

**TESTIMONY**  
presented by  
**Dr. Sarah Sayeed, Chair & Executive Director**  
**New York City Civic Engagement Commission**  
before the  
**New York City Council**  
**Committee on Veterans**

Hearing—Oversight: Increasing Veterans' Civic Engagement in New York City  
Wednesday, September 18, 2024  
10:30 a.m.—Committee Room, 14th Floor at 250 Broadway

Thank you, Chair Holden and members of the Committee on Veterans, for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to submit testimony about the efforts to include veterans by the Civic Engagement Commission (CEC). I'm delighted to submit this testimony in support of our partners in the Department of Veterans Services and of veterans across the city.

As you know, the City Charter grants the CEC broad authorization to support civic engagement throughout the city, in partnership with community organizations and civic leaders in the public and private sectors. The Charter defines specific programs and activities that the CEC is to create and support, including participatory budgeting, language assistance at poll sites and technical assistance to community boards. Along with those programs the Charter names five specific populations, students, seniors, people with disabilities, limited English proficient individuals, and of course, veterans.

While all our programs make an effort to reach veterans our citywide participatory budgeting program, *The People's Money*, has been actively working with veterans' groups and the DVS to encourage their participation. When we first formed our Participatory Budgeting Advisory Committee (PBAC) we brought on a very active member of the veteran community, Dondi McKeller, a former Marine, who is also testifying at this hearing. Dondi has been an invaluable contributor to the Commission's work, and we want to acknowledge him for his efforts.

The CEC recognizes the service and dedication that all our veterans have given to our country and the obstacles they face as they reenter the civilian world. They bring a unique perspective to our communities and their voices deserve to be heard so that their needs are met. We also recognize there is no typical veteran, too many veterans are also part of the disability community or are impacted by the justice system. There are veterans that are still youth and many that are older adults. But they all share a common experience that brings with it unique needs and consideration for services to be provided.


With Dondi's help, along with that of DVS, we have held several events at the James J Peters Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in the Bronx for *The People's Money*, to promote the program, and to gather ideas for consideration in the process. And we have also gone there during our voting phase to make sure veterans had the chance to vote for the projects they want to fund. The CEC has also presented to both the Veteran's Advisory Board and the Bronx Borough President's Veterans Advisory Board about our services.

As part of *The People's Money* voting process, we ask people to fill out an exit survey to track who is participating. In 2023 we had 40,560 surveys submitted and 2%, or 846, of the people who responded identified themselves as veterans. Our 2024 survey had 107,743 people respond with 3% or 2,690 self-identified as veterans.

Our other programs include trainings provided to Community Board members and we are exploring the best way to add to the efforts that DVS does to make Board members aware of what is available so they can help spread the word to their constituents. We hope to implement a workshop in the coming months.

Despite these efforts we recognize that we can do more to strengthen our engagement with veterans. In the coming year we are working to expand our outreach to all the VA hospitals by asking to hold idea sessions there as well as recruitment for our project evaluation committees and the voting phase. We will also continue to work with DVS and veteran focused community organizations to expand our outreach to amplify the voices of the approximately 135,000 New Yorkers who have served our country. Reaching this community is an important part of the work of the CEC and we look forward to expanding that outreach to serve more of those that have served our country.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Sayeed". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S".

Dr Sarah Sayeed  
Chair & Executive Director  
Civic Engagement Commission



**JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS**

**TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS  
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON VETERANS**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I thank Chair Holden and the members of the Committee on Veterans for holding this hearing today.

With a vested interest in the political process and their records of service, veterans typically outperform civilians when it comes to measures of civic engagement – in many cases by large margins. In a 2021 report by the Veterans Civic Health Index, researchers found that 74.7% of all veterans voted in the 2020 presidential election, outpacing non-veterans at 66.9%.<sup>1</sup> For veterans, this marks an increase of nearly 5 points from 2016. Furthermore, this report also found that veterans outpace their non-veteran counterparts on a number of other indicators including volunteerism, social connectivity, community involvement as well as charitable giving.<sup>2</sup>

These indicators are incredibly important but they also coincide with a concerning trend of VA hospitals, often at the center of veteran communities, closing their doors. These closures, part of a larger national plan, not only deny veterans of the services they need but they also deny the community tremendous opportunities to host voter registration drives and further conduct outreach to educate the public.

In addition to this, we must also consider our homeless veterans and their ability, or lack thereof, to engage civically. With the help of federal funding, homelessness for our aging veterans, many of whom served in the Vietnam War, has decreased by 83% since 2012, the largest decrease of homeless veterans in the nation according to a recent report by the New York State Comptroller's office.<sup>3</sup> But as of 2022, there were still a total of 482 homeless veterans in NYC, a decrease of 202 from the previous year.

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<sup>1</sup> Meyers, David. "Veterans outperform non-veterans in civic engagement". *The Fulcrum*.  
<https://thefulcrum.us/ethics-leadership/veterans-day-2021>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Lisa, Kate. "Comptroller: New York veteran homelessness down 83% since 2010". *Spectrum News 1*.  
<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/politics/2023/11/08/comptroller-ny-veteran-homelessness-down-83-in-12-years>



**JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS**

Our Department of Veteran Services (DVS) is one of the smallest agencies we have, with an FY24 budget of only \$5 million. As a city we rely on community centers like the VA hospitals to help provide a fountain of resources and services for our veterans. I look forward to hearing today how we can address these issues and further support civic engagement in our veteran community. Thank you.

## **TESTIMONY OF MJHS HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE**

### **OVERSIGHT: INCREASING VETERANS' CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN NEW YORK CITY**

#### **SUBMITTED TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON VETERANS**

#### **CHAIR ROBERT HOLDEN PRESIDING**

**SEPTEMBER 18, 2024**

Chair Holden and members of the New York City Council Committee on Veterans. Thank you for holding this public hearing to allow stakeholders the opportunity to discuss increasing Veterans' civic engagement in New York City. My name is Ashton Stewart, I am a Navy Veteran who served in the Gulf War and the Veteran Liaison and Cultural Sensitivity Outreach Coordinator for MJHS Hospice and Palliative Care.

MJHS is a not-for-profit health system that was founded in 1907. Our hospice and palliative care program has provided end-of-life care for New Yorkers with serious and advanced illnesses since 1979, and we were part of the original nationwide pilot program for hospice. Volunteerism is a key part of hospice programs.

MJHS understands the unique needs and challenges that face Veterans of all cultural backgrounds as they approach end-of-life, including the very real, and often not yet met need for peer-to-peer support from other Veterans. As you all know, the bond between veterans is unmatched. As a result, volunteerism among Veterans would play a critical role in supporting our Veteran hospice patients and their families. It is also a very real opportunity for Veteran civic engagement across New York City.

Last year, MJHS experienced a 46% increase of Veteran hospice patients, and it is believed that this trend will only accelerate as the number of Veterans in New York City over the age of sixty-five continues to grow. This makes the need for volunteers, particularly volunteers from the Veteran community, that much greater.<sup>1</sup>

With help from volunteers, who understand the lived experiences of other Veterans, we will be able to leverage those unbreakable bonds to more effectively address the psychosocial needs of our Veteran patients and their families. In some cases, it's just about listening. In others it's about sharing stories. Volunteers who are Veterans are uniquely positioned to meet this very vulnerable patient population where they are, and with the support they need.

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<sup>1</sup> Murphy, Jarrett. "A Statistical Snapshot of NYC's Veterans." *City Limits*, 11, Nov. 2020, <https://citylimits.org/2020/11/11/a-statistical-snapshot-of-nycs-Veterans/>.



MJHS is proud to be a member of the We Honor Veterans (WHV) program, a collaboration between the U.S. Department for Veteran Affairs and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. MJHS has been part of this initiative since its inception in 2010 and since 2019, we have maintained their highest rating – Level 5 partner status. MJHS is the only Level 5 partner in New York City, and our robust program earned the 2023 WHV National Outstanding Program Award.

The goal of WHV has always been to cultivate a Veteran-centric culture to ensure that end of life care is delivered in alignment with the lived experiences of our Veterans. We provide person-centered, trauma-informed care to ensure caregivers, as well as our staff, are equipped with the tools necessary to address PTS and PTSD. In addition, through the WHV program our interdisciplinary teams are also trained to address the effects military service has on individuals and their families. Our hospice care teams also use active listening during visits, honor the military service of patients who've served with pinning ceremonies, and encourage families to explore healing together—when needed. Volunteerism is key. And thanks to the WHV program, we have been able to do so much more for Veterans and their families.

In 2024 WHV connected MJHS to several civilian volunteers. In addition to volunteer roles to assist with pinning ceremonies and providing support to Veterans, their caregivers and families, WHV also encourages volunteerism in the No-Veteran Dies Alone and Veteran-to-Veteran programs.

One volunteer completed the MJHS onboarding process and has been assisting with our WHV program. He is a retired business professional who started by helping us prepare Veteran recognition packets for our service members. He recently represented MJHS at the *Vietnam Veterans Day Reading of the Names of the Fallen* event with UVWC (United Veterans War Council). We look forward to his continued civic engagement in advocating for Veterans and their families.

Last summer, we had a Mandarin speaking volunteer who also started by preparing Veteran recognition packets. Soon the opportunity presented itself for her to play a more active role in supporting the family of one of our Chinese Veteran patients. In this case, she was able to connect with the family because of the comfort and trust that came from sharing a culture and speaking the same language. As a result of this volunteer's ability to connect, and the family's resulting willingness to open up and share critical information, we were able to help them access a broad range of benefits that they did not know were available to them from housing to disability.

Often, Veterans are not aware of their benefit entitlements or have been told they do not meet eligibility criteria. However, sometimes their unique situation does make them eligible for benefits that are typically denied to Veterans at large. By empowering our volunteers to research eligibility criteria and listen to our Veteran patients about their specific life experiences, MJHS was able to demonstrate eligibility for a former POW, many Veterans exposed to Agent Orange, a Veteran who did not set foot in the theater of war, but nonetheless required benefits for an illness acquired as a result of their service, and more.



MJHS has seen firsthand how volunteering can lead to greater advocacy for Veterans and increase community engagement. While, with one exception, the volunteers we've worked with so far have not been Veterans, they were empowered to become advocates for Veterans when they took part in the MJHS WHV program. Can you imagine how much greater that impact would be if the volunteers are all Veterans themselves...able to leverage their shared bonds of service to support our hospice patients and their families?

