JOINT HEARING BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE
SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES
AND
SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FORUM/TOWN HALL:

HUMAN SERVICES FORUM ON THE CURRENT AND FUTURE
ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF HUMAN SERVICES
ADMINISTRATORS, ADVOCATES AND CLIENTS

Monroe County Administration Bldg.
4th Floor, Legislative Chamber
Rochester, New York

February 9, 2012
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

PRESIDING:

Senator Patrick M. Gallivan
Chairman
Senate Standing Committee on Social Services

Senator Diane J. Savino
Chairwoman
Senate Standing Committee on Children & Families

SENATE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Joseph E. Robach

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ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Luis Burgos
Commissioner
Recreation and Youth Services

Valerie Snipe
Program Officer
United Way of Greater Rochester

Alisa
(no position denoted)
Hunger Solutions of New York

Kelly Harris
Director of Administration
Alzheimer Association

Kelly Bartle
(no position denoted)
Rochester County Youth Bureau

Elizabeth Reyes
(no position denoted)
Rochester City School District,
Homeless Teen Program

Linda Beaty
(no position denoted)
Carol Jackson Ray
(no position denoted)
Rochester City School District

Bill Gutschow
Program Manager
Salvation Army's Genesis House

Several other speakers; no names provided

---oOo---

SENATOR ROBACH: Okay, good afternoon, everybody.

Thank you, everyone who is here, and those who will be giving testimony.

I am Senator Joe Robach, and I'm very happy that we're having this hearing, and allowing people in Rochester to put in their comments, testimony, on the Governor's budget.

I see several people in the room who have already contacted me via e-mail, or other ways, regarding proposals of the executive budget.

But, I do want to both, introduce, and thank, think my two colleagues.

First, Senator Pat Gallivan, the Chairman of the Social Services Committee, and, Senator Diane Savino, the Chairwoman of Children and Families Committee, for taking the time, to not only come here to Rochester, which I personally appreciate on behalf of everyone in this region that provides vital services; but, also, they've been going around the rest of the state, and I think this is very important, to give people the opportunity, firsthand, to chime in, put their comments on the record.

Obviously, this is a very, very important

part of the budget. It impacts young and old alike. There are programs that can, not only impact individuals greatly, but, really, our entire community.

So, we're happy to have this, and do that.

So, with that, I will turn it over to Senator Gallivan, who will give you a little bit of an outline of how we're going to proceed, and move forward and get right to the testimony.

Thanks again for being here.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you, Senator.

Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for being here.

As Senator Robach had mentioned, I chair the Senate Committee on Social Services, and Senator Savino chairs the Senate Committee on Children and Families.

And we have held hearings in different parts of the state, to try to learn a little bit more about the issues that you're facing.

Certainly, when we see the realities of the economic downturn, we know that we have seen an increase in need for human services, and at the same time, demands on the various human-service agencies, in a time when State government has cut its budget,

and everybody is looking for more and more resources: financial resources, people resources, and others.

So, we'd like to focus in two different areas. We've tried to use this as an opportunity.

We started in New York City. We were in Albany. We have a forum scheduled in Buffalo as well.

And then, of course, we're meeting with numerous people that -- out in our districts, and that come to the Capitol to relay their concerns.

The Governor has come out with his budget. I'm sure many, if not all, of you are keenly aware of what's been proposed.

We're interested in hearing your thoughts about the budget: How it impacts your agencies. What you think we may be able to do to help, knowing full well that we don't have a blank check to be able to write, unfortunately, for many of you, and the good work that you do.

In addition to that, though, we're looking -- we know that legislation impacts your daily -- the things you do on a daily basis. And that there may be regulations, that if you can bring up, that we might be able to deal with the specific agencies

that fall under the executive branch, and either, push, or through legislation, have an impact on that, that can help you.

So, you needn't confine it to just the budget.

Our two committees are closely tied together, and that's why we're both here. A lot of the things that might start within Social Services spill over to Children and Families, and vice versa.

So, we work very closely together, in both -- in all of these different areas, and really are committed to trying to help.

The specific help, that's really for you to bring some of the things up that we can take to Albany.

But with that, and before we get started, I'll turn it over to Senator Savino.

And, thank you all again for being here.

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you, Senator Gallivan.

I also want to thank Senator Robach for hosting us here in Rochester.

I'll be brief, because we really want to hear from you, as opposed to listening to the three of us.

As Senator Gallivan said, this is the third

in a series of roundtables we've done outside the State Capitol. We want to kind of bring the Senate to the people.

Last year, many of those of you in this room, and organizations like yours around the state, were invaluable in guiding us through the budget process.

Last year's budget was brutal. It was a $10 1/2 billion deficit that we had to close, and a lot of those cuts directly affected programs that you all work in and care about.

This year it's not so bad; but, yet, and still, there a lot of cuts to TANF-funded programs.

The Governor is still recommending zeroing out many of the things that we care about. There's not enough restoration.

And as Senator Gallivan said, it's not just about putting money back. You know, we're going to do what we can to restore it. But, it's also about finding ways to reduce the burden upon some of the service providers, so that they can maximize the money they get from the State, and they don't waste it on duplicative, redundant paperwork reporting, or any of the other silly requirements we sometime

impose upon you.

So, we're going to be focusing on a lot of stuff this year.

Those of you who deal with youth, know, that juvenile-justice reform is front and center in the Governor's budget. It's going to impact upstate and downstate.

The loss of child-care slots, in my opinion, is devastating. And I think we need, as service providers, to start to talk about child care in a different way. It's not an entitlement program. It's not an assistance program. It should be part and parcel of our economic development programs.

It's about making work pay again; giving women the supports they need to stay in the workforce.

So, we have to start talking about these things differently. You know?

The Governor wants us to do everything we can on job creation.

Well, if we create jobs, we then have to create the supports that keep people in those jobs we've created.

So, I welcome you all here today, to participate, and, I guess we should get started.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: We are -- when you come up to speak, if you could just start right in the front row, right in front of us, if there's more than one.

Obviously, first seat, second seat.

SENATOR SAVINO: Yeah, we have three seats here in the front.

So, first up is, Jacqueline Cady -- oh -- on early child-care education, and the Early Childhood Initiative.

Do we have testimony? Written/printed testimony?

JACQUELINE CADY: No. I think -- I could hand it you to. I just have two copies.

SENATOR SAVINO: Just two? All right.

Well, one, two -- that will do.

Thank you.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you.

JACQUELINE CADY: I thank you very much for an opportunity to speak today.

I'm Jacqueline Cady. I'm a member, and the past chair, of the Rochester Early Childhood Initiative.

The announcement for this hearing asked for suggestions on efficiencies, economies, in human services.

And, I'm here to say that, pretty much what Senator Savino said: That New York State needs to invest in services, with a proven payback; services in early care and education.

We know that most brain development happens before the age of three. A dollar invested in high-quality early education pays back a minimum of seven.

And I know Senator Robach thinks: Oh, I've heard this so many times.

In some studies, it even shows that there's a $17 payback for that dollar that you invest in quality early education.

And that payback is in the avoidance of later social costs.

So, look at that juvenile justice that's a priority for the State. Think about teen pregnancy, incarceration, unemployment. These investments in early education can really make a difference.

So, how can New York State take advantage of what we know about early education?

Let's start at the beginning.

At birth, nurse-family partnership is an evidence-based program. Gives enormous payback to both the mother and the child. The program pays

for itself by the time the child is six.

And, there's little to no funding for this in New York State.

Right now, there's a proposal on the table for a very modest, a $5 million, fund to support a little bit of nurse-family partnership.

I wish you would give your support to that.

The biggest piece of this, again, as Senator Savino said, for children, birth into school age, we need more comprehensive support through the child-care subsidies.

For us in Rochester, subsidies are the baseline. This is how we get to ask at-risk children, and their families, with the opportunity for quality early education.

So, go back to where we started here: The opportunity for that critical early brain development.

We need two things.

And the first one I think is right up your alley, of saying: How could you possibly do more with less?

The first thing is: Consistent quality standards across the state.

I looked at the maps on your websites.

And I would say, for Senator Gallivan, in the several counties that you represent, you would find that no two have the same regulations.

For Monroe County, and the seven surrounding counties, no two have the same regulations for child care.

A third of the children who are in child care are in what's called "legally exempt child care."

There are no quality standards. There's no requirement for training. There is precious little oversight of those who are in legally exempt care.

Here in Monroe County, the infrastructure of our quality child care is threatened because caregivers are not paid when children are absent.

So, you can't run a business like that, and say: I've got to meet ratio. I've got to meet standards. I can't add another child to this classroom. But, these two are absent today, so I don't get any funding for these kids, and I can't do anything to make that up.

These problems arise because there isn't any statewide standard.

Setting consistent criteria and standards across the state could be carried out without significant dollar implications, and would make

great strides to ensure that the dollars we spend are providing quality early education.

The second thing, of course, is that more funding is needed for subsidies to reach more families.

In Monroe, flat and reduced State funding has reduced our headcount, from about 13,000, 10 years ago, to under 7,000 this year. We're serving about half of the children with subsidies that we did 10 years ago.

Again, a dollar invested in high-quality care pays back a minimum of $7. Then, here's a place to reduce New York State costs, by investing now in quality care for young children.

I would mention another program, early intervention services, which I'm sure you have heard about, have been decimated, with the reimbursement rates for 2012 equal to those of 1992; 20 years ago.

Many providers in our county have stopped offering this service. They can't afford to subsidize it. They've been subsidizing it out of their other income streams. They can't do it anymore.

I know that, in Albany, they've made

strides toward getting insurance coverage, third-party payers, for some of this early intervention service.

The Governor is recommending a total restructure of early intervention services.

And, ultimately, that may be good. What we've got now is not working.

But in the meantime, if there isn't some kind of an increase -- and folks are specifically asking for a restoration to the reimbursement rate that they got just a year ago -- if there's not some restoration of those rates, we're going to lose the rest of our quality early intervention providers in Monroe County. They just cannot afford to provide that service.

I would ask you to think about this: We're talking about early intervention. We're talking about kids who are zero, 1, 2, and putting those families in a situation where they might have to wait six months, or nine months, for an evaluation to have services.

When you're one, waiting 9 months for services is half your life. That's crazy.

Again, this is where most brain development occurs. We really need to serve these young

people.

Pre-K is a shining -- okay, new program: Pre-K is a shining star of our early education.

80 percent of the city of Rochester 4-year-olds are in the highest quality pre-K programs.

Funding has been flat for many years. Neither the community agencies, nor our city school district, received adequate funding to fully fund this excellent investment in young children.

The Regents had put forward a proposal to put a little more funding back in pre-K.

We certainly support that.

Nurse-family partnership and early intervention are really in the purview of the Health Department.

Subsidies are in OCFS.

Pre-K is in the State Education Department.

These systems need to work together.

I would ask you to think of a continuum of integrated services for our many at-risk children.

Because you have leadership roles in New York, I ask you to stand up for young children, to invest more resources in quality early education.

Use your leadership to represent these young

people. They can't speak for themselves.

Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you.

I just -- wait. Before you get away, Jacqueline, two points.

The "early intervention" piece, there's been some discussion there.

Actually, there's was some discussion yesterday at the State hearing, the budget hearing, on Health.

The other issue hanging over that -- those programs, is this 1115 waiver.

Have you had any conversations with any of the service providers about what this "1115 waiver" issue would do to them?

JACQUELINE CADY: To them? No, I can't answer that.

Sorry.

SENATOR SAVINO: It's -- you may start hearing from them. It's, apparently --

JACQUELINE CADY: Somebody else --

SENATOR SAVINO: I see some people shaking their heads.

JACQUELINE CADY: -- will speak about it.

SENATOR SAVINO: They'll talk about it.

JACQUELINE CADY: I'm not the one.

SENATOR SAVINO: It's very complicated.

On pre-K, though, I'm actually quite surprised, and pleased to hear, that 80 percent of your 4-year-olds in Rochester are in universal pre-K.

We don't have that anywhere else in the state, because most of the program -- most of the school districts claim that there are so many complications in implementing UPK; that you either have to have a certain, you know, classroom sizes, or teachers with certain evalu- -- you know, certain skills, and certain --

Yeah, he's shaking his head in back there.

-- so they don't even do it.

JACQUELINE CADY: Right. We've got a long history in Rochester. Our early childhood initiative is 20 years old --

SENATOR ROBACH: Head Start.

JACQUELINE CADY: -- and was started by, really, Mario Cuomo in 1990, which he declared "The decade of the young child."

We formed a community collaboration at that time. We began to work on accreditation.

When Speaker Silver put forward what he

called the "Ladder Program," which was pre-K, we were really ready for that, and worked with the school district to write a pre-K program.

Our children are about 55 percent in community-based agencies, right now.

We have 15-year evaluation project that shows our pre-K classrooms are -- rate, 6 on a 7-point scale. They're just excellent quality.

