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PUBLIC HEARING
of
ASSEMBLY HOUSING AND URBAN POLICY COMMITTEE
on
EMERGENCY PROVISIONS FOR THE HOMELESS

Held:
March 31, 1983
Room 317
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

New Jersey State Library

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman David C. Schwartz (Chairman)
Assemblyman John S. Watson
Assemblywoman Leanna Brown

ALSO PRESENT:

John B. Lee, Senior Research Associate
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Assembly Housing and Urban Policy Committee

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I N D E X

	<u>Page</u>
George J. Albanese Commissioner New Jersey Department of Human Services	4
Douglas H. Palmer Freeholder Mercer County, New Jersey	18
Larry Lackock Center Director Volunteers of America, Trenton, New Jersey	24
Barbara Parenti Housing Education Committee Middlesex County, New Jersey	29
Jeanne M. Stephens Catholic Charities	34 & 33X
Jewel Daney Middlesex County Housing Coalition	36
Reverend Karl Esmark New Brunswick, New Jersey	44
Barbara F. Kalik New Jersey State Assemblywoman District 7	48
Anne Christensen Shelter Homeless People Task Force Hudson County, New Jersey	51 & 34X
Catherine Costa New Jersey State Assemblywoman District 7	62
Reverend Gerhardt Kugler Shelter Homeless People Task Force Union City, New Jersey	67 & 1X
Greg Adkins United Progress	76
Mercedes Moore Mercer Street Friends	79

INDEX (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Gerry Thiers Director, Department of Social Concerns New Jersey Catholic Conference	82 & 9X
Charles Dillman New Jersey State Representative American Red Cross	84
Brenda Beavers Director of Social and Correctional Services Salvation Army of New Jersey	87
Grace Mazzatelli Social Work Supervisor Mercer County Board of Social Services	93 & 25X
Robert Murphy Rescue Mission	97
ALSO SUBMITTED:	
Letter from David D. Ozenbaugh State Director New Jersey Farmworkers Opportunities	27X

ASSEMBLYMAN DAVID C. SCHWARTZ (Chairman): I want to thank you all for coming. In my capacity as Chairman of the Housing and Urban Policy Committee of the New Jersey Assembly, I am going to convene this public hearing on the plight of the homeless -- the problems of homeless people in the State of New Jersey.

By way of introduction, I think very few of the people who are here in attendance today, either to testify or to observe our hearing, need much background on the problem. The fact is, there are thousands, and very probably scores of thousands, of people in the State of New Jersey who are without shelter today, will be without shelter tonight, and who have been without shelter through this cold winter.

During the course of this winter, there were many newspaper stories about the plight of the homeless, both in New Jersey and throughout the country. Much consideration has been given to the problem in New York, Chicago, and elsewhere. But, all through the winter, while a number of bills were introduced into the General Assembly to provide some additional food, clothing, or shelter, no bill, to my knowledge -- and I think I speak correctly -- was, in fact, enacted into law.

New Jersey's response to the homeless then, at least in terms of the State's role, was confined to task forces, study, and perhaps some special State aid that was pumped out in a variety of categorical programs, but there was no comprehensive new approach to the problem of the homeless, nor a legislative solution which gave promise that next winter will be better. But, next winter will be better because this Assembly Committee on Housing and Urban Policy is determined to draft a bill, the kind of bill that will provide better services and more shelter for our people; more research on the cause and prevention of homelessness; and a coordinated cost-effective program.

We meet then not only because we are concerned, as you are concerned, with the plight of the homeless, but also because we are aware that the Congress of the United States is active in this regard. An Emergency Anti-Recession Assistance Bill was signed less than ten days ago by President Reagan, and monies will begin to flow into the State of New Jersey for emergency food and shelter programs.

It was not possible this morning, at least according to the best information I have been able to get from our New Jersey Congressional delegation -- or from certain State officials -- to give you a precise statement as to exactly how many dollars will be made available to New Jersey. The Congressional services that I contacted suggested that a nationwide Emergency Food and Shelter Program, under the Emergency Anti-Recession Bill, will approximate \$375 million, nationally, about \$100 million of which will be for the distribution of surplus foods. So, in the shelter portion of that legislation, it may be reasonable to assume that there will be some \$275 million available, nationwide.

