

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL  
OPERATIONS

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June 8, 2021  
Start: 12:33 PM  
Recess: 2:53 PM

HELD AT: Remote Hearing, Virtual Room 1

B E F O R E: Fernando Cabrera  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Fernando Cabrera  
Darma Diaz  
Ben Kallos  
Stephen T. Levin  
Alan N. Maisel  
Bill Perkins  
Keith Powers  
Ydanis Rodriguez  
Kalman Yeger

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

Chair Margery Perlmutter  
BSA

Kurt Steinhouse  
General Counsel  
BSA

Brady Hamed  
Chief of Staff  
Mayor's Office of Operations

Joshua Sidis  
Senior Advisor  
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Kamlesh Mehta

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George Fiala

Eddy Heredia

Anthony Ibarria

Caroline Pimental

Abu Taher

Kowshik Ahmed

Kevin Boyle

Luciano Vasquez

Juan Miguel Jimenez

Nolasco

Roberto Amaro Garcia

Gregorio Morrobel

@

1  
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good. Will sergeants  
3 please start their recording?

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Computer recording  
5 started.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Recording to the cloud  
8 all set.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you, and good  
10 afternoon, and welcome to today's report New York  
11 City Council of the Committee on Governmental  
12 Operations. At this time would all council members  
13 and council staff please turn on their video. To  
14 minimize disruption, please place electronic devices  
15 on vibrate or silent mode. If you wish to submit  
16 testimony you may do so at [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).  
17 Once again, that is [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Thank  
18 you, Chair Cabrera. We are ready to begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [gavel] Good  
20 afternoon. I am Council Member Fernando Cabrera,  
21 chair to the Committee on Governmental Operations. I  
22 want to start off by thanking the members of the  
23 committee joining us today, Council Member Maisel,  
24 Council Member Darma Diaz, Council Member Rodriguez,  
25 I believe that's all we have for, ah, the, no,

1 Council Member Yeger and Council Member Powers.

2 Today the committee will be hearing two pieces of  
3 legislation, Introduction number 22257, sponsored by

4 myself, will required the Board of Standards and

5 Appeals, [inaudible] BSA, upon issue a decision

6 affecting the use of a parcel land to have a copy of

7 that decision recording the county in the list of

8 properties located. This will ensure that the BSA's

9 decision affecting property in Manhattan, Brooklyn,

10 Queens, and the Bronx will be available in the

11 automatic city register information system.

12 Decisions affecting properties that not only will be

13 available in the electronic recording system retained

14 by the Richmond County clerk. I'm proud to sponsor

15 this legislation to improvement government

16 transparency and I'm grateful to BSA chair Margery

17 Perlmutter and her staff for their collaboration on

18 this bill, with production number 2313, sponsored by

19 Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez will create an Office

20 of Ethnic and Community Media in place of the

21 requirements from agency advertisement spending. New

22 York City is home to more than 3 million immigrants

23 and more than one in five New Yorkers is considered

24 limited English proficient. The last seven years

1  
2 multilingual campaigns conducted by the city on  
3 Defund the [inaudible]. We saw this within a short  
4 idea and was [inaudible] rollout and mostly recently  
5 in the city's census campaign and COVID-19 rapid  
6 response in 2020. In 2019 the mayor signed Executive  
7 Order 47, which directed city agencies to spend at  
8 least half of their advertising budgets on ethnic and  
9 community media outlets. Fiscal year 2020 the city  
10 spent 9.9 million dollars, or 84% of its total  
11 advertising dollars in this type of media outlet.  
12 This has had dramatic improvement from only 18% spend  
13 on community media advertising in 2013. The COVID-19  
14 pandemic has shown all of us the vital importance  
15 ensuring that diverse communities receive timely and  
16 accurate information from the city in their preferred  
17 language. It is undeniable that the trustee, the  
18 trusted messengers, such as ethnic and committee  
19 media outlets are able to speak to the hard-to-reach  
20 committee that mainstream media outlets will  
21 [inaudible] English. The mayor's Executive Order 47  
22 is widely seen as a resounding success in both city  
23 government, community media publishers, has seen, has  
24 seen the benefit of reaching New Yorkers through  
25 media they trust and engages with. Intro 2013 will

1  
2 codify Executive Order 47 and guarantee that the  
3 commitment the city has made to advertising ethnic  
4 and community media outlet, outlets, which maintain  
5 and strengthen in the coming year. I want to thank  
6 Council Member Rodriguez. He has been an advocate  
7 for immigrants and limited English proficiency  
8 [inaudible] in his district, across out city, and I  
9 commend him on this legislation. I want to thank the  
10 Board of Standards and Appeals, the Mayor's Office of  
11 Operation for being here today and I look forward to  
12 the testimony, and also always I like to thank the  
13 Dream Team committee staff that we have, C. J.  
14 Murray, Emily Forgione, Elizabeth Cronk, Sebastian  
15 Bacce, and the central staff operating this remote  
16 hearing being the scenes. And I also want to thank  
17 my own legislative director, Flora Pena, for making  
18 this hearing, hearing possible. I will now turn it  
19 over to my colleague, Council Member Rodriguez, to  
20 say a few words about this bill.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,  
22 Chairman Cabrera, for your leadership on this bills  
23 and in many other bills, not only the great borough  
24 of the Bronx, where you've been a champion, but also  
25 in the whole city of New York, especially looking to

1 protect working class and middle class New Yorkers.  
2 I know that not [inaudible] my bills, but your bill  
3 is very important for you. I know that you have lead  
4 the experience working with so many [inaudible] and  
5 community meeting in the full borough of the Bronx,  
6 but also in the City of New York. You've been  
7 working with them, eh, [inaudible] media from the  
8 Asian community, from Bangladesh, from other the  
9 group that you have in the boroughs, also you being,  
10 eh, eh, leaders also working with, with the Latino,  
11 eh, eh, [inaudible] media that we have has also  
12 working with other ethnic community media for the  
13 Jewish community that also had the [inaudible] paper.  
14 From the African American communities, and for, for,  
15 eh, everyone who understand that many New Yorkers,  
16 eh, are living today like myself. When I come here I  
17 has to wash dishes without speaking the language, eh,  
18 and however, I contribute from '83 to 2000 and when I  
19 live with green card, at the same level as I've been  
20 contributing after being a teacher, after being  
21 elected official. So, you know, this bill that will  
22 allow the City of New York to expand on executive  
23 order that the mayor, Mayor de Blasio, established,  
24 eh, before COVID. Now we have a great opportunity to



1 work together with Mayor de Blasio and his team,  
2 [inaudible], [inaudible], and from the speaker, Corey  
3 Johnson, Jason Goldman, and James and everyone, you  
4 know that really want to, eh, eh, work on this  
5 hearing, to work together, to pass this bill so that,  
6 that we will have a office with a director, with a, a  
7 person in charge on marketing, to be sure that if we  
8 are seeing that 50% of interim, all, all those  
9 millions of dollars that we invest in the City of New  
10 York to media should go to the any community meeting.  
11 It should go to progress such as, eh, [inaudible],  
12 such as, as, eh, eh, Cesar Romero. It should go  
13 Manuel Ruiz. Those people and other in the Creole,  
14 who speak Creole, who speak Cantonese, who speak also  
15 other language in the contractility, who have a  
16 audience, who have been paying the taxes and however  
17 they have not been able to get the city to put  
18 millions of dollars as they been doing to the  
19 mainstream media. Eh, we been working together, not  
20 only again with you and [inaudible], eh, but also  
21 I've been working together with Brooklyn borough  
22 president Eric Adams, who is also a coprime, as also  
23 as it's a coprime, eh, and Speaker Corey Johnson as  
24 also is a coprime, also [inaudible]. And we working

1 together will be seeing this [inaudible] being  
2 created. As we all know very well our city is among  
3 one of the most diverse in the world. Our meeting  
4 pot, melting pot communities consist of over 200  
5 different language across the five boroughs with  
6 people from all over the globe. I think that as we  
7 will, as we are looking for, you know, how to expand  
8 there's a lot that we have to do. Unfortunately,  
9 during the height of the pandemic we saw that many of  
10 these immigrant, low-income community where  
11 [inaudible] communities were also the ones who were  
12 hit hardest, the hardest by COVID-19. When many  
13 upper class New Yorkers left to [inaudible] somebody,  
14 left to the, to the [inaudible], work class New  
15 Yorkers who read the newspaper, who follow the law,  
16 who following the TV, the local [inaudible] community  
17 TV program, they didn't get the city see the city  
18 investing their dollar on COVID-19. On, on, any  
19 other, eh, millions of dollar that the city being  
20 investing. I think that it is time again for our  
21 city to give their respect to all New Yorkers,  
22 especially those 35% of New Yorkers especially those  
23 35% of New Yorkers who are and, and who are having  
24 [inaudible] and other [inaudible]. Intro 2013, which  
25

1 worked also with Speaker Corey Johnson, Brooklyn  
2 Borough President Eric Adams would establish and also  
3 Felix who will establish the Mayor's Office of  
4 [inaudible] Community Media. Our goal is to ensure  
5 we are not excluding our [inaudible] and local media  
6 outlet. They have the potential to play a key role  
7 in sharing informations with communities of all  
8 backgrounds across the city. According to the  
9 central community for community media, CUNY's great  
10 new [inaudible] graduate school of journalism there  
11 are over 300 [inaudible] and local media in New York  
12 City. They of course have some concern how CUNY, eh,  
13 eh, some people related to CUNY published an article  
14 in the last couple of weeks without giving credit to  
15 what is already in plan to create this office. It is  
16 crucial that we support our local media [inaudible]  
17 and work with them to share important information.  
18 Many Spanish-speaking media outlet as other  
19 [inaudible] media receive significant less or nothing  
20 from funding from the city's total advertising  
21 spending. Even though they make up over 28% of the  
22 total city population and contribute millions of  
23 dollars in taxes. It is time for us to work on this  
24 bill. [inaudible] from their friend publisher on the  
25

1 [inaudible] community medication and together we will  
2 pass it. [speaking in Spanish]

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,  
5 ah, Council Member Rodriguez. I will now turn it  
6 over to our moderator, Elizabeth Cronk, to go over  
7 some of the procedure items. And let me just  
8 recognize we've also been joined by Council Member  
9 Perkins.

10 MODERATOR: Thank you, Chair Cabrera. I  
11 am Elizabeth Cronk, senior policy analyst to the  
12 Immigration Committee on, sorry to the Committee on  
13 Governmental Operations. Before we begin testimony, I  
14 want to remind everyone that you will be on mute  
15 until you are called on to testify, at which point  
16 you will be unmuted by the hosts. I will be calling  
17 on panelists to testify. Please listen for your name  
18 to be called. The first panelist to give testimony  
19 and to respond to council member questions today will  
20 be representatives from the Board of Standards and  
21 Appeals, or BSA. After Chair Cabrera and council  
22 members have had an opportunity to ask questions of  
23 the BSA on Introduction 2257 I will call the second  
24 panel from Mayor's Office of Operations to give  
25 testimony on Introduction number 2313. From the BSA,

1 we are joined by BSA Chair Margery Perlmutter and BSA  
2 General Counsel Kurt Steinhouse. From the Mayor's  
3 Office of Operations we are joined by Chief of Staff  
4 Brady Hamed and Senior Advisor Joshua Sidis.  
5

6 Panelists, I will call on you when it is your turn to  
7 speak. During the hearing if a Council Member would  
8 like to ask a question of a specific panelist please  
9 use the Zoom hand raise function and I will call on  
10 you in order. We will be limiting council member  
11 questions to five minutes, which includes the time We  
12 will be limiting council member questions to five  
13 minutes, which includes the time it takes the  
14 panelist to answer your question. Please note that  
15 for ease of this virtual hearing there will not be a  
16 second round of questioning outside of questions from  
17 the committee chair. All hearing participants should  
18 submit written testimony to [testimonycouncil.nyc.gov](https://testimonycouncil.nyc.gov).  
19 Before we begin testimony, I will administer the  
20 oath. Chair Perlmutter, General Counsel Steinhouse,  
21 Chief of Staff Hamed, and Senior Advisor Sidis,  
22 please raise your right hand. I will read the oath  
23 once and then call on each of you individually for a  
24 response. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole  
25 truth, and nothing but the truth before this

2 committee and to respond honestly to council member  
3 questions? BSA Chair Perlmutter.

4 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: I so affirm.

5 MODERATOR: BSA General Counsel  
6 Steinhouse.

7 GENERAL COUNSEL STEINHOUSE: I do.

8 MODERATOR: Mayor's Office of Operations  
9 Chief of Staff Hamed.

10 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: I do.