Whether you're in the school-district program, we got about 950 children; or in a community agency, about 1,050 children.

SENATOR SAVINO: Do most of those children go on to kindergarten, or do they have a break in -- in their education?

Because, you know, kindergarten's not a requirement.

JACQUELINE CADY: Right. Most of them --

SENATOR SAVINO: What we see in the city of New York is different now.

JACQUELINE CADY: Yeah, most of them.

We've got just 2,000 in pre-K this year.

We have 2,500 in our incoming city school district kindergarten.

SENATOR SAVINO: And do you do center-based pre-K -- center-based kindergarten, for those that

don't --

JACQUELINE CADY: No, because we have full-day kindergarten.

SENATOR SAVINO: Hmm, interesting.

JACQUELINE CADY: The child-care centers used to have kindergarten. Maybe a few do, but most of them do not anymore, because, in the city school district, they've got full-day kindergarten; which, again, we understand is threatened across the state with education dollars.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Very good. Thank you.

SENATOR ROBACH: Jackie, let me just say too, I chair the Human Services Budget Subcommittee.

So, we go out with the Assembly, and have the talk, and then go to the conference committees.

We're going to do that.

And, there's really, like, not too much new money, but I think -- I'm going to make it, and I think it will end up in our version of the budget. We're going to adjust some money, to put more money into straight child care.

And then, on the -- you know, I've heard your story, you've heard mine.

On early intervention, you know, I've lived it.

JACQUELINE CADY: Yeah, I know.

SENATOR ROBACH: I mean, I have a hearing-impaired kid --

JACQUELINE CADY: I know.

SENATOR ROBACH: -- whose life completely got changed by the right treatment modality, getting in that Excellus program at Al Sigl, and was told, at two: This kid won't go to college, like your other kids.

That's a hard thing to hear, as a parent, and have your spouse look at you, and go, you know: What are you going to do about it?

And, I go: I don't know what I'm going to do about it.

But, you know, a good story: Because of that early intervention, and getting the right program, that child is now 23; has gone to college, has a pretty good job. She's the star -- I'll do the commercial -- of Shear Ego in Pittsford.

Go there and get your hair cut. Ask for Rachel.

[Laughter.]

SENATOR ROBACH: But, she's doing really good, and it's because of that.

So, we're going to really look at these

things.

JACQUELINE CADY: Thank you.

SENATOR ROBACH: This is going to be a challenge, but I think we're committed to try to move some things around.

JACQUELINE CADY: Thank you very much.

SENATOR ROBACH: Okay, thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Mark Wickham.

MARK WICKHAM: Good afternoon.

My name is Mark Wickham, and I'm the new hot-out-of-the-box CEO of Catholic Family Center, following in the shoes of Carolyn Portanova, who was a tireless advocate --

SENATOR ROBACH: We've heard the name.

[Laughter.]

MARK WICKHAM: Yeah.

-- who was a tireless advocate for many, many years here.

So, I'm hopeful that I can fill her shoes. I'll make sure that I make some referrals to Rachel. I'm not sure that I need too much of it myself, but --

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Mark, if I may, before you get started, and this is -- really is for everyone

who's providing testimony today: It's very helpful to us that you provide this. And because we have it, you needn't read it all.

MARK WICKHAM: Oh, uh-huh. Well, that's good.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: But I think what becomes appropriate is, you know, bring up the main points that you really want to stress.

SENATOR SAVINO: Uh-huh.

MARK WICKHAM: Sure.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: And we, of course, will read all of it, but, it might save --

MARK WICKHAM: Some time.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: -- might save you a little bit of time, because we don't have water for you.

MARK WICKHAM: Yes, that's great. Thank you. I appreciate that.

As you read through this, you'll see Catholic Family Center has been around since 1917, and we provide services to over -- pretty close to 40,000 individuals in the Monroe County area.

And it's, really, we provide services for people in the areas of behavioral health, housing services, family services, and workforce development.

The pieces that I want to really focus on are some of the critical, necessary services and programs we offer.

One of the things that's important, is to understand the economic impact of organizations like ours on a community.

We are approximately 460 employees throughout our organization, whom we pay $16 1/2 million to. And that was in 2011.

And, we spent over $9 million in services and good rent and supplies and equipment in our community.

Many of our programs result in real savings to New York State taxpayers, and that's really what this is about.

You know, what people really want to know is: Where are we saving money?

And, not only are we saving money, but what are those outcomes that we're providing? And how does it equate into saving money in our area -- in our county; in particular, Monroe?

For example: We serviced 163 families and 421 children last year. And the annual cost of our program which works with families and the children, is about $1,100. So, that equates to an annual

budget of about $465,000.

If you looked at the annual cost for regular foster-care placement in Monroe County, it's approximately $24,000.

So even if you took one-fourth of those children that we served and placed them into regular foster care, that would be $2 1/2 million.

So there's real cost savings in terms of what we do.

More than 70 percent of our support and revenue comes from government, including service contracts and fee-for-services and payments for Medicaid.

The support -- this government support is largely from New York State, either directly through Monroe County or through the State.

One of the biggest issues that we have is prompt payment. What we're finding, across the board, is, we don't get paid in a timely fashion. There are times that we're waiting 6, 9, 12 months. So, we're providing the service, and we're not getting the payment.

SENATOR ROBACH: From contract to Medicaid, or all?

MARK WICKHAM: From contracts, typically,

yeah.

Medicaid is -- right now, it's set up as a fee-for-service; so, that's based on our providing services and our getting reimbursed on that.

And I'll talk a bit about the OMIG piece, but, all in all, it's really contracting. It's those contracts that we have, which are, we would call them "expense-based contracts." So, we have the -- we're going to provide the service. We're not -- it's not, we're billing Medicaid, or anything. We're expecting that money to come in.

And most of my colleagues will say the same thing: It creates a huge cash-flow problem for us.

So, if we're outlaying -- you know, we have about $15 1/2 million worth of contract services. And if we're outlying 7.5 million, for 6, 9, 10 months, that's -- that's huge.

So we end up having to do is, dip into our credit line, which then costs more money, which we can't charge off. We have to incur that cost.

So, prompt contracting is critical, going forward.

We understand that it's -- you know, that it's important to delay a bit, but to delay 6, 8,

10 months, just, it makes it almost impossible for us to continue providing the care to people.

So, prompt contracting.

The other one is master contracting.

We service many -- we service whole families. So, we may have people, or children in particular, programs, in various areas, who might have some families in some other programs, but the funding streams are very different.

So what ends up happening, is, we -- and they're siloed. They're just very siloed. So we'll -- we're waiting on money to provide care, with the child, or -- and/or family.

It would be much easier, if what we could do is, just have one contract. It just flows through, so we can service the whole family, and break down the silos within the -- it's, really, a lot of the children services.

And, I think, from my standpoint, it will just make it much easier to deliver services.

The other piece that doesn't really ever get talked about is the administrative costs associated with, you know, going -- trying to stay on top of getting the money.

The more contracts you have, the more

people we have to have to manage it.

So, it would be less administrative costs across the board, at least on our end, if we could just have central, or, really, master contracting.

The other pieces, one of the other interesting points I wanted to hit was, in an effort to address the issue, this was related to --

I just lost my place here. Excuse me.

SENATOR SAVINO: It's non-profit compensation. I read it already.

[Laughter.]

MARK WICKHAM: Well, thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: This is where they took the cheap shot at you guys.

MARK WICKHAM: The Office of Medicaid Inspector General, last year, both Houses passed unanimously, or --

(Off-camera comment.)

MARK WICKHAM: -- yeah, it was unanimously, the OMIG reform legislation, which Catholic Family Center strongly supported.

The Governor chose not to sign that bill.

CSC certainly believes that the efforts to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse, and corruption, is critically important. We believe that that's

important.

At the same time, we are -- we, and similar providers, are heavily burdened, financially, and otherwise, by the OMIG conducts and audits.

For example: What we have, are five full-time staff there, are set up within our organization to, basically, deal with compliance.

And that's -- that's regulated. We have to do that. We have to be watching ourselves, and I think that's important. We don't think that that's not important.

But, one of the things that's most disturbing, is that we believe the State, or OMIG, took an approach that they were looking at finding money to help pay for bills.

Well, I don't know what bills, but, you know, they were out to get money.

And, so, we weren't committing fraud. Organizations like ours were not committing fraud. We're catching particular pieces, and we turn them in. That's what compliance does.

So, what we really would like to see -- I would like to see, our organization and a lot of executives would like to see -- are what are the protocols?

Share with us the protocols of what they're looking for. What is OMIG looking for when they come in to do audits?

Let us know.

I mean, because, from a compliance standpoint, we should know, so that we're monitoring ourselves and being able to report issues as they come up.

Moving on here. I'll try to speed this up.

Finally, in the Governor's proposal budget, as well as the executive order that he signed subsequently, it contains language that 75 -- oh.

I'm going to circle back, because we actually added something in here.

The Governor just recently signed an executive order regarding administrative costs and overhead, in addition to executive comp.

One of the things that we want to say is: We're very interested in making sure we keep administrative overhead low. All of us are committed to that in our industry.

We do not want that to go up, but, with increased regulations, one that I just talked about with OMIG, it's hard to do that. It's very difficult. But, we want to work hand in hand, and

partner -- in partnership with the state government, to figure out how to do it. But, to just set arbitrary numbers, like, 15 percent across the board, when we have an approved federal rate at 17.1, I don't -- I don't know, where does that come from?

So, we want to work hand in hand, and get to places that I think will work for the State, and for our organizations.

Not-for-profit overhead costs project -- cost project, the collaborative effort of the Urban Institute of the Center of Philanthropy of Indiana University issued a report entitled "Getting What We Pay For: Low Overhead Limits Not-For-Profits' Effectiveness." [sic.]

The project studied nine not-for-profit organizations, ranging in size, from under 1 million, to over 40 million, in annual expenditures.

They found that arbitrarily low overhead leads to a limited ability for an organization to manage their finances, fund-raise, train and develop staff, and develop the IT infrastructure that's critical to effectively perform in today's world.

So there's enough research out there to

support monitoring and watching overhead, but it's important for us to do it in a responsible way.

I'll conclude by saying: I want to thank you for taking time to come out into the community, and meet with the folks like us, so that we can share our concerns.

And, more importantly, it's not so much sharing our concerns. It's, more, what can we do to help you?

That's what we're here to do.

We're here to help our communities, to help people to get better, to get them back to work, and to make them productive members of our society.

That's what we're here to do. And we're successful in that, every year.

So, we're here to tell the story, and make sure we get the word out, and have you go back to Albany and support what we do, because what we do is valuable, important.

And, as you said, Senator Savino, we do have economic impact in these communities, that's very important.

I thank you for your time today.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Thank you.

Wait, don't go.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Go ahead.

SENATOR SAVINO: I'll go first. Ladies first.

You mentioned something that's kind of intriguing: The idea of a master contract.

You know, I've been around this world long enough now that I remember when you had one commissioner of Social Service. Now you have OCFS, and OTDA, and OPWDD, and whatever the "alphabet soup of the year" is in these agencies.

MARK WICKHAM: Everything.

SENATOR SAVINO: Back when you had one state commissioner of Social Services, and then you had all of the services under the big umbrella, how did they contract?

Did they have these silos of funding then?

Or, do you remember?

Does anybody remember?

MARK WICKHAM: I don't remember that. I don't know.

SENATOR SAVINO:: So, walk me through this, where -- so you have a family. Let's assume you're servicing a family, where the mother is in substance-abuse treatment, the children are in foster care. One of them may need

developmental-disability services. The other one might be in special ed, and family therapy.

MARK WICKHAM: Uh-huh?

SENATOR SAVINO: So, how many different service funding streams are existing in that --

MARK WICKHAM: Five.

SENATOR SAVINO: -- the life of that family?

MARK WICKHAM: You just mentioned five.

SENATOR SAVINO: Five.

So you would have to, essentially, contract with five different --

MARK WICKHAM: Yes. Five different government organizations to provide services to one family.

SENATOR SAVINO:: I'm trying to figure out how we would streamline that into one state contract. Who would administer it?

I guess -- I don't know, but that's an intriguing idea, and it's something we should explore.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Yeah, and there's a model right now, with the advent of the regional economic development councils.

MARK WICKHAM: Yes.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: They've put together what

they're calling "consolidated funding application" --

MARK WICKHAM: Yes.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: -- that brings in, now, I think it's -- it's either 12 or 14 agencies, where they're making one application, comes to a central place, and then gets farmed out.

MARK WICKHAM: Yes, and then it goes out.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: That might be a good model. We don't know it's working yet. The goal is to bring in more state agencies. But, that might be a good model for us to look at, for you to look at, and then comment on that, how that then might be able to apply in [unintelligible] social services.

MARK WICKHAM: Absolutely.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: But that's somewhat new --

MARK WICKHAM: Yes.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: -- and the jury is out on it.

MARK WICKHAM: Yeah.