Data from a 2016 report conducted by *Got Your Six*, a campaign sponsored by the Bob Woodruff Foundation, revealed that, "Veterans are more likely than non-Veterans to volunteer with their neighbors to fix problems in their communities."<sup>2</sup> At the local level the City Department of Veterans' Services, "connects Veterans to programs and resources that promote social enrichment, including volunteer opportunities, civic engagement, professional networking, and peer support resources."<sup>3</sup> The New York State Department of Veterans' Services (NYSDVS) provides volunteers with, "Mentoring under a Veterans Benefits Advisor regarding the benefits process from the federal, state and local perspectives."<sup>4</sup> The State also offers opportunities for volunteers to accompany NYSDVS staff and represent this agency at Veteran outreach opportunities.<sup>5</sup> At the national level, the VA has a robust volunteer program that in 2023 reported that more than 25,000 volunteers provided over 3.5 million volunteer hours.<sup>6</sup> These opportunities demonstrate the many ways to cultivate engaged Veteran volunteers to work with fellow Veterans and increase civic engagement.

MJHS would like to thank Chair Holden and the New York City Council Committee on Veterans for this opportunity to share our experiences and observations about volunteerism within our hospice program. We also appreciate being able to address the positive impact having Veterans as volunteers would have on helping to support and advocate for their brothers and sisters who served, while increasing their community engagement.

MJHS is grateful for the mutual support we have shared with the New York City Department of Veterans' Services, the New York State Department of Veterans' Services, and the many VSOs we collaborate with. We look forward to future collaboration with you, and others who are part of the Veterans Initiative, to advance our shared work in supporting this vulnerable population. There is so much more we can do to support our Veterans at this critical point in their life's journey and Veteran volunteers would make a world of difference.

Thank you.

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<sup>2</sup> Montgomery, Robert. "Veterans' Civic Engagement Strengthens Communities Nationwide." *Points of Light*. 14 Nov. 2016, <https://www.pointsoflight.org/blog/veterans-civic-engagement-strengthens-communities-nationwide/>

<sup>3</sup> "Social Enrichment: Volunteer and Networking Opportunities," New York City Department of Veterans' Services. August 29, 2024. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/veterans/services/social-enrichment.page>

<sup>4</sup> "Volunteering with the Department of Veterans' Services." New York State Department of Veterans' Services. August 29, 2024. <https://veterans.ny.gov/volunteering-department-veterans-services>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> "VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement Social Enrichment." Veterans Administration. August 29, 2024. <https://www.volunteer.va.gov/>

Community Healthcare Network Testimony  
For Committee on Veterans

September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Erin Verrier and I am the Manager of Policy and External Affairs at Community Healthcare Network, otherwise known as CHN. CHN is a federally qualified health center with 14 sites citywide that provide critical primary care and social services for patients in underserved communities. Reaching well over 50,000 patients annually, CHN welcomes individuals of all ages, regardless of their ability to pay.

While our services are many, I'm here today to speak about the work we do for Veterans. CHN's Military Family Wellness Program connects active and former service members to health and social services. Each participant is screened and assessed for mental health needs by a licensed clinical social worker and can receive referrals for services like individual and family counseling, psychiatry, and medication management, as well as medical care, dental services, and other social services, including legal support services provided by our program partner, the Veterans Advocacy Project (VAP).

With the Veterans Advocacy Project, our program participants can receive assistance for public benefits, VA claims, discharge upgrade applications, housing support, and other civil legal issues. The Veterans Advocacy Project works closely with CHN staff to ensure continuity of care and provides CHN staff training on cultural competency when working with Veterans and understanding their legal needs.

To speak to our program's impact, in one example, a 44-year-old Army veteran was referred to our program given his mental health concerns and housing instability. A CHN social worker provided a mental health assessment, identified the need for a higher level of care, and helped him schedule an initial intake appointment at the VA for treatment. The social worker also referred the patient to the Veterans Advocacy Project for assistance with rental arrears. The patient is now attending regular talk therapy and psychiatric appointments at the VA, while receiving legal representation for his housing concerns.

In another example, a 33-year-old U.S. Navy veteran and single mother of two was referred to our program given her childcare and employment concerns. With CHN, she learned how to apply for a childcare voucher, and how to contact the Veteran Center for employment assistance. The patient is now approved for childcare vouchers and is working closely with the Veteran Center to attend career events and build relations with future employers.

CHN is proud and honored to work with our Veteran population and greatly appreciates City Council's support for our program. We are committed to its continuation and look forward to sharing progress in the year ahead. Thank you.





Thank you for holding today's hearing on veterans' civic engagement. My name is Charlotte Martin, and I am the director of access initiatives at the Intrepid Museum. In this capacity, I have the privilege of overseeing the Museum's veterans' access initiative that includes a range of programs and resources for current and former service members and their families. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the generous support of the City Council. Our programs would not be possible without this support. Thank you to Chair Holden and the Committee members and staff for your efforts to connect veterans with one another and with cultural resources like the Intrepid Museum.

Cultural organizations like the Intrepid Museum have a tremendous role to play in connecting veterans with one another and other resources. Because of Intrepid Museum's non-traditional ship-like meeting spaces, our organization may present a more comfortable environment for veterans who have not previously felt welcome at or drawn to traditional veteran organizations. Through supportive but not overtly therapeutic programming, we can create entry points for veterans to try something new and engage in community. Veterans come together through a shared interest and end up exchanging resources and opportunities for further engagement. We have also observed this with veteran and military families, who may feel isolated from one another or from the city.

The Intrepid Museum's programs are designed to be inclusive and engaging for all veterans, including those with service-related disabilities. Outreach and programming has also increasingly focused on veterans historically excluded from other veteran spaces, particularly women, veterans of color and LGBTQ veterans. We acknowledge and address the challenges faced by veterans and their loved ones while honoring their strength and contributions. In order to foster this positive experience, appropriate staff and volunteer training and planning is crucial.

Since starting our veterans' initiative almost 10 years ago, the Intrepid Museum has welcomed veterans from all branches, services eras and backgrounds through both free veteran-only and inclusive programs. At our cornerstone veterans-only program, Intrepid After Hours, veterans explore the Museum, get a behind-the-scenes experience or workshop, and then connect over a catered dinner. Earlier this year, we started coordinating with the Department of Veterans Services to ensure that there is always a veteran DVS representative at programs, available to answer questions and share resources. We have received very positive feedback. We have also heard from veterans how meaningful it has been to learn about resources and opportunities from other veterans. Several have even gone on to become volunteers at the Intrepid Museum and part of other organizations, reducing isolation and giving back to their community.

At the Museum, we also make a point to ensure that veterans are specifically invited to public programs, whether focused on veteran issues or more general, in an effort to reduce isolation and bridge veteran and civilian divides. Collaborations have been crucial, such as our ongoing partnership with Exit12 Dance Company to host therapeutic workshops for veterans and family members, culminating in a public performance on the flight deck, and our recent program with The Met Opera focused on women in the military. We recognize the power and value of the arts, history, culture and service to bring veterans together and connect them with their communities, reducing loneliness and isolation while creating a sense of belonging.

## **Testimony of Derek Coy, Senior Program Officer, New York Health Foundation**

### **Submitted to the New York City Council Committee on Veterans Oversight: Increasing Veterans' Civic Engagement in New York City September 18, 2024**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the New York Health Foundation (NYHealth) and address this important issue of increasing veterans' civic engagement in New York City. NYHealth is a private, independent, statewide foundation dedicated to improving the health of all New Yorkers—including the more than 133,000 or so veterans who call New York City their home. And I myself am a proud veteran, having served as a Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps.

Veterans play a crucial role in our communities, and while most return from service to their lives and communities without issue, some veterans don't feel ready for civilian life.<sup>1</sup> They may face barriers including limited access to mental health services, health care, and peer support. Ensuring that veterans are civically engaged reduces social isolation, contributes to their overall wellbeing, and strengthens the fabric of New York City's communities through their active participation.

#### **The Connection Between Civic Engagement and Health**

Veterans who feel healthy and connected to their communities are more likely to engage civically, and vice versa. Research indicates that civically active people tend to have better physical and mental health, and healthier people tend to be more civically engaged.<sup>2</sup> For example, veterans with quality health care are likelier to vote, volunteer, and be involved in their communities. At the same time, veterans are at greater risk than their civilian counterparts for social isolation and mental health challenges such as PTSD, depression, and substance use, all of which can limit their participation in civic activities.

#### **Fostering Veteran Civic Engagement to Promote Health in New York**

It's perhaps not surprising that veterans have higher levels of civic engagement than their civilian counterparts; separating from the military doesn't dim veterans' interest in service. Multiple organizations are operating programs in New York City to capitalize on veterans' ongoing commitment to service and civic engagement as a means to improve mental health and strengthen their community connections, including programs launched with support from the New York City Department of Veterans' Services (NYC DVS).

NYHealth has supported several of these efforts in partnership with NYC DVS. For example, the award-winning [Mission: VetCheck](#) program trained veteran volunteers to provide buddy checks, peer-to-peer support, and referrals to nearly 30,000 veterans across New York City during the COVID-19 pandemic. More recently, the program has pivoted to focus on educating veterans about expanded health and mental health benefits available to them through the recently enacted Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

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<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center, "[The American Veteran Experience and the Post-9/11 Generation](https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/09/10/readjusting-to-civilian-life/#:~:text=While%20most%20veterans%20say%20the,it%20prepared%20them%20somewhat%20well)," [www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/09/10/readjusting-to-civilian-life/#:~:text=While%20most%20veterans%20say%20the,it%20prepared%20them%20somewhat%20well](https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/09/10/readjusting-to-civilian-life/#:~:text=While%20most%20veterans%20say%20the,it%20prepared%20them%20somewhat%20well), accessed September 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Healthy Democracy Healthy People, "Health & Democracy Index," <https://democracyindex.hdhp.us/>, accessed September 2024.

In partnership with NYC DVS, we also supported [Black Veterans for Social Justice](#) to mobilize veteran and civilian volunteers to connect food-insecure veterans with healthy, nutritious meals during the pandemic. The program conducted extensive outreach to veterans in the Bronx and other parts of New York City, with a focus on areas hardest hit by the pandemic.