11 MODERATOR: Mayor's Office of Operations  
12 Senior Advisor Sidis.

13 SENIOR ADVISOR SIDIS: I do.

14 MODERATOR: Thank you. Chair Perlmutter,  
15 you may begin your testimony.

16 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: Thank you. Good  
17 morning, Chair Cabrera and members of the  
18 Governmental Operations Committee. I am Margery  
19 Perlmutter, chair of the New York City Board of  
20 Standards and Appeals. I want to thank you for the  
21 opportunity to testify today. Ah, the Board of  
22 Standards and Appeals supports Introduction number  
23 2257, which would require the board to record in the  
24 Office of the City Register or the Richmond County  
25 Clerk's Office notice of each of its orders,

1 requirements, decisions, determinations, resolutions,  
2 or restricted declarations. First I would like to  
3 provide a brief background on the Board of Standards  
4 and Appeals as well as the reasons for our support  
5 and then take questions. Since 1916 the board has  
6 worked to administrate, administer zoning, building,  
7 and housing regulations in a fair and just manner to  
8 protect the city's interest in safeguarding the  
9 general welfare while balancing the private property  
10 interests. In this role the board has frequently be  
11 called a "relief valve", a protector of the city's  
12 regulations from constitutional challenge and a  
13 guardian of the urban fabric. The board is an  
14 independent agency that consists of five full-time  
15 commissioners with select skill sets, including  
16 experience in architecture, urban planning, and  
17 engineering, supported by a staff of 16 employees.  
18 Using their technical expertise and independent  
19 judgment, each commissioner scrutinizes every land  
20 use application with the utmost of care.  
21 Commissioners review frequently involves analyzing  
22 intricate construction documents, financial states,  
23 testimony from other government agencies, and site  
24 conditions gleaned through visits to the properties  
25

1 and neighborhoods at issue. The board staff of, ah,  
2 16 to 18 employees currently manages 105 years of  
3 archives and pending applications currently in review  
4 under the direction of the board's executive director  
5 and deputy director, these applications are reviewed  
6 by four project managers and one director of  
7 environmental review. Second, as I mentioned, we  
8 support Introduction number 2257, variances, special  
9 permits, and other applications granted by the Board  
10 of Standards and Appeals employs safeguards and  
11 conditions to ensure that its decisions minimize any  
12 potential adverse effects on surrounding communities.  
13 The board's waivers of zoning and other regulations  
14 and conditions of approval are delineated in a set of  
15 board-approved architectural plans and in a written  
16 resolution and in a written resolution, copies of  
17 which are retained by the applicant, forwarded to the  
18 Department of Buildings, and maintained in the  
19 board's archives. However, the board has seen number  
20 occasions where the property owner, neighbors, and  
21 government agencies are actually unaware that a  
22 property is subject to board jurisdiction.  
23 Frequently a new owner will learn for the first time  
24 in perhaps a decade or more that the property is  
25



1 subject to a variance or a special permit upon  
2 receiving a violation for a zoning noncompliance  
3 because due diligence searches conducted prior to  
4 purchasing did not flag these property restrictions.  
5 Accordingly, the board should record its resolutions  
6 against the properties they affect in the Office of  
7 the City Register or the Richmond County Clerk to  
8 ensure they become part of the title search process  
9 and to provide clarity to the public at large. This  
10 modest operation modification would greatly benefit  
11 property owners subject to board jurisdiction, the  
12 vast majority of which are small businesses,  
13 homeowners, and nonprofit organizations. But it  
14 would help ensure that the board safeguards and  
15 conditions are carried out, lowering enforcement  
16 costs, and benefitting communities. I'm happy to  
17 take any questions and look forward hearing ideas  
18 about improving the board's processes. Thank you  
19 again for this opportunity to testify.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,  
22 ah, Chair. I want to recognize we've also been  
23 joined by Council Member Kallos. I only have four  
24 brief questions. Ah, I think this bill is, ah, ah,  
25 very helpful and very straight up. But, ah, I wanted

1  
2 to ask you what resources will be necessary, ah, for  
3 the board to submit decisions for publications and  
4 the appropriate public register?

5 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: So, um, there, it's  
6 actually no additional resources necessary. The  
7 board actually only decide, comes to a decision on  
8 maybe it was just to throw out a, an estimate, say 10  
9 cases a month. So that's about 10, at most 20 cases,  
10 that where there would be a resolution that would be,  
11 need to be recorded, those are recorded on the city's  
12 [inaudible] and on the Staten Island city clerk's  
13 office, um, digitally, and so it's easily done by a  
14 staff member who is already working on these  
15 resolutions.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Fantastic. Is it  
17 the committee's understanding that currently a  
18 property owner may not know their parcel of land is  
19 subject to a BSA decision until a violation is  
20 issued? Can you share how the BSA handles such a  
21 situation? Is the property owner held liable or  
22 there opportunities to rectify this?

23 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: So what happens is,  
24 um, the Department of Buildings issues the violation  
25 and it may, for example, the common of which is our

1  
2 gas stations. Almost every gas station in New York  
3 City has received a variance or a special permit in  
4 its, in its existence in order to be able to  
5 operation. Many property owners are not aware that  
6 it was a BSA decision to allow that and therefore  
7 example located in residents' districts. So somehow  
8 or other Department of Buildings finds out and issues  
9 a violation, for which, yes, there, there are  
10 penalties associated with it, and that's the first  
11 time where the property owner will now learn that  
12 they have to come to the BSA to rectify it. So the  
13 BSA is not involved in the Department of Buildings'  
14 violation process. That's for DOB to deal with. But  
15 we, ah, accept these, um, applications and work with  
16 the applicant to rectify the situation and extend the  
17 term of the special permit or variance, as long as  
18 they can establish that they are still entitled to  
19 those waivers.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. I have  
21 two more questions, ah, but I see, ah, Council Member  
22 Yeger, he has a question, and, and then I'll come  
23 right back.

24 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: OK.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Council Member  
3 Yeger.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you, Mr.  
6 Chairman. Ah, good morning, Madam, good afternoon  
7 Madam Chair. Does the Board of Standards and Appeals  
8 currently have no legal authority to record its  
9 decisions with the county for in Richmond and the  
10 City Register in the other four boroughs?

11 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: I'm going to actually  
12 defer to my General Counsel Steinhouse on this one.  
13 Is that OK with you, Kurt?

14 GENERAL COUNSEL STEINHOUSE: Ah, yes,  
15 that's our understanding that this legislation would  
16 be necessary in order to codify, um, the operations  
17 of recording BSA resolutions. Um, as you would note,  
18 um, the Landmarks Preservation Commission has a  
19 specific provision in the administrative code that's  
20 analogous.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: OK. Do you  
22 maintain a list of properties at your agency that  
23 have had a BSA decision, ah, rendered with respect to  
24 it by address?

25 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: [inaudible].

2 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: OK. So if a  
3 title, so if a title company was to, ah, do a  
4 diligent title search for a property they could  
5 simply as part of that process request the board to  
6 check its resources. If One Center Street has any  
7 decisions rendered with respect of it then you'd give  
8 them an answer in a day or two?

9 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: So it, it actually  
10 goes like this. I have quite a lot of experience  
11 from my prior work life with title companies. The  
12 typical title company does not delve into Board of  
13 Standards and Appeals or City Planning or Landmarks  
14 Preservation Commission decisions. They go to the  
15 Department of Finance and they look to see what's  
16 there and download that data. They go to the  
17 Department of Buildings to see if there are  
18 violations. They go to judgments to see if there are  
19 judgments and then that's that. It's only very, very  
20 savvy, ah, counsel who might think to check at the  
21 other agencies whether there is something that's  
22 indicating, um, a BSA or City Planning or Landmarks.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: I appreciate all  
24 that, but that's the answer to a question if I would  
25 have asked are title companies necessarily always

1 good at what they do, ah, or do they commit  
2 malpractice from time to time. But the question I  
3 asked is whether or not you maintain this list and if  
4 a title company chose to make a search would they be  
5 to ask, and specifically I'm referring to your answer  
6 that you gave before, ah, for example a gas station.  
7 Um, you know, if somebody is going to purchase  
8 something and a title company them, or actually you  
9 referred to this in your testimony, you mentioned  
10 people don't know, ah, what, what is affecting their  
11 property until after they purchase it. Well, then  
12 they have a claim against their title company. The,  
13 the title company certified clear, free and clear  
14 title, ah, without referring to, ah, necessary  
15 encumbrance on the title, which is your decision. So  
16 they didn't do their job. I'm just trying to see,  
17 you know, I find frequently here in this body we pass  
18 laws that are solutions in search of problems and,  
19 you know, I, I try to err on the side of that, um,  
20 the city, the city is operated quite well, ah,  
21 without use stepping our, stepping ourselves in the  
22 middle of things and passing laws all the time. The  
23 only reason that we pass laws is because the Charter  
24 requires to meet twice a month. So I'm trying to  
25

1 figure out precisely what it is that this law, ah,  
2 is, why this law is necessary. I haven't been able  
3 to see from the committee report or from the  
4 sponsor's opening statement why it's necessary. I  
5 understand why it's not an entirely bad idea. I just  
6 don't see why it's necessary, and I still have find  
7 why it's necessary. Madam Chair, I'm not saying it's  
8 your job, ah, to try to tell us why it's necessary,  
9 but if you can that would be great because you've  
10 been chair for a while and you've never come before  
11 the council and said, you know, it would be great if  
12 you guys passed this law.

14 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: Ah, OK. So step one,  
15 yes, of course we maintain resources. Anyone who has  
16 the, ah, let's say general knowledge about how the  
17 city operates and is, um, let's say, um, broadly  
18 versed enough can check on, not only that, on our  
19 website to see whether you can just put in the  
20 property's address or block and lot number into our  
21 website and our resolutions are recorded back to, I  
22 think it's 1989, is that correct?

23 GENERAL COUNSEL STEINHOUSE: 90.

24 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: Yeah, 90, so, ah, so,  
25 but anything that was decided before that, that might

1  
2 have been in a state of incredible lapse, they would  
3 have to call our archive department and find out  
4 about that. So, yes, of course we maintain records.  
5 We're also required, um, by, actually it's, ah, I  
6 think legislation under, ah, Council Member Kallos to  
7 have a do it search. So there's the general  
8 database, shows the existence of BSA cases on a map,  
9 um, again, but only back to 1990, I believe, right?

10 GENERAL COUNSEL STEINHOUSE: 1998.

11 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: 1998, thank you. So  
12 there's only so much of a sweep that the database can  
13 do.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: Um, sorry, does that  
16 mean we're done?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: No, you can keep  
18 talking.

19 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: OK. Um, but in terms  
20 of the necessity for this, I've been actually, so I  
21 will just do a little bit of background. Um, I had  
22 this whiteboard installed in my office when I first  
23 became chair, and one of the first things on the  
24 whiteboard was to require the recording of BSA  
25 resolutions and it took us up to this point, um, to



1  
2 get up to that, right? So we've been talking with  
3 the Law Department and so on for a long time about  
4 this and, um, this was, I would have to say, um,  
5 maybe COVID gave us the opportunity to focus on this  
6 a, a little bit more. But it's been an essential,  
7 ah, ingredient for the BSA for a long time. And, um,  
8 for example, Landmarks Commission, the Landmarks  
9 Commission records all of its, ah, its, ah,  
10 designations against the property. So there's no  
11 such thing as a person with a Landmarks designated  
12 property who is not aware of it as a result of a  
13 simple title search where all you do is go on ACRIS  
14 and find out, um, so and, you know, the sad news is  
15 title searches are not as complete as you would like,  
16 and are they committing malpractice? Um, that's for  
17 an ethics committee to decide. We're trying to help  
18 the property owner save a lot of money in violations,  
19 a lot of heartache, um, to be aware that they should  
20 be coming regardless for renewals, ah, so we think  
21 this is actually essential and, um, will really save  
22 small businesses, um, from, from needless expense.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: All right. Thank  
24 you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Madam Chair.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,  
3 ah, Council Member Yeger, and I don't recall if I  
4 recognized already Council Member Kallos. Ah, I  
5 don't see another question by, ah, any other  
6 colleagues, so let me continue with my last two. Ah,  
7 the bill allows for the BSA to post record of its  
8 decisions prior to the effective day of the bill, I  
9 quote, "where it determines to be in the public  
10 interest." What kinds of past decision, if any, does  
11 the board anticipating posting? Approximately how  
12 long would it take? And what resources does the  
13 board anticipating needing for this task?

14 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: Thank you. So  
15 obviously it's easier if we move forward with what we  
16 have in hand and record it as we go along. But once  
17 we learn how to effectively mount these decisions or  
18 intention is to slowly work our way back to about 10  
19 years so that all decisions in the last 10 years are  
20 eventually recorded against the property, because 10  
21 years tends to be, um, the sort of effective, ah,  
22 application of the BSA on properties. Before that  
23 likely they've been, um, amended in the past or  
24 abandoned or something like that. So 10 years seems  
25 to kind of the [inaudible] generally agreed

1  
2 timeframe. And in terms of resources, no additional  
3 resources, as I said earlier.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Great. And just  
5 for the record, does Intro 2257 as drafted provide  
6 the BSA with the sufficient authority to notice its  
7 decision in all publicly available databases,  
8 typically used by property owner? Does the board  
9 intend to post decisions in additional places not  
10 provided for in the bill?