Well, we think that we're uniquely positioned because we provide all of those five services as -- to be a pilot organization, to even try it. Just try it in a couple organizations across the state.

But that's something that we definitely would

look at, Senator.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Some of the United Ways out west and around Albany have spoken about this as well --

MARK WICKHAM: Yes.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: -- so, you're not alone. There's other people speaking up.

What can you do?

Everybody keeps speaking up.

MARK WICKHAM: Yeah.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: We keep bringing up the things --

MARK WICKHAM: Thank you.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: -- not just to our attention, but to anybody who will listen, that might be able to make a difference, and try to do something about it.

The OMIG issue, a number of the issues you spoke about, we are -- we are trying to address the OMIG issue specifically.

We've heard horror story after horror story across the state. We were not -- we passed the legislation. You mentioned the Governor didn't sign it. We are looking to address it, to try to --

MARK WICKHAM: Thank you.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: -- come to some common agreement with the Governor's Office, so that it's done legitimately, and not just the money grab like it was.

MARK WICKHAM: Yes, thank you.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Like many of us think it was.

MARK WICKHAM: Yeah, no, we appreciate that, and any help we can get.

The change in that, from our standpoint, is let us know what we can do to help in this process. It's not so much that we're -- we're out here providing the care, and spending -- we want to put as much money, and keep as much money, in the programs. We don't want to be taking money out.

And this, in particular, it starts to take money out of programs, especially when you have to do paybacks, which in -- you know, you've heard the horror stories. The paybacks, which are astronomical, will put not-for-profits out of business. Good not-for-profits.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Well, that, and quite frankly, I found it appalling that that executive order was signed, limiting executive compensation of the not-for-profits to, what is it, $199,000 a year?

MARK WICKHAM: Yes.

SENATOR SAVINO: Well, you know, that was gratuitous in many ways, because it's only for executives whose salary is 75 percent of Medicaid money.

MARK WICKHAM: Yes.

SENATOR SAVINO: Many of -- the only people that are going to get hurt by this, are the small not-for-profit organizations. It's going be difficult to recruit or retain, you know, competent people --

MARK WICKHAM: Yes.

SENATOR SAVINO: -- who want to run these programs.

The larger agencies, the hospitals, their funding streams come from multiple sources.

MARK WICKHAM: Yes.

SENATOR SAVINO: So, they're not really going to be affected by it.

And I really think that -- you know, I think more people need to speak up about that, because it really was a gratuitous shot at people who have been struggling for the past five years to provide services to, you know, the most vulnerable people in our state, as if, you know, you're all just getting

rich off of social service programs.

MARK WICKHAM: Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: It's the most ludicrous thing in the world.

MARK WICKHAM: Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO:: I just have to say, I find it so offensive. I really do.

MARK WICKHAM: Well, we really thank you for this leadership.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you.

MARK WICKHAM: Thank you very much.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Ann Marie Cook.

Senator Robach had to leave. He had a prior meeting scheduled with Rochester's own Lieutenant Governor Duffy, and the Rochester Business Alliance.

And, he did want me to let everybody know, he is going to try to work his way back here.

ANN MARIE COOK: Senator Gallivan and Senator Savino, I want to thank you very much for holding this public hearing today in Rochester.

LifeSpan is a private not-for-profit organization that serves older adults and caregivers.

Last year, we served about 25,000 older adults in the Finger Lakes Region.

We have multiple programs, about 30 different programs and services, everything from:

The New York State Ombudsman Program in this region;

We work with the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities, so I'm familiar with the 1115 waiver;

RSVP New York Connects;

And, we also operate the New York State Coalition on the Prevention of Elder Abuse, and, the New York State Caregiving and Respite Coalition.

And, we contract with five different state agencies. And that's important in my remarks.

As you know, all not-for-profits, you know, are struggling to serve an ever-increasing client base, especially in this economic downturn, and with State budget cuts.

And, certainly, that's been true at LifeSpan.

And I think we have the addition of an incredible age wave that we're experiencing in New York State. The ever-increasing older adult population, coupled with this economic downturn, has

caused a demand for services, quite frankly, like we've never seen before.

A couple of examples of that: In just a three-month period last year, at the end of the year, we had 6,500 calls from older adults concerned about health insurance, although, the State Health Insurance Information Program was cut last year.

And this number for our region, of course, was exacerbated by the Kodak announcement of bankruptcy, in which we have 25,000 retirees here from Kodak who are worried about their health insurance, and what to do.

I had to field those calls with 1.5 FTEs, and, you know, it ended up being, of course, "all hands on deck," to make sure we're serving people, but these people are desperate in need of information so that they can make informed decisions.

Second thing I wanted to talk about is: LifeSpan was thrilled to participate with Cornell University and the New York City Department for the Aging, on the first-ever New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence and Incidence Study.

It's the second-largest study ever done on

elder abuse in the world.

And, just a -- very briefly: For every one case we know about elder abuse in this state, 24 case go unreported. 260,000 older New Yorkers were abused in a one-year period, with financial exploitation is the primary form of abuse.

Simultaneous -- almost simultaneous to the release of this report, New York State, in last year's budget, cut elder-abuse-prevention funding by 50 percent.

It's been devastating.

We also extrapolated the amount of the cost to New York State, in terms of elder-abuse financial exploitation, and we estimate that it cost New York State $3 billion a year, because these older adults can't go back to work, they can't recover those funds; they have no other choice but to go on Medicaid, and get State funds to help them.

Despite all of this -- and I could talk for hours, obviously, about the issues of older adults -- with the Governor coming out, saying he did want to restrict not-for-profits, which is fine with me, quite frankly, to 15 percent of administrative funds, I wanted to talk about some ways in which we can do that, because we all want

to put more money back into programs.

First, of course, Mark mentioned this, the speaker before me: Contract delays and late payments.

Despite the "prompt contracting" law of a few years ago, I, quite frankly, have seen very little relief.

I just want to talk about one contract that I had with the State, in which it took 14 months to execute.

But during that time, I had to hire staff, I had to do reports, I had to meet with agency staff to talk about it.

We have a wonderful program here.

And every time I asked about, "What seems to be the problem with the contract, and then payment?" I was told, they're short in the state agency, and, unfortunately, that's the best that they could do.

But, I'm expected to up front all that money before payment.

So, I don't know what the answer is to the delays in payments, but it certainly has an effect on not-for-profits, and many have to borrow, waiting for those payments.

Second thing I would like to talk about is,

the sheer redundancy in documentation submission; and request that we create a centralized system of documents.

I'll give you an example here, too.

We're all required to fill out what's called a "vendor responsibility form," and, there is an electronic form.

Many of us fill that out; and many state agencies take that form, but not all state agencies. And, we can't print off that form and send it to those that require us to mail it. It's a different form.

The redundancy of information is just incredible.

And, also, each state agency requires a whole list of information from us each year.

We don't mind providing that information, but if we could just upload it, or download it, whatever you call it, into one centralized system, and each state agency look at that, it would save us time, and I'm assuming it would save the state agencies time.

The third point is: Centralized monitoring and auditing.

I talked about LifeSpan; contracts with

five different state agencies.

I, quite frankly, host a whole slew of State people that are in and out of our agency every day -- we have a conference room devoted to them -- all looking for different information, oftentimes coming with conflicting information about how they would like us to keep it.

But, if there was a way in which they could work toward a single audit, in which, if each state agency came in for a particular information, they looked at that, but not everything all at once.

I have to say, in the 16 years I have been at LifeSpan, we have never received serious compliance or fiscal issues, but I still host these people all of the time.

And, also, I'm required, of course, to do an outside audit, that not-for-profits are required to do.

So, I would like this single-audit approach looked at, so that we can help reduce our administrative costs and move more money, of course, where it needs to be, to help folks.

And one final regulatory issue I would like to talk about is, really, the finger-imaging for older adults and food stamps; and request that

this requirement be eliminated for food-stamp-only applicants.

The State, quite frankly, has requested that all food-stamp applicants be finger-imagined, even those in their 80s and 90s.

I'll have to tell you, in the last two years, I have never seen the needs of older adults like I have seen now. It's the first time in which I have seen that we're running out of emergency food almost weekly for older adults in our senior centers. They're in desperate need of just the basic needs.

And trying to find those, and trying to get them eligible for food stamps, which would help, this requirement seems ridiculous to me.

And, I would ask that it be looked at, and eliminated.

I want to thank you for your time.

We really appreciate this, as we're all trying to serve, I think, people, in general.

I think that we have to looked at these administrative changes that would help us to get the money where it needs to be; and, in my case, to older New Yorkers.

SENATOR SAVINO:: On the food stamp finger-imaging issue, I was of the impression that -- first of all, the Governor, you heard him in his State of the State, say, that he's going to eliminate the waiver on that.

But I was under the impression, it was only the city of New York that continued that practice in the state. That, the rest of the counties aren't currently requiring food-stamp applicants to be finger-imagined.

ANN MARIE COOK: There are other counties in the state that are requiring that, or looking at that.

SENATOR SAVINO: Yeah. So I guess, then, the good news is, the Governor -- it requires a waiver.

He's not going grant the waiver anymore. And he's decided that this is unnecessary, as you pointed out, for a whole host of reasons.

There may be people who will then try and legislate it again, so, I think you need to talk as often as you can about the importance of getting food to hungry seniors.

And the idea of a senior, you know, at 80 years old, showing up at a welfare center to get their fingerprint taken, is -- you know, it's

demeaning at that point in their life.

But, on the contract delays: So, you use the example, where you had one contract, it took 14 months to get paid.

What would happen if your agency, or any other agency, just decided they weren't going comply with the contract while you waited to get paid?

What steps would the State take against you?

ANN MARIE COOK: Well, I suppose -- I guess that they would say we didn't fulfill the terms of the contract. And, even though we outlaid that money, they may not pay us.

SENATOR SAVINO: What prevents you from saying the same thing about them?

I mean, I'm curious: Has anybody ever tried to sue the State for failure to, like --

So, you enter -- you respond to an RFP. You enter into a contract with them. They grant it to you. They give you a set of requirements that you must meet, and, this is how much money you're supposed to get paid.

Under any other circumstance, anywhere else in the world, if someone did not live up to their end of the bargain, the place to solve that would be

in the court.

Does anybody ever -- has anyone ever sued the State for failure to comply with their end of the bargain?

Or do you all just wait to get paid, eventually?

ANN MARIE COOK: We wait to get paid.

I've never considered suing the State, I'll be honest with you. But, it's an interesting idea.

SENATOR SAVINO:: I'm just surprised nobody does it.

Anywhere, if it weren't the State that you were doing business with, you would be down in the -- you know, whatever the appropriate court venue would be, suing for --

Look, I see Brian in the back; he's shaking his head.

But, it's -- it's -- it is kind of odd that the State can get away with this; and, yet, you guys continue to respond to RFPs, and do business with the State.

ANN MARIE COOK: And I think, for us, I mean, quite frankly, it's because we want to serve people.

You know --

SENATOR SAVINO:: But they're taking

advantage of you.

Could be.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Along those lines: The contracts on the State end of it, does it say anything about the requirement of payment by the State within a certain time period?

ANN MARIE COOK: Well, I assume it -- I think it does in the "prompt contracting" law.

Although, I have to tell you, in my experience, even since it's been passed, nothing has changed.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: No, nobody follows it.

ANN MARIE COOK: No one follows it.

SENATOR SAVINO: You see, I've done "prompt pay" legislation, but it applies to the construction industry.

So maybe what we should do, Senator Gallivan, is take my "prompt pay" statute, and see if we can't figure out --

Barbara is sitting there.

-- if we can't -- apply it.

(Off-camera comment.)

SENATOR SAVINO: Right.

(Off-camera comment.)

SENATOR SAVINO: So we need to get it

through -- on these contracts.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: For the Human Services.

SENATOR SAVINO: For Human Services.

Hmm.

Well, we're gonna try again.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Let me ask one other question, if I may, back to the finger-imaging?

ANN MARIE COOK: Sure. Uh-huh?

SENATOR GALLIVAN: If finger-imaging is to continue, and there's, you know, some laudable goals for it, specifically the seniors, where would you suggest the cutoff should be?

ANN MARIE COOK: I don't know.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: 80 years old? 70 years old? 40 years old? 100 years old?

ANN MARIE COOK: Senator, honestly, I work with older adults, 60 and older, and I don't know any of them that apply. And we have to encourage them to apply.

I have to say, for older adults in particular, there's a lot of shame involved in this.

SENATOR SAVINO: Uh-huh.

ANN MARIE COOK: So, if we get to the point where we're encouraging them to apply because we know they don't have enough food, one more barrier,

quite frankly, gets them where they don't do it.

I work with older adults, 60 and older; so I'm going to say: 60.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: All right, thank you.

ANN MARIE COOK: Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you.

Next is Rebecca Case Grammatico, senior attorney at the Empire Justice Center, to talk about foreclosure prevention services.