What formula will be used, and the specific nature of the transmission of those dollars to New Jersey is not yet clear. Nonetheless, it is the intention -- and I say this categorically -- of the Housing and Urban Policy Committee, to draft legislation that will appropriate those Federal dollars, when they become available and when the exact size of New Jersey's entitlement becomes clear. We will be drafting legislation that will appropriate the Federal dollars in question. It will be a comprehensive bill, that sets up a comprehensive program, and it will address the long-term needs of the homeless.

To be sure, we are aware -- the Committee on Housing and Urban Policy is clearly aware that the needs of the homeless in New Jersey are not confined merely to shelter, because this is not merely a housing problem. We are aware of that. We are aware of that because we have had research reports sent to us from a variety of entities around the State, and many of those who have communicated with us are in the room today to tell us that this is not merely a problem for the Housing and Urban Policy Committee.

We know that there are problems with having to deal with the Criminal Justice system, and the Law and Public Safety Committee of this Assembly should be involved in the drafting of the bill. We are aware that there is a need for food services, and in some cases psychiatric services, and a variety of other human services that need to be addressed. The recognition by this Committee that this is so should be clear to everyone since our lead witness, who I will call in a moment, is the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, George Albanese.

So, we are aware that this is not merely a housing problem. We are aware and we want to consult with George Otlowksi -- Assemblyman Otlowksi's committee. We are aware that the problems of the homeless also involve the area of health and hospitals, and you can be sure that those departments of State government and those committees of the Legislature that deal with health and hospitals will be contacted and will be consulted in the drafting of a bill.

But, there will be a bill. This Committee will have that bill drafted. Because we are not going to be, over the course of this year -- and especially as we look toward next winter -- in the same condition that we were in this past winter; that will not happen. That will not happen if the members of this Committee have anything to say about that. We are going to try, pursuant to the testimony we will hear today -- and the testimony we will elicit once a bill is drafted -- to move in the direction of a legislative, comprehensive, statewide program that will do better by those who are most in need.

It is not my purpose to touch your heart this morning and to talk in a "tear-jerker" fashion about the plight of the homeless. Perhaps you will do that, and touch our consciousness and our consciences by your testimony.

But, I can say for myself, and I think for every member of this Committee -- certainly for Assemblyman Watson, the distinguished Assemblyman from Mercer County who is with us, and the others who will be joining us during the course of the four or five hours I have allotted to this hearing -- that we are aware of the plight. We are aware of the need for a government with a heart, as well as the always and ever-present need for a cost effective way of implementing our compassion.

So, I welcome you to this hearing. I welcome you to this hearing with a sense of urgency, and with a sense of compassion, but I welcome you to this hearing primarily with the sense that something will be done. This is not going to be a hearing that results in a transcript that gets filed on the shelf and forgotten, and then, years down the road, when another legislative entity takes a look at this problem, they can read what we said in the year 1983. We are going to have a bill, and your testimony will help us to draft it. You can come

to us this day, secure in the knowledge that we mean to take action as a result of this hearing. This is not going to be just another opportunity to talk.

With that, before I call our first witness, I will ask my colleague, the very distinguished Assemblyman whose work on this Committee has already borne fruit through a major piece of legislation dealing with housing in our urban centers, the Honorable John Watson from Mercer County.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will not prolong our hearing. I would just like to say that I am happy to see so many here today to testify. This is a serious situation that we are confronted with today. I only hope that this hearing will bear some fruit, and I am willing to have the hearing begin.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you very much, Assemblyman. Your brevity is welcome, and so is your seriousness of purpose. With that I will simply say one word by way of a guideline. The nature of our public hearings here in New Jersey is that we will hear the witnesses. The members of the Committee will then question the witnesses. There will not be a public discussion, in the sense that the members of the public will not be allowed to ask questions of the various witnesses. I am sure that outside of this room questions will be acceptable. A few of the members of the press may well wish to ask our witnesses questions, and if they will also do the same thing so as not to disrupt our hearing, we would be very grateful.

With that, we welcome all of you, both the members of the public and the members of the press. I will now call upon our lead witness, the Honorable George Albanese, Commissioner of the Department of Human Services.

COMMISSIONER GEORGE J. ALBANESE: Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I note for the record that the Commissioner has prepared a statement, which I take it will be read into the minutes, verbatim. I don't know whether copies are available to the public or not. The Commissioner informed the Committee that the members of the public can seek, either today or through his office, copies of his prepared text.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Mr. Chairman and Assemblyman Watson, good morning. It is a pleasure to be here.