[Team Rubicon](#), a veteran-led humanitarian organization, used an NYHealth grant to mobilize veteran volunteers to provide critical services to New Yorkers in need during the pandemic. They helped coordinate emergency food distribution, medical shelter support, and sanitation efforts; the project offered the added benefit of combating social isolation and promoting cohesion and connection among veterans.

And [The Mission Continues](#), which empowers veterans through community service, organizes “service platoons” that offer veterans a new mission in communities that need their help, from planting community gardens to doing Earth Day clean-ups to laying wreaths on Veterans Day. Veterans who participated in the organization’s fellowship program reported decreased social isolation and an increased sense of social support.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, peer mentor programs support veterans to draw on their unique experiences to offer practical skills, support, community connection, and hope to fellow veterans. Programs like the statewide and City-run Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans’ Support Program are effective in helping veterans navigate mental health challenges and access services, while also encouraging them to engage in civic activities. And Veterans Treatment Courts (VTCs)—a type of problem-solving court that provide an alternative to incarceration for justice-involved veterans—include peer mentorship as a core component. These court programs highlight how peer support and engagement can improve mental health and reduce recidivism. A recent NYHealth data brief, developed with the Office of Court Administration, noted high success rates for veterans who participate in VTC, showing the power of community-based interventions and peer support.<sup>4</sup>

### **Recommendations for Action**

New York City has laid a strong foundation for increasing civic engagement among veterans. I urge the Committee to consider the following steps to continue to improve and leverage existing infrastructure and programs:

**Ensure Veterans are Connected to Health Benefits:** Veterans who have more access to quality health and mental health services are more likely to have the time and energy to be civically engaged. New York City should continue to take advantage of the recent unprecedented expansions of federal health benefits through the PACT Act. In fact, New York City is responsible for informing veterans and the organizations serving them about these expanded benefits, and has been using one of its core engagement programs to do so. To aid this work, the Foundation is supporting the extension of the Mission: VetCheck program, in partnership with NYC DVS, to ensure all veterans in the five boroughs know about and can access and use their benefits. The City Council also has the opportunity to support these outreach and education efforts and further ensure that all New York City veterans have access to the resources they have earned.

**Leverage Civic Engagement as a Pathway to Health Access:** Programs such as those led by The Mission Continues and Team Rubicon provide veterans with a sense of purpose and community connection. Expanding and funding initiatives like these can further foster civic involvement as a means

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<sup>3</sup> The Mission Continues. 2020. “The Empowered Veteran Index.” The Mission Continues. Available at: [images.missioncontinues.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Empowered-Veteran-Index.pdf](https://images.missioncontinues.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Empowered-Veteran-Index.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Coy, D. Cobbs, E. Ford, MM. Havusha, A. Sandman, D. 2024. “Veterans Treatment Courts in New York State: Past and Future.” New York Health Foundation. New York, NY. Available at: <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/resource/veterans-treatment-courts-in-new-york-state-past-and-future>.

to improve health access and outcomes, including responding to medical emergencies and addressing food insecurity. Programs that integrate peer mentors to offer comprehensive support are particularly effective at helping veterans overcome barriers and participate more fully in civic life in New York City. The City Council can help drive additional resources toward peer support programs, including organizations that will be funded through NYC DVS's [open Request for Proposals](#) for Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans' Support Program initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

Civic engagement is not only a measure of veterans' involvement in society but also a key indicator and driver of their overall health and wellbeing. By fostering civic participation and expanding access to health services, we can ensure that veterans remain active, valued members of their communities. This approach will benefit our veterans and strengthen the fabric of New York City. I hope you will look to the New York Health Foundation as a resource for your important work. You can learn about our veterans' health work and more by visiting our website, [www.nyhealthfoundation.org](http://www.nyhealthfoundation.org).

Thank you.

**TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH BELLO  
NY METROVETS**

**BEFORE**

**THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS COMMITTEE**

**Oversight - Increasing Veterans' Civic Engagement in New York City**

**September 18, 2024**

Chairman Holden, members of the Veterans Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing on increasing veterans' civic engagement.

Military veterans and their families bring a unique perspective on how service fosters a sense of common purpose, and civic engagement is one of the impactful ways veterans continue to serve their communities after leaving the uniform.

One reason veterans excel in civic life is because of the diverse environment we experience in the military. We are brought together with individuals from various backgrounds, races and perspectives and we're expected to work as a team. This experience fosters a strong sense of purpose, camaraderie, and belonging.

Veterans share a lot of the same concerns on issues that many of NYC's residents do but we are keenly aware that change requires civic engagement. As a result, research shows that veterans are more likely to vote, volunteer, join civic organizations, and donate to charity.

Here in NYC, we have an aging veteran population, with 72% of our roughly 138K veterans over the age of 55. Therefore, it's likely that many of our aging veterans have at some point either served or are currently serving on Community Boards, HHC Community Advisory Boards (CABs) or even Police Precinct Councils. Unfortunately, these numbers will likely decrease as they age.

For younger veterans, their civic engagement varies. Some veterans are engaged in their schools or in internships, working with VSOs or non-profits, or participating in civic activities outside of veteran-specific organizations, such as volunteering or serving on their child's PTA.

Additionally, some (younger and older) veterans find themselves dealing with challenges (disability or mental health) that may hinder them from participating in civic engagement. For others, civic engagement may be as simple as voting in NYC's Participatory Budgeting (PB) initiative or their local councilmember's PB, where community members help decide how funds are spent.

With regards to CBs, before his untimely passing, Paul Vallone was meeting with Borough Boards to encourage CBs to get more veterans to serve on them. Unfortunately, he noted DVS did not maintain data on how many veterans actively joined CBs; they were simply promoting the opportunity. Therefore, any discussion on increasing veteran civic participation first requires some data around how many vets are currently engaged in civic activities.

According to its webpage, DVS "connects veterans to programs and resources that promote social enrichment, including volunteer opportunities, civic engagement, professional networking, and peer support resources." The site highlights three main areas of social enrichment that DVS provides. They are (1) Mission: VetCheck, (2) The Veterans Voices Project and (3) Packing Hello Ready Fresh meal kits.

Unfortunately, while there are various issues regarding each of these programs, to access any of them, veterans must complete the agency's VetConnect page request, which has a response time of 3-5 business days.

Aside from these programs, DVS has fallen short in creating additional civic engagement opportunities for veterans. For example, two years ago, as the agency was in the process of taking over the Joseph P. Dwyer MH peer-to-peer program from the city's Health Department, Commissioner Hendon stated at a Veterans Advisory Board (VAB) meeting that a committee, including VAB members, would be formed to review grant/RFP submissions for this funding. Unfortunately, this committee never materialized while funding has already been provided.

Additionally, with regards to the new post-9/11 veterans' memorial in Whitestone, DVS' webpage states the formation of a Memorial Advisory Committee intended to "represent diverse facets of New York City's veteran community." This also includes a proposed timeline.

Unfortunately, DVS appointed members to this committee without involving or informing anyone, including the VAB or the community. To date, there has been no information from Commissioner Hendon regarding the committee's members, even though we know at least of two that live outside the city. The lack of transparency and missed opportunity on both these programs reflects poorly on the agency's efforts to enhance civic engagement within the local veteran community.

With regards to the city's VAB, as someone who not only helped draft several pieces of legislation but also served on the board, I believe I have some insights into its issues. Therefore, I would ask that this committee hold a separate oversight hearing for the VAB, as one has not been conducted since February 2017.

There are several concerns regarding the current state of the VAB, including the process for appointing members, the way meeting notices are put out to the community, and the lack/lag of documented minutes. While I deeply respect my former VAB colleagues and the institutional knowledge they bring, I would like to propose legislation to limit the number of terms an individual can serve to a maximum of two terms (six years). This change would open opportunities for other veterans who wish to become more civically engaged with the community.

We are currently in a time when trust in veterans is high, but negative perceptions also persist due to issues like veteran suicide, homelessness, and the media portrayals of veterans as either extremists (far right or left) or damaged. Both these narratives cannot be true, but they highlight the need for more data and a balanced understanding of veterans and how/what we contribute civically to society.

To those attending today's hearing in person or online, thank you for sharing your thoughts, insights and concerns about what's happening with this community. Your participation is civic engagement at its best and helps shape the future of our community.

Thank you, councilmembers, for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

# Civic Engagement Program: "Veterans Voice on Every Corner"

The "Veterans Voice on Every Corner" program envisions transforming **1,000 American Legion-run newsstands** across New York City into vibrant hubs for civic engagement, veteran support, and community connection. Each stand would be a beacon of veteran leadership and civic education, providing both practical services and fostering a culture of community involvement.

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## 1. Program Purpose:

The program aims to:

- **Empower veterans** by providing them with employment and community leadership opportunities.
  - **Promote civic education** by offering resources and platforms for citizens to engage with local and national issues.
  - **Support veterans' integration** into civilian life through meaningful interactions with the community.
  - **Enhance civic participation** by making information, voting resources, and public service guides easily accessible.
- 

## 2. Key Components:

### a. Newsstand Operations:

Each of the 1,000 American Legion newsstands will be strategically placed across New York City, offering a unique blend of traditional news services and civic engagement resources.

- **Veteran Staffing:** Each stand will be operated by veterans who will serve not only as attendants but as **community liaisons** to share their experiences and guide visitors toward civic participation.
- **News and Civic Resources:**
  - **Veteran-run Publications:** Major newspapers, magazines, and veteran-specific publications (e.g., *The American Legion Magazine*) will be sold.
  - **Civic Engagement Guides:** Information about voter registration, local elections, government programs, and community meetings will be available at every stand.
  - **Voting Resources:** Each stand will be a drop-off location for absentee ballots and will provide registration forms, voting schedules, and election guides.

### b. Civic Engagement Activities:

The newsstands will serve as the epicenter for community engagement and civic activities.



- **Daily Civic Spotlights:**
  - Short, easily digestible pamphlets or flyers will be distributed highlighting key civic issues, local government updates, and upcoming election deadlines.
  - **Daily Questions or Polls:** Veterans will engage the community by asking “Today’s Civic Question,” designed to prompt reflection or discussion on a local or national issue.
- **Voter Registration Drives:** Every stand will host regular voter registration drives, making it easy for residents to register to vote or update their information.
- **Civic Engagement Workshops:**
  - **Civic Education Clinics:** Veterans will host short, informal workshops once or twice a week, focusing on how to vote, how local government works, and how to advocate for community change.
  - **Know Your Rights:** Informational workshops educating residents on their rights in areas like housing, health care, and civic participation.