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: So, yes, thank you for -- Senator Gallivan specifically, for inviting Empire Justice Center to this hearing.

And, yes, my name is Rebecca Case Grammatico. I am the supervising attorney for the foreclosure prevention unit in Rochester, New York, just down, right across the way here.

Empire Justice Center is a statewide legal services organization, with offices in Albany, Rochester, White Plains, and in Long Island.

My office specifically provides support and training to legal services in other community-based organizations.

We undertake policy research and analysis; we engage in legislative and administrative advocacy; and we represent low-income-individuals, as well as

classes of New Yorkers in a wide range of poverty-law issues, including consumer public assistance, child care, and disability benefits.

On behalf of my organization, I would just like to say, thank you both, for the opportunity today; and for, specifically, your continued support in these areas, and specifically, also, the foreclosure prevention services campaign that we are currently in the middle of.

Our office in -- our staff members in Albany and Rochester are particularly appreciative of your staff, and your work with us.

I briefly want to, sort of step away from what my testimony is, and just mention the ability to sue the State for inability to fund contracts in a timely manner.

Number one: I don't know whether there's some sort of an attorney's fees provision in that opportunity.

If there was, I suspect that my office might be willing to take a look at that, perhaps, and see the viability of that.

But the reality is, is that, in order to sue, you have to have money to sue. And, of course, non-profits don't have money. Sort of the

definition; right?

So, as you're looking at that, it might be helpful to incorporate some sort of attorneys's fees provision.

[Off-camera inaudible comment.]

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: I'm sorry?

[Off-camera inaudible comment.]

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: Oh, arbitration. I'm not -- not really, no.

[Off-camera inaudible comment.]

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: It is, but it doesn't tend to favor the consumers; or the folks who are actually the underdog in this situation.

So, today my testimony will focus on four issues, not just foreclosure prevention work.

And I apologize. Unfortunately, my area of expertise is strictly foreclosure prevention, so, if you have questions in the welfare or the child-care issues, I'm not your girl, but you can contact Susan Antos [ph.] in our Albany office, or Don in our Long Island office.

So, briefly, those issues are:

Improving the identification of disability screening for welfare applicants, and sanction policies;

The importance of full implementation of final phase of the welfare grant increase;

The desperate need to invest in child-care assistance for low-income working New Yorkers;

And, of course, the economic impact of foreclosures on New York's families and children.

So, first: The welfare grant increase.

The work of non-profit agencies serving New Yorkers faces a nearly insurmountable obstacle when a safety net is in tatters.

The striking example of this dilemma arises when circumstances compel a family to turn to the public-assistance program for their existence.

In the 22 years since 1990, the cost of living in New York has risen by more than 70 percent. During that period, the welfare grant in New York has increased by 20 percent.

As a result, poor New York families have an ever-increasing difficulty in meeting the most basic needs.

In 2009, the State adopted a modest grant increase, to be phased in over three years, as you know. The first increase in the basic allowance in 19 years.

The first two steps were enacted, but,

unfortunately, in 2011, the State failed to implement the final stage. And, the executive budget now proposes to further delay that final installment by phasing it in, in half of a third step this year; and then half, next year.

If the proposal is adopted, this very limited increase would only -- will have taken five years, instead of the intended three, which was intended.

Even when fully implemented, however, the grant will still bring families to an income level less than half of the federal poverty level.

In Monroe County, the maximum grant for a family of three will rise to 48 percent of the poverty level. While this grant, theoretically, enables them to provide for their essential needs, the reality still falls short.

The full grant increase, estimated to cost the State an additional 6 million, nevertheless, will provide a very small but meaningful supplement to poor families.

At a bare minimum, the increase pledged by legislature and governor in 2009 must be implemented in the 2012 session.

Number two: The work-related sanctions.

We support two legislative proposals to

address the problem of an unexpectedly -- unacceptedly high, excuse me, number of welfare recipients who are punished for alleged non-compliance with work requirements.

Before describing the legislation, it's instructed to review the four principles that guide this initiative.

Number one: Public assistance recipients are much more likely to have serious disabilities, than is the case for the population in general. And are even more likely to have disabilities than other low-people.

In the welfare system, disabilities frequently are not recognized; and, therefore, needed accommodations are not made.

Number three: People of serious physical and mental limitations that have not been accommodated are at much greater risk of being punished for those alleged non-compliances.

And not surprisingly the families who are sanctioned are more likely to experience hunger and food insecurity, health problems, homelessness, and further need for emergency services, which are costly.

If this is a set of facts that has prompted

advocates to endorse the two pieces of legislation, then one would improve the process by which local agencies can identify clients with disabilities first.

The other would serve to prevent unwarranted sanctions, particularly when imposed on clients with the disabilities.

Screening for disability, another piece: Our proposed screening legislation would ensure that local districts offer clients the opportunity to be evaluated for disabilities soon, at the application stage, and at other appropriate times.

Require OTDA to develop a high-quality tool for screening for physical and mental disabilities, and require that the districts use this tool to evaluate their clients.

Provide, that if the initial screening suggests a possible disability, that the client must be offered the opportunity for a more in-depth evaluation by a qualified professional.

And also require, that if the valuation process indicates the presence of a disability, the client must be offered appropriate accommodations, to ensure full program access.

Now, the protections against those

inappropriate sanctions: The proposed legislation would require that, before imposing a sanction, districts must determine whether the alleged failure to comply was related to a disability, a problem with child care, or transportation difficulties.

Mandatory sanctions, but they're inflexible. Punishment periods would be eliminated; and, instead, a sanction can be lifted once the client demonstrates a willingness to come into compliance.

And, also, a client who is otherwise satisfactorily participating in assigned work activities must not be sanctioned for a single minor infraction.

We believe that these two proposals would go a long way toward ensuring that no New Yorkers's excluded from needed benefits because of their disability.

Now, changing topics and focus to child care now: The wages of low-income working families are usually not sufficient to pay for a child-care provider who cares for their children while they work; and, to cover, also, that other necessities of life, including, rent, utilities, and food, and

transportation.

As a result, child-care subsidies are critical to helping low-income families retain their jobs.

Child care is in crisis, as local service districts struggle with the reduced funding; a $70 million reduction in funding since 2009 and 2010. This $70 million gap exists, with the $93 million in the State funding provided by the Governor. But without that money, the reduction would be approximately 163 million.

Our testimony explains in further detail, in front of you, how this funding problem has developed, and explains how, even with the $93 million, there is still not enough child-care assistance available to help all eligible families.

Under state law, families with incomes up to 200 percent of poverty are eligible for financial assistance paying for child care, but there is not enough funding to cover all of the eligible families across the state.

And as those funds have declined, counties have taken their own dramatic steps to cope with those decreases.

I have outlined in the testimony, several

counties across the area, but I'm only going highlight a couple here.

In Erie County, with its lowered eligibility guidelines for low-income working parents, from 200 percent of poverty level to 125 percent of poverty, effective March of 2010, that's leaving 1,100 children, in 700 families, without child care.

Erie County was able to partially restore that eligibility to 175 percent of poverty, effective June.

The other county I wanted to mention was Albany County. They've stopped taking applications for child-care services from working families for one year, beginning April 23 of 2010.

And, again, there's more in the testimony.

Finally: Child care is a solid investment in job creation, as we have discussed already. Every dollar invested in child care saves a job for a working parent, and it also create as job for the child-care provider.

All parents share in the cost of child care by making co-payments, and that's an investment in the education and safety of our youngest citizens, that is shared by their -- the parents and the government.

And, at a minimum, New York should invest an additional 70 million to bring our child-care investment up.

Now, my area that I can talk somewhat intelligently on, is foreclosures.

The loss of a home, as you know, a foreclosure auction negatively impacts the state, local municipalities, and the families who are specifically suffering from that loss.

According to a May 2009 report by the Urban Institute, entitled "The Impacts of Foreclosures on Families and Communities," when a foreclosure occurs, the families living in that foreclosed property are impacted in virtually all aspects of their well-being.

It's an older report, but you can imagine that it's still quite valid today.

In addition to the harm caused to the family, the impact of a single foreclosed home is profoundly felt the more urban the environment is.

So, not only through the tax lost in the values of revenues -- excuse me -- the lost tax revenue, and the value of the property is lost, but, also, the simple cost of it cutting grass for a vacant property; and, ultimately, the demolition

costs for a property that's become vacant from -- that also brings an additional costs, as crime and public-health issues.

Now, I'm not going to spend a lot of time talking about the trends of foreclosure. I think we all know that's a serious problem.

But, briefly, if I could highlight some numbers:

According to a study that we have done, and the specifics are in testimony, we have estimated that over 250,000 homes in New York State are either in foreclosure or about to become in foreclosure.

We have had some hiccups, shall we say, along the way, with the robo signing.

And, the courts have taken a particular aggressive approach to that, to make sure that lenders' attorneys are taking a proactive look at their cases.

And in -- good or bad, depending on how you look it, and which side of the coin you're on, that has caused, in effect, a moratorium on folks.

So, as a result, people are stuck in this limbo state right now, not actually entering foreclosure.

Or, if they are entering foreclosure, they're

not entering into the required settlement-conference process, so people are getting served. They're not getting the request for judicial intervention filed, which triggers the settlement-conference process to begin.

So, folks are sitting there, without loans, that are currently unaffordable, and the interest continues to accrue, and people are unable to actually communicate with their banks, which further causes delay and costs.

I do want to say that New York, thankfully, has taken a proactive approach to the foreclosure crisis. They've been some of the -- New York has been amongst the most aggressive in the country to address the subprime and the foreclosure crisis.

New York was only the second highest of 11 states to experience the home-price appreciation in 2010. And, we are fourth in the nation in terms of loan modifications achieved through the federal Home Affordable Modification Program. The "HAMP Program."

We strongly believe that New York could be poised to exit the foreclosure crisis ahead of most other states. But, if we stay the course right now, with the current lack of funding for the

program and activities, we will be in a much worse-off shape than we already are.

The good news, I suppose, is that we believe that we are approximately halfway through the crisis; whereas, the rest of the country is about a third of the way.

But, again, if we don't have funding for the service providers on the ground -- the housing counselors and legal-services providers and pro bono attorneys -- to assist folks in that foreclosure process, it's going to become much worse, and it's going to take us a much longer time to exit the crisis.

Now, some numbers on the foreclosure program itself.

It started in 2008, and over 80,000 homeowners have been assisted, and at least 14,000 homes have been saved from foreclosure.

Every dollar invested in the foreclosure-prevention program has resulted in at least a $68 savings to the State. This is due to the avoidance of the decreased property values and the subsequent decreased tax revenue.

It's estimated that, today, the program has saved over $3.4 billion across New York State.

If nothing is done, however, to help that more than 250,000 homes entering foreclosure, the cost would total, approximately, over 61 billion in decreased property values and the reduction of the tax base.

Now, the Governor has announced in his State of State Address, and has included some money in his executive budget, for the creation of the foreclosure relief unit within the Department of Financial Services.

To date, few details have been revealed on that program.

We continue to work with them, to try to help funnel, and have a conversation about how best to implement that program.

But, so far, we have found that they are providing a state-run mobile command center, staffed with foreclosure counselors who are coming to Long Island, I believe this week, or next. And they provide information about loan modifications that are available under federal law, and they take complaints from homeowners, so that the unit can investigate further.

There's already a system in place right now to assist those homeowners.

It's a great idea, as long as it's used in conjunction with the program that's proven to work.

That's all I have.

Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Thank you.

The foreclosure prevention program that we currently have in New York State, as you pointed out, is probably the most comprehensive in the nation.

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: Yes.

SENATOR SAVINO: Senator Klein, who is -- was the deputy majority leader at the time, actually created it.

We had a press conference about a week ago, with providers from all around the state, to focus on just how important this is.

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: Yes, and we thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: It would be a tragedy if New York, which, you know, stepped out way in front of the rest of the country, falls behind.

It is $25 million. And I think we're, you know, making the case to Governor's Office, that even if the program is going to be administered through the Ben Lawsky's office, that's great, but

you got to put the money there --

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: That's right.

SENATOR SAVINO: -- because we have far too many people at risk.

I'm happy to see that you guys are supportive of the idea of investing in child care. We need to do it. It's something important.

And, you know, I actually have met with your downstate counterparts, to talk about the sanction issue.

You didn't -- interestingly, you didn't mention the issue of fair hearings.

I don't know about the rest of the state or the other counties. In New York City, they lose their fair hearings -- the city loses, just about 100 percent of the time; which means, they sanction somebody for either failure to comply with workfare, or failure to show up for a face-to-face, or whatever the case happens to be, and they lose, every time.

I'm not -- is that consistent statistics with counties outside of the city in upstate New York?

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: I can't say. That's outside of my knowledge.

SENATOR SAVINO: Just curious.

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: I'm sorry.

But I'm sure that you can get the information from folks in Albany as well.

SENATOR SAVINO: Okay. Thank you.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: We actually have some of that information.