11 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: Ah, Kurt, will you  
12 take maybe?

13 GENERAL COUNSEL STEINHOUSE: Sure. Um,  
14 so, as drafted, we feel that this gives sufficient  
15 authority for the board to post its decisions, um,  
16 [inaudible] Richmond County Clerk's Office, um, and,  
17 ah, that is the current state of, um, our policy  
18 goals right now.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: OK, great.  
20 Moderator, do we have anyone else? I don't see any  
21 hands raised.

22 MODERATOR: I'm not seeing, um, but I can  
23 go ahead and give some instructions. Thank you,  
24 Chair Cabrera. I will now call on council members in  
25 that they have used the Zoom raise hand function.

1  
2 Council members, if you would like to ask a question  
3 at this time and you have not raised your hand,  
4 please do so now. You will have a total of five  
5 minutes to ask your question and receive an answer  
6 from the panelist. The Sergeant at Arms will keep a  
7 timer and will let you know when your time is up.  
8 Once I've called on you, please wait until the  
9 sergeant has announced that you may begin before  
10 asking your question. Seeing no hands raised right  
11 now, I think we can, um, I'll turn it back to you,  
12 Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.  
14 Madam Chair and to your staff, thank you. Thank you  
15 for the great work that you continue to do. Ah, when  
16 I look at all of you put together the years of, of  
17 experience, ah, it, it just, you continue to do the  
18 robust work that is required, ah, from the BSA. You  
19 literally fill the gap, ah, which, um, I'm very proud  
20 of the work that you, you all have done. So thank  
21 you so much and with that I'll turn it back to the  
22 moderator for our next part of the hearing.

23 CHAIR PERLMUTTER: Thank you, thanks very  
24 much.

25 GENERAL COUNSEL STEINHOUSE: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

3 MODERATOR: Thank you. I'll now call on  
4 our second panel from the administration to give  
5 testimony on Introduction number 2313. Mr. Hamed,  
6 ah, you may begin your testimony when you are  
7 radiology.

8 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Great, thank you.

9 Ah, good afternoon, Speaker Corey Johnson, Chair  
10 Miller Fernando Cabrera, and members of the  
11 Government Operations Committee, and Council Members  
12 Ydanis Rodriguez and Oswald Feliz for cosponsoring  
13 this legislation. Thank you for inviting us to  
14 appear before you today to discuss community and  
15 ethnic media and Introduction 2313. My name is Brady  
16 Hamed and I am the deputy director of accountability  
17 and administration for the Mayor's Office of  
18 Operations. I'd also like to recognize Jose Bayona,  
19 Director of Community and Ethic Media at the Mayor's  
20 Press Office, for his leadership and organizing role  
21 in this important efforts. On May 22, 2019, Mayor  
22 Bill de Blasio signed Executive Order 47,  
23 strengthening our commitment to community and ethnic  
24 meeting. This executive order directs all city  
25 agencies, the New York City Department of Education,

1 New York City Health and Hospitals, and the New York  
2 City Housing Authority to spend at least 50% of their  
3 eligible individual annual print and digital  
4 advertising budgets with the city's community and  
5 ethnic media outlets starting in fiscal 2020. This  
6 commitment to community and ethnic media advertising  
7 spending is important not only to amplify city  
8 services to communities and neighborhoods that may  
9 have limited English proficiency or otherwise may be  
10 unaware of city government programs, but also to  
11 support New York City's small businesses and  
12 community and ethnic media news outlets, an effort  
13 that has been particularly important during the  
14 COVID-19 pandemic. There's a broad landscape of city  
15 agencies, offices, and partners that are instrumental  
16 in placing advertisements in community and ethnic  
17 media outlets citywide. Jose Bayona, director of  
18 community and ethnic media for the Mayor's Press  
19 Office, serves in a leadership role for this work.  
20 This role is foundational as a primary liaison with  
21 the community and ethnic media partners and assisting  
22 agencies in developing advertising campaigns. This  
23 role is also important in maintaining the community  
24 and ethnic media directory posted publicly on the  
25

1 city's websites. The Mayor's Office of Operations is  
2 tasked with implementing the requirements of  
3 Executive Order 47. The Office of Operations is  
4 focused on the performance management aspects of the  
5 city agencies media advertising spending. Working  
6 with the Mayor's Office of Data Analytics on  
7 analyzing the relevant data, issuing guidance  
8 documents, and hosting trainings with agencies to  
9 support their compliance with the executive order,  
10 collecting data on a quarterly cadence, and checking  
11 with agencies to support them in meeting the 50%  
12 advertising spending target. The Office of  
13 Operations also reviews and approves agency requests  
14 for exemptions, petitions, and waivers on certain  
15 requirements as outlined in the executive order.  
16 Additionally, the Office of Operations reports on the  
17 data publicly each fiscal year. The Department of  
18 Citywide Administrative Services hosts a backdrop  
19 contract with two advertising firms, Miller and  
20 Graystone. These firms are provided with training  
21 and guidance on the requirements of the Executive  
22 Order 47. They help agencies place advertisements in  
23 community and ethnic media outlets and also regularly  
24 report advertising spending data to the Office of  
25

1  
2 Operations. Finally, each agency has its own network  
3 of marketing and fiscal contacts that work to reach  
4 the 50% advertising spending target for the agency.  
5 For the purposes of Executive Order 47 community and  
6 ethnic media outlets are defined as a print or  
7 digital outlet that is created for the communities of  
8 people based on native language, race, color, gender,  
9 national origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual  
10 orientation, disability, or immigrant status, targets  
11 a discrete neighbor or geographic region, or  
12 populations that may or may not typically receive  
13 information from mainstream publications because of  
14 their exclusive use of foreign language, or falls  
15 within specifically tailored subject matter. To  
16 calculate agency spending towards the 50% advertising  
17 spend pool the Office of Operations collects all ad  
18 spending data, both from mainstream and community and  
19 ethnic media print and digital outlets. Collecting  
20 the full universe of print and digital advertising  
21 spend allows us to calculate how each agency is  
22 meeting the 50% community and ethnic media  
23 advertising spend pool. At this time, other forms of  
24 media, including social media, broadcast media, like  
25 television and radio, mobile applications,



1 unaffiliated with a print and digital outlet, job  
2 boards, professional associations or networks, bus  
3 shelter ads, and other types of media are outside the  
4 scope of the executive order and are therefore  
5 exclude from the calculations. The Office of  
6 Operations regardless collects data on individual  
7 advertisement placements, both from agencies and  
8 directly from Miller and Graystone, the advertising  
9 firms mentioned previously. Operations collects all  
10 advertisement data on a quarterly basis in order to  
11 perform regular benchmarking with agencies throughout  
12 the year in an effort to meet the 50% advertising  
13 spending targets. Throughout the fiscal year the  
14 director of community and ethnic media and the Office  
15 of Operations partner to maintain the community and  
16 ethnic media directory and work with agencies to  
17 reach a broad network of the outlets. There is also  
18 a regular process for communication with agencies to  
19 review annual waivers for agencies with a negligible  
20 advertising spend, petitions for agencies to request  
21 for spending with an outlet that would typically be  
22 out of scope from compliance calculations, to count  
23 positively towards community and ethnic media  
24 spending, and exemptions for a request for spend that  
25

1 typically counts negatively for compliance to be  
2 excluded from compliance calculations entirely,  
3 generally requested if the agency places ads in a  
4 mainstream outlet in order to meet other legal  
5 requirements. At the end of the fiscal year  
6 Operations compiles this data and publishes it on its  
7 website and on the Open Data portal. Operations also  
8 has a partnership in place with the Craig Newmark  
9 Graduate School of Journalism, CUNY Foundation, on  
10 behalf of the Center for Community Media at CUNY to  
11 further support the joint commitment to community and  
12 ethnic media. In addition to the 2020 summary  
13 report, published by the CUNY Center for Community  
14 Media, which utilizes data provided by the Mayor's  
15 Office of Operations, the city also works with the  
16 CUNY Center for Community Media to ensure lines of  
17 communication are open between outlets and key city  
18 agency marketing and press staff. The city has  
19 demonstrated strong progress in fulfilling the goals  
20 of Executive Order 47 and advertising city services  
21 to a diverse group of communities. In fiscal 2020,  
22 the first full fiscal year of the executive order,  
23 the city saw substantial spending on community and  
24 ethnic media outlets. 35 out 40 eligible agencies,

1 or 88% of agencies, met the 50% spending threshold.

2 Citywide, 9.9 million out of the 11.8 million dollars  
3 of eligible advertising spending, was spent on  
4 community and ethnic media outlets. This represented  
5 84% spending, far outpacing the stated 50% goal.

6 Compliance at both an individual agency and at  
7 citywide levels far surpassed our targets. The city  
8 was also able to communicate its programs and  
9 services with individuals who read community and  
10 ethnic media outlets and support those outlets in the  
11 process. This targeted communication was  
12 particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic,  
13 as many community-based outlets served as key new  
14 sources for communities vulnerable to COVID-19.

15 Moreover, in fiscal 2020 the city placed ads with 50  
16 outlets for the first time ever and increased  
17 advertising placements with more than 185 outlets.

18 The city is committed to continuing this important  
19 push in future fiscal years. The Mayor's Office of  
20 Operations and the city are largely supportive of  
21 Intro 2313, to create an office of ethnic and  
22 community media, which aligns with the values, goals,  
23 and accomplishments of the de Blasio administration  
24 in advertising critical city services to a diverse  
25

1  
2 landscape of communities, including those with  
3 limited English proficiency. I'd like to close by  
4 thanking our external partners at the CUNY Center for  
5 Community Media for their guidance and support on  
6 this important initiative, and by thanking you,  
7 council members, for your leadership on this topic  
8 and hearing our testimony today. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you, thank  
10 you so much, and I want to take a moment to thank the  
11 mayor and to all the staff that made it possible for  
12 Executive Order 47 to take place. It was truly, we  
13 had an injustice taking place, an institutional  
14 injustice, ah, until this executive order, ah, came  
15 into being. Ah, I wanted to ask a, a few questions  
16 here, then I'll turn to it, ah, my colleagues. I  
17 know the sponsor of the bill, ah, is seeking to  
18 codify, ah, the executive order, ah, through, through  
19 this bill. But I wanted to ask you. You know, I  
20 just, maybe I didn't get it right. Are there some  
21 agencies that did not meet the 50% threshold?

22 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Ah, that is  
23 correct. Ah, 35 out of the 40 agencies did meet the  
24 50% spending threshold, which means, ah, in fiscal  
25

1  
2 year 2025 the agencies that are participating did not  
3 meet the spending threshold.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Is, is there a  
5 particular reason why they didn't?

6 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Ah, there's a  
7 variety of reasons for each of those agencies. Um,  
8 we do regular benchmarking with all of the agencies  
9 to make sure that they are reaching those goals, and  
10 so when we see that an agency is not reaching the 50%  
11 advertising spending goal we partner with, ah, the  
12 director of Community and Ethnic Media and the agency  
13 to help get them on the right track. Um for a couple  
14 of the agencies that, that did not meet the goal,  
15 they have relatively small, um, advertising budgets  
16 for fiscal year 2020, um, so just did not have, um,  
17 much of an opportunity to correct that along the way  
18 in the fiscal year.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Would it have  
20 helped if you had gotten them more funding  
21 [inaudible] equitable, ah, the [inaudible] of the,  
22 those funding towards media?

23 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: I can't speak to  
24 every agency's advertising budget, but I can say that  
25

1  
2 it would definitely help to have more advertising  
3 budget for each of the agencies.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Um, how do you know  
5 that these ads are actually, is there like a  
6 accountability system to making sure, ah, maybe you  
7 get, ah, one listing when [inaudible] or is there  
8 someone that just does sporadic checks to making sure  
9 that they're actually being put on a certain time and  
10 with those, ah, channels?

11 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Thank you for the  
12 question, Council Member. At, at this time we don't  
13 have kind of a, a formal audit process, um, to make  
14 sure that all of the agencies are placing those ads.  
15 However, what we do is we collect data from both our  
16 advertising firm, Miller and Graystone, and from the  
17 agency, and we are able to, um, double check that  
18 data, and whenever there are, ah, discrepancies in  
19 the data, ah, we, ah, frequently do desk research and  
20 do look up some of those advertisements, um,  
21 especially ones in question that you, that you  
22 referenced.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Does, does those  
24 consulting companies check, ah, to see if they  
25 actually got put on? The reason I'm asking, I, I

1  
2 seen it in times that people put commercials, they  
3 went to check those times and actually it was not put  
4 by the TV station. So I just want to make sure that  
5 we get what we're paying for.