#### c. Veteran Empowerment Initiatives:

Veterans will be the heart of this program, both running the newsstands and serving as community leaders.

- **Veteran Employment Opportunities:**
  - Every stand will be staffed primarily by veterans, giving them employment while helping them connect with the public in meaningful ways.
  - Veterans will receive training in customer service, civic education, and community outreach, equipping them with new skills.
- **Veteran Support Resources:** Each newsstand will distribute literature on veteran benefits, local veteran support groups, and job opportunities. Veterans will also be able to directly connect with local and national organizations for assistance.

#### d. Corner-Based Community Engagement Hubs:

Each newsstand will become a mini community center.

- **Local Event Promotion:** Each stand will post information about local town hall meetings, community events, and public hearings.
- **Neighborhood Announcements:** Stands will act as bulletin boards for neighborhood news, lost-and-found notices, and updates on construction, school meetings, and safety initiatives.
- **Volunteer Sign-Up Stations:** Partner with local non-profits to offer volunteer opportunities in various civic activities such as park cleanups, food drives, and election monitoring.

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### 3. Program Features:

#### **a. Veterans as Civic Leaders:**

The program focuses on positioning veterans as pillars of their communities. They will not only run the newsstands but also serve as local educators and advocates for civic participation. Veterans will be trained to lead conversations about important issues and connect citizens with resources.

#### **b. "Voice of Veterans" Platform:**

- **Veteran Storytelling:** Each stand will feature “Veterans Voices,” a dedicated section where local veterans share their stories, personal experiences, and thoughts on civic issues through small brochures or posters.
- **Monthly Veteran Spotlights:** Once a month, a veteran working at the stand will be highlighted in the community through interviews or social media stories, drawing attention to the invaluable service veterans continue to provide.

#### **c. Digital & Physical Access Points:**

- **Civic Resource Kiosks:** Digital kiosks or tablets at the stands will allow users to quickly access voter registration, public services, and community information.
  - **Wi-Fi Hotspots:** Offering free Wi-Fi at each stand to ensure citizens can access online government portals, election guides, and job application sites.
- 

### **4. Marketing and Promotion:**

#### **a. Citywide Launch Campaign:**

A broad-reaching marketing campaign will introduce the “Veterans Voice on Every Corner” initiative across NYC.

- **Social Media & Digital Outreach:** Create a social media presence with the hashtag #VeteransVoiceNYC where citizens share their interactions with veterans and highlight how the program has impacted their civic engagement.
- **Community Ambassadors:** Partner with local influencers, elected officials, and community leaders to promote the newsstands and encourage participation in civic programs.

#### **b. Print and Outdoor Advertising:**

- Posters and banners at key transportation hubs, subway stations, and public buildings promoting the newsstands as civic engagement hubs.
- **Collaborative Marketing:** Work with local news organizations and veteran-supporting companies to provide co-branded content and advertisements.

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## 5. Funding and Sustainability:

### a. Government Grants:

Apply for federal, state, and city grants aimed at promoting civic engagement, veteran employment, and community-building programs.

### b. Corporate Sponsorships:

Engage local and national businesses interested in supporting veterans and civic participation, offering sponsorship opportunities at individual stands or across the entire initiative.

### c. Revenue from Sales:

Generate revenue through the sale of newspapers, magazines, and refreshments, with a percentage reinvested into the program to sustain operations.

### d. Community Support:

Encourage community donations and volunteer support to help fund specific events or resources distributed through the newsstands.

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## 6. Success Metrics:

- **Veteran Employment:** Track the number of veterans employed and monitor job satisfaction and skill development.
- **Civic Participation Rates:** Measure the number of voter registrations, absentee ballot requests, and other forms of civic participation directly attributed to the program.
- **Community Engagement:** Collect feedback from local residents on the usefulness of the stands as civic engagement tools through surveys and interviews.
- **Social Media Reach:** Monitor the usage of the #VeteransVoiceNYC hashtag, engagement with the program's online content, and overall program visibility.

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The “**Veterans Voice on Every Corner**” initiative would be a groundbreaking program that not only empowers veterans but also brings civic engagement directly into the heart of New York City's neighborhoods. By transforming newsstands into vibrant community hubs, the program will create lasting impact by fostering veteran leadership and encouraging New Yorkers to engage more deeply in civic life.

Put Veteran First, Ltd.

## **Testimony for SAGE/SAGEServes on Civic Engagement with LGBTQ+ Veterans**

**Presented by:** Bryan Ellicott-Cook, Director of Government Relations, SAGEServes

**Date:** Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup> 2024

**Location:** Council Chamber

Good Morning Chair, Holden, and distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans. My name is Bryan Ellicott-Cook my pronouns are They/He, and I serve as the Director of Government Relations at SAGEServes, a division of SAGE—the nation's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ older adults.

Today, I am here to highlight the importance of civic engagement for veterans, particularly LGBTQ+ veterans, and to explore how the New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) can better serve this community. SAGEServes has served Veterans of the LGBTQ+ Community who are age 50 and up since the creation of our SAGEVets Program.

### **The Importance of Civic Engagement for LGBTQ+ Veterans**

Civic engagement is a cornerstone of a healthy democracy. For veterans, particularly LGBTQ+ veterans, participation in civic life is not only a way to continue serving their country but also an essential pathway to ensuring that their unique voices and needs are heard.

LGBTQ+ veterans face unique challenges—ranging from discrimination within and outside the military to health disparities that persist long after their service. Active involvement in civic life, whether through voting, volunteering, or participating in advocacy, provides these veterans with a platform to influence policies that directly impact their lives. Civic engagement empowers LGBTQ+ veterans to shape a society that is more inclusive and responsive to their needs, particularly in areas like healthcare, housing, and mental health services.

### **The Complex Nature of Civic Engagement Among Veterans**

However, it is important to recognize the complex nature of engaging veterans in civic life. Veterans are not a monolithic group. Their experiences, needs, and priorities vary widely based on factors such as the era in which they served, their branch of service, and their personal experiences in and out of uniform. For LGBTQ+ veterans, this complexity is further amplified by a history of discrimination, both within the military and in civilian life.

Many LGBTQ+ veterans who served under the discriminatory policies of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" or who were discharged due to their sexual orientation or gender identity often carry deep scars. These experiences can lead to mistrust of institutions, including government agencies, which can hinder their willingness to engage civically.

Additionally, the intersection of multiple identities—such as being a veteran, an LGBTQ+ person, and an older adult—can further complicate access to resources and opportunities for civic participation. These veterans may face barriers such as social isolation, lack of transportation, and limited access to information, all of which can impede their ability to engage civically.

## How the NYC Department of Veterans' Services Can Do Better

The New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) plays a crucial role in supporting veterans across the city, but there are opportunities to enhance its outreach and services to better meet the needs of LGBTQ+ veterans.

1. **Targeted Outreach and Education:** DVS should prioritize outreach to LGBTQ+ veterans through targeted campaigns that address their unique needs and experiences. Collaborating with LGBTQ+ organizations, like SAGE and SAGEVets, can help ensure that these efforts are effective and culturally competent. Education on the importance of civic engagement, tailored specifically for LGBTQ+ veterans, can encourage greater participation.
2. **Culturally Competent Services:** To build trust with LGBTQ+ veterans, DVS must ensure that all of its services are inclusive and affirming. This includes training staff on the unique experiences and needs of LGBTQ+ veterans and ensuring that services are accessible to those with intersectional identities. When veterans feel seen and respected, they are more likely to engage with the services and resources available to them.
3. **Support for Mental Health and Social Isolation:** Many LGBTQ+ veterans face significant mental health challenges, often exacerbated by isolation and a lack of supportive networks. DVS should expand programs that address mental health and work to combat social isolation, providing LGBTQ+ veterans with the community support they need to feel empowered to participate in civic life.
4. **Advocacy for Policy Change:** DVS can play a key role in advocating for policy changes at the city and state levels that address the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ veterans. This includes supporting legislation that ensures equitable access to benefits and services, as well as policies that protect LGBTQ+ veterans from discrimination.
5. **Partnerships with LGBTQ+ Organizations:** Collaboration with LGBTQ+ organizations is essential. By partnering with groups like SAGE and others, DVS can leverage expertise and resources to better serve LGBTQ+ veterans and foster greater civic engagement within this community.

LGBTQ+ veterans have served our country with courage and dedication, often in the face of significant adversity. It is our responsibility to ensure that they have the tools and support they need to continue serving their communities through civic engagement. By working together, we can create a more inclusive and responsive system that empowers LGBTQ+ veterans to be active participants in shaping their own futures and the future of our society.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your questions and to continuing this important conversation.



**Testimony for the September 18, 2024 New York City Council Committee on Veterans  
Oversight: Increasing Veterans' Civic Engagement in New York City**

**J. David Stiffler, MD**

Good Afternoon, Chair Holden and members of the New York City Council Committee on Veterans. I am Dr. J. David Stiffler, Medical Director at the Military Family Center at NYU Langone Health.

The Military Family Center at NYU Langone Health was established in 2012 with the goal to fill in the gaps in mental health services available to veterans and their families in the New York City area. The Center's mission is to address the mental health challenges of this population by providing accessible, high quality, evidence-based treatment to veterans and their family members.

Since inception, our Military Family Center has provided mental health treatment to over 4,000 veterans and their family members. We provide comprehensive evaluations and personalized, evidence based treatment for a number of mental health problems including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, ADHD, insomnia, and substance use disorders. For couples or families experiencing relationship difficulties, we offer either couples or family therapy. We are also able to offer individual psychotherapy for children and adolescents. We provide services completely free of charge and offer our services to veterans regardless of their discharge status, combat exposure, or era served. Our services are available to family members of veterans, even if the veteran is not involved in the treatment. To maximize engagement and access to care, we offer appointments during the evening, outside of normal business hours, in person or by video through a virtual health platform.