First, I would like to thank you for your legislative efforts dealing with the problems of the homeless, and your concern about the growing problem, not only in the State of New Jersey but nationally.

I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you on what is a very serious issue for New Jersey's homeless citizens. New Jersey's communities have long been faced with addressing the problem of homeless families and adults. Although we don't have precise figures on the number of homeless in New Jersey, we don't need actual figures to know that the problems of the homeless have reached critical proportions, both in New Jersey and nationally.

Increasingly, we hear of people living in cars, abandoned buildings, makeshift boxes, and alleyways. We have also seen men and women wandering the streets, and sleeping in train stations and on park benches. In many cases, their only worldly possessions are stuffed in paper bags.

We have also been made aware of an increase in the number of homeless people through reports from non-profit agencies. For example, the Salvation Army in Newark had a forty-five percent increase, from December, 1981 to December, 1982, in emergency assistance cases. Although the Salvation Army's caseload is generally lower in the summer, it is interesting to note that in the summer of 1982 there was a sharp upturn in the number of people seeking aid.

In response to this growing need, new soup kitchens and food banks have opened in various parts of the State. The Center for Food Action, a statewide coalition for emergency food programs in Englewood, has experienced growth in its membership, from thirty groups only two years ago, to one hundred groups today.

These providers range from small church-based efforts, to organizations such as the recently incorporated Community Food Bank in Newark. This group distributes food to 171 agencies.

Another increasingly evident need is for shelter. A tremendous growth in the number of homeless seeking emergency shelter has been reported all over the State. Based on reports from nonprofit agencies and coalitions for the homeless in various parts of the State,

it is estimated that there are 1500 homeless people in Passaic County, 2500 in Middlesex County, 200 in Hunterdon County, and 350 in the City of Elizabeth.

Although we don't have exact figures on the number of homeless in such major cities as Newark, Camden, and Atlantic City, it is evident that the need for shelter far outstrips the supply.

I applaud the opening of soup kitchens and shelters by local communities, but because of the scope of the problems of the homeless, this issue must be approached from a statewide perspective.

Not one, but a combination of circumstances are contributing to the growing number of people who find themselves on the street. These factors include current economic conditions, a severe shortage of affordable housing, and increased stress due to the complexity of daily living. Dependency on drugs and alcohol and the special problems experienced by some persons with impaired physical and mental functions, compound the problems of the homeless, and they must be addressed by both the public and private sector.

The problem of the homeless has also been recognized nationally and the Federal government is attempting to address this issue with the recently-enacted Jobs Bill.

This measure provides \$50 million dollars to the states for the homeless. In New Jersey we expect to receive about \$1.4 million for this effort. New Jersey's voluntary agencies are also expected to receive a yet undetermined amount for the homeless.

At the State level, I have appointed a departmental task force that is focusing in on the question of why people are homeless, how they became so, what services are needed, and what services are currently available to meet their needs.

As the task force began its review of the problem, it became evident that this problem transcends the scope of the Department's capabilities. As such, I most recently recommended to the Governor that an Executive level task force be established. The Governor has indicated to me that he looks favorably on appointing such a committee, which I think would be very advantageous in light of your opening remarks concerning the whole problem of the homeless.

Recently, the Department of Human Services has taken some steps to deal with the problems of the homeless. The Department of Human Services provides programs and services for the homeless through its network of State, county, and local welfare agencies, mental health centers, and Youth and Family Service agencies.

The county and municipal welfare agencies specifically provide emergency funding for food, shelter, clothing and other personal belongings. A specific change in public assistance policy, authorized by the Department's Division of Public Welfare, now allows for the provision of emergency funds to former AFDC families whose children were placed in foster care. This change will enable these families to reunite.

Another recent change in the General Assistance Program establishes the provision that individuals who apply for assistance and who meet necessary eligibility criteria, must be granted assistance if they are physically present in a particular municipality, and intend to remain there. There is absolutely no requirement that they have a mailing address.

Finally, our Lifeline and Home Energy Assistance programs have enabled many individuals and families to maintain their homes throughout the winter months. Without this assistance, countless individuals would be literally driven out into the cold. Unfortunately, the scarcity of fiscal resources and supportive services has hampered efforts to provide emergency shelter, food and clothing for the homeless.

It is clear that we must direct our energies and attention to the growing numbers of people who find themselves homeless, penniless, vulnerable to the elements, and starvation.

As we speak to the need for emergency food, shelter, and clothing, we must ensure that a person's rights and dignity are not compromised.

