

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

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June 19, 2018
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm
14th Fl.

B E F O R E: CHAIM M. DEUTSCH
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Justin L. Brannan
Mathieu Eugene
Alan N. Maisel
Paul A. Valona

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

Jeff Roth, Deputy Commissioner
NYC Department of Veterans Services, DVS

Jamal Othman, Assistant Commissioner
City Employment, Education Entrepreneurship
Events and Engagement, CE5 Division
NYC Department of Veterans Services, DVS

Eric Henry, General Counsel
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Armando Crescenza, Veterans First

David Titus, Attorney with, Legal Health Division
New York Legal Assistance Group, NYLAG

Melissa Molfetas, Coordinating Attorney
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Hanna Sinoway, Senior Veteran Transition Manager
Operations and Outreach Lead, IAVA Rapid Response
Referral Program, RIP

Evans Wang, Chapter Leader, Operation Code

2 [sound check] [background comments,
3 pause] [gavel]

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet please.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Good morning
6 everyone. Firstly, I just want to thank the members
7 of the armed forces who give us our freedom that we
8 enjoy each and everyday, and let's take a moment of
9 silence for all those who made the ultimate sacrifice
10 and let's keep their families in our prayers and our
11 hearts. Let's take a moment of silence. [moment of
12 silence] Thank you very much. At 10 hundred hours
13 good afternoon. My name is Councilman Chaim Deutsch.
14 I'm the Chair of the Veterans Committee, and I would
15 like to thank all of you for being here, and I would
16 like to extend my warmest regards to the veterans who
17 are in attendance here today. This hearing will
18 focus on the services of that the city provides to
19 the 210,000 veterans that live across the five
20 boroughs. DVS has already gotten off to a good start
21 and the legislation we are considering simply seeks
22 to codify many of the department's existing
23 practices. Today we'll be hearing Intro 391 sponsored
24 by Council Members Ulrich and Brennan who—which
25 would—which would amend the Administration Code by

2 requiring DVS to provide counseling services to
3 veterans seeking assistance regarding federal, state
4 and local benefits to which they may be entitled to.
5 Intro 394 also sponsored by Council Members Ulrich
6 and Brennan would require DVS to establish a
7 resource centers in each borough and obliged by the
8 Commissioner to sub a report twice a year about the
9 operations of those resource centers. Intro 396
10 another bill sponsored by Council Members Ulrich and
11 Brennan would require DVS to maintain and
12 periodically update a resource guide for veterans.
13 It would be available both electronically and in
14 written format if requested. This guide will contain
15 information about eligibility for benefits and
16 instructions on how to apply for federal, state and
17 city benefits as well as health programs, legal and
18 housing services and educational and employment
19 opportunities. Finally, intro 647 sponsored by
20 Council Member Eugene would require DVS to establish
21 a peer support hotline for veterans and offer peer
22 support services and partnership with veteran
23 organizations. The number for this hotline as well
24 as other information about these peer support
25 services would be posted of the DVS website. The

2 department is now thank God fully staffed with a
3 budget of approximately \$4.4 million. It is large—it
4 is the largest agency of its kind in this country and
5 it is building out its services in a thoughtful and
6 deliberate way. I look forward to hearing from the
7 Administration today about how this legislation can
8 be improved, streamlined and integrated with existing
9 policy so that our service members are able to access
10 whatever it is that they need in a timely and
11 convenient manner. I also look forward to hearing
12 from advocates and veterans about their experience
13 accessing these services, and any insights they might
14 have on how to improve the services being provided
15 and fill any gaps in service and resource that
16 remain. I would like to thank the committee staff
17 counsel Muzat Santuri (sp?), Policy Analyst Michael
18 Kurtz and Finance Analyst Zachary Harris for their
19 work preparing this hearing. Finally, I would like
20 to recognize the committee members who have not
21 joined us yet. So, we'll skip that. We will now
22 hear from Council Member—actually, we will now hear
23 from—we're going to actually—we're going to swear you
24 in. So, in accordance with the rules of the Council,
25 and the counsel will now administer the affirmation

2 of witnesses from the Mayoral Administration. So,
3 pleas swear them.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Please raise your right
5 hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
6 truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony
7 before this committee, and to respond honestly to
8 Council Member questions?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: We do.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Okay, so we're
11 going to begin with I think Jeffrey Ross. We'll
12 start with you.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Good morning
14 Chair Deutsch, members of the Committee on Veterans
15 and bill sponsors Councilman Ulrich, Councilman
16 Brannan and Council Member Eugene. My name is Jeff
17 Roth and I'm the Deputy Commissioner for the New York
18 City Department of Veterans Services or DVS as we
19 like to say. I'm joined today by Assistant
20 Commissioner Jamal Othman who leads the City
21 Employment, Education Entrepreneurship events and
22 engagement for CE5 Division at DVS and our General
23 Counsel Eric Henry. On behalf of DVS, I'd like to
24 extend our appreciation for the citywide enthusiasm
25 and support, which contributed to another successful

2 set of New York City Fleet Week and Memorial Day
3 events. Everyday we see our city wrap its arms
4 closer around our veteran community. By way of
5 illustration, at a special ceremony held at City Hall
6 in May with the Mayor and Paul Zucant (sp?) Chair
7 Deutsch, Staten Island Borough President James Oddo,
8 veterans and Coast Guard Service members, New York
9 City was declared to be the latest and largest coast
10 Guard city in America. This is truly a testament to
11 the strides our city has made to become more military
12 friendly each and every day. In the past two years,
13 DVS has grown dramatically from a small four-person
14 mayoral office to an established city charter agency
15 with several divisions dedicated to specific
16 programmatic areas of outreach. In response to
17 previous discussions with the City Council, as well
18 as veteran advocates, the department has put
19 tremendous effort into that—into evaluating the best
20 possible practices for connecting with the veteran
21 population including the delivery of information and
22 resources to that community. The legislative
23 proposals that the sponsors have offered are
24 important and we are grateful for their input, but as
25 we continue to grow, it is vital that the agency

2 maintain flexibility in how we connect with veterans
3 and their families to the services they seek. I
4 welcome this opportunity to tell you about some of
5 the ways DVS currently conducts targeted outreach in
6 the New York City veterans community and how those
7 efforts are aligned with the goals of today's package
8 of bills. DVS supports in part the goals of Intro
9 No. 391, which would require DVS to provide
10 counseling services to veterans seeking assistance
11 with federal, state and city benefits that they may
12 be entitled to based on their military service.
13 However, the bill as drafted raises a potential legal
14 concern that we believe presents a significant
15 obstacle. DVS currently provides extensive
16 counseling to the city's veteran community. In 2017,
17 DVS established satellite sites co-located within the
18 borough president's offices in the Bronx, Manhattan,
19 Staten Island and Queens and at the Brooklyn
20 Workforce 1 Center on Bond Street where veterans and
21 their families are connected with resources and
22 opportunities for school, jobs and business
23 opportunities. Each site is staffed by a DVS
24 community outreach specialist who is trained to
25 assist veterans with applying for health, disability,

2 educational or pension benefits for which they may be
3 eligible. In addition, outreach specialists assist
4 veterans in filing for city benefits such as
5 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs, SNAP, and
6 NYCER's pension benefits. They connect veterans in
7 numerous ways. They help with referrals to local
8 legal service providers. They identify connections
9 from employment opportunities through a partnership
10 with SBS's Workforce 1 and the New York State
11 Division of Veteran Affairs. They encourage
12 entrepreneurship with Bunker Labs and they connect
13 veterans with educational services through CUNY and
14 SUNY to name just a few. The requirement that would
15 mandate that counseling services be provided by
16 agents or attorneys recognized by the United States
17 Department of Veterans Affairs is problematic. We
18 have identified potential liability concerns raised
19 by having city employees assume power of attorney
20 status for filing benefits claims on behalf of
21 veterans. For this reason it is more appropriate for
22 outreach specialists to continue assisting in the
23 preparation of veterans benefits package submissions
24 to the federal government, but not for them to assume
25 the legal role suggested by the bill referring formal

1 accreditation by the VA. In this, we note that DVS
2 is in excellent position to partner with other
3 entities to provide these types of services in
4 connection with packaged submissions. DVS supports
5 the goals in part of Intro No. 394, which would
6 require DVS to establish at least one veterans
7 resource center in each borough providing veterans
8 with free current information on housing, public and
9 private social services, financial assistance and tax
10 exemptions available to veterans. As I mentioned
11 earlier, in 2017, DVS established a citywide presence
12 with satellite sites co-located within the Borough
13 President's offices in the Bronx, Manhattan, Staten
14 Island, and Queens and at the Brooklyn Workforce 1
15 Center on Bond Street. We are grateful for the
16 support that our host offices in the five boroughs
17 have provided for these satellite sites for they are
18 a natural convening ground for the public and they
19 increase DVS' exposure to the veteran community.
20 Also, these sites are accessible by public
21 transportation and the department's outreach
22 specialists are trained to connect veterans and their
23 families to trusted resources available to them from
24 the city, state and federal governments. In this
25