SENATOR SAVINO: Uh-huh.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: And we have been working with New York City to try to correct that. A lot of it -- some of it was sloppy paperwork.

SENATOR SAVINO: Yeah.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Better handling internally.

But, no, they were not consistent with the rest of the state.

New York City was very high. The rest of the state, pretty much consistently, as compared from county to county.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Okay.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Significantly lower.

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: If you have other questions, I'm sure that those folks can offer some sort of assistance to you.

SENATOR SAVINO: Thanks.

REBECCA CASE GRAMMATICO: Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: Next is, Jean Carroll, the president and CEO of the YWCA.

JEAN CARROLL: Yes, I'm Jean Carroll. I'm president and CEO of the YWCA of Rochester, in Monroe County.

And I'm here today, along with Lydia Rodriguez, who is one of the 1,000-plus women and girls that we serve annually.

And, I thought that, while I have some messages to share with you, I thought that it would be good for you to hear first-hand from Lydia about one of the services that is in danger of not being continued.

LYDIA RODRIGUEZ: Okay, hi.

AS she said, I'm Lydia Rodriguez.

And my story is, I come from a domestic-violence background. Severe domestic violence.

My son and I fled from Syracuse. We came over here to Rochester where we knew no one.

Nothing. Nobody.

We heard about ABW, and they took women.

I just needed to be away from Syracuse, as I lived there for 23 years. And, whatever shelter I

went through, I have lived, in various parts of Syracuse. I didn't want to be found.

I was almost killed, twice.

So, we made it over here, far enough from Syracuse, where, I could feel safe walking the streets, but close enough to where my older children could come and see me if they had to.

Well, I ended up coming to the YWCA, by the grace of God.

I've got into support services, where, we were lost.

We were lost.

And we were being turned away from everywhere that we went. And it was to the point where I felt that I would have to go back.

And if I went back, that would be my life.

I had, my son was 10. Then, a 10-year-old.

He's 13 now.

And through the YWCA, they helped us. They roomed us. And they helped us, through support services, find an affordable and safe apartment in the Irondequoit area.

We were close to hospitals.

He got to a wonderful school, which is East Irondequoit Middle School. Excellent school

system.

We were able to, through the YWCA, to get counseling, because this is 14 years of extreme domestic violence. And counseling, not only for myself, but for my son.

Throughout being here, we were found.

We were found, somehow. And, the YWCA, they helped me to get into a higher apartment, so that -- because I was afraid. I was, like: He's going climb through our windows.

We lived in a first floor.

They helped me to feel safe. You know, they gave us the safety. They moved us to a upper apartment, which I don't believe they usually do.

They helped us to make our Christmas.

With school, they helped us with school supplies for my children.

Clothes, because we came with nothing. We left everything, in the middle of the night.

And, they helped us in so many aspects.

Right now, my son is doing great in school.

Like I said, we're getting our mental health. We're close to the hospitals, getting the help we need.

For Thanksgiving, they helped us with food.

That first Christmas; it was August when we came, so, of course, we didn't have nothing. They made Christmas possible for me and my child.

My daughter ended up coming. She was also a victim of domestic violence. They also helped house her, and helped her with their service.

They helped me.

I didn't know anything about the YWCA.

I didn't know anything. I thought it was, you know, a place where people just rent apartments, or whatever. But, it was much more than that.

They helped us to get furniture. They helped me get into public assistance. Helped me get to the doctors.

At times, when I couldn't get to the grocery store, every month, our social worker would come, and she would take us grocery shopping, which was an extreme help.

I suffer from severe asthma.

Her office is downstairs, and, I was having asthma attack. I couldn't hardly move.

My support-service manager, she came in and took me to the hospital. Stayed with me, you know, while I got admitted, and everything.

And, it's just a lot of help.

I have met young girls there that were homeless also, because of the economy, et cetera.

And, you know, it gives you a heads up. It makes you feel comfortable.

And, I felt unworthy; I felt like nothing.

And, now, I can lift my head up.

I can walk the streets. I have a safe place to live. My son is doing excellent. I'm doing fine.

They -- where we couldn't afford, they take us places, like Darien Lake. I could never afford to take any son there. We had no transportation, or anything.

They do that for us.

They took us to Niagara Falls.

They give us services, where we get together and we talk about parenting, and self-help issues.

So, you know, we need that. And it's important, because there's a lot of women dying from domestic violence that don't know that they have places to go. That don't realize that there are people that can help. So we stay in this situation.

And, I believe that if I knew -- I was in the situation for 14 years. If I knew that there was, you know, these type of programs, that could help

me to be safe, they can get me away from this violence, and -- and not only, just find me an apartment and leave me there, and, Okay, you're on your own, but, give me these support services that I need to find help.

So, okay, you need mental help, you need to talk, we're here.

Go to this program. Come to that program.

You know, it's very helpful. Because, like I said, we're dying. And a lot of women, you know, I could have died.

I was a statistics. I have been in the hospital, twice. I had to have surgery to have discs removed that were crushed from being choked. I had bones -- when I came to the YWCA, bones in my face broke, and I still can't barely see from one side of my face.

But, I thank God that I found the YWCA, that I ended up here, because they saved my life.

So...

SENATOR SAVINO:: Thank you, Lydia, for sharing.

JEAN CARROLL: Thank you, Lydia.

You know, there is nothing more compelling than a firsthand account of how, what you have done,

and what we try to do as a community, makes a difference in an individual's life.

At the YWCA, we serve a 1,000 women and children every year.

We have a continuum of housing services.

We start out with emergency housing. And then we have, in addition to that, transitional housing, and supportive living. And, then, long-term permanent housing.

And, women can come in at any point along that continuum.

And we do, often, get women who have been victims of domestic violence at our emergency housing. About 40 percent of the women who come through our housing program have been victims of domestic violence.

A critical component along any person's journey, when they're found to be homeless, whether it's because of domestic violence, or, you know, lack of financial resources, or mental or physical health, a critical component is the support services.

And, the YWCA has relied on many sources to provide support services to the women that we serve.

In the past, we have had funding from

New York State. It was originally called "supportive housing for families and young adults." And, we have had that funding for about seven years, and, we no longer have that funding.

So, we have had to cut back on our staff, and not been able to provide the level of support services that are needed.

Over the past three years, in fact, you know, while funding has been cut, we've seen an expansion in the need for emergency housing and longer-term housing.

We did expand our services to families, because it is, in fact, women with children who are one of the greatest areas of increase in homelessness.

One of the things that is very true about homelessness, is that it doesn't happen overnight, and it doesn't get solved by short-term emergency-shelter stays.

That is why the permanent affordable apartments, linked to on-site services, is really the solution. It's a proven cost-effective and humane way to provide stable homes to individuals and families who have difficulty finding and maintaining housing.

This year's underfunding endangers a lot of the stability of very fragile residents at the YWCA, and around the state.

The supportive housing program is the area where we would have been funded, where we are not currently funded. It was a consolidation of many other programs under that umbrella last year, and, went from substantially a higher rate of funding to a much lower one.

One of the stats on this, is that, over 12,800 disabled tenants in 163 residences really have inadequate services because of the underfunding in the supportive housing program.

Underfunding also puts federal funding at risk.

New York State leverages significant federal resources, up to four federal dollars for every State dollar.

So, from a cost standpoint, or from a leveraging standpoint, having those services in place is very important.

The other area that I wanted to talk about, since I know that you also have oversight related to the Office of Children and Family Services, is our program where we serve teen moms.

We work with about 250 teen moms annually; teenagers who are pregnant and parenting, and at risk of dropping out of school.

Typically, nationwide, about 75 percent of teen moms drop out of school.

At the YWCA, we have really focused our programming and our services. We are currently in seven of the city high schools, on site, and we provide the teen moms that are at those schools with the highest-quality, evidence-based teen outreach program approach to service.

In fact, this past school year, 76 percent of the senior girls in our "young-parent support services" program, graduated.

And, 86 percent of girls in the program, 18 months or more, delayed a repeat pregnancy.

Excellent results such as these should be supported; yet, because of changes in funding and administration in New York State, we're losing our ability to continue providing these services.

A program-funding stream called, "APS," or, "adolescent pregnancy and parenting services," administered through the Office of Children and Family Services, provided support to these vulnerable young women and their children.

This was transitioned out of the Department of Office of Children and Family Services and into the New York State Department of Health.

The Department of Health now targets teens for primary prevention services, which is focused on preventing an initial pregnancy.

And while I certainly agree that it would be better for these young women, for themselves, and for their children, to delay sex and childbearing, cutting services and support to teens who are moms and have young babies, teens who are moving towards graduation, and post-secondary education, is not the result that any of us want.

I'm hopeful that you may be able to help to direct me to alternative funding that already exists within New York State budget, that can continue the kind of success that we have had.

This is not a one-year success rate.

This, we have been doing this for about 20 years, so -- and with the teen outreach program fully functional for about five years.

So, we have really shown the results. It does make a big difference.

And I would very much like any advice that you can give me on this.

As an administrator, I struggle every day with how to prioritize our services, between housing for women and children, and services to teen moms.

I knowing that your job as senators is probably even more daunting than mine, in terms of making decisions related to this the State budget.

I ask that you consider Lydia, and my testimony, and the impacts that the funding levels within New York State have on a very, very vulnerable population in our community.

Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Thank you.

Lydia, we'd like to thank you for sharing your story. You're reminding us of what these dollars actually do, and the difference they make in people's lives.

On the teen-pregnancy issue, are you not at all frustrated by the fact that television has now glorified this?

We have this weekly reality show now called "Teen Mom." And they go out and recruit some 15-year-old girls to show their -- and they become a reality -- like Jersey Shore.

It's really outrageous, Senator Gallivan.

And now they're on the front cover of

magazines. You can't come out of the supermarket without seeing these girls and their babies, and, you know, they glorify them, and turned them into stars.

Are you -- how do you, as a service provider, then, talk to a teenaged girl about this situation that she finds herself in?

JEAN CARROLL: Most of the young women that we're working with, they don't intend to become pregnant. They really are not setting out with that as a goal in their life.

Often, the biggest issue with the teen moms that we're dealing with is, really, the lack of guidance in their lives. And, they're not seeing a future for themselves.

Rochester -- the city of Rochester, which is where we provide our services, has the highest rate of teen pregnancy outside of New York City. It is very, very high -- tenth -- in child poverty in the country.

So, there are many forces that are at work that probably aren't very well reflected on the show that you see on cable, in terms of the challenges that these young women are up against.

Often, they have not had the opportunity to

even get out of their own neighborhood, to see what the potential is for them, long term.

So, a lot of it has to do with, working with these young women, to build themselves up. To help them to develop a sense of their own future.

And surprisingly enough, I have heard many of the young women say, that, now that they have a child, they have a better sense of responsibility, and look more to the future than they did before they became pregnant.

SENATOR SAVINO: I hope so.

JEAN CARROLL: They -- yeah, well, you know, you can't take anything for granted.

SENATOR SAVINO: No.

JEAN CARROLL: So, helping these young women on their way, you know, we can't change the fact that they have a child.

We can certainly do everything that we can, in terms of primary prevention, which I think we should. But once they have a child, the critical, critical issue, is making sure they get educated, not only get out of high school, but also continue for a post-secondary education, so that they can have a future beyond poverty, for themselves and that child.

So, that's what we're all about, is making that future happen.

SENATOR SAVINO:: What is the cost to this program for your agency?

JEAN CARROLL: Well, I would say -- let me think.

Usually, for each case manager, I would say it's about $50,000 for each school that we're in. And we're in seven different schools.

So, 350,000, about, for the program.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: One question.

And, Lydia, my thanks, also, for sharing your story with us.

Regarding domestic-violence victims and emergency housing, and you may not know this off the top of your head: Are you able to tell us what the average length, or the duration of, the services that you're providing for domestic violence victims, as it relates to housing?

5 days? 100 days? 3 years?

JEAN CARROLL: Oh, no.

We're pretty limited in terms of the services that we provide.

We, generally, I would say the average stay, if it's an individual person, a single woman, it's

probably two weeks.

If it's a family, it tends to be 30 to 45 days.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: And, then, are you in all of those cases, or, can you put a percentage on the assistance?

Are you providing assistance as they're transitioning -- transitioning, excuse me, out of the emergency housing?

JEAN CARROLL: We were.

We are not currently able to do that because --

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Because of funding.

JEAN CARROLL: -- because of funding.

That was another New York State Emergency Solutions Grant that was cut.

We did, in the past, receive funding for staff that we had on site, that the women would get to know while they're there. And then they would follow them after they left, for six months to a year.

They would have, you know, at minimum, of every two weeks, meet with the women, to ensure that, once they leave our facility and move into an apartment, that they maintain housing stability, and

that they get other services in the community.

So, it was a very de-institutional approach to serving the women, but still giving them supports.

And, we've had to discontinue that, in November, when we didn't get additional funding for that purpose.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: All right, thank you.