6 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Yeah, I, I don't  
7 know, um, what their kind of double check process is.  
8 I'll look into it and get back to you.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: OK. Um, Intro 2313  
10 gives the, the mayor discretion on where to house the  
11 newer Office of Ethnic and Community Media. Where  
12 would this office be housed?

13 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: I think we support  
14 the legislation as written, that allows it to be, um,  
15 housed, ah, in an office at discretion of the mayor.  
16 I think there's any number of, um, appropriate, ah,  
17 organizations for the office to be housed in.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: But for this year,  
19 I mean, the mayor will have a say where it will go,  
20 right?

21 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Sure. Ah,  
22 currently, um, Jose Bayona, the director of Community  
23 and Ethnic Media, um, works for, ah, City Hall and  
24 the Mayor's Press Office, um, and the Mayor's Office  
25 of Operations supports the kind of performance

1 management and data collection, ah, of those efforts.  
2 Um, so I think have a report directly into City Hall,  
3 um, as, ah, the current director does, ah, may be  
4 appropriate.  
5

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: How many staff do  
7 you anticipate you're gonna need, and do you  
8 anticipate using existing staff or hire new staff,  
9 and at what cost?

10 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Um, we haven't yet  
11 had the opportunity to think through all of the  
12 operational elements of this. Right now the  
13 administration of Executive Order 47, um, including  
14 the, the funding for Jose Bayona's role, the director  
15 of Community and Ethnic Media, the staff at the  
16 Mayor's Office of Operations, um, and the staff at  
17 agencies who are working on marketing contacts are  
18 already budgeted. Um, so we do not expect a  
19 significant budget need, ah, to administer the new  
20 Office of Ethnic and Community Media.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Well, great.  
22 Executive Order 47 of 2019 requires the Mayor's  
23 Office' develop and maintain approved list of  
24 community and ethnic media outlets for city agencies  
25 to use at their discretion for placing ads. The



1 list, as you know, posted on the city Open Data's  
2 portal includes 233 outlets. Meanwhile, the list  
3 posted on the Mayor's Office of Media and  
4 Entertainment [inaudible] includes 283 outlets. Can,  
5 can you share with us which one is the correct number  
6 the, ah, pursuant to EO47 and why do the open data  
7 alone have two different lists?  
8

9 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Ah, that's a good  
10 question. I'd have to look into that, um,  
11 discrepancy specifically. Um, but, ah, we do update  
12 the list with the Mayor's Office of Media and  
13 Entertainment regularly, um, and that is an accurate  
14 list of 283 outlets.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: That's 50, that's,  
16 that's a substantial, um, you think someone just  
17 forgot to post them up or?

18 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Ah, we prioritize,  
19 um, updating it with, ah, the Mayor's Office of Media  
20 and Entertainment website. We know that's where, um,  
21 most people are apt to see this data. Um, and so,  
22 yes, there's likely a lag of our office updating, ah,  
23 the directory on the Open Data portal.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And, ah, as you  
25 many know, CUNY Newmark, ah, Jay School Center for

1  
2 Community Media, has also reported that they are  
3 working with the mayor's office to consolidate their  
4 list of 300-plus outlets with the mayor's list. When  
5 would this list be consolidated?

6 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: We are in regular  
7 contact with the Center of Community and Media, and  
8 we, ah, have exchanged, um, notes on, um, many of the  
9 outlets that are not yet on our directory. Um, we  
10 are continuing to look at those outlets, um, and, ah,  
11 determine whether or not they are appropriate for our  
12 directory. Um, we will likely be updating it  
13 sometime in the next coming months.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Coming months, like  
15 two months, five months?

16 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Probably by the  
17 end of the summer.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: By the end of  
19 summer, that's great. Ah, what criteria do we use,  
20 ah, and who ultimately makes the decision, but very  
21 interested in knowing the criteria for determining  
22 which outlets, ah, get the funding and, and how do  
23 measure success?

24 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: That's a great  
25 question. Um, I think, ah, ultimately, ah, this is,

1  
2 um, the responsibility of Jose Bayona, the director  
3 of Community and Ethnic Media. Um, he is responsible  
4 for determining which outlets are on the community  
5 and ethnic media directory. Um, we are always  
6 evaluating, um, which agencies are spending with new  
7 outlets that have not yet been spent or included on  
8 our directory, um, and when we do find that there is  
9 spending with those outlets that are appropriate to  
10 be included, um, we add them to our directory and our  
11 compliance calculations.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yeah, but do, when  
13 I talk about criteria, do you have like a rubric that  
14 you use? How do, how do we know that it is going to  
15 the right, right outlets? Like, look, during COVID-  
16 19 I saw on certain channels, ah, very few and some  
17 of them no advertisement at all from the city. So I,  
18 and I'm talking about the ethnic media, and I'm just  
19 curious, the person who is sitting behind a desk and  
20 said, oh, you know, we're gonna go this way, we're  
21 gonna go this way, it's their rubric that says that  
22 is what we need to do and this is why.

23 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Yeah. Ah, in  
24 general, in order to make our directory, um, of  
25 community and ethnic media it does have to meet, ah,

1  
2 the definition that you described earlier. They have  
3 to focus on a specific, um, race, demographic  
4 breakdown, um, neighborhood, um, and that's when they  
5 get onto our directory and we prefer if the outlets  
6 are based in New York City. Um, the agencies have  
7 discretion over which outlets their advertisements  
8 are placed in. And if they are working with Miller  
9 and Graystone there is expertise there on making sure  
10 that, um, those advertisements are placed are placed  
11 in a, um, variety of outlets, um, including those  
12 that they agency may be trying to target with a given  
13 program. Um, so Operations is only managing the data  
14 collection that clients at large speak to the  
15 agencies, ah, directs the spending of their own  
16 advertising budget.

17 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: You know, I started  
18 by complimenting and I'll continue to do that, ah,  
19 for [inaudible]. It really brought, you know, we're  
20 in the right direction of bringing balance, ah, but,  
21 you, you hear from some of the reporters that I see  
22 here, ah, from some, ah, some outlets here, ah, that  
23 I, I happen to know personally. Ah, for example, in  
24 the Dominican media that, ah, they have felt that  
25 they were largely ignored this last year in terms of,

1  
2 ah, getting, ah, some of those fundings to go through  
3 those programming, ah, because they reach a certain  
4 sector of society that, to be honest with you, nobody  
5 else is. Ah, and, and that could be indifferent, you  
6 know, we could go around in different sectors. So I,  
7 I would hope that we will have a better way that is  
8 more objective, ah, to be able to make the selections  
9 so we can give a better answer with why some are  
10 selected and some are not, ah, in the future. Ah,  
11 with that, let me turn it over to our moderator. Ah,  
12 I know there are some council members that have some  
13 questions and I'll come back for my final questions.  
14 Thank you so much.

15                   MODERATOR: Thank you, Chair Cabrera.  
16 Um, I will now call on council members in the order  
17 they have used the Zoom raise hand function. Council  
18 members who would like ask a question and you did not  
19 raise your hand please do so now. Ah, you will have  
20 a total of five minutes to ask your question and  
21 receive an answer from the panelist. The Sergeant at  
22 Arms will keep a timer and will let you know when  
23 your time is up. Once I have called on you, please  
24 wait until the sergeant has announced that you may  
25 begin before asking your question. We will first

1  
2 hear from Council Member Rodriguez, before hearing  
3 from Council Member Yeger.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: It's difficult  
6 to be sitting here and listening to, you know, all  
7 the great things that have been happening [inaudible]  
8 and spending in all the ethnic community media. When  
9 you represent a district, in my case in northern  
10 Manhattan, that none of the any media have been able  
11 to get, eh, any investment, any the list of  
12 participants, you were here, another translator, they  
13 would do the job for many of them, where the city has  
14 maybe approached them and say we respect your  
15 contribution, we want to invest in you guy, so that  
16 you are also available to connect your readers, your  
17 audience, to the services. You know, our people pay  
18 taxes. They can speak different language. But they  
19 working daily. They work in supermarket. They work  
20 in bodega. They raising their family. I, I'm happy  
21 to see some of the publisher and I also would like  
22 to, you know, hear from you what is the process in  
23 how those two that you mentioned, Miller and the  
24 other, where you to select them as the one that we  
25 rely on for them to go out and connect the services

1 with the ethnic community media. How many have they  
2 gone to northern Manhattan, to the south Bronx, going  
3 meet with the Jewish community, with the Asian  
4 community, and check what are those local newspapers  
5 there? So of course my daughter, 8 and 14, I cannot  
6 promise them that either the grandchildren, we  
7 believe in a society of equal opportunity because we  
8 have inherited a culture where this is all about who  
9 control the resources, and I think however we will  
10 continue [inaudible] and happy to be working with the  
11 mayor and I know that his executive order, ah, you  
12 know, move our city in the right direction, but it's  
13 not enough. When I read the article [inaudible] from  
14 CUNY, I mean, for me this was about were CUNY aware,  
15 didn't CUNY know that there was a bill already  
16 introduced to create this office? Had they  
17 approached and tried to figure out what is, what was  
18 the plan [inaudible]? What is Miller doing? What is  
19 the other publisher doing to connect with the local  
20 ethnic media regardless if they are Latino, if their  
21 Asian, if they're Jewish, if they're Anglo, they have  
22 a group of people that for decade they've been using,  
23 they've been controlling those advertising. And we,  
24 we had to break that wall. [speaking in Spanish] So  
25

1  
2 I, I'm happy, again, and I want to thank Paula Choya,  
3 Emma Wu, you know Jason Goldman, the speaker, Eric  
4 Adams, we're working together with this bill since  
5 day one. A lot of respect for [inaudible] Jonah.  
6 But when you mention [inaudible] Jonah 20 time and  
7 he's about OK. So is [inaudible] power? Does he  
8 control all those resources? And, and I definitely  
9 chose and believe in the literacy of [inaudible]  
10 Jonah. But I do believe that this office should  
11 definitely bring the necessary changes, cannot be to  
12 main publisher that control for decades where we  
13 publish those ad. So I'm happy, eh, but I know  
14 [inaudible] will be frustrated on how we got here and  
15 I hope again that this office will play a major role,  
16 millions and millions of dollars. I chair the  
17 Committee on Transportation. I can tell you how many  
18 dollars the DOT has invested...

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...[inaudible]  
21 the public media, in the public newspaper, TV in my  
22 community. You know how much? Zero. That's  
23 unacceptable.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,  
25 Council Member. Any other, ah, council members?



1  
2           MODERATOR: I'm not seeing any hands  
3 right now. We had Council Member Yeger on deck, not  
4 sure if, he's no longer here. Um, I'm going to go  
5 back to you.

6           CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.  
7 Let me come back to our, a couple of more questions.  
8 The Office of Ethnic and Community Media will be  
9 required to provide at least one annual training for  
10 city agency employees responsible for advertising.  
11 Will this training be developed by the office or an  
12 external organization? What will the training  
13 involve? Will this training have a cost, and if so  
14 how much?

15           CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Ah, thank you, and  
16 I do just want to, ah, respond to say thank you to  
17 Council Member Rodriguez for your, your comments.  
18 Um, I do think that the creation of this, ah, Office  
19 of Ethnic and Community Media, ah, is going to  
20 helpful in accomplishing those goals. Um, to speak  
21 to training specifically, um, the city has conducted,  
22 um, two trainings so far with the agencies, um, since  
23 the creation of the executive order, um, and has been  
24 involved in, ah, how to use the directory, compliance  
25 with reporting the data, and showcasing some of our

1  
2 more successful agency partners and how they've been  
3 developing ad campaigns. Um, while I, ah, imagine  
4 that this training would be, ah, developed at the  
5 discretion of the future Office of Ethnic and  
6 Community Media, um, and we don't have it yet fully  
7 thought through it operationally. Um, there is a  
8 path forward to doing it, um, within city government.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: As you know, the  
10 bill will require city agencies spend at least 50% of  
11 their advertising budget in ethnic and community  
12 media to grant waivers from this requirements. For  
13 what reason do you anticipate a waiver, um, might be  
14 granted, aside for the need for certain notices to be  
15 posted in different places pursuant to city and state  
16 law?

17 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Ah, that is the,  
18 the primary reason that we have granted waivers in  
19 the past, I'd say the overwhelming majority of them  
20 are for legal requirements.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Got it. Ah, what  
22 contracts does the city currently have with, ah, with  
23 an ad placement firms? What types of advertisement  
24 are they each responsible for? And what is the  
25 timeframe for the current contracts?

1 COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS 51  
2 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Sorry, what was  
3 the question again?

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Sure. What  
5 contracts does the city currently have with the ad  
6 placement firms, the two firms, what types of  
7 advertising are they each responsible for, and what  
8 is the timeframe for the current contracts?

