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**Testimony of Nashla Salas
Budget and Policy Analyst at the New York City Independent Budget Office
Before the New York City Council Youth Services Committee
On the LGBTQ Commission Report**

September 21, 2010

Good afternoon Chairman Fidler and members of the committee. My name is Nashla Salas, and I am a budget and policy analyst for the New York City Independent Budget Office. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the LGBTQ Commission Report.

The Independent Budget Office released a report on the city's runaway and homeless youth initiative in August 2010. A copy of that report is attached to my testimony. In this report we found the following:

- Spending for runaway and homeless youth has more than doubled since 2005 and is budgeted at \$12.8 million for the current fiscal year.
- Much of the increased spending has come from the city while the state and federal shares have fallen. The city currently provides more than 80 percent of the funding for the runaway and homeless youth programs it sponsors, up from 71 percent in 2005. The state and federal shares have fallen to about 15 percent and 1 percent respectively.
- The increased city funds came largely from additional City Council discretionary money added at the adoption of the budgets since 2006. These discretionary funds totaled \$4.6 million in 2009 and grew to \$5.9 million in 2010 and 2011.
- The number of overnight stays by runaway and homeless youth in crisis shelters has more than doubled, growing from 20,148 in 2005 to 41,245 in 2009. Spending on crisis shelters quadrupled over this period, rising from \$796,000 to \$3.3 million.

The report also notes that some state and federal regulations have reportedly had the unintended effect of impeding efforts to provide services in New York City, especially for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth. State and federal regulations limit access to shelters based on age and gender and have different age cutoffs, 18 years and younger under federal law, and 21 years and younger under state law. The traditional method of segregating youth on the basis of gender adds a layer of difficulty in serving the needs of transgender youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am glad to answer any questions you may have.