Additional programs we provide include:

Dual Diagnosis Program

Our Dual Diagnosis Program offers flexible, integrative care for veterans and their family members struggling with Substance Use Disorders and co-occurring mental health problems. Our harm reduction approach provides flexibility in setting treatment plans and goals, which may vary between patients. Goals may include reduced harm associated with use or full abstinence, and treatment may include individual therapy, group therapy, and medication management.

Traumatic Brain Injury Program

Approximately 300,000 veterans sustained a TBI as a result of serving in the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; 57% were not evaluated or treated for TBI. Our TBI Program, made possible by the support of the New York City Council Veterans Initiative, is providing much-needed services to address the gap in treatment.

Child/Family Program

Military children are faced with unique stressors related to relocation, parental separation, family reunification, and reintegration. These stressors may result in disrupted relationships, behavioral problems, and academic difficulties. Many children struggle to adjust to their parent's combat injury or

**The Military Family Center at NYU Langone Health**

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deal with a parent's death. Our Child and Family Program provides individual child therapy, parent-child therapy, family therapy, and parenting training. These services are offered to veterans and their families, as well as families of the fallen.

It is common for veterans who struggle with depression to have difficulty with engagement in civilian life after service. Young veterans often face challenges with the transition from their military service into the next steps in their lives as civilian adults. After service, some veterans struggle with finding meaning in their lives, or activities to engage in that leave them feeling fulfilled or like that have made a valuable contribution. Research shows that civic engagement contributes to growth and maturation as young people transition into adulthood ([Flanagan](#)). For veterans in school, it has shown that civic engagement may promote higher utilization of mental health services on campus. It has been reported that such volunteer engagement reduces depressed feelings in service members ([Albright](#)).

Research has shown that Veteran civic engagement is important to the transition to civilian life. The Military Family Center at NYU Langone Health is proud to be a link for Veterans to engage with their community. We thank the Council for holding this important hearing.

#### References:

Flanagan C, Levine P. Civic engagement and the transition to adulthood. *Future Child*. 2010 Spring;20(1):159-79. doi: 10.1353/foc.0.0043. PMID: 20364626.

Albright DL, McDaniel JT, Godfrey K, Thomas KH, Fletcher KL, Rosen G. Civic engagement among student veterans. *J Am Coll Health*. 2020 May-Jun;68(4):387-394. doi: 10.1080/07448481.2018.1559170. Epub 2019 Jan 25. PMID: 30681934.



## The RTM Protocol™: A Breakthrough Treatment for PTSD

- The Research and Recognition Project is a 501c3 nonprofit organization established by Dr. Frank Bourke in 2006. Its mission is dedicated to accelerating research and advancing adoption of the Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories (RTM) Protocol™ by licensing its training throughout the world.
- The RTM Protocol™ is a breakthrough neurological intervention building upon over five decades of neuroscience research concerning memory reconsolidation; in short, the protocol is a brief non-traumatizing, non-drug treatment for PTSD that is 2-3 times more effective than other therapy modalities. In the words of one client: *“Who knew that you could retrain your brain in a few hours, without medication, to remove yourself from the traumatic events that have been crushing you and making you wish you would just die?”*
- Over 90% of the 160 veterans in the first four RTM studies finished treatment with measured loss of their PTSD diagnosis, nightmares, flashbacks and directly related emotional symptoms. Sustained protocol efficacy has been formally documented to 12 months; anecdotally, many clients report stable outcomes for years.
- An 89-step manualized protocol, RTM requires no drugs and is usually completed within 3-4 sessions, totaling approximately five hours; it may be delivered in traditional face to face settings as well as via remote video platforms. Following these sessions, an individual can talk about difficult memories without reliving the trauma – and to focus on underlying concerns in therapy without experiencing the cascade of physiological and psychological PTSD reactions, which are experienced as overwhelming and, for all too many, a permanent and debilitating condition.
- Since 2022, RTM training has been completed with over 200 therapists in Ukraine & Poland; following the 3-day online training (1/2 day neuroscience overview / 2.5 days training), trainees work with RTM coaching staff to achieve RTM certification (successful treatment of two clients). Weekly consultations are provided to ensure newly certified RTM practitioners receive ongoing support and guidance; training packages may be customized to fit specific needs.
- The published random controlled trials were conducted by licensed professionals supervised by review boards at Duke University and subsequently peer-reviewed and published in professional journals.
  1. *Pre-Pilot Study, (JMVFH), 25 of 26, (96%) test negative for PTSD and Symptoms for 1 year.*
  2. *First Replication, (JMVFH) 25 of 27, (93%) test negative for PTSD and Symptoms for 1 year.*
  3. *Second Replication, Psych Trauma, 28 of 29, 97% negative for PTSD & Symptoms, for 1 year.*
  4. *Third Replication, Psychotherapy Research, 60 of 66, 90%, test PTSD negative for 1 year.*
  5. *Additional studies are under way at Walter Reed in the US and King’s College in the UK.*
- Recent scientific meta-analysis of PTSD treatments (Kitchiner et al., 2019; Wright et al., 2021) identified RTM as one of only two or three treatments, respectively, as “effective for treating military PTSD”. The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) published “Effective Treatments for PTSD” (2019), arguably the gold standard of evidence-based PTSD treatments, in which RTM was recommended as an “emerging intervention.”
- Bottom Line: RTM is a brief, drug-free, non-traumatizing, and highly effective and enduring frontline neurological intervention for PTSD. It works ... and can be rapidly deployed globally wherever needed. For more information, please contact Dr. Frank Bourke ([frank.bourke@randproject.com](mailto:frank.bourke@randproject.com)) / (855) 229-1428.



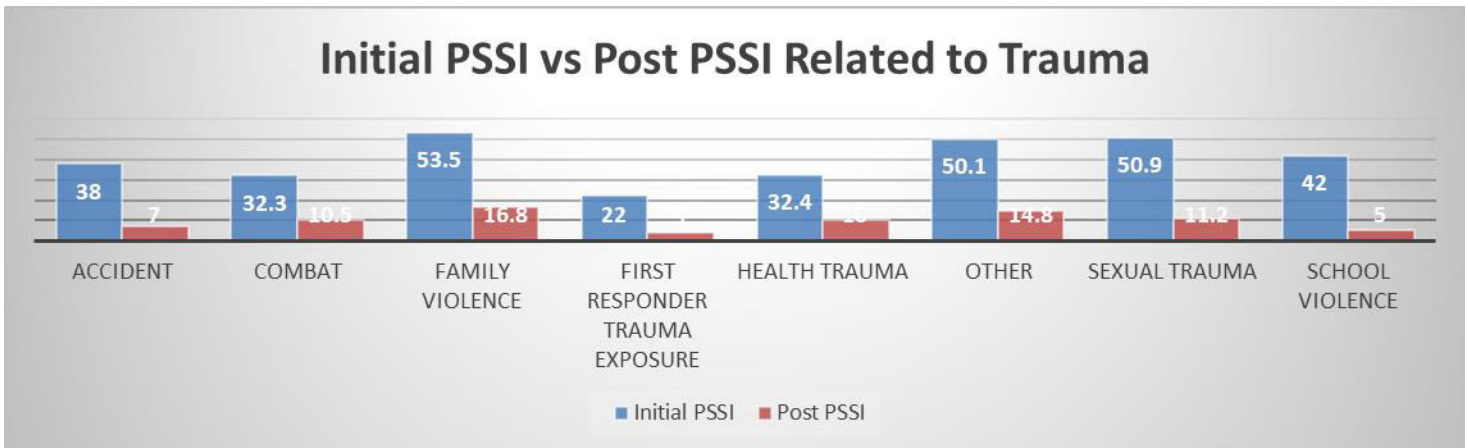


# Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories (RTM) Protocol™

## FACT SHEET – AUGUST 2022

### OVERVIEW

Developed by The Research and Recognition Project (R&R) relieve suffering and restore lives devastated by PTSD, the **RTM Protocol™** has been rigorously tested under strict scientific standards., with additional studies in progress. Over 90% of the 160 veterans in the studies to date finished treatment with measured loss of their PTSD diagnosis, nightmares, flashbacks and directly related emotional symptoms. The manualized Certification Training Program is duplicating the 90% PTSD remission rate in certified RTM™ counselors. Eighteen RTM™ certified licensed counselors treated over 100 PTSD, pre and post measured clients, successfully remitting their diagnosis and symptoms, after RTM Protocol™ Certification. The pre and post PTSD scores for the clinical populations treated are presented in the graph below:



The Protocol requires no drugs and is typically completed in two to three sessions totaling approximately five hours. At the onset of the COVID19 pandemic, R&R quickly adapted RTM Protocol™ training and treatment to be conducted online. To date, over 300 licensed clinical mental health professionals have completed the RTM Protocol™ training; over 100 have advanced to obtain certification status.

Currently, the RTM Protocol™ training has been provided to 28 mental health counselors from Poland & Ukraine; additional trainings are planned throughout the next three months. Further, the American Legion (Department of New York) is sponsoring The RTM™ Protocol training scholarships throughout NY state.

*“...For our community, RTM™ has the potential to change the game. It is now, not only cost effective, but clinically effective, countering the high cost of PTSD and its impact. In my estimation, RTM™ is the closest thing we have come in mental healthcare system to creating systemic change, the way antibiotics did for medicine.”*

Amanda S. Davison CEO,  
The Family Connection LLC

The RTM Protocol™ was featured in the ISTSS) 2019 book “Effective Treatments for PTSD” as an intervention with emerging evidence; further, a Symposium panel reviewing RTM research in the U.S. and abroad has been accepted for presentation at the ISTSS 2022 Annual Meeting.



The RTM Protocol™ was recently reviewed in Kitchiner et al. (2019) and found to be one of only two of the treatments examined to meet their efficacy criterion for consideration as effective for treating military PTSD. A follow-on systematic review and meta-analysis by SR. Astill-Wright et al, 2021, demonstrated a large effect of reconsolidation therapies in the treatment of PTSD (n=372, SMD: -1.42 (-2.25 to -0.58), RTM was the only talking therapy that was superior to control.

Under paid VA contract, R and R successfully completed a pilot RTM™ training of VA Readjustment Counselling Service counselors (24) from the RCS Eastern Region; more to follow.