9 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: I'd have to get  
10 back to you on a couple of specifics, but there are  
11 the two backdrop contracts with, um, both Miller and  
12 Graystone. Um, they both work, um, across all types  
13 of media landscape for the purposes of Executive  
14 Order 47. Um, we are tracking only, um, print and  
15 digital, ah, compliance spends, but the agencies do  
16 work with those advertising firms for other, um,  
17 advertising outlets as well. And, ah, a couple of  
18 the agencies have relationships, um, with different  
19 advertising firms that are not Miller and Graystone.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Ah, since EO47, ah,  
21 since EO47 has the city worked with the, with its  
22 contracted out firms to ensure they're requiring that  
23 half of the agencies, ah, budget go to community  
24 media is met and you're also part of that already,  
25 and also since EO47 has the administration seen city

1  
2 agency marketing managers take a more active growing  
3 community media ad placements now that the city  
4 maintains the MM community media directory?

5 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Yes, um, we have  
6 seen, ah, active participation with, um, Miller and  
7 Graystone in their administering of, um,  
8 advertisement placements and they have been coached  
9 and, ah, ah, [inaudible] media directory and are an  
10 active partner in helping us reach that 50%  
11 advertising spending goal. And also we have seen a  
12 new credible uptake with, um, individual agency press  
13 marketing and fiscal contacts. We engage a wide  
14 variety of contacts at each of the agencies, um, and,  
15 ah, they have been, ah, very energized and excited  
16 about, ah, an opportunity to advertise to different  
17 populations.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. Does  
19 the administration have a prediction of the expected  
20 spending of FY22 of ethnic and community media  
21 outlets?

22 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Um, we're just now  
23 finishing the second full fiscal year, um, and, ah,  
24 beginning to package and analyze our data for how we  
25 performed in fiscal 2021. We do not yet have an

1  
2 understanding of, um, our advertising budget citywide  
3 for fiscal year 2022. But, um, are hoping to adapt  
4 to the changing landscape right now.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Do you think  
6 outside of COVID-19 is there gonna be something  
7 compatible to what we saw last year, again, outside  
8 of that budget for COVID-19, something compatible?

9 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Ah, it's good  
10 question, Council Member. I, I think a significant  
11 portion of the city's advertising budget for the last  
12 year was focused on COVID-19, um, response, health  
13 and safety measures, and recovery. Um, I think we  
14 will continue to see a lot of targeted advertisements  
15 for COVID-19, ah, recovery and vaccinations,  
16 reaching, um, community and ethnic media outlets in  
17 the broader landscape. Um, beyond that response, um,  
18 it is up to each individual agency [inaudible], um,  
19 budgeting process to, ah, advertise.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And can you provide  
21 us a breakdown of the proportion of ad buys by  
22 language and/or community demographic, ah, for fiscal  
23 2020, roughly what percentage of the city's spending  
24 on television or radio advertisement goes towards  
25 outlets with five or fewer staff, and are there any

1 obstacle that will prevent the city from  
2 significantly increasing this percentage?

3  
4 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Thanks, Council  
5 Member. I don't have information on some of the  
6 demographic breakdowns of the different outlets we're  
7 reaching or on the, um, television and radio that  
8 meet the five or fewer employees definition. Um,  
9 what I can provide are, um, some information on the  
10 language breakdown of ads placed. Um, we place  
11 advertisements in eligible community and ethnic media  
12 outlets in, um, a variety of languages, a couple  
13 dozen different languages, um, including English.  
14 Um, the top five languages other than English that we  
15 are placing advertisements in are Spanish, Chinese,  
16 including Mandarin and Cantonese, Korean, and Haitian  
17 Creole.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Do you, do you have  
19 a percentage breakdown, like for example 20% Spanish,  
20 30% Mandarin?

21 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Yep. We spend,  
22 um, ah, 12% of our advertising spend in Spanish, just  
23 about 8% of our advertising spending Chinese, um, and  
24 around 3% of our advertising spend in Korean and  
25 Haitian Creole.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Great, and I just,  
3 ah, forgot to mention one question. Are there any  
4 approved outlets certified M/WBEs and if so roughly  
5 what's the proportion?

6 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Ah, we don't have  
7 the information at our fingertips of which of the  
8 outlets are M/WBEs. Um, but we can get back to you  
9 with more information on that. It's something we're  
10 interested in searching as well.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I would appreciate  
12 that. Can you take a calculated guess? I mean, is  
13 it few, is it, if it's around 50% what, what do you?

14 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Ah, I hesitate to  
15 take a calculated guess, but I would say given, um,  
16 just, ah, the wide variety of the directory that we  
17 have and that community outlets that we are reaching,  
18 I imagine it's fairly high.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: OK, great, great,  
20 fantastic. Ah, let me turn it back to our moderator.  
21 I believe that we have a second round of questions.

22 MODERATOR: Yes, I'm seeing Council  
23 Member Rodriguez, um, he can speak when ready.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Well, I want  
3 thank, eh, Hamed, eh, Brady Hamed for being here.  
4 And I want to keep it positive because I know that we  
5 are moving in the right direction on, on, you know,  
6 eh, not only identifying challenges that we have, eh,  
7 so far but also giving credit to Mayor de Blasio.  
8 Nobody has had done what he, what he did it. So him  
9 and his team, Jose Bayona number one, they been  
10 trying to look up, you know, how we can do better.  
11 However, we cannot be shy when we tend to, we do not  
12 seeing the reality, and that's what I hope that we  
13 will address as we will create that permanent office.  
14 Eh, do you have the numbers on, and, and of course  
15 when you look at the percent, this is about, you  
16 know, not, not only on this administration, the  
17 administration has made progress, but when you look  
18 about 29% of New York City population are Latinos.  
19 You know, and 27% are black, and 15% are Asian. So  
20 at some point whatever we do from leadership at City  
21 Hall, from investment in, in what, on women and  
22 minority contract, to investing in the media, we  
23 should use those percentage and make people  
24 accountable [inaudible]. And that's what I say. I,  
25 I hope that Miller and the other, eh, publisher they



1  
2 will be testifying today because they're the one  
3 making all the money. So I hope that, you know,  
4 first of all I am sure that they knew that this  
5 hearing was taking place, and I sure that they should  
6 testify about how they've invested in this community,  
7 how they, how, how it came out that there's no Latino  
8 in charge of the Millers and other who are also  
9 responsible to lead, you know, the effort, eh, to, to  
10 put those ads, to invest those ads. But, again, from  
11 just speaking coming from our heart, from the  
12 frustration, knowing at the same time, [inaudible]  
13 same time that here you will hear from, you know,  
14 [inaudible] and [inaudible] Latino, you know, eh, the  
15 Queens, and have [inaudible] in many other, they  
16 reaffirm, you know, my brother who they were speaking  
17 in Spanish because that's the language they speak,  
18 and they don't know how to navigate all those  
19 procurement process. And that's why it's so  
20 important to [inaudible] this. But do you, can you  
21 give me the dollars? How much money did the city  
22 invest last year on advertising?

23 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Um, on total  
24 advertising?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

2 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Um, well, so for,  
3 um, print and digital, ah, outlets...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Everything,  
5 everything on advertising, yeah.

6 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: Everything, I  
7 probably have it on one of my spreadsheets here. Um,  
8 I think our total advertising spending in fiscal 20  
9 was just over 29 million dollars.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Do you know  
11 how much the Miller and the other to publish it  
12 control?

13 CHIEF OF STAFF HAMED: I don't have, ah,  
14 at hand.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: I'm sure it's  
16 more than 12 million. You know what I mean? And I,  
17 I know that they have the biggest, the biggest pie.  
18 And, and, and that's why I hope I would like hear  
19 from them. And, again, I looking at them as  
20 potential partner, too. I give people a chance for  
21 people to look at it and share that information. So,  
22 you know, [speaking in Spanish]. Thank you,  
23 Chairman.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.  
3 Moderator, do we have any other council members who  
4 want to speak or ask a question?

5 MODERATOR: Um, I'm seeing a hand from  
6 Council Member Darma Diaz.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: I will  
9 definitely be brief. I just want to thank my  
10 colleagues, Cabrera and Rodriguez, for the effort  
11 that you're putting forth here today. Definitely  
12 coming from a, a high number of, of constituents that  
13 [inaudible] Latino and knowing the struggles that  
14 they have with communication and the media I'm  
15 empowered by, by your passion in your voices, and  
16 also want to, um, further compliment, um, Council  
17 Member Rodriguez for, for, um, taking to the point  
18 that the administration is finally acknowledging our  
19 place in society. So when we thank the  
20 administration for acknowledging us it doesn't mean  
21 that the fight doesn't continue. [speaking in  
22 Spanish]. Thank you. I'm handing it back to you.  
23 Thank you.

24

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,  
3 Council Member D. Diaz. I appreciate your word, as  
4 always. Ah, moderator, anybody else?

5 MODERATOR: I'm not seeing any hands  
6 right now, um, so if there are no further questions I  
7 think we can move on to the public.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.  
9 Again, I want to thank the administration. Thank you  
10 for making an institution [inaudible] you can make an  
11 institution of change, ah, through an executive order  
12 and now it's gonna be codified into law as we're  
13 looking forward to passing, ah, this, ah, bill and  
14 moving it forward. I want to thank the  
15 administration. I want to thank you, the chief of  
16 staff, for all the work that has been put forth, ah,  
17 and making sure that we have a more equitable, ah,  
18 ah, to dealing with all these advertising dollars.  
19 We're not there yet. We're not where we used to be,  
20 but we're not where we need to be there yet. But  
21 we're moving in the right direction and, and one of  
22 the hardest things to get done is to get started.  
23 Ah, and so I appreciate all the effort. I appreciate  
24 all of, ah, ah, the administration seeing the value,  
25 actually, because I didn't know [inaudible] the value

1 that we see in making this, ah, a reality. And so  
2 with that, um, we're ready, I believe, ah, to move to  
3 the public.  
4

5 MODERATOR: Thank you. We will now turn  
6 to public testimony. I'd like to remind everyone  
7 that unlike our typical council hearings we will be  
8 calling individuals one by one to testify. Each  
9 panelist will be given three minutes to speak.  
10 Please begin once the sergeant has started the timer.  
11 Council members who have questions for a particular  
12 panelist should use the Zoom raise hand function and  
13 I will call on you after the panelist has completed  
14 their testimony. For panelists, once your name is  
15 called a member of our staff will unmute you and the  
16 Sergeant at Arms will set the timer and give you a  
17 go-ahead to begin. Please wait for the sergeant to  
18 announce that you may begin before delivering your  
19 testimony. I would now like to welcome Kamlesh  
20 Mehta, followed by Gail Smith, and then followed by  
21 Javier Castano.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

23 KAMLESH MEHTA: Hello, everybody. Thank  
24 you very much for presenting the important issue of  
25 the ethnic media. Truly speaking, without the

1 support of New York City the ethnic media will not  
2 survive, even though there is a population,  
3 population of more than three million people and not  
4 only Spanish or Bengali or English and Spanish or  
5 other languages, it is really important that the  
6 ethnic media keep getting support from the city, so  
7 the community which doesn't speak English, they're  
8 gonna also get the message they can learn about the  
9 project, about the developments, what is [inaudible]  
10 New York City about the laws. Some things we must  
11 make sure that there is an ethnic media office in New  
12 York City [inaudible] and it also managed by the  
13 ethnic media [inaudible] because they know what we  
14 need, how we are getting to the [inaudible] medias.  
15 So if the city opens a specific office or outlet for  
16 the ethnic media that will be a great help. During  
17 the COVID most of the ethnic media would have lost if  
18 it was not supported by the city. So for the benefit  
19 of, ah, New York City and the citizens of New York  
20 City the ethnic community, which is more than three  
21 million people, we must have the office in New York  
22 City for the ethnic media. Thank you very much for  
23 your support.  
24  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS 63  
2 MODERATOR: Thank you. Ah, Gail Smith,  
3 you may begin.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

5 GAIL SMITH: Good afternoon, Chair  
6 Cabrera and members of the Committee on Governmental  
7 Operations. Thank you for the opportunity to testify  
8 for this very important legislation. I am Gail Smith  
9 Carrejo. Um, I am the publisher of *Impacto Latino*.  
10 My father, Carlos Carrejo, an immigrant from  
11 Argentina, started publishing *Impacto* in 1967 to give  
12 voice to the growing Latino immigrant community,  
13 particularly the growing Dominican community, but  
14 regardless of geographic heritage and touching all  
15 five boroughs. Today our mission continues to be the  
16 same. I'm here to express to you the critical  
17 importance of ethnic media to a city like New York  
18 City that has the largest number of ethnicities in  
19 the country. New York City has an extraordinarily  
20 diverse population. Just Latinos represent, ah,  
21 nearly 30% of the population, according to census  
22 data. Latinos culturally keep their language. There  
23 are significant proportions of non-English speaking  
24 households in New York City, as in many parts of the  
25 country. There is also a large percentage of the

1  
2 Latino population that is technology deficient,  
3 either because of affordability or lack of technical  
4 knowledge. For many in our community newspapers are  
5 a lifeline. Ethnic media connects migrants that are  
6 culturally and linguistically diverse with their own  
7 local communities. It reaches 55% of the city's  
8 population. On a more practical level, ethnic media  
9 are essential sources of information. We provide  
10 information on city services, health, migrants'  
11 rights, and other types of information to live and  
12 thrive in New York City. We inform and educate the  
13 community on voting systems, age care services, and  
14 others, and provide information that is attuned to  
15 the particular needs of our audience. And let me  
16 make a most important point. The information we  
17 provide is verifiable information, not information  
18 like some information found on social media. This is  
19 a service that mainstream media are largely unable to  
20 provide with their focus on a broad audience, but  
21 without it our community potentially miss out on  
22 important information. We are valuable allies to  
23 city government. We communicate available services  
24 provided, and, most importantly, we explain how they  
25 work. This is particularly crucial in the Latino



1 community given the high fear that exists and  
2 reluctance to tap into the services. We capture the  
3 subtleties and nuances that one-size-fits-all  
4 government communication campaigns cannot provide.  
5 We are in a unique position to effectively  
6 communicate government initiatives...