2 way, these site service hubs where veterans can
3 receive one-on-one support to navigate and apply for
4 benefits such as the GI Bill, New York State tuition,
5 veteran property tax exemptions and local housing
6 support. The department understands the necessity
7 for staff to also be mobile in order to reach our
8 veteran population. Outreach specialists also
9 provide one-on-one counseling and advice on benefits
10 and resources at community board meetings, town halls
11 and other special events. In addition, the
12 department holds its monthly DVS office hours at
13 Civic Hall and West 22nd Street in Manhattan, where
14 veterans and all members of the New York City
15 community can learn more about the agency and provide
16 feedback on what we can do better to support our
17 service members. These office hours are held by DVS
18 Press Secretary Alexis Wichowski who advises on
19 different topics and resources available to the
20 veteran community and we encourage everyone to stop
21 by. The current satellite system functions well in
22 light of the size and limitation of the satellite
23 sites and staffing limitations of the agency. DVS
24 supports the goals of Intro No. 396, which would
25 require DVS to maintain and update a resource guide

2 for veterans containing information about eligibility
3 and the process of applying for federal, state, and
4 city veterans benefits. Special rights accorded to
5 the veterans under the law helped programs and
6 services, legal and housing services, small business
7 support, educational and employment opportunities and
8 other available resources for veterans. In the early
9 stages of DVS' establishment, the agency found that
10 the content and resources included in printed
11 resource guides changed with some regularity, and so
12 the most versatile way to maintain this information
13 would be online. To this end, the department
14 maintains all of the above information on its website
15 where veterans can explore what benefits they may be
16 eligible through the Get Help section. There's a
17 comprehensive range of information found on the site
18 with topics ranging from eligibility, and the process
19 for applying for federal, state and city veterans
20 benefits, special rights accorded to veterans under
21 the law, health programs and services, legal and
22 housing services, small business support, educational
23 and employment opportunities and other available
24 resources for veterans. For those veterans who might
25 not have access to a computer, they can call the DVS

2 main office where they are connected with an outreach
3 specialist in their borough for individual personal
4 service and navigating resources within 24 hours.
5 Printed materials on particular topics are also
6 mailed by DVS to a veteran upon request. DVS also
7 issues a monthly newsletter that describes our work
8 in the community, upcoming events and resources
9 available to veterans and their families. In
10 addition, information on veteran resources is
11 available through DVS social media, and we encourage
12 all veterans their families to take full advantage of
13 the information currently available. DVS supports
14 the goals of Intro No. 647, which would require DVS
15 to establish and publicize a peer support hotline and
16 other peer support services in partnership with
17 veterans associations and organizations that serve
18 veterans. Peer mentorship and support are valuable
19 tools for ensuring that both transitioning service
20 member, and those who may be removed from the
21 military for some time are able to lead fulfilling
22 and productive post-service lives. Towards that end,
23 DVS maintains a strong partnership with ProVetus,
24 which is a trained peer mentoring program that helps
25 veterans and service members successfully transition

2 from the military to the civilian sector. ProVetus
3 is also part of our Mentor a Vet Initiative and DVS
4 conducts direct referrals for veterans who wish to be
5 connected with peer support services at no charge.

6 In addition ProVetus is also a member of the New York
7 Serves platform where veterans and their families can
8 be connected to a constellation of service provides

9 across a myriad of needs. The DVS Mentor a Vet

10 Initiative includes of list of mentoring

11 organizations on the DVS website with links that

12 directly connect to each organization's page. The

13 list also includes information about the different

14 specialties and veteran's subpopulations that each

15 organization serves. For veterans who are homeless,

16 our Veteran Peer Coordinators from our Housing and

17 Support services team provide peer-to-peer engagement

18 to better understand the veterans housing needs, and

19 help them navigate the apartment search process.

20 This peer engagement continues after our veterans are

21 housed with a DVS after care coordinator following up

22 to ensure that all of our recently housed veterans

23 transition successfully to their new home, and

24 community. Additionally, any veteran or veteran

25 family struggling with housing stability can call our

2 main line or our After Care Hotline and receive
3 extensive homeless prevention assistance. All of
4 this is done in close coordination with our sister
5 agencies such as HRA and the many VA funded support
6 services for veteran families, SSVF providers in the
7 city. If veterans are experiencing a more
8 complicated or dramatic need for support such as
9 particular mental health needs, the Whole Health and
10 Community Resilience team connects them with
11 institutional partners such as the Steven A. Cohen
12 Family Clinic at NYU Langone, their local VA vet
13 center, NYC well, 311 or the VA Crisis hotline. DVS
14 welcomes the opportunity to expand its established
15 peer-to-peer support network, and looks forward to
16 partnering with many more organizations which fill
17 this need in the veterans community. We thank the
18 New York City Council for its continued support in
19 pushing forward the needs of veterans and their
20 families in New York City. We support the goals of
21 these bills where they do not duplicate current
22 processes at place—at DVS. As we continue to grow,
23 we will continue to implement innovative processes
24 such as the Satellite Site System for connecting
25 veterans and their families to the services they may

2 need. Thank you again for this opportunity to meet
3 with you today. At this time, I'd be happy to address
4 any of your questions.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you. Thank
6 you very much Jeffrey. So, we've been joined by
7 Council Member Brannan and Council Member Maisel.
8 Thank you. So, what I've heard is that you support
9 all these bills, which is—which is great and I
10 understand that many of these services you already
11 have. So, now, throughout the five boroughs if you
12 take a look, you have 210,000 veterans throughout the
13 city, and if you break them down by boroughs do you
14 have those numbers of how many veterans are currently
15 in each borough?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Yes, we do.
17 The largest is Queens followed by Brooklyn. I've got
18 percentages here. In Queens we have 27.9%. Brooklyn
19 is 25.7% followed by Manhattan at 18.3%, the Bronx
20 roughly 18% and Staten Island 10%.

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, when you speak
22 about having an office a DVS satellite office in each
23 borough, how many people does each office—how many
24 employees do you have in each office?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: We have one
3 outreach specialist that is assigned to each borough
4 and they hold office hours at the various locations
5 in each of the satellite sites.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, when you look
7 at the—the breakdown of all five boroughs you have
8 been getting the least amount of veterans in that
9 borough, Staten Island and then going to the Bronx
10 and Manhattan, and you have one person doing the
11 outreach in those three boroughs, but when you look
12 at Brooklyn and Queens where there are a large—
13 there's a larger amount of veterans so we still have
14 one person in Queens and the Bronx. So, how does it
15 work when the services are needed and the demand is
16 high, then the veterans come in, that by having one
17 in those Manhattan, Bronx ,and Staten Island and then
18 having that same one individual in Queens and
19 Brooklyn where you have a high population of
20 veterans. So, how—how does that balance out? When I
21 look at these bills I would think that maybe you
22 would need more than one in Queens and Brooklyn
23 because of the high population of veterans.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: So, the—the
25 one individual staff is the office hours at the

2 satellite sites, but we have a number of outreach
3 events that we attend. Others from our staff may
4 attend those events whether it's community board
5 events would be attended by senior staff members. We
6 act-we also have our Whole Health and Community
7 Resilience line of action, which has four outreach
8 coordinators that are also doing work in each of
9 those communities. So, while we have one staff
10 member that staffs the satellite site office hours,
11 we do have a whole host of resources that are
12 available in connecting with veterans outside of just
13 that forum.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Do you have the
15 amount of veterans that reach out in each borough
16 like daily?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: We do. [pause]
18 We have a monthly breakout. For example in 2018
19 through its satellite offices to date in the Bronx
20 we've had 91; Brooklyn we've had nearly 80; Manhattan
21 50; Queens a little bit lower at 20; and Staten
22 Island has been very high with a 100.

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: A 100. Can you just
24 repeat the—the population in all five boroughs again
25 if you don't mind?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Yep.