## COMPLETED RESEARCH

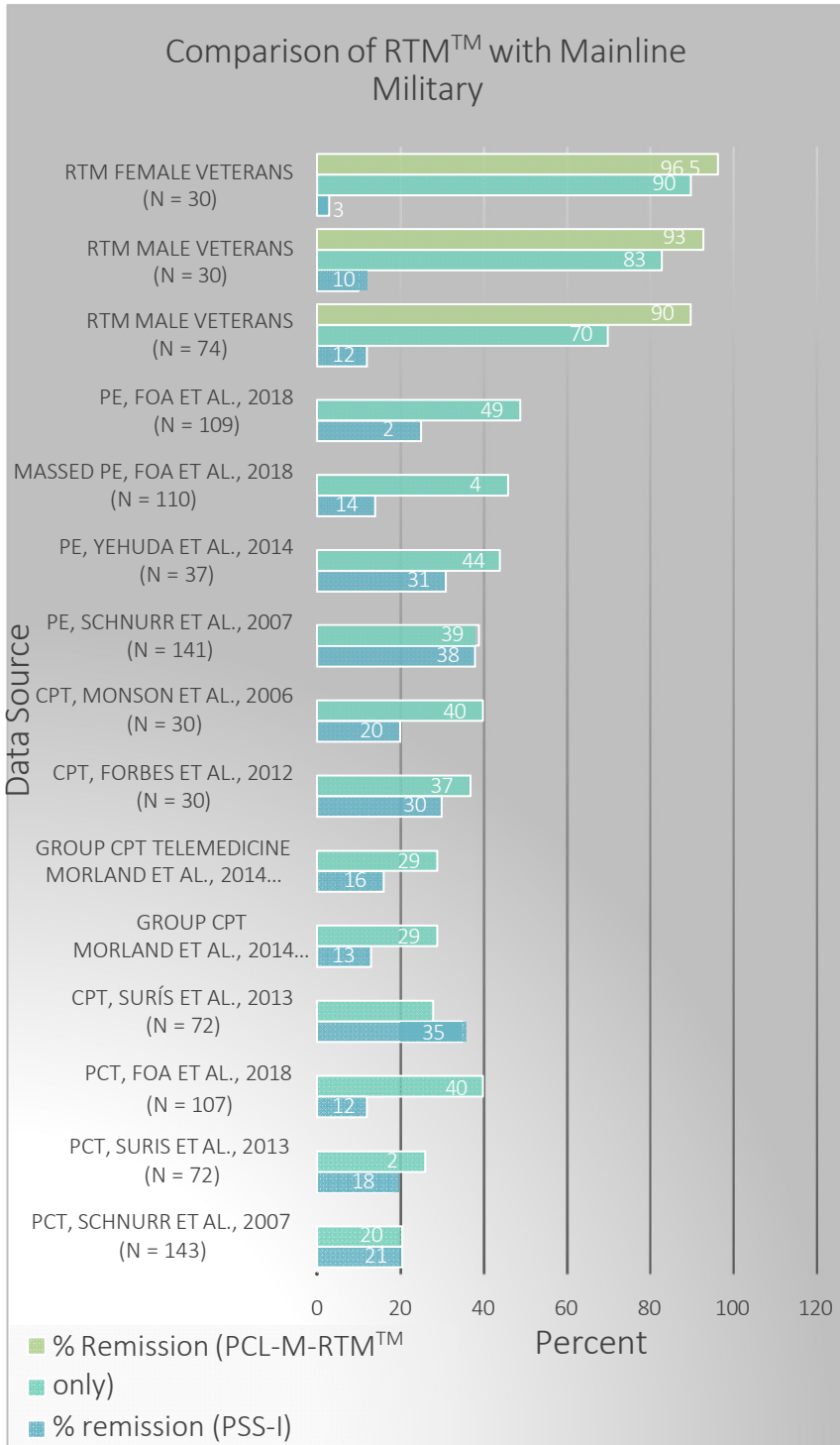
1. Pre-Pilot Study published in the Journal of Military, Veteran, and Family Health, (JMVFH), 25 of 26 (96%) no longer test as having PTSD and their PTS intrusive symptoms were fully alleviated in under five sessions. (Gray & Bourke, 2015)
2. First Replication Study. Results were published in the JMVFH in 2017 (Tylee et al., 2017). Over 90% of the 30 male veterans were diagnosis free at the two-week, six-week, and twelve-month follow-ups.
3. Second Replication Study. 75 veteran study published in Psychotherapy Research (Gray, Budden-Potts, & Bourke, 2017). Over 90% of the male veterans completing treatment have scored below diagnostic threshold on the PCL-M and PSS-I. About half of those treated were followed to six months and retained freedom from PTSD intrusive symptoms and diagnosis.
4. Third Replication Study. Gray, R. M., Budden-Potts, D., Schwall, R. J., & Bourke, F. F. (2020, November 19). A Randomized Controlled Trial of RTM™ in Military Women. Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy. 96% PTS remission of the 30 women veterans on the PCL-M and PSS-I at two weeks and all subsequent measures to one year, follow-ups.
4. Neurological Studies using EEG, pre- and post-treatment, have begun at the Mind Research Network in New Mexico. The first pilot “Quantitative EEG Markers of PTSD and Impact of the (RTM™); publication pending. The research is being conducted in Dr Jeff Lewine’s laboratory in New Mexico.

*“I was first contacted by Drs. Frank Bourke and Richard Gray several years ago about possible brain imaging studies to explore the neuro-biology of PTSD and how the RTM™ helps normalize brain-behavior relationships ... I have come to recognize them as clinicians of great integrity, and we have begun a pilot study to examine RTM™ using electroencephalography (EEG), a technology which directly evaluates brain activity.”*

Jeffrey David Lewine, PhD  
Professor of Translational Neuroscience  
The Mind Research Network



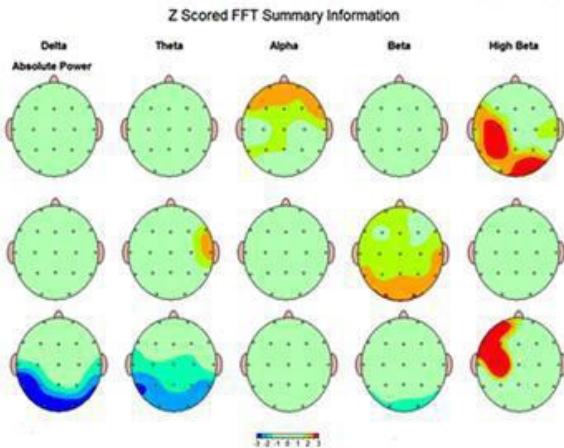
**Graphic comparisons:** The first graph below shows the results of the first three post-pilot RTM™ studies as compared with evidence-based treatments currently approved and used by the VA and Army using PSSI.



(Table Notes: PCL results for the 2014 RTM™ study required a pre-existing diagnosis of PTSD with at least one nightmare or flashback in the preceding 30 days and a score > 45 on the PCL-M. For the three RTM™ replication studies, PCL-M remission was determined by presenting with a PCL-M score > 50, with at least one nightmare or flashback in the preceding 30 days. The PSSI was added to the pre and post measurements of RTM™'s treatment administration in the three replication studies in order to allow a direct comparison to the larger number of studies of other PTSD therapies already approved as evidence-based treatments).

The Second Graph shown below is a sample of the initial pilot results of the neurological study submitted by Dr. Lewine to the Biological Psychiatry Journal. The dark reds and blues in the left row Pre RTM™-Treatment scans are indicative of PTSD abnormality. They have completely disappeared in the Post Treatment scans measured five days after treatment. Light turquoise color is within normal limits. Dark reds and blues indicate deviations from normality. The research is being conducted in Dr Jeff Lewine’s laboratory associated with the U. of New Mexico

**Pre RTM Treatment Baseline qEEG**



**5 Days Post-RTM Treatment qEEG**

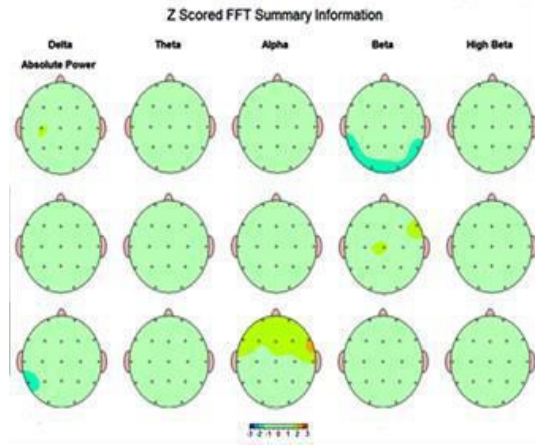


Table of RTM™ Research Results:

Note the following Table that show RTM™ has removed PTSD Diagnosis (along with nightmares and flashbacks) as measured by pre and post treatment PCL-M scores over 90% of the time in its first four scientific studies. The results hold for the twelve months followed thus far.

| <b>Percentage loss of diagnosis by PCL-M from all RTM™ studies</b> |                    |                    |                      |                     |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|  | NY 2014            | SD 2015            | SD 2016              | NY 2016             |
| N  | 26                 | 27                 | 30                   | 66                  |
| Last measure   | 6 weeks            | 12 months          | 12 Months            | 6 months            |
| PCL-M > 50 Tx failure n (%)  | 1 (4%)             | 1 (4%)             | 1 (3.4 %)            | 5 (7.5%)            |
| <b>Total loss of Dx (all Criteria) n (%)</b>                       | <b>25/26 (96%)</b> | <b>25/27 (93%)</b> | <b>28/29 (96.5%)</b> | <b>60/66 (90 %)</b> |

Table Note: Dx = Diagnosis; Tx = Treatment. The three replication studies (2015, 2016, & 2016a) have been updated since publication. Participants in the 2014 study were required to have a pre-existing diagnosis of PTSD and one flashback or nightmare in the preceding 30 days. The cut off for military diagnosis was set at 45 Points. For all other studies, PCL-M status was determined by presenting with a PCL-M score of  $\geq 50$ . Remission for military PTSD was defined as PCL-M < 50, complete loss of intrusive symptoms, and improved life adjustment and satisfaction



## RESEARCH FUNDED AND UNDER DEVELOPMENT

1. In Sept. 2018, Mike Roy from the Uniformed Services University (USU) and the R&R Project have had a \$700,000 grant funded at the Center for Neuroscience and Regenerative Medicine (CNRM). The study is being run at Walter Reed Hospital and is comparing RTM™ with PE. The study is a large step forward to the scientific recognition of the RTM™ Protocol.

