

It disgusts me that we, as everyday citizens, go out of our way to get educations that cause bankruptcy, just to be ignored, even with our professional status. Why is it that I can go to school all my life, get a degree, yet still be **brushed aside by the people in power**? What are professionals good for if **you don’t listen** to the educated? It simply makes no sense.

I am done asking nicely. You folks **need to do your part in amplifying voices** that need to be heard. Allocate our budget based on the things **New Yorkers themselves** say they need, not the **wants** of the privileged people in power. Solving the housing crisis should involve **providing housing**. Managing the opioid crisis should involve **providing healthcare**. Increasing education opportunities should involve **funding libraries** and other **social programs**. Building overall safety in our city should involve **grassroots movements** at the **community** level, not filling the subway with the national guard.

If you can comfortably sit back, watching as this all unfolds, you’re just as bad as they are. **Violent policing tactics should not be used on everyday citizens, period.** The SRG must disband and its funds should be reallocated in order to **actually** serve New Yorkers. That means reinvesting back into public parks, libraries, and other third spaces that keep people like me safe. That means ensuring SRG officers who are placed in another unit cannot continue to carry SRG functions, nor recreate the SRG under a different name. That means reducing unnecessary contact between the NYPD and New Yorkers and centering the needs and voices of those that are directly impacted by police violence. **That means protecting people like me.**

I truly hope that one day, we can all live side-by-side in an actually safe and secure New York City. Thank you for your time.

My name is Jessie my pronouns are she/her and we/ours
I am a fourth generation New Yorker and we know the power
We all have to shape our city
Don't you think it's a pity
To hear children say
Why is there no budget for pre k
No budget for libraries no budget for books
No budget for parks they just took and they took
With billions in reserves and billions for cops
Our children are asking you when does it stop
We have all we need to make our city thrive
Let's invest in the things that keep us alive
More libraries more parks more schools more art
Less weapons less bloat please use your head and your heart
We can build a better and stronger city for all
City council members please heed our call
Invest in our libraries our parks and our schools
Let common sense and love be our strongest tools
Divest and dismantle the SRG
It's our constitutional right to protest peacefully
We deserve care not cuts
no ifs ands or buts
The future is bright, think what we can do
And remember History has its eyes on you

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5-9-24

Name: SUSAN FRIEDMAN (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [REDACTED] 56th ST NYC

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/24

Name: Rebecca CITRON (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [REDACTED] East 57 St. 10022

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Pernell Brice (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: William Jahn

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yorwin Romero

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

53

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ileana Mendez-Pena

Address: _____

I represent: Communities United for Police Reform

Address: _____

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

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

52

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: MAY 9, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sherryl Betesh

Address: [REDACTED] W 58 ST

I represent: My self & FJSS

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ESTHER BAK

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rachel Herlands

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kimberly Sultz

Address: 211 east 13th Street, New York, NY

I represent: Legal Defense Fund and

Address: Communities United for Police Reform

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5-9-24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeanne Sprenger

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dawn K...

Address: [Redacted] W 26th St 1025

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

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

Date: 5/9/2021

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Artem GURVICH

Address: [redacted] bbleau ave [redacted] 11101, LIC

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Beth Schwartz

Address: [redacted] West 90th St NYC NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

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

Date: 5/9/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Olivia Tai

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dorinne Tai

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alex Brass

Address: [redacted] West End Ave [redacted] New York, NY

I represent: CCIT Collect Crisis Intervention Today

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5-9-2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VICTOR HERRERA

Address: [redacted] JACKSON Ave [redacted]

I represent: FREEDOM AGENDA

Address: 40 RECTOR ST

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elizabeth Brantl

Address: Driggs Ave Brooklyn NY 11222

I represent: Center for Justice Innovation

Address: 520 8th Ave

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robert Anthony Wallace

Address: E. 82nd St. New York, NY 10025

I represent: Jewish Safety *in public property*

Address: City wide

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Theresa Tobin

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Michael L. Petri

Address: _____

I represent: NYPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Asst Commissioner Carlos Nieves

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dep. Comm. Edward Delatorre

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Olivia Duong

Address: 125 Barclay Street, NY NY 10007

I represent: President, Local 3778 (NYPD) Technical

Address: Professional Employees DC37

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Donald Nesbit

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Executive Vice President, Local 372,

Address: DC37

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Darren Mack

Address: 40 Rector St. NY, NY

I represent: Freedom Agenda

Address: 40 Rector St.

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Edward Caban, Commissioner

Address: 1 PP

I represent: NYPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tania Kinsella, First Deputy Commissioner

Address: 11 PP

I represent: NYPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeffrey Maderrey, Chief of Department

Address: 1 PP

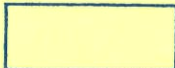
I represent: NYPD

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/2011

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Herber, Deputy Commissioner

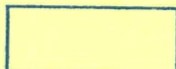
Address: of Legal Matters

I represent: NYPD

Address: 1 PP

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/2011

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deirdre Snyder, Deputy Commissioner

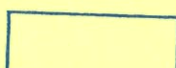
Address: of Management and Budget

I represent: NYPD

Address: NYPD

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Liz Roberts, CEO

Address: _____

I represent: Safe Horizon

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Insp. Bruce Ceperano

Address: NYPD

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dep. Comm. Rebecca Weiner

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: [Redacted] Legal Defense Fund

Address: 90 rector st

I represent: Communities united for public safety

Address: 4

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Ruben Beltran

Address: NYPD

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Wilson Arambales

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Philip Rivera

Address: NYPD

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Michael Kemper

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dep. Comm. Mark Stewart

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Commissioner Chauncey Parker

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____



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



**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Michael Lipatzi

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Joseph Kenny

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dep. Comm. Chauncey Parker

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Chief Robert O'HARE
Address: _____

I represent: _____
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Dep. Comm Lisa White
Address: _____

I represent: _____
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Dep Comm. Wendy Garcia
Address: _____

I represent: _____
Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dep Commr. Bob Barrow

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief John Benoit

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Inspector Tracy Mulet

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dep. Comm. Paul Gamble

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Asst. Chief John Cosgrove

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Miguel Iglesias

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bard Cash

Address: [redacted] Chancery St [redacted] BK 11233

I represent: myself

Address: ---

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Olufunmilola Obe

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 9 May, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Soha Whatstone

Address: [redacted] W 21st St, 10027

I represent: myself

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/9/24

Name: David Jenkins (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Klea Hazizaj (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Joshua Jay shaw (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nash Dixon

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dominique Hood

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: abdul nasser Rad

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Raluca Oanciu

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melissa Chua

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tania Mattos

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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