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

9 GAIL SMITH: ...so it's perfectly  
10 understood. Can I continue? I have about one more  
11 minute.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [inaudible] 30  
13 seconds?

14 GAIL SMITH: OK.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [inaudible].

16 GAIL SMITH: Ah, the COVID pandemic  
17 highlighted the crucial importance of ethnic media.  
18 We provided the specific education with information  
19 for our communities. We worked hand-in-hand with  
20 city agencies to, ah, educate our communities. But  
21 it is common knowledge new platforms are facing an  
22 existential crisis. We need New York City's support  
23 to continue with our mission to service our  
24 communities and continue to work hand-in-hand with  
25 New York agencies. I want to, ah, thank Council

1  
2 Member Ydanis Rodriguez. Thank you for your  
3 passionate support. Speaker Johnson, Brooklyn  
4 President Eric Adams, and Council Member Feliz for  
5 introducing legislation for this council, ah, to this  
6 council, and I want to thank also, ah, Jose Bayona  
7 and the de Blasio administration for all they have  
8 done to support ethnic media, in particular for the  
9 executive order which is the foundation for this  
10 legislation. I respectfully urge this committee to  
11 approve this legislation. Without it all of the New  
12 York City diverse communities will suffer. Thank  
13 you.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

15 GAIL SMITH: Sorry about going over.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: That's OK. We  
17 understand.

18 MODERATOR: Thank you. I'd like to now  
19 call on Javier Castano. After Javier, we will hear  
20 from George Fiala, followed by Eddy Heredia.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 JAVIER CASTANO: Hi. Ah, since I arrived  
23 in New York City 37 years ago I have always worked as  
24 a reporter and photographer of news events. I have  
25 been editor [speaking in Spanish] and I have a

1 master's design in journalism from Columbia  
2 University. I have read extensively about  
3 immigration, housing, employment, education, and  
4 crime. I know New York very well and I recognize the  
5 important of the ethnic media in the city as diverse  
6 as this. But I don't want to talk about these facts  
7 as you know these facts. I am here to testify  
8 because the ethnic media is being used and abused for  
9 too long. At this time, ah, the first time that I  
10 testified in, in the City Council was on January 28,  
11 2015. Councilman Carlos Menchaca called  
12 representatives of the ethnic media to testify about  
13 the *El Diario La Prensa* going down the drain. At  
14 that time we had many promises, but nothing happened  
15 to benefit the ethnic media and the Latino press. On  
16 December 11, 2014, and February 16, 2016, Melissa  
17 Mark-Viverito, then president of the City Council,  
18 brought members of the ethnic media to City Hall and  
19 promised to help us with money and resources. But  
20 again nothing happened. Everything start changing on  
21 May 22, 2019, when Mayor Bill de Blasio signed the  
22 Executive Order 47 to benefit the ethnic media. Each  
23 New York City agency has to give at least 50% of the  
24 advertising budget to print and unlike ethnic media.  
25

1           During these times of big corporation, anti-immigrant  
2           law, and the pandemic this money is keeping the  
3           ethnic media alive and thriving. The input of Jose  
4           Bayona as director of community and ethnic media at  
5           the New York City office has been the key of this  
6           initiative and now Corey Johnson, president of the  
7           City Council, Eric Adams, borough, ah, Brooklyn  
8           Borough president, Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez, and  
9           Oswald Feliz want to take this initiative to a higher  
10          level. An executive order can be killed by the new  
11          mayor. This is why they want to create the New York  
12          City agency to connect and give advertising dollars  
13          to the ethnic media. I welcome this initiative  
14          because it is the first in the United States. It  
15          will be an example for other cities to emulate. I  
16          support this initiative because I will help, it will  
17          help the bottom line of the ethnic media and I  
18          support this initiative because democracy and freedom  
19          of information with benefits. The government has  
20          given media big corporations...

22                            SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

23                            JAVIER CASTANO: ...[inaudible] for too  
24          long and they seldom reach out to our community. I'm  
25          about to finish. This New York City agency for the

1 ethnic media will help balance the inequalities of  
2 this city. It will help solidify democracy in an era  
3 that we are talking about news deserts, digital  
4 divide, the lack of city engagement, and low voting  
5 participation. As director of Queens Latino this  
6 issues that we are paying attention in our platform.  
7 This is an initiative of New York City and no  
8 political party or educational institution as, as  
9 CUNY should take credit for it. It is not for  
10 publication based outside of the city. Thank you for  
11 giving me this opportunity.  
12

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

14 MODERATOR: Thank you. Ah, I will now  
15 call on George Fiala. You may begin when you are  
16 ready.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

18 GEORGE FIALA: Thank you. Yes, I want to  
19 repeat what was just said about, um, we also  
20 testified at Carlos Menchaca's hearing five years ago  
21 and it was only until the last year or two that we  
22 finally see some support from city government. Now,  
23 why should a local newspaper I publish, you might  
24 know the *Red Hook Star Revue* in, ah, it's a community  
25 paper in, in a part of New York, part of Brooklyn

1  
2 that has both a upscale part of it and a public  
3 housing part of it. And we write for both, um,  
4 communities. And it's actually very, it makes for  
5 very dynamic newspaper. Ah, what I wanted to say was  
6 that, ah, also I want to say that Jose has been very  
7 good to us. In other words, we went to visit him. I  
8 took my advertising manager and he was very  
9 solicitous and he explained to us, ah, the program  
10 and we our ads from Miller Advertising, and, ah, we  
11 used to get about one a year, whenever there was a  
12 hurricane season starting. We got one ad from, you  
13 know, whatever agency tells you to, ah, worry about  
14 hurricanes. That was just one. This last issue was  
15 unbelievable. We had about eight ads, half for rank  
16 choice voting and half for, ah, to tell people,  
17 elderly, young people, to get their vaccinations.  
18 It's, it's tremendous. We don't charge that much for  
19 the ads, but, ah, people, they've been seeing this  
20 paper for 10 years or 11 years and what we're selling  
21 in the advertising portion of it is the credibility  
22 that we get, because we're a community voice and I  
23 believe that, ah, people take the ads in the local  
24 paper more seriously. So when they look, when they  
25 see an ad for, ah, rank choice voting they'll read

1  
2 it, just like they'll read the story. Here we have  
3 an article about the, ah, you know, the local council  
4 race. I guess what I'm trying to say is that this is  
5 a wonderful program. I've always thought that, ah,  
6 you know, local newspaper can be a conduit for, ah,  
7 not only news from the city, but also paid commercial  
8 messages. I'm not saying that we deserve or don't  
9 deserve it, but it helps me pay writers. I have a  
10 nice staff that enjoys writing. And, ah, we're part  
11 of the city's commerce. Let me think if I have  
12 anything else to say. We write about the Board of  
13 Standards and Appeals, we write about the mayoral  
14 race, we write about, ah, the Gowanus rezoning, all  
15 topics that we help educate the public in order to  
16 understand better the world around them. And, um, so  
17 anyway I'm very thankful for the city's use of our  
18 pages and, ah, I hope, I hope it, ah, continues. And  
19 you know there's a new man next year.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

21 GEORGE FIALA: Good luck to whoever wins.  
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. Thank  
24 you so much.

25

2 MODERATOR: Thank you. We will now hear  
3 from Eddy Heredia. We have an interpreter for Mr.  
4 Heredia, um, so I'm going the interpreter to  
5 introduce himself.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 EDDY HEREDIA: [speaking in Spanish]

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, ah, [speaking  
9 in Spanish] you could translate.

10 EDDY HEREDIA: [speaking in Spanish]

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [speaking in  
12 Spanish]. If you could hold the clock for us again.  
13 Ah, can you hear, ah, Interpreter, he, what he is  
14 sharing?

15 INTERPRETER: I can hear fine. Can  
16 everyone hear me?

17 MODERATOR: Yes, we can hear you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Now we can hear  
19 you.

20 INTERPRETER: OK.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I appreciate it.

22 INTERPRETER: OK. So first I want to  
23 thank everyone for the initiative that's being  
24 brought forward because this gives us a way to  
25



1 resolve a lot of the issues that affect us.

2 Adelante, señor.

3 EDDY HEREDIA: OK. [speaking in Spanish]

4 INTERPRETER: [speaking in Spanish] In my  
5 case, like many others, we have a TV shows that  
6 communicate to the communities, much like mine, the  
7 Dominican community. Adelante, señor.

8 EDDY HEREDIA: [speaking in Spanish]

9 INTERPRETER: During these 20 years we've  
10 making this kind of content TV shows that reaches our  
11 communities to people that specifically don't speak  
12 English. Adelante.

13 EDDY HEREDIA: [speaking in Spanish]

14 INTERPRETER: And also in fact we've been  
15 creating content since the time of the Twin Towers  
16 and as well as during the pandemic doing live shows,  
17 communicating to our community what was happening.  
18 Adelante.

19 EDDY HEREDIA: [speaking in Spanish]

20 INTERPRETER: When we, and in the present  
21 time we have a team, a team of professionals that all  
22 came from the university, journalists, ah, also like  
23 spokespeople, and this has been very costly, very  
24 expensive. However, we haven't been given any of the  
25

1  
2 resources that the city has given out to other media  
3 groups. Adelante.

4 EDDY HEREDIA: [speaking in Spanish]

5 INTERPRETER: And we would like to give  
6 credit to like the borough president, Mr. Johnson,  
7 Mr., Council Member Rodriguez, and many others that  
8 have been concerned with this whole fact and have  
9 helped us to find some help to achieve these  
10 resources, to find out where they are. Adelante.

11 EDDY HEREDIA: [speaking in Spanish]

12 INTERPRETER: And what we're asking for  
13 in this moment is to be taking account, or taken or  
14 to think about us when you're developing these new  
15 campaigns in, in the search to being able to reach  
16 all these other communities. Adelante.

17 EDDY HEREDIA: [speaking in Spanish]

18 INTERPRETER: [inaudible] And also to, to  
19 get the required information needed for whatever  
20 publicity is being done or any ads in Spanish as well  
21 as an ease in how to fill out the documentation or  
22 whatever mechanisms are required so as to be able to  
23 obtain these resources. Adelante.

24 EDDY HEREDIA: [speaking in Spanish]

1  
2 INTERPRETER: And other than that, just  
3 to thank everyone for all the work, all the hard work  
4 they have been doing to try to make this a reality so  
5 that that way this no longer has to be a  
6 conversation. It would be something that has already  
7 happened in the past and that happily the resources  
8 will become available and we could just continue with  
9 the work all together. Thank you.

10 EDDY HEREDIA: [speaking in Spanish]

11 INTERPRETER: And also to give thanks to  
12 the council people, Ydanis, Johnson, Cabrera for  
13 everything they have done, from starting from the  
14 speck of sand so that everything could eventually be  
15 done.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

17 INTERPRETER: [speaking in Spanish]

18 EDDY HEREDIA: OK.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Gracias.

20 MODERATOR: Thank you. We, ah, will now  
21 hear from Anthony Ibarria, followed by Caroline  
22 Pimental, followed by Abu Taher. Anthony Ibarria,  
23 you may begin when the sergeant calls time.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

1  
2           ANTHONY IBARRIA: Thank you, can everyone  
3 hear me? OK. Um, I basically echo everything that  
4 all of you are saying and I myself understand that  
5 when the Executive Order 47 was made it helped all of  
6 us. What I did is I, I reinvested that money in our  
7 newspaper and we created a page, an information page  
8 that was called [speaking in Spanish] and we  
9 initiated content for people, ah, our readers to be  
10 able to read, um, all the community events within the  
11 city and the happenings in the city. As the general  
12 manager of the largest ethnic medium, *El Especialito*,  
13 I am so excited and so enthusiastic about this  
14 initiative. Why? Hopefully it passes. Why?  
15 Because our community needs to feel empowered. Our  
16 community needs to feel important. Our community  
17 needs to feel like they are part of the city. Our  
18 community needs, ah, to know that City Hall is  
19 counting on them, and they have a voice. With this,  
20 this initiative will do just that. And it's  
21 something that was lacking in other administrations.  
22 So I thank de Blasio and [inaudible] the City Council  
23 to continue, continue doing this. Speaking to the  
24 ethnic community and the language that they  
25 understand and the language that they feel

1 comfortable with is just what they need. And it's  
2 just want they want. The Hispanic communities that I  
3 represent is vital to the growth of the City of New  
4 York and making them feel part of the same is just a  
5 win-win for everybody. I personally feel, truly  
6 feel, that this initiative is a huge step forward for  
7 the city and for Hispanic community at large, and all  
8 the publishers and all the media who caters to all  
9 the other ethnic media. So I'd like to thank all of  
10 you for the opportunity for me to expressing my  
11 opinions and my thought. Thank you.