3 Absolutely. By percentage Queens was 27.9%, which is
4 roughly 58,000. Brooklyn was 25.7%, about 55,000.
5 Manhattan is 18% or 39,000. The Bronx is 18% about
6 37,500 and Staten Island 10% at about 21,500.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, when you look
8 at the population in Queens, you have—you have 58,000
9 and you mentioned the number 20 of people that
10 reached out to the office, and then in Brooklyn you
11 have a population of 55,000 and you mentioned 80
12 people, and then you look at the Bronx with a
13 population of 37,591 and then you look at Staten
14 Island it's 21,500 where you have a high amount of
15 veterans that reached out. So, when I'm looking at
16 all five boroughs, and the amounts of veterans that
17 each borough serves and the amount of peopled that
18 reach out to the service—for these services, I—I just
19 can' believe that like in Queens that has the highest
20 population and only 20 veterans actually reached out
21 for services. So, I'm back to my previous question
22 is that having one—one office staffed by one peer
23 counselor if that's—if that's sufficient enough
24 because if you have the highest population of 58,000
25 in Queens and there's only 20 people that took

2 advantage of the services, I cannot believe out of
3 58,000 there's only 20 people that needed these
4 services. So, that's why I'm going to take another
5 look to make sure that one peer counselor is-is
6 sufficient because maybe you need definitely maybe
7 two or three, and this way we-we could reach out to
8 those larger 58,000 people because Staten Island has
9 21,500, which is a smaller borough, but you have 100
10 people the veterans that reached out. So, maybe
11 because Staten Island is smaller, and it's easier for
12 people to get there and to receive those services.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Uh-hm. Yeah,
14 and in the data I don't have in front of me is the
15 number of interactions. So, while only 20 went to
16 the Queens Satellite location, there are other places
17 where they could receive support from DVS so they
18 could be calling 311 and transferred to our main
19 location. Folks from Queens may be coming into our
20 main location because we do a number of interactions
21 there as well. We're at other community events. So,
22 they may not be going in as high of numbers to our
23 satellite location, but they may be interacting with
24 our staff at other locations.

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, that's, you
3 know, it's—with the transit system and, you know,
4 people, you know, people have a difficult time making
5 ends meet and not having vehicles and paying for
6 insurances and everything. So, you know, we don't
7 want to have veterans going from one borough to
8 another borough to seek those services. They should
9 be able to go into their borough to seek those
10 services, and what troubles me is that the services
11 are there. We have the services. It's not like they
12 have to come up and figure out how we are going to
13 take care of the veterans. So, I think there's like
14 a little neglect when it comes to outreach. I
15 wouldn't say neglect. Maybe a lack of manpower
16 because I think we need to do a better job to reach
17 out to those veterans in each borough and they should
18 receive the services from their borough, and calling
19 311, you know, I have to try it. I have to try
20 calling 311 to see how they direct you to make sure
21 because we keep on telling everyone call 311 and
22 you'll get the services. So, I'm going to call up as
23 a veteran. I'm not a veteran, but I will call up
24 like that I'm a veteran I'd like the services to see
25 how 311 actually directs an individual to the

2 services that are needed. And if 311 does a good job
3 by directing the veterans those services, then may be
4 need to do publicity outreach to let people know that
5 311 is the way to go, and if that doesn't work, we
6 need to better the 311 system when it comes to our
7 veterans, and also, I think looking at these bills
8 and like, you know, that the Administration is
9 supporting them, but we should look at expanding the
10 peer counselors in each borough and making sure that
11 the 58,000 people in queens and the 55,000 in
12 Brooklyn and including Manhattan and Staten Island
13 and the Bronx that they have proper outreach, and do
14 veterans know that you definitely could come here for
15 services, and the services are there. You know, we
16 don't have to come up with any new services. You
17 know, we have—everything is in place and you guys are
18 doing a great job, and I just want to thank the
19 Commissioner. I know she's on vacation now. If
20 she's watching now, she's doing a phenomenal job, and
21 she's really a great partner, and she picks up the
22 phone and like I said last, you know, the last
23 hearing the 11:00 or 12:00 in the morning, she's
24 always, always available. I wish the hotline was
25 like that. Maybe we should transfer the hotline to

2 the Commissioner's cellphone. [laughter] That would
3 be—that wouldn't be a bad idea.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Not when she's
5 on vacation.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, so I'll just—
7 before I continue I just want to give my colleagues
8 an opportunity. So, first, we have a bill here
9 sponsored by Council Member Mathieu Eugene who is
10 sponsoring Intro No. 647 a Local Law requiring DVS to
11 establish peer support outlined for veterans. So, I
12 want to give Council Member Eugene an opportunity to
13 speak on his bill.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very
15 much, Chair Deutsch, and let me take the opportunity
16 first and foremost to say thank you also. We thank
17 Jeffrey Roth for your testimony. Thank you, Deputy
18 Commissioner. Thank you, and good morning. Good
19 morning Chair Deutsch and my fellow colleagues on the
20 Veterans Committee. My name is Mathieu Eugene. As
21 you know, I am a member of the committee. Chairman
22 Deutsch, thank you for providing me the opportunity
23 to discuss my bill Intro 647, which requires the
24 Office of Veterans Affairs establish a peer support
25 hotline and other peer support services that would

2 partner with the Veterans Association and other
3 organizations, which service veterans. As someone
4 who has served on the Veterans Committee for much of
5 my tenure in the City Council, I know so very well
6 the many great challenges that the devoted men and
7 women who are defending our country face when they
8 return to civilian life. Our veterans are people who
9 made the tremendous sacrifices for all of us, and
10 there is no question that all should have the highest
11 level of gratitude and respect for what they have
12 done to help preserve our freedom and tenet that we
13 hold to be the most sacred. Our veterans understand
14 that most people have no military background and will
15 be unable to relate. That is why they need and
16 deserve all the support they have that they can
17 receive from the very same society and people who
18 they sacrificed everything for. Most important for
19 them is having programs and systems in place where
20 they have support and guidance from fellow Americans
21 who have shared many of the things that they have
22 experienced and are particularly attuned to the
23 challenges they face on a regular basis. Intro 647
24 will create a valuable partnership between the Office
25 of Veterans Affairs, and organization, which must

2 proceed for our population of veterans. I commend
3 the current administration, Chairman Deutsch and my
4 colleagues in the City Council for expanding an
5 improvement upon the services that New York provides
6 to our veterans but we, of course, must always strive
7 to do even more, and I know that this legislation
8 will signify another positive step forward. And I
9 want to take the opportunity also to thank all the
10 veterans who are her and those also of them who are
11 not here. I want to congratulate you, and I want to
12 thank you from the bottom my heart for your service.
13 Thank you very much, and thank you Chair Deutsch.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, Council
15 Member Mathieu Eugene. Any questions to add? No.
16 Okay, so, based on the amount of veterans that
17 reached out to DVS are these through a hotline call
18 or are they walk-ins?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Mr. Chair it's
20 a combination of phone, walk-ins and extensive
21 outreach performed by our Outreach Specialists in the
22 five boroughs. In addition to having their satellite
23 sties, they really use that as a launching pad to
24 delve deeply into the communities and the boroughs
25 that they're working in to meet the veterans where

2 it's most convenient to them. So, that's the primary
3 form is that peer-to-peer, and we think that Council
4 Member Eugene has really highlighted that peer to
5 peer. That's—that's really a place that we're going
6 as we evolve this agency. We understand and
7 recognize the veterans appreciate that one-on-on
8 concierge type service, but when it comes to how
9 we're interacting with the veteran community, it's
10 primarily the one-on-one that—that's happening in the
11 Outer Boroughs, and then in Manhattan it's either
12 walk-ins or phone calls.

13 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And that is—is that
14 a full-time job for that individual, the peer
15 counselor to be at this satellite office? Is that a
16 part-time job or a full-time job?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: So, these are
18 full-time staff and they staff the—the sites. I
19 would—I would stay away from using the term office
20 because they're actually within an office. So,
21 actually a desk and—and a space where they work in
22 conjunction with the host site. So, for instance in
23 the Bronx Borough President's Office they work
24 closely with the outreach staff there. The only
25 difference I our reach staff are—are veteran

2 specific, and in many cases are veterans themselves.
3 So, I's full-time staff member yes, but they don't
4 maintain full-time staff hours at the site.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, what is the
6 exact job description of that individual who works at
7 the satellite office?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: In a nutshell
9 the—the goal of the Outreach Specialist is to help
10 veterans and their family members navigate all the
11 various programs, benefit services that may be
12 eligible to them because of their military service.

13 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Okay, so, I just
14 want to ask you to maybe look over the numbers. Not
15 today, but because like in Queens when you mentioned
16 that 20 people reached out, you know, that's one
17 month, right? For rent? [I hope it's for rent.
18 [background comments, pause]

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: That's—that's—
20 that's year to day 2018.