*"...In August of 2018, Frank Bourke and his team conducted a five-day training of 10 Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) staff in this protocol. The trained staff raved about the protocol and confidence of its success within DOCCS..."*

Bryan Hilton, Associate Commissioner  
NYS Department of Corrections &  
Community Supervision

2. A randomized controlled comparison study of RTM™ vs Prolonged Exposure using neurological pre and post measurements is also under development for 2019. The study is a collaboration Dr. Jeff Lewine at the Mind Research Network in Albuquerque New Mexico.

3. King's College (London) has recently completed a randomized control trial for UK military veterans with PTSD, funded by Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT); publication is anticipated by October 2022.

See Full Articles at: <http://www.researchandrecognition.org/research.html>

## TRAINING

The RTM™ Certification training is available in two formats, featuring a 2.5 day live online program or live in-person program. Both formats include self-directed digital course work as a prerequisite to training. Standardized training manuals, visual aids and coaches in combination allow the clinicians to achieve high degrees of competence with the use of the RTM™ in combination with their own experience, education and training. Over 300 clinicians have been trained since 2018; roughly one third have attained certification. All training classes thus far have been evaluated by trainees at 9.5 or above out 10, for both the training course delivery and the RTM Protocol™'s efficacy. The certification process requires the successful administration of two RTM™ treatments, measured pre and post for PTSD Diagnosis remission using the PSSI-5. Because of the manualized format of the live RTM™ Training, the training was easily digitized into Tele-Training format, consisting of 10 days self-directed learning and 2.5 days online classroom.

## PEOPLE

Ultimately it is about people, not statistics – the RTM Protocol™ most important impact is measured through the experiences of those whose lives have been restored. We now have testimonials from military, police fire, EMS and civilians – all of whom have experienced the profound healing provided by the RTM™ Protocol. For client testimonials - click here: <http://www.researchandrecognition.org/testimonials.html>

# New York City Council Veterans Committee on Civic Engagement Oversight Hearing

Good morning to All. Thank you, Chairman, committee members and all the veterans advocates present here today. My name is Armando Crescenzi. I am a life member of the of the Disabled American Veterans, a life member of the Military Officers of America Association, and a life member of the American Legion where I am the Commander of my post. I have a degree in political science. Thirty (30) years ago, I got my doctorate in law and today, I am specializing in civil rights - with a focus on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments. In 2010, with my fellow veterans, I founded a nonprofit organization called Put Veterans First. Our mission is to help NYC veterans start and build their own small business as vendors and food cart operators - all by accessing their state granted rights. *Rights!! Not charity! Not privileges!*

Over the years, I have seen 100's of veterans get driven out of street vending by the city and the NYPD.

Sadly, the mayor's office and the city council stood by and did nothing to help its veterans pursue *their* American dream.

Recently, the city granted full immunity to asylum seekers who commit quality-of-life crimes - stating that criminal charges would reflect poorly on their asylum application.

No matter what your opinion of the immigration fiasco, the fact is that the city sidewalks are overrun with illegal unlicensed vendors. Most disabled veterans cannot compete in such a lawless environment.

Because of rising crime and city dysfunction, vending is no longer an attractive option for veterans.

How can New York City meet its legal obligation, to accommodate disabled-veterans?

*Codified in state and federal law*, the city is mandated to provide reasonable accommodations to its disabled-veterans who operate as street vendors.

Years ago, all the newsstands were run by veterans. Today, with the proliferation of digital media, newsstands have become obsolete and are shutting down everywhere.

The MTA has *dozens* of these so-called *Ghost Newsstands*, And throughout the city, more than 600 newsstands are vacant. *Coincidentally*, there are 600 disabled-veterans - licensed and registered with the city as vendors of merchandise and food.

I propose that the city grant each eligible veteran a newsstands where they can run their own business.

In exchange, the veteran would make his newsstand a hub of community affairs and social resources.

I call my idea “Veterans Take a Stand for Civic Engagement”. This initiative will ensure that the City honors its obligations to disabled veterans who could build a small business from the newsstands.

The veteran, would serve as a community liaison – promoting civic awareness and participation.

Each newsstand will be a resource where local residents can connect with, and plug into, community activities and events. Reliable internet, digital kiosks or tablets would be a must – available for anyone in need of social or civic services.

Security cameras, first aid kits, Narcan and defibrillators will also be required at each location.

Embedded in their communities throughout the city, the newsstands are ideally suited to meet the needs of the booming delivery business.

They can be drop-off and pick-up point for packages - charging stations for e-bikes and relief stands for the delivery drivers.

Maybe Amazon or FedEx would like to access this network of 600



convenient locations - owned and operated by a veteran,  
who has civic engagement as part of the business model.

The opportunities are limitless.

In closing I say, Don't wait for Veterans Day to thank a veteran.

Help Veterans Take A Stand in your neighborhood and you can  
thank a vet everyday all year long.

Armando Crescenzi, Founder

Veterans Take A Stand for Civic Engagement - a social enterprise

**\*\*Testimony for the New York City Council Committee on Veterans, September 18, 2024\*\***

Good morning, Chairman Holden and members of the Committee on Veterans.

My name is Dondi McKellar. I am a 62-year-old U.S. Navy veteran, Bronx homeowner, lung cancer survivor, member of the LGBTQIA+ community, and New York City Veteran Street Vendor. These identities are not just labels but represent my journey and the challenges I've faced. Today, I emphasize the importance of increasing veterans' civic engagement in New York City and encouraging my fellow veterans to take advantage of the opportunities the NYC Civic Engagement Commission (CEC) offers.

I've been dedicated to supporting veterans and ensuring their voices are heard throughout my career. I served as Chairman of the Veteran Committee for the Street Vendor Project from 2014 to 2018 and chaired a stand-alone Veteran Committee for the Bronx Community Board 2 from 2016 to 2019. These roles helped me understand veterans' unique challenges and how crucial civic involvement is to addressing them.

In 2019, I joined the NYC Civic Engagement Commission's Participatory Budgeting Advisory Committee (PBAC) to advocate for veteran engagement. Even after the committee ended in January 2024, I remained committed. As a Coalition Member for the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, I helped secure 347 votes in May 2024 for The People's Money initiative, directing \$3,405 to the James J. Peters VA Medical Center Food Pantry to address veteran food insecurity. Please review the attachments.

\*The People's Money\* is New York City's annual participatory budgeting process. All residents aged 11 and up, regardless of immigration status, can decide how to spend part of the city's budget. The four-phase process includes Idea Generation, Borough Assembly, Voting, and Implementation. Veterans' participation is key in amplifying our voices and making meaningful community changes.

Your participation matters. I urge this committee to recognize the New York City Civic Engagement Commission as a vital resource for veterans. We can empower veterans and drive positive change across New York City by fostering greater civic engagement.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and, most importantly, your dedication to the well-being of our veterans. I sincerely appreciate your commitment to this cause.

Dondi McKellar, USN (MST) He/Him Pronouns

Former Member, NYC CEC Participatory Budgeting Advisory Committee (PBAC)

James J. Peters VA Medical Center Food Pantry \$3,405.00

09/12/2024

1 \$3,405.00

HOLD TO LIGHT TO VIEW TRUE WATERMARK IN PAPER HEAT SENSITIVE RED LOCK DISAPPEARS WHEN HEATED

**Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, Inc.**  
3101 KINGSBRIDGE TERRACE  
BRONX, NY 10463

**JPMorganChaseBank. N.A.**  
NEW YORK, NY

NO.

1-2/210

**PAY:**

DATE

AMOUNT

Three thousand, four hundred and five and 00/100\*\*\*\*\*

09/12/2024

\$3,405.00

TO THE

ORDER

OF

James J. Peters VA Medical Center Food Pantry  
130 W. Kingsbridge Rd  
Bronx, NY 10468



VOID AFTER 90 DAYS

*James J. Peters*

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

Details on back  
Security Features included



**James J. Peters VA Medical Center Food  
Pantry**

**INVOICE**

% Shawn Kingston, MBA  
130 W. Kingsbridge Rd  
Bronx, NY 10468  
Memo: Dondi McKellar (BBP VAC)

INVOICE # 1  
DATE: 7/10/24

To:  
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center  
3101 Kingsbridge Terrace  
Bronx, NY 10463

| DESCRIPTION OF DELIVERABLES  | TOTAL    |
|--|----------|
| Attending Coalition Meetings in Nov, Jan, Mar, April \$ 600<br>150 Votes-\$ 1,300<br>150 Additional Votes \$ 1,000<br>Attending additional July Coalition Meeting \$125<br>Extra Votes and Involvement in Coalition Work \$380 | \$ 3,405 |

**TOTAL DUE** \$3,405

Please make all checks payable to **James J. Peters VA Medical Center Food Pantry**

If you have any questions concerning this invoice, contact Shawn C. Kingston, MBA,  
Tel: 718-584-9000 Ext 5474 or 5344, Email: [shawn.kingston@va.gov](mailto:shawn.kingston@va.gov)  
or Dondi McKellar, Text: [REDACTED], Email: [dondimckellar@gmail.com](mailto:dondimckellar@gmail.com)

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS!**

Melissa del Valle Ortiz

Brooklyn, NY 11220

US Army Veteran

Honorable Discharge

I am submitting this testimony as it is 30 years overdue. I received an Honorable Discharge after accepting my option as a pregnant soldier. Because I did not complete my contract I was enrolled in the in active Reserve and received my Honorable Discharge 7 years later. Prior to that, I birthed my second child and was later divorced by the age of 24. Now a single mother of two, with no qualifying Veteran preferences for any benefits including homeownership deposit or higher education, because of the early albeit Honorable Discharge. I was forced to get on public assistance and remained homeless for 2 years. I was however lucky enough to be housed by various family members. With no one's help or direction, I secured Project based section 8 housing in Sunset Park Brooklyn where my children and I remain housed today.

Unlike NYCHA, PBS8 housing stock receives no Federal, state or City related supportive services. NYCHA tenants are however given access to job training programs, section 3 employment, qualify for Earned Income Disallowance, First time home ownership etc. And yes these are Federally Qualifying HUD guidelines.