JEAN CARROLL: Uh-huh.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Thank you.

We're going to take a two-minute break. I'll be right back.

But next up --

SENATOR GALLIVAN: And, Clyde Comstock will be next up.

[Pause in the proceeding.]

[The proceeding continued, as follows:]

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Okay, Clyde.

SENATOR SAVINO:: You don't have to read the whole thing.

CLYDE COMSTOCK: Does this look a little long?

SENATOR SAVINO: Yes.

CLYDE COMSTOCK: My name is Clyde Comstock. I'm the chief operating officer for the

Hillside Family of agencies. And, I'm also the president of the New York State Coalition for Childrens's Mental Health Services.

And, particularly, I would like to welcome you to Rochester.

Today is Hillside's 175th anniversary, on this very day. So --

SENATOR SAVINO: Wow.

CLYDE COMSTOCK: -- thanks for coming to our birthday.

SENATOR SAVINO: You don't look a day over 140.

[Laughter.]

CLYDE COMSTOCK: We have good water in Rochester.

Hillside serves children and families in about 45 different locations; 120 different programs; 2,300 employees; 24 counties. Our budget is about $135 million.

And, we are licensed by nearly everybody that funds services for children and families: The Office of Children and Family Services, OPWDD, OMH, OASAS, and SED.

There is a lot of advantages to Hillside, in being able to bring to our various communities

the wide range of services and regulatory bodies that we can offer services through.

There are also some pretty serious disadvantages.

We do have about 50 audits per year; so, virtually, every week we have somebody from a different piece of the State coming in to audit a different part of our programs.

We also have our reporting, on a computerized level, happens through 15 different IT systems to the State, each of which has tried to solve their own particular problem in their own area, so that they make life easier for the people on the ground by having a computerized IT system. But, the State systems don't talk to each other, nor do they all upload information from our own system, so, we end up reporting through these 15 different systems.

So, it's one of our hopes, as the SAGE Commission dives into organizational complexity, is that they take a look at life on the ground for agencies that serve children and families whose needs really span all of the various funding streams.

One of the issues that concerns us greatly at the moment is Medicaid.

That, as Medicaid, within three to five years moves to a managed system, to try and deal with the escalating costs of Medicaid that we've all read about, the challenges to this new system, to understand and meet the needs of children and families, particularly children and youth who have chronic mental-health needs that are beyond what the insurance companies have generally been used to, our system, the new system, is going to have to be able to really understand these chronic long-term needs of children and families, and also understand the difference between serving adults and serving children; and that primary difference is, that parents have a key role in the service system.

And as these new products are getting designed around managed care, for the most part, they put the patient first. But, with children, you really need to put parents right along with their children.

New York, as we shift, I think Hillside is probably about a third Medicaid-funded; so, a little over $50 million worth of services are in Medicaid.

All of the payers and regulations and requirements for that amount of money and that

amount of services, within three to five years, is going to change.

So, we're going to be changing into:

Increasing the Medicaid managed-care basic plans to the insurance companies;

Regional behavioral health organizations. And, for Hillside, we deal with two regions: one in Syracuse, and one in the western part of the state;

Health homes for adults over 18;

Regional -- or, health homes for children that are currently being designed;

The new APG system for outpatient mental-health services, that goes from about 3 or 4 rates for children's outpatient, to well over 25 different rates, for billing for those services;

The medical homes;

The developmental-care individual support- and care-coordination organizations, or, "discos," as we know them through the OPWDD.

So our worry, as all of this is changing -- and each of those things that I mentioned are rolling out right now. So, they're either in design phase or they're actually happening.

And our worry is: Who's watching out for children and families' needs, as the systems that New York State has spent a long time building, carefully constructing, are going to all change into this new structure?

It's going to require the legislature to pay particular attention to how this plays out.

I have a somewhat detailed example of what it's like when managed care moves in, and what it's like for an organization, and what it's like for a child and family.

In October -- starting in October, anytime we have non-typical psychotropic medications being prescribed, it has to get approved through a managed-care company.

Conceptually, that makes some sense: have someone else taking a look at what the prescription -- what the prescribers are doing.

The way it has played out, I'll just go really fast through this one: December 19th, we had a child who had a prescription for Abilify written. He had been on it for four years.

It was denied by MVP Option because it needed prior authorization.

That was completed, and it was then denied,

because the diagnosis did not justify use.

Made calls to MVP Option to see what else we needed to do. They referred us to Medco.

We made calls to Medco. Got no calls back from them.

December 21st, the child now had no medication.

We then re-called MVP. They then wanted a list of all past medication, back to before Abilify started. And, they couldn't do an emergency fill.

We then started to try and investigate who actually started Abilify, because the child had been in multiple placements and hospitals before they came into our service.

School then closed, while we're still trying to do the research. We were unable to reach anybody during that time.

We finally found who first prescribed the Abilify; but then they said they had to go back four years -- two to four years, to find out what the story was, and it would take them a while to copy the records.

January 11th, our psychiatrist finally decided that we couldn't wait any longer; we needed to switch medication.

So, the medication that the child should have been put on, they could not be.

And the amount of time that our staff had to spend, virtually, doing nothing except trying to chase down how could we get the -- get anybody to actually hear the whole story; this, is our primary worry.

Managed care done well could be very flexible. Could allow us to do different things for kids and families that could be helpful.

Done poorly, it will mean that we end up adding a whole layer of cost inside all of our organizations, to do this chasing, and, someone else who's actually on the other end of it will be getting paid to also do the following-up on each of these.

So, it's going add a lot of cost, and needs to be watched very carefully.

One of things I did want to bring up today, is that we recently lost funding, along with a number of other organizations across the state, in our Reinvesting in Youth Program.

It was a statewide RFP that went out last year, to provide services for youth, to prevent them from going into the juvenile justice system. It was

supposed to be a -- I can't remember if it was a 3- or a 4-year contract.

We were terminated before the end of the first year, as was every other program in the state.

Hillside was a lead agency, with seven or eight other agencies across Monroe County, and was having a pretty good degree of success at keeping kids in their communities, and not having them go into the juvenile justice system.

So, if there's any way to reinstate that program, that would be very helpful.

At the same time that we have all of these challenges, there are a couple of budget items that we want to make sure we support.

One is, the reauthorization of the child welfare financing;

Second, is maintaining the community optional preventive services funding;

And, third, is the new area of supporting the effort to incentivize the combination of private investment and public investment in the public-private partnership program.

While all of these challenges are happening, the agencies on the ground are also looking at: What can we do that will -- that could

innovate and change the life of our children and families?

Hillside has been involved in two key areas with this.

The first one is: Family finding.

We have, in our OCFS-licensed, mental-health licensed, and an OPWDD-licensed services, kids who have been in the system for many, many years.

I just reviewed a child yesterday, who had 32 placements over the course of her life; and she was 15 at the time, yesterday.

We have a new methodology that we imported from California, that helps us find family members. We use the Internet, and a number of other search methods, to find family members for kids who are entering the system: the OCFS, OPWDD, or mental-health system.

Find their families, bring them to the table, help them plan for the child. Be a resource, either to support a parent, so the parent can help take a high-needs child home, or, to actually be able to have that child be discharged into their own home.

We have, in our initial pilot projects, where we do groups of 25 kids, we, and the counties, together, started off knowing about 100 family

members for those 25 kids. That's all we knew about.

By the time we finished the project, we were up to 1,000 family members, that we knew about, and that we could then reach out and bring them to the table.

If we can do that successfully and early, we can dramatically shorten the length of stay for kids, and increase our success with kids and families, who really should -- or, kids who should not be growing up in the public system.

The other creative services, that Hillside work-scholarship connection, that works with youth, generally, nine through twelfth grade, who are at risk of not graduating from high school.

Hillside currently has about 3,500 kids enrolled in this program, in Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse.

And we significantly improve the high school graduation rate and the college success rate for kids who enter the Hillside work-scholarship program. That is partially funded through education, and through the COPS -- the various COPS funding streams.

So, we would like to see that sort of

innovative program that's focused on high school graduation increase.

Hopefully, I got that through in a hurry.

SENATOR SAVINO: We know we'll see you on Monday. You will be -- either yourself or your agency will be testifying --

CLYDE COMSTOCK: Yes.

SENATOR SAVINO: -- at the Human Service Budget Hearing.

CLYDE COMSTOCK: Yep.

SENATOR SAVINO: I would, though, at some point, like to meet with you, to talk to you more about this "family finding" program, and see -- downstate, the Children's Aid Society has been working on this chronic problem of young people who are aging out of the system into independence, but with no connections to the world.

It's been a chronic problem in the child-welfare system everywhere, where young -- you know what happens. They get to a certain age and you can't place them anymore, and they wind up living in the system until they're old enough to get out.

It's a terrible way to spend your childhood, and it's a terrible way to be introduced to the

world.

But, I think this is an interesting model, and I would like to spend some more time with you, on that.

CLYDE COMSTOCK: Great.

And we have a training institute that we've developed a curriculum for. So, we'll train other organizations, private agencies, or counties.

And, the City of New York, actually, we're talking to at the moment.

So, we would be happy to train anybody who would like to be able to do this as well.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Thank you.

CLYDE COMSTOCK: Great.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you.

See you Monday.

SENATOR SAVINO: Next is, Tim Weider, for the Child Care Counsel [sic].

Come on down.

TIM WEIDER: I regret that I do not have something to give you today, because --

SENATOR SAVINO: That's -- okay.

TIM WEIDER: -- I didn't anticipate I would be able to be here because of my teaching schedule.

You're also going to will be victims of my

policy, of never giving my students notes before the lecture, because I don't want them to distracted.

Thanks for the opportunity to be with you.

About a 20-minute drive from this room, there is a 12-foot razor-wired, double-gated fence.

And behind that fence, children, in red-and-khaki uniforms, march single-file.

Now, I taught in an adult prison for several years, many years. It's no different.

That facility is certified by the American Correctional Association. It is a certified prison.

The children in that prison, 80 to 90 percent of those children have multiple diagnostic labels: developmental, psychiatric, behavioral, and learning.

And two-thirds are receiving psychotropic medication.

95 percent of them, are children of color, who come from somewhat chaotic urban neighborhoods.

So, from one perspective we might say, that we are incarcerating disabled children.

The juvenile justice system has, for decades,

operated on a correctional model that came into play after the '90s, and it has not worked.

And, fortunately, we have had a commissioner that acknowledged that: That we must change, and we must better understand the behavior of these young people.

And the research indicated that their behavior, for the most part, comes out of multiple experiences of trauma in their lives.

And, so, OCFS began a process about four years ago, to change their system, from a correctional, to a therapeutic model.

It was hopeful. It was promising.

And it's over.

And, so, I'm here today, simply to speak for, probably, the most disenfranchised and fragile of our population who have no one to speak for them.

Their parents are exhausted.

First of all, I want to say that, in discussing the systems, I'm not discussing the staff. The staff of OCFS are dedicated, caring, and hard-working.

But the policies and the system must change.

There's been the gradual understanding now, and I'm not sure whether it came from the budget

interests, or others, that were shifting juvenile justice away from facilities into the community.

Now, we have been through reinvestment before. The old OMRDD did it. And back in those days, I helped close Craig Developmental Center, and create that OMRDD, now, that system.

Not bad.

Residential services, they're dealing now with some quality-of-care issues, but, not too bad.

And then we moved on to reinvest in mental health.

Not so good; as more and more people with mental-health issues are in the homeless shelters, and the prisons.

And now we're talking about reinvestment of our juvenile justice system.

And as the previous speaker alluded, there was a program here in Rochester called "Reinvestment in Youth," that, before it got through one year -- it was highly collaborative, community neighborhood-based, and successful.

Before it got through one year, it was defunded.

There's a sense right now that juvenile justice is in chaos. There's no sense of a common,

rational plan.

There's a sense that things are happening simply on the basis of the budget.

The tragedy would be, balancing this budget on the backs of these children.

We have to assure that every dollar saved, by closing those facilities and laying off those staff, is, in fact, reinvested at the community level.

These youngsters represent, not only high human costs, but, indeed, high social costs, because the tragedy will be, they will either end up in a cell, or a coffin.

Some of the issues we need to deal with is, first of all, collaborative planning.

Albany has been making decisions and micromanaging, programmatically, for the local level, and it is not working.

We need the folks in Albany to provide to come out into the community, and sit with the community resources and plan together. And what works in New York City does not work in Rochester, New York.

Number one.

Number two: Ten years ago, at one elementary school in Rochester, 41 percent of all

the students in that school were diagnosed with lead poisoning, and had certifiable permanent brain damage, that meant decreased cognitive functioning and decreased impulse control.

The community responded by running to those houses and cleaning up the lead, but they never followed those children. And ten years later, we don't know who those children were, but we do know that we have increased numbers of children in special education and juvenile justice.

It is critical that we begin to follow those young people who have been placed at risk in urban neighborhoods.

