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COMMUNITY BOARD No. 2, MANHATTAN

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December 20, 2010

Hon. Michael Bloomberg
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

At its Full Board meeting on November 18, 2010, CB#2-Man., adopted the following resolutions:

Resolution to Restore Funds Cut From Services to LGBTQ Runaway and Homeless Youth

Whereas In October of 2009 Mayor Bloomberg appointed a 25-member commission to study the needs of homeless LGBT youth and make recommendations as to how NYC could better prevent LGBT youth homelessness and more adequately care for those suffering homelessness.

And Whereas this past June the City released the Commission's report, which called for 200 additional beds for LGBT youth and expanded drop-in center hours (with a particular focus on the need for overnight drop-in hours) and expanded street outreach.

And Whereas a census commissioned by the New York City Council released in 2008 indicated that on any given night 3,800 youth experience homelessness in NYC. As there are only several hundred shelters and transitional beds available to this population, most youth rely on drop-in centers and street outreach to survive.

And Whereas LGBT youth have difficulty accessing mainstream shelters where they often experience homophobic abuse, and therefore rely on drop-in and outreach services.

And Whereas recent studies have indicated that homeless LGBT youth, most of whom suffer homelessness because of being rejected by their families are at heightened risk for suicide, with 62% reporting having attempted suicide.

And Whereas On Friday, November 26th, the day after Thanksgiving, the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) informed contractees that it will reduce runaway and homeless youth services by \$969,407 in the 2011 fiscal year, and by a further \$700,000 in fiscal year 2012.

And Whereas Homeless LGBT youth, who make up 40% of the homeless youth population, will be disproportionately impacted by these cuts, since the Ali Forney Center and the Bronx Pride Center are both losing 50% of the City funds that support their drop-in programs for LGBT youth, comprising \$185K of the \$969K in cuts.

And Whereas these cuts were already made to Out of School Time (OST) programs, which effectively ended such DYCD funding to LGBT youth serving organizations, and further cuts to street outreach programs would be 50% in Fiscal Year 2011, entirely eliminating them in FY 2012.

And Whereas the City additionally plans to cut Council-funded drop-in-centers by 50% in FY 2011 and DYCD-funded borough-wide Drop-in-Centers by one third in FY 2011 and again by 23% in FY 2012.

And Whereas reducing these services will leave LGBTQ youth on our streets without support, forcing many to turn to drugs and prostitution and theft, risking HIV/AIDS and criminal prosecution, costing the city far more than the preventative services being cut.

And Whereas our neighborhood will be significantly negatively affected by these cuts, because LGBTQ Youth have been especially drawn to CB2 because of the diversity and tolerance of our residents and businesses, which make them feel welcomed and accepted.

And Whereas City Councilmember Lewis Fidler, who chairs the Youth Services Committee, said "I fully understand the need to cut our overall spending. We can't spend money that we do not have. However, cutting the budget on the backs of our very most vulnerable kids - kids who are homeless, without their families and sleeping on the street - is so wrong that words cannot express my disgust and outrage. It surely won't be a happy holiday for the 3,800 homeless children this season."

And Whereas Council Speaker Christine Quinn said "We recognize the difficult times we face and the need to make cuts to help address next year's budget gap. As we have done before, the Council is prepared to act in a fiscally responsible manner. However, we must ensure these cuts do not fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable New Yorkers, including LGBTQ runaway and homeless youth."

Therefore Be It Resolved that Community Board 2 Manhattan commends the Mayor for his decision to appoint a Commission to study LGBTQ runaway and homeless youth, and urges him to abide by the commission's findings and implement its recommendations.

And Therefore Be It Further Resolved that Community Board 2 Manhattan strongly objects to the budget proposal that would cut services to runaway and homeless youth, and that we urge our Mayor and the members of the City Council to restore this funding, finding ways to balance the budget that will not harm our most vulnerable residents.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Jo Hamilton, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Keen Berger, Chair
Social Services & Education Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

JH/gh

c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Thomas K. Duane, NY State Senator
Hon. Daniel L. Squadron, NY State Senator
Hon. Sheldon Silver, Assembly Speaker
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, Assembly Member
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Man. Borough President
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member
Sandy Myers, CB2 liaison, Man. Borough President's office
Lolita Jackson, Manhattan Director, CAU