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, for the full
22 year 20 people?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Of this year,
24 yes so--

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: How is it possible
3 for only 20 people who reached out if it's a full-
4 time job? I mean if it's a part-time job it should
5 be 2,000 people or--

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: So, we--we
7 have--we have just office hours three two to three
8 times a week, and they're not full days. They depend
9 on the demand of walk-ins. If the demand of walk-ins
10 have gotten lower that outreach specialist is trained
11 to then spend their time most effectively, which is
12 out in the community going to the veterans. If
13 veterans don't come to us, we're going to go to them.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: You know, something
15 doesn't add up here. If I was working at one of
16 your--one of the sites, if I was working in Queens and
17 I'm going to meetings, veterans--the veterans and I'm
18 going to so many different organizations and people
19 that are involved with veterans and then I have--I
20 have a full-time job and people come into my officer
21 and there is a hotline number. Does each borough
22 have a hotline where that peer counselor is--situated?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: We have--we
24 have a phone system that allows anyone to call our
25 main number and it--it--

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Okay, you know,
3 I'll get to that.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: I'll get to that in
6 minute. I'll get to my next question, but it just
7 doesn't add up to me that again if-if I was working
8 out of Queens and for the full 2018, and I had-my job
9 is to reach out to veterans and provide services, I'm
10 constantly hearing from-from advocates that, you
11 know, we-we need, you know, a lot of veterans need
12 services. So, 20 would be maybe 20 veterans a day,
13 you know, to reach out to.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: So, I--

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: [interposing] Not--
16 not 20 veterans--not--

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Chair I think
18 what this--this number doesn't include is our reach.
19 So the outreach that we're doing in those outreach
20 efforts how many veterans that we're connecting with
21 outside of the satellite locations. So, we'll--we'll
22 ow that. We'll put those numbers together. With
23 this number, the 20 is referring to is just those
24 that have come to that specific location.

25 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH:

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Yeah, but it
3 still doesn't add up because if-if you're spending
4 money on-on each borough to have the location for
5 veterans, we have to use those resources that we have
6 to make sure that the veterans know that this is a
7 place for you to come, and to have 20 for four years
8 like is like unacceptable.

9 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: That's right and I
10 think what we can do is put the numbers together that
11 show how many veteran that we've connected with, our
12 outreach coordinators in Queens have connected with
13 through all of the different resource fairs they
14 attend, community events they attend and that, that
15 number doesn't reflect the 20.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, but that
17 should be all in additional to the-to the boroughs.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: That's right,
19 yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, I mean if you
21 come back to me and tell me that through the other
22 resources you reached out to 50,000, I'll be-that
23 will be-I'll be very happy about that, but then just
24 to have, you know, I don't want to look at the full
25 number. We'll talk about that maybe at the next

2 hearing, but I'm talking specifically about each
3 borough of how that full-time worker is reaching out
4 to the veterans. Now, in each borough that person
5 is—is he a veteran or she a veteran?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: In most cases
7 yes. In one case it's a spouse someone who served in
8 the military.

9 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Okay, so I mean
10 reaching out to 20 people a year is—

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: So, I should
12 just reiterate, it's not reaching out to 20 people,
13 20 people came in and were provided services. They
14 reached out to hundreds maybe even thousands during
15 that same period. We just don't have the number

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So from those
17 thousands I mean people say oh, I'm good. I'm okay,
18 nothing—I'm happy?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: No, we also
20 provided services. This is specific to the site for
21 those particular hours.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Okay. So, I—I just
23 want to mention that in the last six months when I
24 became Chair of the Veterans Committee, I have
25 already—I think I've gone to all five boroughs

2 visiting different homeless shelter, veteran homeless
3 shelters and supportive housing and I'm going to—I'm
4 going to make it my business now to go visit all five
5 locations in all five boroughs and see how—see how it
6 operates, and then maybe I'll take a walk with a peer
7 counselor to reach out to some of those organizations
8 to see how they do the outreach. I—I just hope that
9 the next time we sit here those numbers go a lot
10 higher because this is totally—like I'm going to say
11 it again, to hit about 20 and 80 and 50 and 91 and
12 again it just proves it because in Staten Island it's
13 a small boroughs and the numbers went up, and even
14 100 throughout—for 2018 is a very low number having
15 21,500 veterans in Staten Island. That also is kind
16 of low. So, I'm going to move on. This is something
17 we need to look into, and that's why some of these
18 bills are actually important and this hearing is
19 important, and I—I really, you know, I speak to DVS
20 all the time and I speak to the Commissioner, I never
21 knew that these numbers—they're kind of disturbing.
22 So, what is the process for a veteran to get help at
23 one of the—one of the satellite offices. So, can you
24 just elaborate a little bit on that?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Well, if
3 they're a walk-in the walk-in hours don't--don't need
4 any sort of appointments. Any veteran or family
5 members could walk in and see one of our outreach
6 specialists. Our outreach specialists should then
7 train--

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: [interposing] So,
9 there's one person per satellite office?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, you mentioned
12 that that individual might be out at community
13 events. So what happen when 9:00 to 5:00 and she or
14 she is out at a community event and they come
15 knocking on the door? Who answers the door?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: So, we
17 published officer hours where we always have someone
18 on site. When outside of those published office
19 hours that are publicized, again this is a desk
20 within a host site.

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, I understand.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: They would--they
23 would interact with someone at the host site who
24 would then take down their information for the
25 Outreach Specialist.

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, is that person
3 who is going to be at the host site, is he or she a
4 veteran?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Sometimes they
6 are. Sometimes they're not.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Is he or she
8 trained?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: I can't—I
10 can't answer that. Where it's—it's up to the host
11 site.

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, so, we don't
13 know—the host site doesn't work with DVS with that?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Correct.

15 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, we don't know
16 how many people like those numbers in Queens, you
17 mentioned 20 people that came for help in 2018. That
18 number could be a lot higher because we don't know
19 how many people maybe may have got turned away
20 because that person who works in—who is the host at
21 that site, just say—will say come back another time.
22 No one is here and not take the information. Do you
23 have like a sign-in sheet that someone at that hot
24 site will take down information for the peer
25 counselor?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Yes, they'll
3 take down the information and make the referral to
4 the outreach specialist.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And that still adds
6 up to 0 in Queens?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Is there a hotline
9 at the host site?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: There is not.
11 I t's a desk and a chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Alright, I think
13 this is something we still need to, you know, work to
14 be done and to see how we could make sure. You know,
15 I'm not looking to raise the numbers just to raise
16 the numbers, but I'm sure that if, you know, we speak
17 to the [squawking mic] 58,000 veterans in Queens and
18 ask them is that—everything is okay, I don't they're
19 all going to say that, yeah, that everything is fine
20 and there—there's no issues, and you might as well—
21 you might say, you know, yeah, we have—you know, we
22 don't know who to reach out to, and we—or we went to
23 this satellite office, and nobody was there. So we
24 have to figure out how to do a better job at these
25 satellite offices, and make sure that those veterans

2 get-get reached out to because with 210,000 veterans
3 and 210,000 veterans in the city of New York and five
4 satellite sites, and a total of-350,000 approximately
5 veterans at these five sites in all five boroughs
6 actually receive some type of interaction with the
7 peer counselor at these sites. It doesn't add up. It
8 doesn't make sense.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: I think, Mr.
10 Chair, once we-once we get those numbers for you for
11 the veterans and family members that we do interact
12 and assist outside of the satellite sites in that
13 borough, I think it will provide a clear picture, but
14 we're-but we're happy to discuss how we can make any
15 improvements with you.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah, I just-I
17 appreciate it. I just want to make sure that those
18 satellites are not a waste of time. Either we like
19 staff those satellites and make sure that someone is
20 there from 9:00 to 5:00 or we close them up, and we
21 figure out something else, another way to reach out
22 to the veterans, or maybe that peer counselor, the
23 staffer should be out in the field all the time
24 referring to one main location. So, instead of
25 having the veterans come to you, this is something

2 that needs to be discussed with advocates and DVS and
3 to see how we could make this better. Now, are there
4 any new developments DVS has been working on with
5 regards to the satellite offices? Like we just spoke
6 about trying to improve these satellite offices. So,
7 was there anything that you have plans on doing a
8 better job in reaching out or this is the status quo?
9 This is what it is.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: So, the
11 satellite sites were just a start, and we always
12 envision the satellite sites as launching pads to go
13 deeper into the community, and go into areas that are
14 typically not serviced by outreach specialists or by
15 other veteran service organizations. So, one of the
16 things that we want to do as we evolve, and we have
17 been doing is our outreach specialists have become
18 more mobile. So, outside of those committed office
19 hours, they're grabbing their laptop. They're
20 grabbing their phones. They have access to the
21 Internet, and when they interact with veterans out
22 where it's convenient to the veteran, they could
23 provide services right there on the spot. So,
24 they're—they're a walking office so to speak.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Got it.