The incoming president of the American Academy of Pediatrics is a Rochester pediatrician, and this is one of his agenda items.

And, therefore, we need to look at: What can we do with State policy to support that process?

We -- one of the biases that I -- I think it's some of the bias -- is that young people need be returned to their families.

As a sociologist, I kind of see that as kind of a nice middle-class concept. But the reality is, the families of these youngsters are emotionally drained and exhausted. Okay?

And, therefore, even though we must reach out, because, if you find a traumatized child, you find a traumatized parent. We clearly need to reach out to those parents and families, but we need a community-based residential resource for many of these youngsters, who are released from a facility and disappear within the first six months.

There is at least four kids from this community, today, we don't know where they are.

There is an empty group home in Brighton, kind of an upscale community, that's has sat empty for the last, at least, five or six years. Okay?

But we need that kind of resource as an intermediary between the fence and the family.

At the same time we're talking about reinvesting in the community, we are defunding the community's resources.

We can't defund the Youth Bureau at the same time we're saying, we need to provide these services at the community level.

That's where this collaborative planning; that's where folks need to come out of Albany, come into the community, understand the resources in that community, and begin to build a rational, healing system for these young people.

There is a group that was functioning under the aegis of the Rochester City School District and the local Department of Human Services, that did some research on young people in these systems.

And one of the recommendations was, providing resources that follow the child.

So rather than fund programs, fund the child, and have those resources that follow that child respond to the specific needs of that particular child.

It's a funding mechanism that's more person-centered. Okay?

So, number one: Collaborative planning, together with the community, in terms of: What is the future of juvenile justice? And, how can we create that future together, not mandated from above?

Number two: We must understand the behavior of these young people in a non-criminal context.

And that means, their trauma history, and the potential for lead poisoning.

Number three: We need to look at residential settings in the community, as an intermediate step, perhaps, between facility and family.

Number four: We need to assure that

reinvestment is genuine reinvestment, and not a mechanism to solve our budgetary problems.

And, finally: A potential for serving young people in the community, is to have a mechanism whereby the funding follows the youth, and is based, ultimately, on: What are the needs of the particular -- of an individual youth, as well as, what are their strengths and competencies?

It's through that kind of mechanism that we can fund programs like, a teen empowerment, the Youth Bureaus, and others, that can be those resources in the community.

Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Thank you.

As you point out, juvenile justice reform is going to be one of the most complicated things that we are going to be taking up.

And, unfortunately, up until now, the discussion really has been about money: Who pays for it? Who -- who shouldn't?

And, you know, unfortunately, for us in New York City, the majority of the kids who are placed upstate, in facilities, are from the city of New York.

TIM WEIDER: Exactly.

SENATOR SAVINO: There is a real desire to bring them close -- actually, the program, they want to call it, is, "Close To Home."

TIM WEIDER: Sure.

SENATOR SAVINO: And, towards that end, the city has taken DJJ as a separate agency, that was correction-based, and merged with it the Administration for Children Services.

I'm not sure how it's going of work yet, but their hope is, bring the kids home, it will cost the City less money. We'll put services in place at the community level.

They're not quite there yet, though, but it will have an impact on the City programs.

TIM WEIDER: Well, let me provide with you an opportunity.

Monroe County, I believe, is the only county in the state that has its kids, in OCFS, in our county.

So, the kids from this county are out in Rush, New York, at the Industry Residential Center; and, therefore, they're close to their families, they're close to their home, and they're close to the communities and neighborhoods that they're going to be returning to.

So, we can build that model here. We've got that leg up.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: I would like to go, kind of the beginning of your testimony; and you talked about, four years ago, there was a movement from a -- for a juvenile justice correctional model, a therapeutic model, and it's over.

TIM WEIDER: Yeah.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Why's it over?

I mean, what --

SENATOR SAVINO: What happened?

SENATOR GALLIVAN: -- what happened --

TIM WEIDER: What happened?

SENATOR GALLIVAN: -- what happened, that turned it from the direction that you think is the proper direction, to the opposite direction?

TIM WEIDER: Essentially, the budget.

So, what happened was, when -- four or five years ago, when OCFS looked at the research, what they found was, again, that the behavior of many of these young people was based on the trauma they've experienced.

If I grew up in a neighborhood where I regularly hear gunfire; if I personally know people, even family members who have been shot and murdered,

including kids, okay; if I lived in a household that's food-insecure, okay; if I'm seen as a failure in school -- et cetera, et cetera -- those are multiple areas of trauma that, in fact, change the brain structure of that child, that leads to their behavior.

So, based on that research -- two of us went down to outside of New York City and were trained in trauma-informed intervention, using the sanctuary model. Okay?

And there were experts in that trauma-informed model that came into the facility, and began to train -- spent a whole year training the staff, because we need to -- as adults, and staff, need to know our trauma before we understand the kids' trauma.

So, a great investment. Okay?

And then, only after the staff were trained, did we begin to roll that out with the young people in the facility.

A wonderful model; it began to show success. Okay?

They began -- I told the -- Sandra Bloom [ph.], who was the psychiatrist at that -- who was responsible for this model, that:

You know, you can do this in the facility, but, send them back to the neighborhood and it will last about six seconds. That we need to have that same perspective in the neighborhoods.

That process began, okay, very hopeful. And then the budget hit. And we haven't seen those folks from Sanctuary Initiative in, probably, almost a year.

So, we need to revisit that, okay, and reinstitute, and continue New York State along that pathway.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Thank you.

TIM WEIDER: You're welcome.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: Next is, Garth Freeman, from Monroe County Runaway Group Continuum.

GARTH FREEMAN: We have a whole bunch --

SENATOR SAVINO: Yeah, the kids are coming too; right?

Yeah, come on down.

CJ MOLLIS [ph.]: Hi. My name is CJ Mollis [ph.], and I would like to thank Senator Savino, and Gallivan, for hosting this forum, and for the outgoing commitment to the youth service and social service throughout New York

State.

MALIKA: My name is Malika [unintelligible], and I would also like to thank you two Senators, and their staff, for bringing this event to Rochester.

Today we will like to speak about the importance and the impact of positive youth development, and runaway and homeless youth service, programs funded by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

CJ MOLLIS [ph.]: Youth Bureau system has provided generations of New York State youth with quality programs that have given youth, like me, the opportunity to develop leadership skills, and become engaged and connect with my community.

I am currently the co-chair of Youth As Resources, a youthful [unintelligible] program of the Rochester, Monroe County, Youth Bureau, that is funded through OCFS. I have been involved in the program for over three years.

I am also involved in TLI, and other community programs.

MALIKA: I have been a board member of Youth As Resources, also known as "YAR," for over three years.

CJ MOLLIS [ph.]: We look to you and your

colleagues to be stewards and -- of these funds, and need you to be champions of all youth, and our state, and beyond.

So, here are some facts.

Youth Bureau funding consists of three funding streams: Youth development, and delinquency intervention; special delinquency prevention program; and, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

If we look at the Governor's proposal for 2012 and 2013 budget, these three funding streams for the Youth Bureau in New York State will be cut at 62 percent -- 62 percent since 2007 and 2008.

MALIKA: The entire proposed New York State fiscal year 2012-2013 budget is $132.5 billion.

The proposed budget for New York State youth development, and runaway and homeless youth, programs is 16.4 million; or, expressed as percentage of a whole, .12 percent of the entire proposed budget.

The language in the current proposed budget makes it sound like this budget will even provide funding from last year.

That is misleading, and the, State-, local-elected officials needed to be made aware of

the following facts:

Our programs were cut 50 percent over the two years, in 2011-2012 budget.

So, today, we are looking for another 25 percent cut from the total associated in 2010-2011.

Simple. Right?

CJ MOLLIS [ph.]: Actually, the cuts in the years's budget are a 33 percent cut from last year's allocation.

Again, super. Right?

Unfortunately, no. It's not simple, at all.

And this is why we are urging you to share and help clarify these facts with your colleagues in Albany.

And, importantly, to take us by -- supporting us, in and reinstating a $60 million to youth bureaus in New York State.

MALIKA: So back to the Youth Bureau funding, and the proposed in the 2012-2013 budget: If passed, as is, allocates $4.44 annually, per month, ages 5 to 18, and our services really impact youth, up to 21, and beyond.

That's a little more than one cent per day.

Split up among all New York State

taxpayers, let me be clear:

1 percent, per day, dividend among all New York State taxpayers. Not a penny out of each person's pocket each day; one penny spent by all taxpayers.

What if it was all, two cents per day?

I'm just saying.

CJ MOLLIS [ph.]: So what happens when these programs and services are not funded?

We believe in -- and evidence supports, that it puts our youth in greater risk of engaging in high-risk behaviors, like, drug use, violence, and as the name of the funding stream suggests, delinquency.

Remember to that -- Remember, too, that these funding streams also support emergency shelter and crisis intervention programs that provide a safe bed and supportive environment for most vulnerable youth.

Without these funds, youth shelters' beds and support services will be decreased.

Youth will find themselves without place to stay, will be forced to put themselves in an unsafe situation that jeopardizes their future, and our future as a community.

MALIKA: The financial cost to New York State taxpayers are also undeniable.

Compared to the $4.44 per youth, annually, for the youth bureaus, to the 120,000 annual cost of keeping a youth in the secured detention.

We know that these programs can't end. They're there for all juvenile detentions.

But, if we could keep just one young person out of detention, we can save taxpayers, literally, hundreds and thousands of dollars per year.

CJ MOLLIS [ph.]: You may be thinking that someone else prepared these remarks, and that Malika and I are just a mouthpiece for these positions.

And, in some ways you're right.

However, in most ways you're wrong.

We met with our adult support staff at the Youth Bureau and talked about these issues, to learn the vocabulary, terminology, and the numbers, to gain insight into the government system, and community needs; and to formulate our own opinions about what is important for ourselves, and our neighbors, communities, and the state of New York.

I am a proud member of Youth As Resources, a program that is funded by New York State OCFS,

because it has impacted my life. It has impacted my family's life.

I have bettered my education. I have the support that I do need, to move on in my life, and move from the things that I have struggled with before.

I get to do things, I have the opportunities to do things, that most youth my age do not have the chance, and most adults that are older than me have not got a chance to do. Like, doing interviews; and coming to these things; and going to conferences, traveling around the United States.

I have been to Atlanta, I have been to Cincinnati, so far. And, I will be going to Albany.

So this is something that I keep dear to my heart.

I have been part of Youth As Resources for five years, because I love it, and because these things are important to me.

MALIKA: That is how our youth programs function. We work in partnership with adults, to learn and gain the valuable skills and experiences that will serve us today, and into the future.

If I was not involved with YAR, I wouldn't be able to stand in front of you today to present this

information.

Maybe, but I know, that without this group, and other youth groups like it, I would not be the person I am today.

I am a proud member of YAR, and a program funded by New York State OCFS, because it is helped me to become a better person. And, I also have, you know, I've also become better in my education. It's given me more family support, and social support.

And, also, to provide this information for you is a great opportunity, because, people also my age, you know, they don't get to have this opportunity as I do. And, it's a great opportunity for me.

CJ MOLLIS [ph.]: Youth As Resources is the family. And without this support of you, and all of the other senators, and stuff, and the funding that we need, we would not be together as we are.

We are -- it's just a big family in the Youth Bureau. And, it's something that we do need, in the county, in the state...youth bureaus all over.

TRISHA GLYKOFF [ph.]: Hi. My name is Trisha Glykoff [ph.].

I have relied on homeless youth services more

than once, and have got much support from homeless youth services.

Shelters for homeless youth give children an immediate safe place to stay, rather than staying in an environment where CPS is involved, and the child just has to wait for them to investigate while they're still in an unsafe place.

Shelters are immediate. It's very important for youth to feel like they have somewhere to go if they feel unsafe.

There are a lot of homeless youth today that not a lot of people recognize, and they don't pay attention to it as much. So, they don't think that shelters are important, or the services are that important.

And, youth services provide counseling, support, for the homeless, and, just emotional support too.

If there weren't services like this, I personally don't know what I would have done, because they give you emotional support, and they help you through everything.

SENATOR SAVINO:: Thank you.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: I know, for both Senator Gallivan and I, these programs are top of our list of restorations. There's not a lot of money, statewide.

You know, last year we were very disappointed to see the Governor cut the Runaway Homeless Youth Program.

We're got a lot of support from our colleagues in other parts of the state, and county governments, and City of New York, to demand the restoration of this money, because, as you pointed out, it could be the difference between life and death for a young person who has to leave home because they're in danger.

Thank you.

The big people back there, do you have anything to say?

BILL GUTSCHOW: I just wanted to say -- my name is Bill Gutschow. I'm the program manager of the Salvation Army's Genesis House, a runaway homeless youth shelter that serves ages 16 to 20.

You mentioned earlier in this hearing, or, beginning of the hearing, you know: What do you do, more with less?

SENATOR SAVINO: Uh-huh.

