HORRORS IN HOMELESS HOUSING: NEW YORK'S UNCLEAN, UNSAFE, DANGEROUS TEMPORARY SHELTER SYSTEM AND HOW TO FINALLY TACKLE THE HOMELESS EPIDEMIC

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Senators Klein, Savino, Avella, Alcantara, Hamilton & Peralta release alarming investigative report on worst commercial hotels and cluster sites in the city; propose legislation to combat homelessness

New York, NY — Senators Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester), Diane Savino (D-SI/Brooklyn), Avella (D-Queens), Alcantara (D-Manhattan), Hamilton (D-Brooklyn) and Jose Peralta (D-Queens), joined by advocates, released an investigative report detailing deplorable conditions at New York City hotels and cluster sites used for the homeless and called for a five-point legislative solution to the homelessness crisis.

The disturbing investigation, "Horrors in Homeless Housing," analyzes inspection data in commercial hotels and cluster site housing where some of New York City's skyrocketing homeless population call home. Violations left open at many sites where families and individuals are placed include unsafe cooking spaces, toilets that don't flush, lead paint contamination and broken fire escapes.

"Homeless families are among the most vulnerable groups in New York City. It is unacceptable that they be subjected to the living conditions detailed in the report that we unveiled today. The solution proposed will help provide new, more humane, housing options for city residents who live in these hotels and clusters sites. The proposal will also ensure that those on the brink of losing their home will be able to remain where they are living, adding much needed stability to their lives," **said Senator Klein.**

"It is unconscionable to allow children and families to be forced to live in these violation ridden hotels and cluster sites. These sites lack the basic services that homeless families should have access to and make living a normal life difficult, if not impossible. The IDC plan presented today will keep people in their homes and make it easier for those in the shelter system to find a place of their own," **said Senator Savino.**

"New York City has a duty to provide shelter, aid, and support for the homeless who live in our city. However, the current system completely looks past the aid and support and only wishes to provide the bare minimum shelter provisions. Many times these sites are almost as bad as staying on the street and the individuals are not treated with any dignity. The City does very little to provide these families and individuals with the assistance and support necessary to get back on their feet. The City should be allocating funds for programs that can cater to basic human needs rather than facilities that warehouse families. We need to provide these families and individuals with, at the very least, basic city services that are built into our State's constitution and our City's charter," **said Senator Avella.**

"Our current system of homelessness prevention is expensive, complicated, and dehumanizing to the homeless families who are warehoused in cluster housing and hotels. Replacing multiple overlapping housing subsidies with the Home Stability Support plan will not only save our local governments money, but also increase the number of homeless families who are able to understand and therefore take advantage of state support to remain in their homes," **said Senator Alcantara.**

"We need to stop using hotels, cluster sites, and temporary housing and instead advance real solutions to our affordable housing crisis. That's why I am a strong supporter of the Home Stability Support Program in the 2017 budget, so we can proactively prevent people from facing homelessness. It is also why I am a strong supporter of 100% affordable housing at the Bedford Union Armory site – we need to use our public-owned sites for public benefit. Three of the top ten cluster site violators are in communities I represent in Crown Heights and Brownsville. Our neighbors are living in buildings with more than 100 open violations. Nobody should live like this. I am proud to stand with colleagues in demanding the housing our most vulnerable New Yorkers deserve," **said Senator Hamilton.**

"My constituents have been raising concerns for the last couple of years regarding the increasing number of hotel to shelter conversions in the district and throughout the City. In light of the growing homeless population, it is clear that warehousing homeless New

Yorkers is not the correct answer to the crisis we face. It is also troubling to see the unsafe, unsanitary living conditions at some homeless shelters and clusters. No family or individual should be living in run-down buildings. It is time to stop putting band-aids on this grave situation and to focus on preventive solutions. A starting point is the Home Stability Support Program. Let's tackle the problem at its roots and pivot the efforts toward preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place. I applaud Assemblymember Hevesi, Senator Klein and the IDC for their efforts to combat the homelessness situation throughout New York City," **said Senator Peralta.**

"The Van Cortlandt Motel in the northwest Bronx is a prime example of the old dilapidated, run-down, dirty motels being used by DHS. This 1960s-era motel is a magnet for crime and prostitution. It is almost impossible to provide wraparound support services at these motels that most shelter residents need. I applaud the Mayor's commitment to ending the use of hotels and cluster sites, but this startling report demonstrates that more needs to be done," **said Councilman Andrew Cohen.**

With the recent rise in homelessness in New York City, the use of hotels and temporary apartments known as cluster sites has risen to keep up with the demand for shelter. The IDC's report examined both the use of hotels and cluster sites to shelter the homeless. Using the city's shelter scorecard system, IDC investigators identified these sites and examined their Housing Preservation & Development, Department of Buildings and Environmental Control Board violations.

The investigation found that 78% of identified hotels used to house the homeless currently have a total of 433 open violations, with the 10 worst sites accounting for 67.9% of all violations. Overall, those with violations averaged 8.68 per site, with Manhattan hotels having the highest average of over 20 violations per hotel. In the case of the Dawn Hotel in Manhattan, the worst site with 78 open violations, investigators found open citations for broken floors, broken sinks, toilets that won't flush, issues with fire escapes, unlawful cooking spaces, potentially dangerous electric hot plates and contaminated lead paint.