3 Alright, before I give—my colleagues have some
4 questions here, but before, I have one more question
5 before I give it over to Council Member Mathieu
6 Eugene. Who in DVS has oversight? Who is in charge
7 of the oversight on all these five satellites? Do
8 you have someone who looks over these satellite
9 offices in all five boroughs or you just send them
10 out and say okay, just go—go out there and do
11 outreach and, you know, come back tomorrow at 9:00 in
12 the morning.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: So,
14 supervision of the staff themselves is DVS and that
15 falls under me. The oversight of the satellite sites
16 themselves is—is done—it's a partnership with the
17 host sites, but ultimately the host site is the owner
18 of the space.

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Okay, Council
20 Member Eugene, you have questions?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Yes. Thank you
22 very much, Mr. Chair. I know that the chairman has
23 asked several questions about the 20 people who six
24 are assistants or help, but when we know that in New
25 York City we have over 20,000 veterans in New York

2 City, and in Queens now we have over 50,000, you
3 know, veterans. So, 20 people we don't know. How do
4 we explain that? That's—that's unbelievable, but I'm
5 not going to ask questions about the 20 people
6 because, you know, they've been asked so many
7 questions about it already. But if somebody asks you
8 why you believe that only 20 people reach out, you
9 know, to their organization for—for assistance, only
10 20 people, why? So, can we explain—how we can
11 explain that among over 50,000 people in Queens and
12 over 20,000 people in New York City, only 20 veteran
13 reach out, you know, to you for help. Since we know
14 that with veterans they are facing so many
15 challenges, and I think—because what I'm saying is we
16 know that the veterans they are facing so many
17 challenges and I can tell you honestly, I walk on the
18 street, and many people come to me they are veterans.
19 They say, Council Member, we have trouble. We need
20 help, and I remember I went—I was in one of the old
21 hotels, you know, just for a visit, and I witnessed a
22 situation facing by a veteran. The guy was mad and
23 sad, and everyone is not acceptable, because you see
24 he doesn't know what to do, what to do. So, what
25 would your answer to that? Why only 20 people? 20

2 veterans? I know that you have, you know, I'm not
3 talking about that, which that you have done reaching
4 out to people and veterans in the community and
5 providing services in other ways. I'm talking about
6 people reaching out to the organization.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Yeah, I think
8 we could all have a talk, you know, think about all
9 different ways of why veterans may not or are not
10 coming into satellite offices or are seeking
11 services. I think—I think you—you're very right. I
12 think if you talk to veterans one of the biggest
13 things that they'll tell you is that they didn't know
14 services and programs exist whether it's federal,
15 state or city level, which is why as an agency we
16 needed our mission to focus on navigation. When it
17 comes to why you're not seeing more numbers, again,
18 it could be a whole host of reasons. I can't predict
19 why. I think one of the things that we can work
20 together on is and knowing that a lot of veterans
21 don't know these services exist is on publicity. I
22 think we could—I think we could work together on more
23 communication about the fact that you have this new
24 agency in the city with—with your local communities.
25 They didn't know that they could get services. When

2 you interact with veterans like you said, that have
3 challenges and issues, send them directly to us.
4 Make that direct warm hand-off. As a veteran I could
5 tell you we can be a little bit stubborn. It's not as
6 easy as saying, well, you know what, there's a
7 service office right over there. Just walk over
8 there tomorrow. Sometimes you have to push them a
9 little bit, and that's where we need the help of
10 family member, of the public and of our elected
11 officials. So, I think—I think that could be
12 potentially one of the—one of the things that we
13 could work together on to improve is the publicity of
14 the office, of the satellite sites and of the
15 services that we provide and we would love to work
16 better on the communication aspect.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: With all due
18 respect, you know, the lack of knowledge of
19 information, you know, that prevent the veteran to
20 seek assistance, I have been hearing that since I
21 came to the City Council, since I was the Chairman of
22 the Veterans Committee myself. We had several public
23 hearings over that to improve the outreach to
24 veterans to make them know that these program exist.
25 Because for people who made the—that must sacrifice,

2 you know the four of us including their life in
3 Beijing, when they came back to New York and they are
4 suffering because of lack of information. This is
5 not acceptable, not acceptable. They deserve much
6 more than that. I think that that should be one of
7 the priorities of DVS to make sure you will do an
8 aggressive ad, which let the people know that if we
9 have the services, we have the services, we have the
10 resources, come on, we got to make the effort, you
11 know, for the veteran to use the services because
12 they need it or they need the services. They need
13 that because I'm telling you honestly when I walk the
14 street and I saw some veterans who fought for this
15 country and the conditions they are living, the
16 challenges they are facing, it is not acceptable. I
17 feel very upset about it. It is very, very
18 embarrassing. So, I wish, you know, my hope is to
19 see that the DVS, you know, put the—make this a
20 priority to reach out to the veteran to make sure
21 that they know the services exist. It is sad for
22 people after serving and they come back, they have
23 really—you know that they have trouble. They need
24 assistance, and the other thing that I want to say,
25 and I know, right, because my father always say, My

2 son, there's no perfection. I don't say that you
3 aren't doing the best that you can do. I don't—you
4 don't do anything. This is not what I'm saying but
5 there's always ways of striving to do better, and my
6 father always say that there's no perfection. Every
7 single day, my son you got to go to bed. Before you
8 go to bed, think about what you have done during the
9 day, what you have done during the week, and see what
10 was good, how can you improve what you have done.
11 So, I know you have an outreach and a system, but
12 could you tell us about the way or the technique or
13 the system that you use to evaluate the outreach that
14 you have been doing is working? Because you have to
15 evaluate. If you are trying to reach out to some
16 people, you say my goal is to reach 100 people today.
17 You got to get a goal. A hundred people today, If I
18 don't—at the end of the day, I go back and say did I
19 reach one of the people? If not, why? If I did, can
20 I reach 200 tomorrow. So what is your evaluation
21 system just to qualify, you know, how many people you
22 reach every time and to evaluate if your outreach
23 system works?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: So, first off,
25 I want to thank your father for those wise words of

2 wisdom. I think he's absolutely right, and—and we'd
3 love to discuss with you further any ideas for
4 enhancing outreach. So, that's without saying. When
5 it comes to evaluation, we are striving to be come
6 more of a data driven organization. As you know,
7 when you ere the chair under the Mayor's Office of
8 Veterans Affairs, it was a very small office, four to
9 five people, and they reacted more like they did a
10 great job with what they had, but they were more
11 reactionary. We want to be more proactive based on
12 what the needs are in the community, and only data
13 could tell us that, evaluation like you just said.
14 So, with regard to that, what we are doing is we are
15 taking steps to establish a CRN system whereas before
16 we were using, you know, rudimentary tracking systems
17 that really didn't tell you any sort of intelligence
18 that you could act on. It just basically tracked
19 basic information whereas now we are instituting a
20 CRN system that will be able to track all the data.
21 We'll be able to input it, all the satellite sites,
22 folks at the main office, walk-ins. You have one
23 source to input information that will be able to
24 crunch those numbers and will be able to make real
25 time, evaluative decision making based on that data.

2 That's what we're currently working on, and that is
3 our goal and what we are striving for.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: And thank you
5 very much and thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, and
6 we in this—in the committee—the Veteran's Committee
7 we are willing to work together with you, and I know
8 the chair, this is the goal of the chair, and to see
9 how we can work together to improve the outreach
10 system. These are all the things they deserve so
11 much, and we owe them so much also. Thank you very
12 much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, Council
14 Member Eugene. Council Member Brannan.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you,
16 Chair. I wanted to go back to Brooklyn and Queens.
17 Brooklyn obviously is very near and dear to my heart.
18 Both boroughs have more than 50,000 veterans, and I
19 assume they have additional—additional needs that the
20 other boroughs may, you know, with less—less than the
21 veteran population may not have. Not only have you
22 considered adding services and staff to these
23 boroughs that have larger veteran populations, but do
24 you have info on sort of how as far as equity with,

2 you know, how equal each borough is served relative
3 to the borough's veteran population?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: What I could
5 tell you is that we have five staff, we have five
6 boroughs and we based on the need because you're
7 right there are varying needs in each borough. We
8 adjust the--the staffing of those sites. So, for
9 instance, there may be a lot of activity going on in--
10 in Brooklyn a particular month or a particular week.
11 We would bolster that one outreach specialist with a
12 staff from some other borough that is not--that does
13 not have as much activity for that week or month. We
14 also have staff that work at our main office that
15 could also reinforce any particular borough who
16 happens to have more activity. So, whenever there's
17 an increase in demand we've been able to meet it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: So, of on an A
19 la carte basis I guess.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Well, I've
21 got--from time to time we can make adjustments, but
22 most of the time we've been able to identify the
23 correct amount of resources for each borough.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay. I mean is
25 it--is it something that you're keeping an eye on? I

2 mean I assume, you know, with-with all due respect to
3 Staten Island, they have the lowest—they have the
4 lowest veteran population. I would assume, you know,
5 Brooklyn or Queens would require more on a resource
6 level than Staten Island did.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: I can't speak
8 to what the exact needs of each borough are. I think
9 we're making the assumption larger—larger population
10 more needs. With a larger borough also come other
11 organizations that also provide support services,
12 but—but I think ultimately yes, there would be an
13 increase in—in needs. What I can say is right now
14 we've been able to meet those needs whether we need
15 those going forward, I can't speak to that. I think
16 when we institute the CRN and we learn more about the
17 population that we're serving, I think we'll, you
18 know, course correct as needed to provide those
19 additional resources where needed.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay. Yeah, and
21 I think I—I, you know, speak for the Chair and that
22 we want you to succeed. So, I mean I think that
23 there are needs there. You know, it's—it's up to you
24 guys to let us know, but yeah, I mean look I'm basing
25 it on just the data that's before me that I looking

2 at this, you know, in supply and demand—purely in a
3 supply and demand sort of fashion, I would assume
4 Brooklyn and Queens that the largest that are in
5 population, they're going to need more than the guys
6 in Staten Island and the Bronx, and that's just, you
7 know, it's—it's up to us, up to us, it's up to you to
8 make sure we're looking after that. Thank you.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Thank you,
10 Council Member.