BILL GUTSCHOW: And a lot of our shelters have been doing more with less.

Since 2009, when funding started to get cut, we have seen a 20 percent increase in the need for services. So, we received 80 percent cuts, and receive 20 percent increase. And we've worked with that amount of need.

We have decreased staff to the lowest, per OCFS regulations, but we have maintained bed space.

Additional cuts in fundings could result in loss of beds for the Genesis House.

And that's what we just wanted to call the attention to, you, for coming today.

Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I would just like to add, I want to echo, [unintelligible], and everybody coming up here today, around, permanency.

The runaway and homeless youth services, for years, have provided that safety net for these other systems -- for CPS, for foster care, for juvenile justice systems -- where we, either, catch youth coming out of them, or we're helping

youth avoid them, or we're helping youth reconnect to the services and the systems that can really help them.

And we do it really efficiently, and for not a lot of money.

And, so, I think that it's important, when we're thinking about that permanency, with Hillside was talking about the family finding, runaway and homeless youth services have had to do it for years.

Most of the young people we work with, go home. That, we're creating those bridges, and building those connections, and those permanent, life-long situations where these young people can be successful.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, I'm going to add something --

And is this on?

SENATOR SAVINO: Yes, that's on.

A COUNCILWOMAN: Okay.

How are you?

Is it okay?

I can also shout, you know that. You folks know me.

And I'm a city councilwoman. I'm on your

side an awful lot. So, I'm so grateful that you're sitting here all day, and your words are so heartwarming.

We're going to give you a speaking-out piece that actually appeared in a very timely way.

You may actually have it.

It's not my story. It's Kendra's story.

And Kendra came to the Center for Youth, where I am the executive director, when she was in her mid-teens, totally without family support.

And, today, at 24 --

And this, of course, is in celebration of her 24th birthday.

-- she's holding a diploma from RIT. She's enrolled in graduate school, here in the community, and, she's working, which is why she's not here today.

She calls me "mom." My kids are jealous. That's okay.

So, Kendra is the reason I'm here, because, we kept her out of systems. We kept her in cost-effective systems that made an impact on her life.

And you both know, I mean, this is not news to you: We already are not able to meet the need.

At the Center for Youth, we are the only agency that can take emergency foster -- emergency homeless -- not foster -- emergency homeless kids, 12 to 15.

In the last two years, we turned away as many as we took.

A 12- to 15-year-old cannot be on the streets. It's just not acceptable in our community, and in our state.

I know you don't want that.

We don't want that.

In fact, OCFS has tried so hard to work with us, that they added a thirteenth bed when we asked them to give us another bed.

So, they got it.

And that's, of course, is the irony: Adding a bed in a shelter at the same time you're taking away funding.

We will not close our doors.

We will not.

But we can't keep the kids, the number of kids we need in our system, without your support.

We can't take another 25 percent cut. The youth bureaus can't take the cut.

If they try to hold us harmless, they'll hurt

something else.

We're all in this together. We're in a big boat, and if you make a hole, here, we're all going go down.

So, read about Kendra. I wish she was here, so you could say "Happy Birthday" to her.

She spent her 24th birthday in Las~Vegas, so it made me a little nervous.

SENATOR SAVINO: Good for her.

A COUNCILWOMAN: But you know, what?

She won, and she's back, and she had the best time.

And that's what 24-year-olds do.

And when I met her at 15, I had my doubts about whether she would live to 24.

SENATOR SAVINO: How much of your budget do you -- are you able to derive from private donations, philanthropy?

A COUNCILWOMAN: We leverage -- I mean, let me tell you about United Way, just for that.

United Way is leveraged dollars, at this point.

And I think this is embarrassing: Our United Way allocation is more than you're giving me from OCFS for my homeless shelter. More than.

When I started at this agency 10 years ago, we had $333,000.

If you cut us, the way you're projected, we're at $187,000 dollar.

United Way allocation for my shelter, two twenty-seven.

So I'm leveraging every second.

We have private donators, funders, who give us whatever they can, but it's not going help.

The other thing is, that we -- and I hope you -- I invite you back, both of you, for Fashion Week. We run something called "Fashion Week." We raise money.

We do everything we can to leverage our dollars. At some point, the inn is full.

I'm just so grateful for your work, and, thanks so much.

SENATOR SAVINO: Thank you.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Let me ask: The kids that you're turning away, where do they go?

A COUNCILWOMAN: That's a good question.

They couch-surf. They end up back in unsafe situations. We see them on street. They end up hanging out with older kids in incredibly unsafe situations.

Then you have another level of crisis and trauma.

So, we can't keep them safe. That's the whole point.

Everybody says: Where do they go?

They go back where they were, which was unsafe to begin with.

The other thing is, our shelter's completely voluntary. There are no mandates. So, you know those kids are coming to us in pretty desperate situations, on their own.

So, they're staying in places, they're doubling-up. They're sleeping on the streets.

You know, we've had a mild winter, but, it's still Rochester.

So, thank you, Senator.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you.

BILL GUTSCHOW: [Unintelligible] to say is, abandoned houses, where drug abuse is prevalent, as well as any other type of delinquency.

Obviously, the heat and utilities are not on so it's still cold in the houses.

I believe earlier this year, a 17-year-old youth was -- they found dead in one of those houses.

So what we -- the Genesis House, as well,

turns away over 150 youth a year, due to being full.

And, they will find places to go, but not home, and not somewhere safe.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Okay. Thanks everybody.

A COUNCILWOMAN: Thank you, Senators.

BILL GUTSCHOW: Thank you for your time.

SENATOR SAVINO: And our last speaker is, Dan Ross, from the Children's Agenda.

DAN ROSS: Tough act to follow.

Thank you for accommodating me, despite a foul-up on our end in making the appropriate arrangements. I appreciate it.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Glad you're here.

Dan Ross: I'm Dan Ross. I'm chair of the Children's Agenda policy committee.

The Children's Agenda is a local, small not-for-profit organization. We do two things, basically:

We advocate for evidence-based programs, and we do analysis of city and county and, hopefully, school district, and in future budgets.

To maintain our objectivity, we do not accept funds from either government agencies or from service providers. So, it's philanthropic, and a

lot of hard work to get a little money.

We're a very small organization.

Before I retired, I was the director of Child and Family Services for the Monroe County Department of Social Services. So, I know many of the issues that people have been talking about today, in some ways a little better than I would like to.

This decade, the twenty-first century, has been terrible for families and children. It really has.

The report I gave you is a local one, modeled on some work that I think Nick Kristof did at "New York Times," talking about "the lost decade."

But, we have data from Monroe County, and, things are not getting better, they're getting worse. And there's some areas where they're getting better, but, they're getting worse. And we really -- really need to pay attention to that.

We've also done a brief overview of the Governor's objective budget. I'm going to have to mail that to you because, someone is out sick today and we're sort of playing catch-up. But, I will do that.

I'm going to talk about, in fairly general

terms, about four issues facing our families.

One is, child care;

One is, home-visiting programs;

One is, homeless -- runaway and homeless youth services;

And one is, services for children with special needs.

I may actually weave my biography into this because it fits in some cases.

Ten years ago, there were 12,000, slightly more, children in -- receiving daycare subsidy in Monroe County. It's down to about 7,000.

Jackie's figures are probably more accurate than mine, but it's close to a 50 percent reduction.

One of the very first things I did when I came to Monroe County -- I was hired as a planning coordinator -- was -- and this was during the budget cuts during the early '80s, and we cut subsidized daycare for a large number of families then.

My first task was to try to track those families. And we tracked them, and we had a comparison group that we could compare them to.

We went in, and -- because of what everyone said, and you have heard this is: They'll go off welfare. They'll go into welfare. They'll quit

working, and go into welfare. Well, they can't do it.

And beyond that, families really want to work. Parents want to set a good example for their children. They want to be productive members of society.

So they did not -- the rates of people going onto public assistance were no higher than they were before the programs were cut.

What did happen, though, frightens me; and that is, that children became latch-key children. Children became kids who were at home, being cared for by an older, nonetheless, pre-adolescent sibling. They became kids who spent time in four or five different care settings each week. Grandma's one day, an aunts's another day, the neighbor when the neighbor could do.

And we all know, the evidence is overwhelming, that what children need in those early years of development is, a consistent, loving, knowledgeable caregiver: a parent, a grandparent, a daycare provider.

But, consistency, is really critical. Otherwise, you just don't get the kind of development you should have.

We make up for some of that in Monroe County with what is, arguably, the best pre-K program in the nation, that meets international standards, but, we're playing catch-up.

We realize the problem is driven largely by the lack of federal funds.

Monroe County invests more than it's required to, in child care. New York State is investing a little more than it's required to, in child care. But, we need to figure out ways to do better.

And, more importantly, I think we need to work together, to ensure some increase -- seems unlikely, but I'm always hopeful -- in federal funds, because that's the backbone of this service.

I was very fortunate that I was supervising day care here, when -- or administering it, when the rule was: Okay, if you can spend it, we'll reimburse you.

And we grew the program to, thirteen, fourteen thousand kids.

That's no longer the case.

Those were all people who need. It's probably the best indicator of the magnitude of the need: The number we were serving who meet the same criteria, in theory, that we have now.

Second issue: home visiting.

Monroe County is actually the home of the nurse-family partnership.

Began 30 -- more than 30 years ago, at the University of Rochester. The initial work was in Kentucky. It's been replicated throughout the country. And it's finally come home to Monroe County, and, to New York City.

There's a big home -- there's a big nurse-family partnership program in New York. We joined Mayor Bloomberg in supporting $5 million, to be dedicated to funding for the nurse-family partnership.

But we strongly believe that the best long-term solution is to heed the Medicaid Redesign Team's recommendation to make NFD a fully covered Medicaid-preventive service for high-risk, first-time mothers, and their children.

And we urge that that program be extended, I suppose, through, say, State Health Insurance Department, to private insurers.

Building this kind of care into medical care is sensible, appropriate, and would really help the issue.

Services for runaway and homeless youth:

Shelters are a part of the safety net, and the safety net is frayed.

We don't want to wait for a law, a new law, to be named after an adolescent who died on the streets. But we're going to get one if we don't pay more attention to those service.

Kids need a safe place to go.

I was -- this goes back a long way -- but I was chairman of the board of the Center for Youth, who you just heard speaking, a long time ago, when we bought the place that's the shelter now.

It's a wonderful home. It's a marvelous place for kids in need to be.

And we need to be able to meet the needs of those kids.

We cannot -- "we cannot" -- afford a 33 percent reduction. We can do better.

Children with special needs:

Through an accident of fate, I was responsible for Monroe County's Early Intervention Program for about three years. And during -- so I really know how rapidly it has grown, and how expensive it has become.

Nonetheless, I believe there are opportunities for us to become more efficient, to

save money, and to continue to provide top-quality services. But we can't simply cut our way to quality. We need some time -- some time, and spend some real energy, figuring out how to do these services better.

Let's slow down just a little bit, improve the system.

And we'll run into resistant service providers who say: You can't do it better.

But, we've been through that.

We can do it, if we spend some time on it, and some energy on it, and we don't do the cuts up front.

Make sure that we do the work effectively in the long run.

Figuring those out will be difficult, but we can do better.

And, finally, it's not really a program, but it fits in with the agenda of the Children's Agenda: We really believe strongly in the importance of evidence-based programs. And we advocate for them.

Most of the programs that we work for are evidence-based.

Good information about evidence program --

evidence-based programs is widely available now.

There's a federal government center that collects it. The legislature of the state of Washington has had a standing policy group doing work on evaluating evidenced programs for 10 to 15 years. There's additional work being done in California.

You don't need to reinvent the wheel. You need to figure out what's out there, that meets the needs of the group you're trying to work with, and take advantage of it.

I also need to say, because, sometimes when people talk about evidence-based, it's been asserted, we don't always have to meet the highest evidentiary standards. There is not going to be a double-blind experimental study for every kind of program. And some of them don't need it.

I would argue, the Center for Youth Services Runaway Shelter doesn't need it. But what you need for them, is to make sure kids are safe, and, track outcomes.

But, you should try, in any program, for the highest possible standard of evidence-based that is applicable to that program. And that means, doing some work -- the state bureaucrats are pretty good

at some of this -- at figuring out:

What is working other places;

What the cost benefits are;

And, then, probably biding -- and this isn't in here -- but what may be the most difficult bullet for people like you, and that, is: The realization that costs are always in the short run, and benefits are always in the long run; and it really creates a dilemma for all of us.

Thank you for your time.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Thank you.

SENATOR SAVINO:: That's it. We're done.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: We're good.

SENATOR SAVINO: Yeah, we're done.

SENATOR GALLIVAN: Well, we thank those of you that have remained, for being here, and everybody who testified.

Thanks.

(Whereupon, at approximately 3:25 p.m., the jointly held roundtable held by the New York State Senate Standing Committees on Social Services, and, Children and Family Services, concluded.)

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