Top Ten Hotel Violators

Rank	Name of Hotel	Address	Borough	Number of Open Violations

1	Dawn Hotel of NY LLC	6-8 ST NICHOLAS PLACE	Manhattan	78
2	Frant Hotel	209/211 WEST 101 STREET	Manhattan	59
3	Ellington Hotel LLC	610 WEST 111 STREET	Manhattan	37
4	Aladdin Hotel	317 WEST 45TH STREET	Manhattan	26
5	Apollo Hotel	2027 7TH AVENUE	Manhattan	25
6	Lincoln Atlantic Motor Inn Inc	90-35 Van Wyck Expy	Queens	17
7	Park Overlook Hotel	1938 WEBSTER AVENUE	Bronx	16
8	Galaxy Motel	860 PENNSYLVANIA AVE	Brooklyn	16
9	Manhattan Center	315 West 34th Street	Manhattan	10
10	Extended Stay America-NYC LaGuardia Airport	18-30 WHITESTONE EXP	Queens	10

While the violations at hotels are alarming, investigators found violations at cluster sites to be especially egregious, with 93% of those analyzed having open violations. Despite numbering less than homeless hotels, cluster sites had nearly six times as many violations and averaged 68 violations per site. The Bronx has the highest number of violators with six sites making the top 10 list and accounting for 46% of violations uncovered. The worst violator in the city and the site of a recent shooting, Bedco Cluster in the Bronx, had 185 open violations including rodent and roach infestations, mold, lead paint in several units and failure to install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. The site also lacks a locking front entryway and door locks are absent from several units.

Top Ten Cluster Site Violators

Rank	Name of Cluster Site	Address	Borough	Number of Open Violations
1	BEDCO CLUSTER	1055 UNIVERSITY AVENUE	Bronx	185
2	LCG COMMUNITY SERVICES CLUSTER	111 E MOSHOLU PARKWAY N	Bronx	166
3	BEDCO CLUSTER	250 East 176 Street	Bronx	158

4	LCG BROOKLYN	1801 Pitkin Avenue	Brooklyn	144
5	CHLDN RESCUE FUND CL MODEL PRG	1575 TOWNSEND AVENUE	Bronx	143
6	BROOKLYN ACACIA CLUSTER	2063 NOSTRAND AVENUE	Brooklyn	142
7	LCG COMMUNITY SERVICES CLUSTER	2723 Barnes Avenue	Bronx	140
8	LCG COMMUNITY SERVICES CLUSTER	1229 CLAY AVENUE	Bronx	123
9	MONICA HOUSE II, WOMEN IN NEED	899 MONTGOMERY STREET	Brooklyn	113
10	MONICA HOUSE II, WOMEN IN NEED	434 SCHENECTADY AVENUE	Brooklyn	112

As part of the IDC investigation staff visited the Van Cortlandt Motel in The Bronx to take undercover photographs of conditions. These sites are generally difficult to access, however IDC staff obtained access to a room at the hotel and were able to photograph unsafe conditions and damaged units.

In response to the findings, the IDC proposes a five-point legislative solution that will focus on prevention, re-housing and planning. The proposal includes the Home Stability Support initiative which will provide a statewide rent supplement for families and individuals, who are facing eviction, are currently homeless, or who have lost housing due to domestic violence and/or hazardous conditions. The IDC will introduce legislation to ensure inclusion of domestic violence survivors within the HSS, expand housing anti-discrimination measures, give preference in the New York City Housing Lottery to those living in shelters and require a survey of homelessness across the state. With the implementation of these policies, the use of dangerous hotels and cluster sites will be greatly diminished, resulting in safer, stable housing for struggling New Yorkers.

"Empire Justice Center is grateful to Senator Klein and the Independent Democratic Conference for bringing into sharp focus the unacceptable level of homelessness in New York, the plight of those who do not have a decent place to live, and for their crucial backing of the Home Stability Support initiative (HSS). Empire Justice Center is proud to be a partner in this campaign to that seeks to bring housing stability to thousands of low income

New Yorkers, from Buffalo to Suffolk County. In communities all over this State, many of the people who Empire Justice serves simply cannot afford housing. In addition, many New Yorkers must pay for fuel for heating in addition to their rent and thus engage in a monthly triage, balancing among rent costs, fuel bills and food. HSS will make it possible to pay the rent, pay for heat and achieve the stable home that they have worked so hard for, but that has been out of their grasp," **Said Don Friedman, Managing Attorney of Empire Justice Center's Long Island office.**

"The Home Stability Support proposal that is being championed here by Senator Klein and the Independent Democratic Conference, is the first proposal that is matched to the scale of the crisis we are facing. Home Stability Support addresses the most serious drivers of homelessness including the failure of homelessness prevention supplements to keep pace with the dramatically rising costs of housing in New York City and elsewhere around the State, and the failure to adequately support families fleeing domestic violence. With over 150,000 New Yorkers either homeless or on the brink of homelessness, today marks a turning point in the fight to secure safe and permanent housing for homeless New Yorkers. Homelessness is not a partisan issue, and now, more than ever, it is time for the Executive, both houses of the legislature, and the City of New York to pull together to tackle this problem. We believe there is indeed a will to do so," **said Kenneth Stephens, Supervising Attorney, Civil Law Reform Unit, The Legal Aid Society.**