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, Council
12 Member. So, I'm not going to take up all morning to
13 ask you questions, but I think we understand where we
14 are at right now, and you know, if—if I—if there's a
15 car dealer that purchases 20 cars, and that person
16 doesn't advertise, no one is buying cars, and the
17 only way for people to come down and even look at the
18 cars is by them reaching out and advertising and
19 everything. So, I see there is really, you know, I'm
20 just like, you know, these numbers and I'm—I'm going
21 to be going out to all five boroughs, and we'll with
22 the next hearing, I'd like to just know, have a
23 better idea of what, you know, what Council Member
24 Mathieu Eugene mentioned is that, you know, people
25 say in the Police Department there's a quota. You've

2 got come back with a certain amount of tickets. I
3 would like to see a quota here not in the Police
4 Department but with DVS that they should be mandated
5 to reach and say, you know, something. You got to—
6 you got to strive every day to reach out to more and
7 more people, and just to get those numbers up, and to
8 get the services better. Many of the veterans they
9 don't have computers at home and I—I would also like
10 to see by visiting the homeless shelters, the veteran
11 homeless shelters is that many veterans are waiting
12 for housing. They have been already told that we are
13 preparing an apartment for you whether it's an
14 apartment of supportive houses and they complain.
15 They're saying it's been like five months when they
16 told me this and nothing has happening. So, I would
17 like to see more, you know, from DVS being involved
18 with those veterans who are in these homeless
19 shelters spread out throughout the city to streamline
20 the process and to make sure that if there is an
21 apartment available, it should remain empty. And
22 while visiting some of supportive housing, there were
23 empty—empty rooms, empty apartments, and some of the
24 reasons why they weren't occupied yet because it is
25 unfortunate there's—a veteran passed away, and the

2 NYPD closed up that apartment and it took weeks
3 before they unsealed it. So I spoke. I had a
4 conversation with the Police Commissioner about this
5 that we need to make sure that especially in
6 supportive housing for those that are looking for it
7 as an end, if an apartment is closed up, sometimes
8 it's, you know, if it's something like an unfortunate
9 situation where there's family members, I mean when
10 there' family members sometimes they have to wait for
11 the family to pick up their belongings. So, that's
12 understandable, but if there's no family and they
13 can't find the family, then they should have to wait
14 weeks for the NYPD to come and unseal that apartment
15 because the detective may be too busy. So, those
16 apartments need to be opened right away, and veterans
17 must be able to move into those apartments, and out
18 of the homeless shelter. So, I want to thank you for
19 your partnership and—and I'm sorry, you know. I, you
20 know, we speak a lot, we speak on the phone. We have
21 meetings and I'm proud to say that with my—through
22 my—with my colleagues in the City Council we're able
23 to—we're able to raise the initiatives in the City
24 Council an additional million dollars for our veteran
25 groups, and I want to thank all those—veteran

2 advocates and those who do it as a job and those who
3 volunteer, and I see plenty of people in here who
4 just do it out of their heart, and who are veterans
5 themselves. So, I want to thank you for everything
6 you do on behalf of, you know, the veterans. There's
7 maybe 20--10,000 veterans in the city of New York and
8 the veterans across our country, and you all really,
9 you know, are really dedicated, and I always made a
10 commitment and I don't think anyone could tell me I
11 didn't say this that when people have to reach out to
12 me, they speak to my Deputy Chief of Staff who is
13 over there and make an appointment, and I put it on
14 my schedule. But for all the veteran groups and for
15 any veteran throughout the city of New York I tell
16 them no appointment necessary. You could just walk
17 into my office any time. It's an open door policy,
18 and I want to just reiterate that to each and every
19 one of you, and I'm looking forward to doing great
20 things together and working with DVS. So, thank you,
21 Deputy Commissioner for coming down here and
22 testifying, and I'm looking forward to the next
23 hearing and also thank you for your support in
24 codifying these bills, and working with my colleagues
25 to make sure that the voices are heard, an this

2 partnership is there, and my goal again is to not
3 reduce veteran homelessness, but to totally eliminate
4 veteran homelessness and I'm working with my
5 colleagues on Borden Avenue Jimmy Van Bramer to come
6 up with some type of solution maybe to expand the
7 Borden Avenue location to do a rezoning for all
8 veterans to turn into supportive housing, and also
9 working with HPD for set-asides and—and there's
10 nothing less that we should do for our veterans. So,
11 thank you very much. We will now listen to the
12 advocates who are going to be testifying here. Thank
13 you.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ROTH: Great. Thank
15 you, Chair for your leadership and partnership.

16 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you.

17 [background comments, pause] David Titus from NYLAG,
18 Melissa Molfetsa. If I pronounce your name wrong, I
19 apologize ahead of time. Reed Bennett. Armando
20 Crescenza [pause] Oh, we'll go—we'll go clockwise.

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yeah. [background
22 comments, pause]

23 ARMANDO CRESCENZA: My name is Armando
24 Crescenza with Veterans First. I'm from the Bronx
25 District 13. My Councilman is the Honorable Mark

2 Gjonaj. I come here today because there are a few
3 things that I'd like to say about outreach and
4 veteran services, and how the city is reaching out
5 and I may have some suggestions to assist the
6 Department of Veterans Services do a little bit of a
7 better job. I'm in favor of all proposals. It just
8 the fact that how many more—how many more veteran
9 service organizations does the city need to provide
10 the type of services that the Department of Veterans
11 Services is purporting to provide. I mean are they
12 more than just an overpaid bulletin board. I mean
13 are they just a referral service? I hear words like
14 interacting, connecting, assisting, providing,
15 servicing. I mean are they more than just a human
16 telephone book. What are they doing? I've been
17 interviewed at City Hall on the 22nd Floor at the
18 Department of Veterans Services. The interview went
19 on for an hour. We came up with a lovely checklist
20 of all the places I'm going to be sent to for the
21 services that I need. That was months ago. I never
22 had a follow-up, right. So, even though I'm in favor
23 of satellite services throughout the boroughs, if
24 we're going to replicate a service that really is
25 redundant to begin with all the other veteran

2 services and organizations out there, shouldn't we
3 get good at first? I mean shouldn't the Department
4 of Veteran Affairs come up with the numbers to prove
5 that they are worthy of the funding to go out and
6 help veterans who need help. Having said that, I
7 want to go to my testimony.

8 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: I think your time
9 is up.

10 ARMANDO CRESCENZA: [laughter] Anyway, I
11 work as a street vendor.

12 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: So, I just want to
13 answer your question. So, first of all, like I
14 mentioned before, we have been able to raise the
15 Veterans Initiative to \$2.3 million this year, which
16 went to approximately 15 different advocate groups
17 and I met with the Commissioner just last week, and
18 we will be having a roundtable meeting with all these
19 organizations and all the advocates, as well as the
20 Commissioner and the staff. Each organization will
21 be providing the services that we'll explaining the
22 services that they—that provide to the veterans and
23 there will be oversight to make sure that the
24 veterans whatever their needs are met. There is a
25 certain gap in services. So this year I was proud

2 to, you know, add additional funding to some other
3 groups to close that gap, and I'm sure we'll still
4 find more gaps in services in certain ways, and
5 whenever you just spoke, whatever you just mentioned,
6 we're going to make sure that it's not just
7 referrals. It's that veterans are being helped, and
8 you'll come back at the next hearing if you want, and
9 if you have any specifics, you could always speak to
10 me after hearing, and we'll get to the bottom of it.
11 It's nice to know,

12 ARMANDO CRESCENZA: I do have one other
13 point specifically. As a disabled vet, I street
14 vend. Pursuant to New York State Law GBL35, New York
15 State Law provides that disabled vets can street vend
16 anywhere in the city of New York. What has happened—
17 we're speaking about outreach, and this is kind of
18 like a shutdown because since the Department of
19 Veterans Services has been created when I call the
20 Council Members they tell me oh, you're in luck. We
21 have the Department of Veterans Services who can help
22 you, and then I call the Department of Veterans
23 Services and they refuse to help us with any street
24 vending issues at all. We need help with all the
25 agencies, Department of Health, MTA, Department of

2 Transportation. I mean citywide we need help. So,
3 we're talking about outreach, we're getting shutdown
4 in a lot of ways, and just to wrap things up as
5 succinctly as possible, Department of Consumer
6 Affairs--

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: [interposing] is
8 this part of your testimony?