12  
13 MODERATOR: Thank you. We will now call  
14 on Caroline Pimental. You may begin when the  
15 sergeant calls time.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starts now.

17 CAROLINE PIMENTAL: Hi, how are you  
18 everyone? Um, my name is Caroline Pimental. I  
19 represent [speaking in Spanish] production and for me  
20 is, ah, very important that the city support our, ah,  
21 channels because like my mother, she doesn't speak  
22 English. She likes to watch those kind of, ah,  
23 channels so they understand and whatever ads that you  
24 send from the city is especially good for our  
25 community, the Spanish community, all the other

1 countries, they are here. Well I'm, I'm representing  
2 right now especially those Spanish one, the one that  
3 doesn't speak English, ah, so it's very important  
4 that we share for everybody in every country, too,  
5 that are here in the United States. Thank you.

7 MODERATOR: Thank you. We will now hear  
8 from Abu Taher.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts, I'm  
10 sorry. Time starts now.

11 ABU TAHER: Hello, everyone. Um, thank  
12 you so much for giving us opportunity. Um, I thank,  
13 ah, Mr. Cabrera, the chair, and you are wonderful.  
14 As you mentioned, a wonderful moderator, and Speaker  
15 Corey Johnson. I came, my name is Abu Taher. I'm  
16 the editor of the [inaudible]. This, this newspaper  
17 which established in 1996 and, ah, since then it is  
18 publishing every week. It's almost 26 years now, and  
19 also we started television called Time Television in  
20 2014, 24-hour full TV station for serving the  
21 community, the Bangladeshi in the US. Bangladeshi  
22 community is one of the most fast growing, fast-  
23 growing community in New York City, as you know. So  
24 when I came in this country in 1992 I found, I was  
25 journalist and I worked with [inaudible] to

1 understand the, ah, council members for the  
2 importance of the community, ah, media and also how  
3 the, how the community media was as with, ah, City  
4 Council and how the [inaudible] is going right now.  
5 So in 19, I, I remember in 19, ah, when we came, ah,  
6 we were in the, in the newspaper, but there is no  
7 connection at all with City Council, with ethnic  
8 media, nothing, zero. In 19, and I think end of  
9 1990, after 1996, there is a [inaudible] called IPA,  
10 Independent Press Association. I was one of the  
11 member of the press association and [inaudible] that  
12 we have to be part of, ah, the city and it is not  
13 that the one media was going to get the opportunity.  
14 They will attend the, even we don't get the press  
15 invitation for the press conference at that time.  
16 Absolutely detached from City Council. I'm talking  
17 about, ah, end of 1990. Then, um, Independent Press  
18 Association cannot sustain the, um, there was another  
19 organization formed called New York City Community  
20 Media Alliance. They work with all the ethnic media,  
21 [inaudible]. We start the bargain with New York City  
22 Council and then, ah, it start to move and then, um,  
23 ah, New York City Community Media Council, Media  
24 Alliance, they, um, they can't sustain them, then  
25

1 they hand over to all this thing to, as [inaudible]  
2 Hamed mentioned, um, to, um, CUNY, J School, with  
3 their ethnic media [inaudible]. Anyway, so what, I,  
4 I was one of the, ah, um, you know, person who as,  
5 ah, other my colleague mentioned, that, you know, um,  
6 in New York City Council's hearing, it was about five  
7 years ago, ah, we are working day and night. The,  
8 the ethnic media is very important for New York City.  
9 Ah, New York City, you know, all the, since the  
10 United States have the immigration system, the people  
11 are coming and almost all the generation who are  
12 here, came here...

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

15 ABU TAHER: Can I stay another few  
16 minute, another one minute?

17 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes.

18 ABU TAHER: OK. So the, the, ah, what I  
19 say, the ethnic media is getting [inaudible] about  
20 more than 60 million Americans. They depend  
21 absolutely, depend on the community, especially the  
22 New York City, ah, who are the hub of the immigrant  
23 community and, ah, as I mentioned before the  
24 importance of the ethnic media several Time  
25 Television, which we, ah, 24-hour TV, last, last year



1 on March 17 when the pandemic came, from that day to  
2 now, every day, every day one of us from 9:00 to  
3 10:00 p.m. [inaudible] Bangladeshi community one of  
4 the worst victim of COVID-19, about more than 300  
5 people has been lost their life by this, ah, you  
6 know, ah, COVID-19, and there was no one, they was  
7 confused, they were scared what they are supposed to  
8 do. So the ethnic media Time Television [inaudible]  
9 they provide all the information. They stand behind  
10 the community. But they don't understand *New York*  
11 *Times*. They don't understand the other, ah, the, ah,  
12 the mainstream media. They are dependent on their  
13 ethnic community media in their language. So I think  
14 it's very important and I'm urging the City Council  
15 members who are here to, ah, you know, I mean, the  
16 executive order or bring up a new, you know,  
17 department where they can take care and understood  
18 the importance of ethnic media. It is very  
19 important. It is live, you know, line of the  
20 community in New York City. Thank you so much, ah,  
21 Mr. Cabrera. Thank you so much to others, ah,  
22 council members.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,  
25 ah, for sharing. Ah, before we move forward I want

1  
2 to pass on, ah, as you know, I'm the chair of this  
3 committee, but I'm gonna pass the baton to, ah,  
4 Council Member, ah, Rodriguez, and he will be  
5 chairing the rest of today's hearing.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,  
7 Chair. And the only thing that I would say to the  
8 participant we're gonna be also, eh, stay with the  
9 time, eh, that is given by the moderator, because we  
10 also have another meeting coming up after this  
11 hearing.

12 MODERATOR: We will now hear testimony  
13 from Manuel Ruiz, followed by Kowshik Ahmed, followed  
14 by Kevin Boyle. Ah, Manuel, you may begin when the  
15 sergeant calls time.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 MODERATOR: Um, it looks like we do not  
18 have a microphone associated with murmur Ruiz. Um,  
19 we will come back to you. Um, I will move to, ah,  
20 Kowshik Ahmed, followed by Kevin Boyle.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

22 KOWSHIK AHMED: Hi, everybody. Thank  
23 you, Councilman Cabrera, Councilman Rodriguez, and  
24 others, ah, for speaking in favor of the ethnic  
25 media. Ah, my name is Kowshik Ahmed. I publish

1 weekly Bengali newspaper since 1991. Ah, we're  
2 running now 31 years, and this newspaper is also for  
3 Bangladesh community. Ah, as you know, the  
4 Bangladesh community, ah, ah, I should say that was  
5 the time when we started publishing newspaper, this  
6 is about the time the Bangladesh community in New  
7 York City began growing. A good number of people  
8 were trying to start their businesses here. A good  
9 number of people began driving taxis and new  
10 immigrants started coming. At the time they needed  
11 the guidance. They needed the city help information.  
12 As the new immigrants and other immigrants do not  
13 read English language newspapers they're dependent  
14 and still dependent on us, the ethnic newspaper. We  
15 try to provide as much information as possible.  
16 Until 2014 from, ah, 1991 till 2014, ah, we used to  
17 sell our newspapers. But since 2014 we are just  
18 distributing this newspaper free and our only source  
19 of revenue is advertising money. As you know, the  
20 44% of the city's population is immigrants. They  
21 speak their own languages at home. We are, ah,  
22 serving these people through our newspapers. I  
23 strongly claim that now Bangladesh community become  
24 [inaudible] the city says is the fastest [inaudible]  
25

1  
2 one of the fastest-growing communities in the city.  
3 Now it's very strong and it is because of our ethnic,  
4 our newspapers in Bengali language. And the first  
5 time in 2019, Bill de Blasio, Mayor Bill de Blasio,  
6 signed this executive order in favor of our  
7 newspapers. I thank him. I thank everybody who have  
8 working for this executive order. That is the only  
9 lifeline for the ethnic newspapers in the city.  
10 Otherwise, it is very hard to survive as a newspaper  
11 in this community. Thank you again to everybody.

12 MODERATOR: Thank you. We will now hear  
13 from Kevin Boyle.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

15 MODERATOR: It looks like we are not  
16 getting a response from Mr. Boyle.

17 KEVIN BOYLE: Hello, how about that?

18 MODERATOR: There we go. Now we can hear  
19 you. Go.

20 KEVIN BOYLE: Hi, everybody. Kevin Boyle  
21 from *The Rockaway Times*. I would like to point out  
22 that we are a free newspaper, wholly reliant on  
23 advertising and by free that means we're more free  
24 than the internet. You know, the internet is free  
25 except people need access to the internet and they

1  
2 don't necessarily have it, particularly in Rockaway,  
3 where we have such a high concentration of nursing  
4 homes and public housing. So Executive Order 47 is  
5 crucial to our existence and, um, I really support  
6 everybody's efforts getting behind this. I'm going  
7 to, ah, cut it short 'cause it's a long day for  
8 everybody, but thank you for everybody behind this  
9 effort.

10 MODERATOR: We'll now hear from Luciano  
11 Vasquez. After Luciano we will hear from Juan Miguel  
12 Jimenez, followed by Nolasco. Ah, we will need an  
13 interpreter for Luciano Vasquez, ah, if the  
14 interpreter can, um, give instruction?

15 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: Buenos dias.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

17 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: Buenos dias. [speaking  
18 in Spanish]. Adelante, senor.

19 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

20 INTERPRETER: First I want to thank for  
21 the opportunity for us to participate. Adelante.

22 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

23 INTERPRETER: The State of New York has  
24 approximately 1 million and something Dominicans.

25 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

1 COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS 86  
2 INTERPRETER: And during the hard times  
3 of the United States and also the State of New York  
4 has had us, the Dominican media has always been there  
5 to inform. Adelante.

6 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

7 INTERPRETER: And in, in seeing that the  
8 opportunity of this project to be approved will give  
9 us the possibility to be also a voice here in the  
10 State of New York. Adelante.

11 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

12 INTERPRETER: And despite we haven't been  
13 taken into account for more than 20 years now, we  
14 still have been here present for any policies that  
15 have been effective here in the City of New York.  
16 Adelante.

17 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

18 INTERPRETER: Because the communication  
19 is a commitment that we have to inform our community.  
20 Adelante.

21 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

22 INTERPRETER: And just like the other  
23 councilmen have worked so hard, we've always been  
24 here present while they've taken us into account to  
25 bring their messages across, whether it's the mayor,

1  
2 the Councilman Rodriguez, Cabrera, we have been here  
3 helping with the proposal to bring their messages  
4 like they have. Adelante.

5 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

6 INTERPRETER: And during the pandemic we  
7 have cried together, but we have also never stopped  
8 bringing in information, understanding that that was  
9 our duty to bring information. Adelante.

10 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

11 INTERPRETER: And in consequence of our  
12 communication, knowing that all our followers and  
13 listeners do not speak English, despite of this we  
14 have brought them information through all our media,  
15 whether written, TV, digital, radio, digital  
16 platforms, all we serve in this very important part,  
17 population of New York State. Adelante.

18 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

19 INTERPRETER: And if we are a part of the  
20 problem and part of the solution, let us come with  
21 you. Let us live. Let us be part of this media and  
22 take us into access and any publicity or any campaign  
23 in the future so we can continue bridging that  
24 communication for the people of New York.

25 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

1  
2 INTERPRETER: And when we get on a bus  
3 and when we are, get on a train, we know how they  
4 feel, how they think. We understand the pain they're  
5 going through. So allow us to continue living and  
6 continue giving this service to the people and the  
7 communities of New York. Let us continue as a media  
8 service. Adelante.

9 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

10 INTERPRETER: And as a US, as a country,  
11 as a New York State full of all its history and  
12 integrated communications from 1776 to 1872...

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

14 INTERPRETER: ... we, forged all by the  
15 different, by the differences of that everyone brings  
16 to the table, let us be part of this history, of the  
17 history that has to come by bringing this service of  
18 media and communications to our communities.

