



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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WITH POVERTY ON THE RISE AMONG CITY'S ELDERLY, CM CHIN VOWS TO FIGHT CUTS TO SENIOR- RELATED PROGRAMS

Chin pushes back against threatened \$2 million cut to already minuscule city spending for elderly

CITY HALL — At a City Council hearing yesterday, Council Member Margaret S. Chin, chair of the Council's Committee on Aging, fought against a threatened \$2 million cut in funding for essential senior services, citing a crisis of rising poverty rates — particularly among Latinos, Asians and African Americans.

“With revenues down across our city and economic instability on the rise, we are hearing a lot about how the city cannot afford to provide services for those in need. I say we cannot afford not to adequately fund these essential programs, which pay for themselves and then some,” said Council Member Chin. “All seniors, particularly seniors of color, immigrants, and women, are bearing the brunt of rising poverty rates. Higher rates of poverty mean that paying rent, buying medication, and putting food on the table are all much more difficult. Today, we learned that the Administration's answer to the brewing crisis facing older adults is a deep cut to the city's already minuscule budget for senior services. If City Hall wants to make New York the fairest big city in the country, it will need to create a fair city for all ages.”

Though Council Member Chin scored recent victories with increases in city funding for case management, homecare and other vital services, money for vital senior programs accounts for less than 1 percent of the city's total budget.

Heightening the current crisis in senior funding, a recent statewide report by the Center for an Urban Future and AARP NY noted that the poverty rate for New York City's seniors is at 20 percent, the second highest rate statewide. Latino seniors experience the highest rate of poverty at 26 percent, with Asian American and African American seniors at 22 and 19 percent, respectively.

Citing this troubling report, Council Member Chin pushed Acting DFTA Commissioner Caryn Resnick on her agency's long-term plan for New York's aging population. Council Member Chin also raised alarms about a delay in the release of \$10 million in approved funding for support staff and programs at senior centers.

"Our city's senior population heavily relies on the critical services provided by the Department for the Aging — especially those who face housing challenges, food insecurity, and all other issues triggered by poverty. The older adult population will grow exponentially in coming years and we must invest in the resources that will allow them to continue living healthy, productive lives," said **Committee on Aging member, Council Member Diana Ayala**.

"With a growing senior citizen population, many of whom are now living in poverty, it is important that as a city, we do everything in our power to accommodate their needs," said **Council Member Mathieu Eugene, member of the Committee on Aging**. "We must continue to advocate for the preservation of essential programs for our underserved elderly residents. These are the men and women who laid the foundation for the communities in which we live, and the city of New York must expand critical resources available to them."

"The Mayor and City Council must increase funding for the Department for the Aging's budget for essential services that help older New Yorkers remain in their own homes, not costlier and mostly taxpayer-funded nursing homes," said **AARP NY State Director, Beth Finkel**. "With the rapid aging of the city's population, it is unacceptable not only that the Mayor's preliminary budget provides no increase for home-delivered and congregate meals, senior centers, home care, case management or Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, but that it asks DFTA to make cuts. The city's 65 and over population has grown by 24 percent in the last decade while that of residents under 65 grew by only 2 percent, and that trend will only continue. It would be foolish not to provide this growing segment of the city the services it needs."

"LiveOn NY stands firmly opposed to any potential cuts to the Department for the Aging Budget, which already stands at less than 1% of the city's overall budget," stated **Allison Nickerson, Executive Director, LiveOn NY**. "Instead of cuts, it is time that New York City truly commit to becoming a #FairCity4AllAges by making key investments to support New York's older adult population. Investments in senior center and home-delivered meals, increased wages for senior center staff, and dedicated funds for infrastructure needs in NYCHA Senior Centers, to name a few, can go a long way in ensuring equity across the lifespan and improving the quality of life of New York's booming older adult population."

Advocates for the elderly, senior center workers, and everyday New Yorkers testified about the need for increased funding for seniors — even in a time of budgetary belt-tightening — as the city’s moral imperative to its aging population.

“After hearing this testimony, it’s clear that New York’s older adults and the senior centers that serve them are as much a part of the city as the Statue of Liberty,” **Council Member Chin** said.

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