9 ARMANDO CRESCENZA: Yes sir,

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Okay, good.

11 ARMANDO CRESCENZA: Department of
12 Consumer Affairs maintains a list of disabled vets
13 who have come forward to the city of New York seeking
14 a vending license. Mostly all of us need help
15 besides the vending license. I mean we need help
16 with the vending also. We need the protection and we
17 need the support and we're trying to—we're trying to
18 maintain some dig—some dignity out there. We're not
19 getting any support from anyone. We're really on our
20 own out there. So, I would suggest that Department
21 of Veterans Services create a particular office that
22 reaches out to Consumer Affairs and starts with the
23 list of the thousands of disabled vets who are
24 already registered with the City of New York who are
25 already disabled and help us, help us with all our

2 other veterans benefits that you are purporting to
3 provide services and counseling for, and help us
4 build our businesses. Protect us from some of the
5 insanity and the injustice from some of the other
6 agencies. You know, the nuttiness we face out there
7 every day on the street. The turnover of veterans on
8 a—on a Consumer Affairs list is like 50 to 60% every
9 year. Now, I used to advise veterans come on out,
10 get a vending license. This will work for you. I
11 can't do that any more. They come on out on the
12 street, and they get driven off. They're harassed by
13 the police, and other city agencies. It's insane. I
14 just can't understand why the Department of Veterans
15 Services refused to help disabled vets who are
16 licensed with Consumer Affairs and need help building
17 some self-sufficiency for their own business. Thank
18 you.

19 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, Armando
20 and if you want, you could speak to my Deputy Chief
21 of Staff who is here, and—and if you—I'll respond to
22 those—those questions.

23 ARMANDO CRESCENZA: Thank you very much.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Okay, I should give
3 you my-my email address. You'll always get a
4 response. Okay. So, don't wait--

5 ARMANDO CRESCENZA: She's already
6 responded to one of my emails.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Great. So don't
8 want for a hearing to let out, you know, your
9 frustrations.

10 ARMANDO CRESCENZA: I look forward to it.

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And I know you let
12 out your frustration because you didn't read off your
13 testimony, and it's better sometimes to speak from
14 the heart. So, I appreciate that. Okay. So, you
15 could always reach me any time 24 hours. Thank you,
16 Armando.

17 DAVID TITUS: Okay. Chair Deutsch,
18 Council Members and staff. Good morning and thank
19 you for this opportunity to express our support for
20 the proposed bills on fixed counseling services for
21 veterans and creating veterans resource centers and
22 guides, and a resource guide. My name is David
23 Titus. I'm an attorney with the Legal Health
24 Division of New York Legal Assistance Group or NYLAG.
25 I'm joined here by my colleague Melissa Molfetas,

2 Coordinating Attorney for NYLAG's Veterans Legal
3 Assistance Program, which works with veterans outside
4 the VA system. Legal Health has served over 1,000
5 veterans in VA medical center, clinics for behavioral
6 health, geriatrics, women's health and transition and
7 care management for post-9/11 veterans, which much of
8 this work involves assisting veterans in obtaining VA
9 benefits as well as other legal issues. The
10 application and claims process for obtaining VA
11 benefits is highly complex. Veterans going through
12 this process without representation can often feel
13 overwhelmed and frustrated, and so, it's no surprise
14 that VA statistics show that a veteran's best chance
15 at obtaining these benefits on appeal is to have an
16 attorney accredited by the VA representing them on
17 their appeal. So, we're in full support of the
18 proposals and would urge that a VA accredited
19 attorney be an integral part of those services. So,
20 I'll turn it over to Melissa.

21 MELISSA MOLFETAS: Good morning and thank
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: [interposing] Thank
24 you, David.

25 DAVID TITUS: Thank you.

2 MELISSA MOLFETAS: Thank you. I would
3 first like to say that I was very excited to read the
4 budget and I'm very happy that the City Council and
5 this city is really taking this issue seriously. I
6 do believe—I myself am a former service member and
7 everyone on my staff is either a service member or
8 the close relative of a service member. I take that
9 seriously. My program right now is staffed by one
10 full-time attorney, one half time attorney and one
11 paralegal. That's his own staff at my program.
12 Everyone else is either pro bono volunteer or a law
13 student intern and I have also recruited disabled
14 veterans to come and intern at the office
15 specifically undergraduate students. So that who I
16 have working in my program, and to speak to 391 for a
17 moment, I noticed the—a couple of key phrases. The
18 first is counseling services, and our hope based on
19 what David just shared, my hope is that that includes
20 attorneys as it states, and that counseling services
21 really means representation because we can counsel
22 and—and advise veterans all day long on how to obtain
23 benefits, but without tangible real help, sometimes
24 the process is too daunting. It is too confusing and
25 the process at the end of the day is legal in nature,

2 and so having an attorney work towards the goal of
3 obtaining VA specifically disability benefits, not
4 only helps veterans, but achieve more financial
5 stability and move away from homelessness, but it
6 also helps them move away from the city public
7 assistance safety net, and onto federal benefits,
8 which is a benefit for the city. It's a benefit for
9 veterans and for their families. So, it's-it's
10 winning all around. The other-the other thing that I
11 would just like to share is that our program right
12 now in the last year served about 600 veterans. I
13 would like to see expansion there. NYLAG overall
14 last year served about 1,800 veterans in total and,
15 you know, that was services across the board. That
16 was eviction prevention, foreclosure prevention.
17 That was healthcare access, access to Medicaid and
18 Medicare. That was estate planning and the most
19 common request that our veterans hotlines receive and
20 I-I believe I can speak for Legal Health and for
21 myself when I say the most common request that we
22 receive is for assistance and navigating the VA
23 disability benefit landscape. That's all I have and
24 to sum up we are totally in support of the passage of
25 these bills. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, Melissa
3 and thank you for your service and I appreciate you
4 taking the time to come down here this morning. So,
5 we'll get now to Reed.

6 REED BENNETT: Yes, sir.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yes, and nice
8 meeting you this morning.

9 REED BENNETT: Yes, thank you. Hopefully
10 I won't be redundant.

11 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yes. First of all,
12 I just want to thank Council Member Brannan for
13 sticking around because usually when—after the
14 hearings when advocates testify we usually have like
15 an empty table here. So, I want to thank the Council
16 Member for—for being here.

17 REED BENNETT: So, I'd like to greet you
18 Council Member and members and staff, and the Chair,
19 of course. My name is Reed Bennett. I'm a proud
20 former Marine Corps Infantry Officer. Other than the
21 twitch and the hearing loss, I think I'm okay, but
22 you tell me. So, I have recent—I am also a member of
23 NYU's Veterans' Future Labs located in Brooklyn. If
24 you know it, Industry City. Call me a Vetrepneur.
25 WE also thank the Borough for supporting us there.

