



It's about Counting as a New Yorker

On July 9th, Mayor Bill de Blasio held a Mayoral Public Hearing on the Municipal ID bill. The new law the Mayor signed the next day creates a municipal identification card that will be accepted by city agencies and give New Yorkers greater access to cultural, educational and commercial services.

Care for the Homeless Client Leader Anthony Williams was among 12 advocates expressing their support to the Mayor that day.

Mr. Williams was the only homeless advocate who testified but in many ways he spoke to the underlying theme of all the advocates' when he said, "this id will afford me the opportunity to say that I count. That is what this is about, counting as a New Yorker." Upon the conclusion of Anthony's remarks the Mayor thanked him for his support. Read Anthony's full testimony on the Care for the Homeless blog at www.cfhny.com. Other advocates represented vulnerable New Yorkers including immigrants and transgender persons who often have limited access to official identification.

Care for the Homeless strongly advocated for the Municipal ID bill since its introduction because it means supporting our neighbors in challenging circumstances. As Policy Director Jeff Foreman said at the April 30th City Council Hearing on the bill, "It promises aid to so many people buffeted by life changes and disruptions, displacement and any of a multitude of interruptions or calamities that often result in destroying, misplacing or losing important documents...people like our 10,000 patients at Care for the Homeless." A link to Jeff's full testimony can also be found at www.cfhny.com.



It's Shocking: 80,000+ Homeless NYC School Children

In a shocking report released in July, New York City's School System reported more than 80,000 of its over 1 million students (about 1 in 12) were recorded as homeless last year under required federal reporting. This number differs from the figure most commonly referred to as homeless children in New York City of almost 23,000 children living in city Department of Homeless Services shelters, because it uses a different definition. But the figures don't completely overlap because many of the 23,000 children in shelters are of pre-school age, and of course it doesn't include children on the streets or in shelters not run by DHS.

Under federal reporting a public school student is considered homeless if he or she is lacking ... *Continued on page. 2*



CFH Advocates for NY Homeless Protection Act

"Increasingly homeless people are stigmatized and even targeted for violent attacks for no reason other than their poverty and homelessness," CFH Certified Client Advocate Bill Bryant says, as he advocates for passage of the proposed New York State Homeless Protection Act, which would include attacks on people targeted specifically because they are or are perceived to be homeless as "hate crimes."

"It's important," Bryant says, "because stigmatizing or dehumanizing people just because they are poor sets them up to be targeted." Numerous studies, including a recent study by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council's Consumer Board, which CFH helped to conduct, document that attacks against people experiencing homelessness are about 25 times more likely than violent attacks on the stably housed population.

One of finding these reports have in common is that we don't have good or accurate reporting about attacks on homeless people. If the New York Homeless Protection Act were adopted, police would keep those kinds of statistics. "If people saw how big the problem is and how fast it's growing," Bryant predicted, "there would be much more attention."

The New York legislation (Senate Bill 1148-2013 and State Assembly Bill 1148-2013) hasn't moved from Committee. CFH client advocates are circulating a petition saying "In New York and across the United States, violent attacks on people experiencing homelessness are increasing. Poor and homeless people are increasingly being stigmatized and targeted" and urging supporters to join CFH in seeking passage of the Homeless Protection Act. Several hundred



signatures have been gathered and client leaders are continuing the effort.

In July, many New Yorkers were shocked as media ran security camera footage of a brutal attack of a homeless man, viciously stomped and repeatedly kicked as he slept on a church stoop, for no apparent reason. The man was rushed to a hospital and admitted in a coma in critical condition after the attack.

Our thanks to legislative advocates of the bill, including Senators Breslin, Avella, Hassell-Thompson, Klein, Krueger, Parker, Perkins and Stavisky and Assemblywoman Rosenthal.

Please call your state legislators to ask that they support the effort!

80,000+ Homeless NYC School Children *Continued*



a regular, fixed and adequate residence. That includes students living in public places not designed as residences, sleeping in cars or doubled up temporarily with others due to economic hardships. Even the federal definition is likely an undercount as it's based primarily on information provided by students or their families.

To add to the tragedy, we know unstably housed students miss more school, repeat grades and fail more often, and drop out of school at higher rates than other school children. If the American dream is based on a level playing field in education affording people the opportunity to climb out of poverty, homelessness robs far too many of their dreams.

The cost of not providing for stable housing for children, and for adults too, is difficult to calculate. We, as most advocates for people experiencing homelessness, know it's almost always far less expensive and produces much better results to provide stable house for people in need than to suffer the brutal consequences in human misery and the far greater costs for medical and mental health care, increased interactions with the criminal justice system and other public resource expenses.