19 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: [speaking in Spanish]

20 INTERPRETER: And may God bless America  
21 and the United States and allow some illumination for  
22 all of you to help us be part of the US, be part of  
23 all this that is happening, and part of the history  
24 of New York and the United States. Thank you.

25 MODERATOR: Thank you.



2 LUCIANO VASQUEZ: Gracias.

3 MODERATOR: Ah, we will hear from Juan  
4 Miguel Jimenez, followed by Nolasco, followed by  
5 Roberto Amaro Garcia, followed by Gregorio Morrobel.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]?

8 JUAN MIGUEL JIMENEZ: Yes, hello?

9 MODERATOR: I can hear you.

10 JUAN MIGUEL JIMENEZ: OK. Um, hold on  
11 one second please. Hello?

12 MODERATOR: We can hear you.

13 JUAN MIGUEL JIMENEZ: OK, perfect, sorry.  
14 Um, first of all, thank you. Thank you for this  
15 space and especially for the younger population in  
16 the media, Latinx media, today represented by me  
17 and many others out we might be able to listen today.  
18 Um, Latino immigrants have an important role to play  
19 in the United States economy. However, we tend to be  
20 less [inaudible] and our [inaudible] maybe the  
21 native-born population. Our childrens will more  
22 likely to than their parents to earn a higher  
23 education and achieve economic success. That's a  
24 fact. I'm doing myself in as my example. And the  
25 big three that we have to pay attention here,

1 especially in this area, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans,  
2 Mexicans, comprehensive at 70% of all [inaudible]  
3 Latinos, [inaudible] nationalities, Ecuadorians,  
4 Colombians, Central Americans, that figured, ah,  
5 notably in, ah, [inaudible] Spanish-speaking groups.  
6 No other city in the country displays such a, ah,  
7 like more people display us here in Hispanic origins  
8 and people here in New York. Hispanic culture is  
9 having a profound effect on American food, music,  
10 sports, beauty products, fashion, politics, and much  
11 more. This influence is not due to only the sheer  
12 size of Hispanic population, which is right now  
13 around broadly 52 million now in the United States.  
14 Roughly one-sixth, one of, one in six Americans, with  
15 a projection to nearly one in three by 2050.  
16 Initially throughout other than other immigrant press  
17 by those who [inaudible] European ethnic press in the  
18 United States, Spanish language newspapers are  
19 conceived as transitory medium that allow new  
20 immigrants to adapt to our new nationality and new  
21 country. That's why having this voices, especially  
22 younger voices, and people on TV that reflect who  
23 they are, and they can reflect themselves, is such a  
24 big importance so we can support it and we can  
25

1  
2 promote it, so we can be able to make the transition  
3 smoother and also be more peaceful and also to get  
4 relate to what we have here to this backslash of  
5 influences. Around 85% of Hispanic listens to  
6 Spanish language music in the United States. FM  
7 radio remains the most popular music source of  
8 platforms such as Pandora, YouTube Music, Spotify,  
9 and also used as a regular basis by Hispanic  
10 consumers. And the same thing happened with many  
11 other medias, medias that we actually provide,  
12 podcasts, TV, newspapers, and we all have it all and  
13 we are producer all because we need to have that kind  
14 of sources so we can promote, speak, and have a  
15 language, and also a voice that represent what  
16 happen...

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

18 JUAN MIGUEL JIMENEZ: ...[inaudible].

19 There's not much to say. Just thank you, thank you  
20 for the space that we can be able to express  
21 ourselves, and also to be able to make this happen  
22 and make a difference since now on maybe this is an  
23 opportunity for us to keep growing and to making this  
24 more broad and also more inclusive for all of us.  
25 Thank you so much.

1  
2 MODERATOR: Thank you. We will now turn  
3 to Nolasco. Ah, Nolasco will need an interpreter, if  
4 the interpreter can give instruction.

5 NOLASCO: Ah, hi.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

7 INTERPRETER: [speaking in Spanish].

8 NOLASCO: [speaking in Spanish] Thank you  
9 so much.

10 INTERPRETER: OK.

11 NOLASCO: OK. Ah, thanks to the elected  
12 officials for, ah, [inaudible] be in this critical  
13 [inaudible] Latino media. Ah, I'm Nolasco from  
14 [inaudible] Peru, a small corporation that began with  
15 the [inaudible] media and news for [inaudible]  
16 newspaper [inaudible] like, ah, New Yorkers in  
17 Spanish. [inaudible] we have been covering more than  
18 3000 of events and [inaudible] thousands of  
19 [inaudible] New York City. Ah, the grow, the growing  
20 of this project entire, entirely to create Latino  
21 social media week and big Latino event, ah, for our  
22 Latino people and social media, ah, [inaudible]. I,  
23 I do this event to [inaudible]. Ah, I'm here to  
24 testify that I'm part of a group of media that have  
25 not received any advertising to [inaudible] in our

1 media from ethnic community, Media NYC office. This  
2 initiative will be great for our community, the  
3 Latino community, and for our brother and sisters,  
4 journalists, reporters, photographers, and others.  
5 Thanks to the Borough President Eric Adam, the  
6 speaker of the city, Corey Johnson, and Council  
7 Member Ydanis Rodriguez, who worked in this project  
8 that I hope becomes [inaudible]. Thank you.

9  
10 MODERATOR: Thank you. We will now hear  
11 testimony from Roberto Amaro Garcia. You may be  
12 when the sergeant calls time.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 ROBERTO AMARO GARCIA: Ah, buenas tardes.  
15 [speaking in Spanish] but I want to first [inaudible]  
16 borough president of, ah, Brooklyn, ah, Council  
17 Member Cabrera and Ydanis Rodriguez, and [inaudible]  
18 the support that they giving [inaudible]. I think  
19 that the most important, most of the, eh, media that  
20 works in the, in the communities is, ah, the main  
21 support, ah, like the restaurants, ah, the small  
22 business that are part of the community [inaudible]  
23 most of the time the main supporter of, ah, our  
24 activities. Ah, everybody know that, ah, newspapers,  
25 TV shows, TV programs, ah, the only main, ah, the

1  
2 only way of support is our advertisements. And, ah,  
3 during the pandemic most of those places, ah,  
4 restaurants, ah, clubs, ah, they closed, or they were  
5 working on minimum capacity. So that happened, that  
6 made possible that a lot of people produced the  
7 production team, some of them disappear because at  
8 that point everybody like you will be asking for  
9 advertising of social policy. Well, I would like to  
10 help you but nothing happened. I can do it because,  
11 you know, I'm not producing anything and I'm not  
12 getting money from the city for whatever reason.  
13 But, ah, with this initiative I think that will be,  
14 ah, a, a good thing for, ah, get more people into  
15 make better production, more quality in our media and  
16 also that if anything happen again like this pandemic  
17 that closed the city for many, many months, ah, we  
18 will be still able to inform the community and be  
19 part of the effort in order to, ah, communicate, ah,  
20 the things that the city need to communicate. So in  
21 that order I think that the support that the city  
22 customer, ah, and [inaudible] can do to this, ah,  
23 proposal will be really important in order for, ah,  
24 the small media, ah, producing company continue to  
25 work and also for, ah, improve our quality because,

2 ah, we have another way to get, ah, ah, the money  
3 that we need to continue to, ah, doing, ah, our job.  
4 Thank you.

5 MODERATOR: Thank you. We will now hear  
6 from Gregorio Morrobel. You may begin when the  
7 sergeant calls the time.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

9 GREGORIO MORROBEL: Hello, [speaking in  
10 Spanish].

11 MODERATOR: Yes.

12 INTERPRETER: [speaking in Spanish]  
13 Adelante.

14 GREGORIO MORROBEL: Thank you. [speaking  
15 in Spanish]

16 INTERPRETER: Well, first I want to give  
17 thanks for this initiative because of its  
18 contribution on decentralizing communications here in  
19 New York City. Adelante.

20 GREGORIO MORROBEL: [speaking in Spanish]

21 INTERPRETER: And I also want to thank  
22 Councilman Rodriguez for being part of this, and also  
23 Councilman Cabrera for all his help with this.  
24 Adelante.

25 GREGORIO MORROBEL: [speaking in Spanish]

2 INTERPRETER: The friends who all came  
3 before me were very explicit on what we are searching  
4 for. Adelante.

5 GREGORIO MORROBEL: [speaking in Spanish]

6 INTERPRETER: I'm not going to extend it  
7 because I'm not going to repeat the concepts.  
8 Adelante.

9 GREGORIO MORROBEL: [speaking in Spanish]

10 INTERPRETER: Gregorio is a producer on a  
11 TV show for seven years, and we have all seen what  
12 has concerned us about how publicity is dealt with  
13 here in the City of New York. Adelante.

14 GREGORIO MORROBEL: [speaking in Spanish]

15 INTERPRETER: The communication is not  
16 only a place where they give information the way  
17 Unavision or Telemundo does, but it's a place to  
18 distribute information for everyone. Adelante.

19 GREGORIO MORROBEL: [speaking in Spanish]

20 INTERPRETER: Many TV producers establish  
21 a straight link to the viewers and it's this link  
22 that permits the communication to flow directly with  
23 the communities. Adelante.

24 GREGORIO MORROBEL: [speaking in Spanish]



1  
2 INTERPRETER: Today there's this system  
3 that is being brought about for the sake of the  
4 elections, for the communication of the elections,  
5 but none of the small TV producers have been able to  
6 be, have been given any kind of resources to take  
7 part in this situation in New York. Adelante.

8 GREGORIO MORROBEL: [speaking in Spanish]

9 INTERPRETER: It's time that this  
10 initiative starts with this purpose with  
11 decentralizing and allowing New Yorkers, no matter  
12 where they live, to be able to obtain the information  
13 that they need.

14 GREGORIO MORROBEL: [speaking in Spanish]

15 INTERPRETER: And we know that it will  
16 change, but how you all act and how you steer this  
17 into the right direction will affect how the  
18 information reaches to a multitude of populations  
19 within New York City.

20 GREGORIO MORROBEL: [speaking in Spanish]

21 INTERPRETER: And this country has the  
22 character and the purpose of always being driven by  
23 equality and making all sectors equal, and although  
24 it has failed in this one environment, we see that in  
25

2 the future it is starting to want to correct this.

3 Thank you very much.

4 MODERATOR: Thank you. Ah, at this time  
5 if your name has not been called and you wish to  
6 testify, please raise your hand using the Zoom raise  
7 hand function and I will ask the interpreter to, um,  
8 repeat that in Spanish.

9 INTERPRETER: [speaking in Spanish]

10 MODERATOR: Thank you. Anyone who wishes  
11 can submit written testimony for the record at  
12 testimony@council.nyc.gov. If you can say that in  
13 Spanish.

14 INTERPRETER: Can you, what's the email  
15 again? Testimony?

16 MODERATOR: Testimony@council.nyc.gov.

17 INTERPRETER: [speaking in Spanish]

18 MODERATOR: Thank you so much.

19 INTERPRETER: Muchas gracias.

20 MODERATOR: Seeing no hands raised, I  
21 will now turn it over to, ah, Chair Rodriguez for  
22 final remarks.

23 INTERPRETER: [speaking in Spanish]

24 MODERATOR: One moment.

2 JOHANNA CASTRO: Just give me one second  
3 while I sort it out.

4 MODERATOR: Thank you.

5 JOHANNA CASTRO: Councilwoman,  
6 Councilwoman Diaz? Council Member?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: [inaudible] I, I  
8 think he did.

9 JOHANNA CASTRO: Councilwoman Diaz. Give  
10 me one second, Elizabeth.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER D. DIAZ: I don't know why  
12 I'm unmuted.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Sorry, I was  
14 having some technical issue from my end.

15 MODERATOR: That's, no worries.  
16 [inaudible] closing remarks.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: OK,  
18 definitely. Thank you. I would like to thank  
19 everyone again and as I always say you guys, eh, from  
20 the council, you know, the tech guy, the sergeant,  
21 eh, you are the one that make us look good, because  
22 we connect with all New Yorkers and also from the  
23 council perspective and also, you know, you work with  
24 us on this bill and I would also like to thank, you  
25 know, Evelyn, eh, Cojado, my [inaudible] person, and

1  
2 also thanking Tamara Rita, my communication person  
3 and Elizabeth Conforma, my chief of staff, eh, for  
4 all the job. Eh, this bill, you know, will be one of  
5 the most important [inaudible] that we leave in our  
6 City of New York. So thank you to all of you, but  
7 most important thank you for, to the publisher, all  
8 of you guy, the small one that are, you know, small  
9 when it come to the [inaudible] but you are so big  
10 because you are the one that connect to those  
11 underserved community, those who stay alive in  
12 providing the services to our city, especially during  
13 the time of COVID. [speaking in Spanish]

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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 11, 2021