2 Also, I've recently moved to New York City from
3 Detroit. I guess that makes me 2000, 210,000 vets
4 plus one, and as I'm told, or least we're told
5 outside of New York City if you can make it here you
6 can make it anywhere. So, I'm hopefully going to be
7 able to prove that to the positive. So, as I told
8 the chair briefly before this, and if you don't
9 being-me being redundant because I welcome anyone who
10 might be interested in what I'm up to, to come up to
11 me and I can come to them obviously. So, I'm the
12 founder of a venture capital backed startup called
13 HeroHmes.com. Think of it as a Zillow for military
14 veterans or realtorl.com military veterans focused on
15 VA loan guarantees, which in New York City is up to a
16 no money down \$679,750. Obviously, all of the
17 210,000 of us don't qualify for any of that to the
18 maximum, but still that is the maximum amount, and
19 what we are specifically focused on is that few of us
20 vets if not none of us do not know that we can use
21 this buying power to buy and be a resident landlord
22 in a two, three or four-family property, and one of
23 those units can be a commercial unit. So, I know in
24 New York City and in the rest of the country it's the
25 best landlord's market in 70 years, which also

2 translates into the worst renters market in 70 years.
3 So, again there's more to be said about this, but if
4 you take in Brooklyn, which I guess I am now a
5 Brooklynite being at the Futures Lab and having lived
6 there for the last week or so. So, if you'll please
7 allow me to be one of you. With Brooklyn's 55,000
8 vets that roughly translates into an unrecognized and
9 untapped \$37.4 billion, and what they say, a billion
10 here a billion there, it starts to be real money.
11 So, what I would suggest and welcome a discussion
12 with anybody how I can input into what you're doing
13 because obviously intentions are good, and effort is
14 good, too, but in the end of the day, you know, money
15 seems to drive things. So, again, my name is Reed
16 Bennett. I'm with herohomes.com. My email is [r-e-e-](mailto:reed@herohomes.com)
17 [d@herohomes.com](mailto:reed@herohomes.com) and thank you for the honor. So, new
18 into my residency in New York City to be addressing
19 the City Council. It's unbelievable. So thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, Reed.
21 On behalf of the 210,001 veterans, I want to thank
22 you. [laughter] Thank you very much and thank you,
23 and thanks again for coming down. Thank you. So,
24 I'd like to call up now Evans Wang and Hannah Sinoway

2 (sp?). [background comments, pause] So this time we
3 won't go clockwise. We'll do ladies first.

4 HANNAH SINOWAY: Okay. Is this on?
5 Okay.

6 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Yes.

7 HANNAH SINOWAY: Chairman Deutsch and
8 distinguished members of the committee on behalf of
9 Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of American and our
10 more than 425,000 members, I would like to thank you
11 for the opportunity to testify here today on the
12 pending legislation before the New York City
13 Committee on Veterans. My name is Hanna Sinoway, the
14 Senior Veteran Transition Manager of Operations and
15 Outreach Lead with IAVA Rapid Response Referral
16 Program or RIP for short. RIP is IAVA's high tech,
17 high touch referral service for veterans and their
18 families with a complete and comprehensive case
19 management component. To day, RIP has served over
20 8,700 veterans and family members and nearly 1,000
21 veterans and family members in New York City alone
22 providing critical support and resources to ensure
23 the city's veteran's needs are effectively met. After
24 14 years, IAVA has become a preferred empowerment
25 organization for Post-9/11 veterans. While our

2 members are spread throughout the nation, we are
3 proud to say that our national headquarters is
4 located in New York City. Since its beginning IAVA
5 has fought for and has been successful in advocating
6 for policies that are able to meet the needs of our
7 newest generation of veterans. Sorry. We are
8 pleased that DVS has an increased budget for Fiscal
9 Year 2019 and increase of \$1 million for the
10 Council's Veterans Initiative, and an overall
11 positive funding outlook to support New York City
12 veterans. Our testimony today is focused on four
13 bills before the committee. First 391 to require the
14 DVS to provide counseling services to veterans by VA
15 accredited counselors and have locations within all
16 five boroughs. 394 would in addition to requiring
17 DVS to establish accessible veteran resource centers
18 to provide veterans with free information on housing,
19 social services, financial assistance, and tax
20 exemptions that are available to them. The bill
21 would also require DVS to submit a semi-annual report
22 on the frequency of services offered and the number
23 of veterans utilizing the service. INT 396, would
24 mandate that the DVS create an online and paper
25 resource guide for veterans to cover eligibility an

2 application process for various veteran services at
3 the federal, state and local levels. Finally, 647
4 would establish a peer support hotline and provide
5 other peer support services in partnership with
6 veterans organizations. This number would be posted
7 online alongside other peer-to-peer services offered.
8 IAVA is supportive of the intention behind these
9 bills. However, after consulting New York City
10 veteran advocates, it appears that these bills are
11 redundant with current DVS programs already in place.
12 IAVA would like to hear the committee's concerns with
13 the current programs in place and their reasoning for
14 moving forward with the proposed legislation.
15 Additionally, IAVA would rather see the DVS budget of
16 \$4.6 million for Fiscal Year 2019 focused on a number
17 of shortfalls that are not currently being addressed
18 namely the Brooklyn VA Hospital's repeated cutbacks
19 and affordable housing options for veterans through
20 strengthen the VA Home Loan Program. IAVA would
21 encourage the committee to spend its time and
22 resources on these pressing issues that do not
23 currently have solutions rather than re-enforcing
24 programs that already exist through both DVS and the
25 VSO programs. Members of the committee, thank you

2 again for the opportunity to share IAVA's views on
3 these issues today. I look forward to answering any
4 questions that you may have. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you Hannah.
6 Thanks for coming down today. So, I would love to
7 set up a meeting and listen to your ideas. So, we
8 can get with Tova. She'll get the information.

9 HANNAH SINOWAY: Excellent. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: And I'd love to
11 hear it, and I think like these bills are some of the
12 things I mean that DVS is already doing and this is
13 to codify what they're already--what's already in
14 place, and so I think it's important to make sure
15 that these services continue. I would love to hear
16 from you and get your feedback on different
17 initiatives and al some additional, you know,
18 possibly to bet more funding for different resources.
19 So thank you very much.

20 HANNAH SINOWAY: I appreciate that.
21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you. So,
23 Evans.

24 EVANS WANG: Hello. Hey. Hey, good
25 morning. Thanks so much. So, I'm probably going to

2 read a little bit of this, but just wanted to say
3 thanks for kind of calling out like that—that 20
4 number. That was kind of low, and just really
5 drilling down and send those goals and making sure
6 that that outreach is there. I don't want to be one
7 of those statistics, but I know I need services, and
8 they could be variable. So, my name is Evans Wang.
9 I'm a Queens resident and I--

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: [interposing] Oh,
11 you're Queens. My might be 21.

12 EVANS WANG: Yeah, yeah. I'm actually
13 moving to Brooklyn, taking a new position there, but
14 I'm the Chapter Leader for an organization called
15 Operation Code, and for this it's a national non-
16 profit that helps veterans transition into tech
17 careers. That's both the veteran, the military
18 veteran as well as the military spouse. I previously
19 served as a field artillery captain with two
20 deployments one to Kuwait and Iraq and the other to
21 South Africa, which is amazing. I'm still currently
22 serving as a reservist where I teach ROTC at City
23 College right there in Upper Manhattan. I'm very
24 fortunate to be a member of We Work and the Veteran
25 and residents--that's a sweet T-Shirt-program in

2 which it provides six months of free work space
3 within the We Work. In addition, it's providing me a
4 huge support network of mentors, leaders and the huge
5 community or the tribe as they call it. That's
6 helped me grow professionally and personally. The We
7 Work program has connected me to other businesses as
8 a unique opportunity that really helps out the start-
9 up community. Unfortunately, not all veteran
10 business owners have access to these same resources,
11 and many veteran entrepreneurs are left without
12 adequate resources to help them navigate. Sometimes
13 the complicated bureaucracies of what they need to
14 get the help that they need. I guess that made
15 sense. So, really, I'm just here to say that I
16 support the Intros of 0391, 0394, 0396, and 0647.
17 Basically, I just appreciate you guys introducing the
18 bill, and really just want to lend my support to
19 that, and that's really all I've got unless you have
20 a question for me.

21 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Thank you, Evans
22 and with your busy schedule, thank you for coming
23 down this morning, and I hope--I'm not going to ask
24 you where you live, but I hope you're going to be
25 moving into my districts. [laughter]

2 EVANS WANG: Flatbush.

3 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Alright, that's
4 pretty close. Flatbush is divided into four
5 districts. So, I'm not going to ask you what street.

6 EVANS WANG: Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: It's online, but if
8 it's my part of Flatbush and you're in my district--

9 EVANS WANG: Councilor.

10 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Okay. So, you
11 could Google your address and then you'll find out
12 who your Council Member will be.

13 EVANS WANG: Thanks so much.

14 CHAIRPERSON DEUTSCH: Alright, thank you
15 very much. Thanks for coming down. Thank you. So,
16 anyone else want to testify? No. Alright, once
17 again I just want to thank all the advocates. I want
18 to thank you all for coming down this morning and
19 thank you, all the members of DVA, Department of
20 Veteran Services for testifying, for being here this
21 morning and for your partnership throughout the last
22 six months, and I look forward to continue on what we
23 started and what my predecessor Council Member Eric
24 Ulrich from his accomplishments working with DVS and
25 all the advocate groups. So, many good things to

2 come. Thank you very much and thanks for Detroit--
3 Detroit right? Detroit. Thank you, yeah. Thank you
4 very much. Have a great morning and enjoy your day.
5 It's--I'll give you the weather update if you could
6 just give me one minute. [laughter] And thank you
7 for flying with the New York City Council.

8 [laughter] [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date July 12, 2018