I'm testifying today to request that if the City of NY wants to proactively stimulate Veteran and Military Household turn over within NYCHA housing stock as it enters the Project Based section 8 model, under the RAD PACT agreement, it should take into consideration the following recommendations:

1. Lift the barriers from residents of dedicated PBS8 housing, so that those residents can benefit from the same access to self sufficiency programs that RAD PACT tenants have access to.
2. Include "Military Families" as a category on every City Government intake, including City council offices and NYC shelters. This would give family members access to federal services they may not realize they qualify for.
3. Create a prioritized category of Military Families within the homeless shelter system as underage dependents of active duty service members, should have access to housing subsidies. Did you know that female Veterans have the highest rates of homelessness in the United States? This would give them access to immediate shelter upon their return.

4. Educate NYCHA that when a household member joins the military, they do not need to be removed from the household.

5. Categorize their income as disallowed income, so that the household is not burdened with the rent increase, while the service member is away or deployed.

In regards to self sufficiency enact Inactive Duty as a status, pending their guaranteed Honorable Discharge providing access to:

1. A CUNY a education or certificate/vocational program
2. waivers to paid city exams
3. A preference status for gainful employment
4. License as a street vendor

If I had any of this while I waited 7 years for my honorable discharge, I could have been ALL THAT I COULD BE, 7 years sooner. I could have had an apartment, eventually owned a home, I might have obtained a college degree that would have awarded me a higher paying job. I might have already had my own business and by now an empire. We all know that the military cultivates a “Getter Done” mindset.

But not until I was recognized by Senator Gournardes as a NYS Veteran Hall of Fame inductee for my decades of community service, had I embraced my Veteran status. And for this reason I implore you to help hundreds if not thousands of Military Families and “Inactive Military” members awaiting their Honorable Discharge papers direct and immediate access to benefits that they so desperately need and in some cases done even know they qualify for.

FOR THE RECORD

JO MALONE  
LONDON

I AM SPEAKING FROM DIRECT  
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE  
AND I WILL GIVE MY TESTIMONY  
IF THE CITY COUNCIL WILL  
LET A CITIZEN <sup>to</sup> YIELD THEIR  
TIME TO ME SO I CAN  
GIVE CONTEXT TO MY STRONG  
STANCE AND OPPOSITION TO ANY  
THING BUT ENSURING THE PROTECTION  
AND SERVICE TO THE MOST  
VULNERABLE VETERANS

FOR THE RECORD

he don't self identify  
 because when we do  
 and see how veterans  
 are being treated and they  
 stand up for ~~themselves~~ they are stonewalled  
 by the NOC and it's to heartwrenching  
 it's not Ashame ~~and~~ it's  
 it's self preservation  
 will run for office  
~~will~~ and speak for  
 the most vulnerable

we are proud of our service  
 only a non veter would appreciate

LONDON

JO MALONE

this self  
 preservation is a shame and not



JO MALONE  
LONDON

FOR THE RECORD

When we come out of the  
SHADOWS AND SPEAK UP  
we are punished and Retaliate  
~~NO~~ AGAINST

Every Veterans Board, Council,  
& Committee <sup>Needs</sup> to put this as their  
TOP Priority. No Veteran  
should Die in a War and  
Pension program ~~and~~ especially  
with this Amount Funding,  
Resources and People right at  
their Finger tips

There should Be A Homless  
veteran APOD and Appointed  
to Every Council Board and committee

This is why I am ASKING

JO MALONE

LONDON

FOR THE RECORD

I AM ASKING ALL NYC  
Veterans to Refrain From  
any Veteran Engagement

~~with the city~~ Except That

It Serving their fellow  
Homeless Veterans until

Borden Avenue HAS ZERO

Drug over Doses <sup>per year</sup> & Am ASKING

you And NYC Veterans

to Please send HELP

Your Brothers Need you

FOR THE RECORD

JO MALONE

LONDON

from

Being Blown  
~~Not Allowed to Participation~~

in the cities only last  
period program from the DHS  
commissioner and even he  
could not get a definitive  
reason, veterans are dying  
of drug over doses while  
spending 1 million dollars on  
security and 600,000 dollars  
on fringe benefits ~~and~~  
allocating zero dollars on  
recreation ~~and~~ veterans  
are dying and the city  
is lying. Holten there but 16 million  
dollars of funding ~~and~~ jo Malone.com ~~and~~ only housed...

FOR THE RECORD

JO MALONE  
LONDON

Year while there are non-  
veterans ~~and~~ ~~are~~ being placed  
over VA Eligible Veterans  
Veterans, Homelessness 40% in  
2 years They do not  
Drug test even though they  
are required to <sup>legally</sup> ~~The~~ Institute  
for Community Living Retaliate  
against veterans who report their  
violations transfer them out  
and keep them from coming  
back with out reason I fact  
ommissioner Holden tries to  
keep the reason why I am

my Name is Mount Lafayette and I am  
70% service connected Homeless  
Veteran

JO MALONE  
LONDON

FOR THE RECORD

I AM Here to protest Any  
Veteran engagement with the  
City until ~~the~~<sup>New York</sup> City stops  
ITS will full Ig norance

And In competence of whats  
going on <sup>20-12</sup> at ~~the~~ Madison Avenue  
Their denial of ~~the~~ whats <sup>veterans  
residence  
Homeless  
shelter</sup>

going on at the congressional  
approved grant and per diem program  
putting the Veterans under  
OHS Policy over the code  
of Federal regulations  
that guarantees us a safe  
and drug free environment

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Rabah Belkebir <disabledamericanveteran72@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 5:39 PM  
**To:** Testimony  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] This is our concern as NYS service connected disabled veterans

[REDACTED]

To the Honorables NYC Councilmembers and all veterans supporters .

First I hope that everyone is doing well .this message is from NYS disabled veterans , we hope that you will take in consideration this than you May God Bless you all

As a service connected veterans we need your support concerning this issue  
We are a group of disabled veterans from New York City reaching out to you regarding the current state of the largely abandoned NYC newsstands. Today, the community of street vendors in NYC includes more than 1,600 veterans who make their living on the streets, braving all manner of weather conditions—whether it's the scorching heat of summer, the freezing cold of winter, the drenching rains of spring, or the blustery winds of fall. For many of us disabled veterans, these businesses are among the few that accommodate our need to attend frequent VA hospital appointments. It is difficult enough for most able-bodied individuals to do what we do—imagine trying to work under these conditions without the full capacity and function of your body and mind. We believe there is an untapped opportunity that wouldn't cost the city any financial resources and would, in fact, add revenue to its coffers through an increased tax base.

As veterans who have made significant sacrifices for our country, we ask that our service and needs be acknowledged, respected, and rewarded by listening to and implementing what we are about to propose. Our preliminary research shows that only about 300 newsstands are still operating in the city, most of which are in Manhattan, with a few in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. At its peak in the 1950s, there were 1,325 owned newsstands, with the city allocating tiny pieces of sidewalk space for our most severely disabled veterans. Unfortunately, technology has forever changed the way most people consume news, and most of these stands have failed.

Today, most of these newsstands stand vacant, as few people buy newspapers or magazines anymore. These stands are essentially empty boxes, and while the city hasn't removed them due to the high costs involved, they continue to sit unused. As disabled veterans, we propose that the city allow us to take possession of these stands so that we may convert them into coffee kiosks. With the proper authorization, this plan could generate revenue for the city through licensing fees and taxes while also creating job opportunities—especially for disabled veterans. Perhaps these kiosks could be marked with signage indicating that they are disabled veteran-owned businesses created in partnership with the city. This would help these coffee kiosks become more successful while simultaneously enhancing the city's public relations.

These kiosks could also serve as small help centers for veterans, where we could offer guidance and direct them to appropriate resources. We plan to work closely with the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) to ensure that our fellow veterans receive the support they need. Additionally, these kiosks could be equipped with NYPD cameras to enhance public safety. It is for our elected officials to do the right thing to the veterans. We have always been ignored by our beloved city , anyone who will support this would be rewarded by history , for the ones who will be against it are the ones who has no respect for our sacrifices to our Great Country

This is just an introductory proposal, and we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss it further. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely, May God Bless America , our armed forces and the ones who served and the ones who respect our sacrifices

Rabah Belkebir

Service-Connected Disabled Veteran (US Army)

[disabledamericanveteran72@gmail.com](mailto:disabledamericanveteran72@gmail.com) tel [REDACTED]

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

*LTC(R)*  
Name: Susan Wallace (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Self (Veteran)

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: Rabah Belkibir (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Disabled Veterans Vendors

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: 09/18/24

Name: Rabah Elmelech Cook (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 305 7th Ave

I represent: SAGE

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: 9/18/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ashlan Stewart

Address: 55 Water St. 46th Floor NY 10041

I represent: MJHS

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: Abigail Abramovich

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: Allen M. McFarlane

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Brooklyn NY 11241

I represent: NYU

Address: 60 Washington Sq South

**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: Aidel Jamila (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: street vendor

Address: veterans

**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: James Hendon (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DVS

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: Nicole Jordan-Jones (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DVS

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: 9/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MOUNT KACY

Address: HOME 1084

I represent: The Forgotten Veteran

Address: N/A

**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: 9/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicole Jordan Jones

Address: 1 Centre Street 12213 FLOR

I represent: DVS

Address: 1 Centre Street, NY, NY

**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: Walter Wells

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Street Vendors

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: 9/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cris Melendez

Address: 14th Flr

I represent: Forgotten Veteran

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: Michael Motos

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: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dondi McKellar

Address: N/A

I represent: NYC Civic Engagement Commission (PRAC)

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 delValle Ortiz

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: 9/11 Brooklyn Living Memorial

Address: Grace, ~~St~~ Senses Park Brooklyn

**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: JOE BELL

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NY METROUETS

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: Tim Pera

Address: 257 W. 29th St

I represent: Veterans Justice Project

Address: SAA

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: SEP 18 2024

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: JOSHUA SOOKLAL

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: HOPE FOR THE WARRIORS

Address: 55 WATER 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: 9/18/2024

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Fredena Hart

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ QV N/ing

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: 9/18/2024

Name: Armando Crescenzi (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 2335 Yates Avenue

I represent: Post Veterans First, Ltd

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Erin Verner (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 60 Madison Avenue

I represent: Community Health Care Network

Address: 60 Madison Ave

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