The provision of emergency food, shelter, and clothing is only one aspect of a meaningful approach to the needs of the homeless. We must assist communities in providing supportive services which will foster independence.

Specifically, we must promote the development of affordable housing for everyone, and help people in finding employment opportunities.

We must also assist families and adults by providing supportive services, such as counseling, home health and homemaker services, housing related services, and child care, to name a few.

We must also be careful that we take precautionary steps so as not to inadvertently force people into homelessness and starvation. For example, we must ensure that public assistance standards are sufficient so that families, particularly AFDC mothers and children, are able to meet the basic needs of food and shelter.

I appreciate the opportunity to be able to address some of the Department's concerns on the homeless, and I commend this Committee for taking the initiative in examining such a significant issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you very much, Commissioner. I think your words do you credit, and, more importantly, your actions do you credit. The appointment by you of a departmental-level task force on the homeless is very constructive.

I have stated by letter, and I now repeat this before the public, that I would like to meet with, and the Committee would like to meet with, your task force. I would commend you further for your recommendation to Governor Kean that he create an Executive level task force. And, I would also say, by way of a last statement before entertaining questions of you, that -- as I said in my opening statement, when you were coming in -- we are delighted that the Congress of the United States and the President of the United States have, in fact, in the Emergency Anti-Recession Assistance Act, provided some dollars for emergency shelter and food distribution. And, this Committee intends to draft a bill, working with you, to appropriate those dollars in a manner that will provide a cost effective, but compassionate program.

So, that is all good news.

First of all, let me say to the members of the public, with your permission, Commissioner, that we were graced, as you were testifying, with the presence of our ranking member of the minority

party, the very distinguished Assemblywoman from Morris County, Leanna Brown. We appreciate Leanna's attendance. We are not suprised, of course, because her concerns have been evident throughout the important work of the Committee.

Commissioner, by way of the first question, on page seven of your prepared text, you spoke of the need to do more than provide emergency food, shelter, and clothing -- that that is only one aspect of the problem. You suggest -- in my judgment quite properly -- that we must also help communities to provide supportive services. I wonder if you would speak to that point?

What I mean by that question is this: It seems clear that there are things that only the State can do, and that the \$1.4 million, in your estimation -- other estimations vary as to what, in fact, we will receive -- will involve some State services. Yet, you -- I think quite properly -- point out that much of this needs to be done at the local level by communities, as well as by non-profit organizations. I wonder if you can be a little more specific as to what you meant in that paragraph?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: In the hierarchy of needs, we talk about food, shelter, and clothing as some of the basics. But, interestingly, in some of our preliminary analyses of the homeless population, we are now talking about homeless families in some cases. I had the opportunity to be in Washington last week, meeting with members of Governor Cuomo's National Task Force -- the National Governor's Task Force on the Homeless -- and we discussed some of the findings in general, nationwide.

When we talk about food, shelter, and clothing, to me that is an immediate need. But, beyond that, we are talking about employment opportunities. We are talking about social services for children, and what effect poverty and homelessness has on the family -- whether it be child welfare or child abuse, etc.

So, the problems of the homeless have taken a new turn. We are not just talking about the single person that has traditionally been called the Bowery bum; we are talking about a new group of people. Suddenly, the new unemployed is something we have to deal with, and I think our employment efforts have to be directed toward

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this particular area. So, we are talking about the entire gamut of social services being directed towards this very vulnerable population.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Are you saying then that you are not interested, Commissioner, in providing new shopping bags for shopping bag ladies; you are interested in providing a comprehensive case management approach to homeless families?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That's correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I appreciate that very, very much.

Assemblyman Watson, do you have any questions for the Commissioner?

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I would just like to deviate from the homeless families and ask one question while you are here, Commissioner. I was going to give you a call this week, but I was in and out of town so, of course, I didn't call you.

I am concerned about Medicare. Many times, we used to put our senior citizens in hospitals when we were not able to obtain nursing home care for them. We were able to keep them in a hospital until we could find shelter for them in a nursing home. Now, I gather that we can expect hospitals to have auditors come in to see a senior citizen who is able to move around a little. If the chart states he or she should be released from the hospital, and if that senior citizen is there a week over the allotted time, it can not be charged to Medicare; it will be charged to that individual, or whoever can pay it. Sometimes no one can pay it. The hospitals are now very strict about keeping those kinds of patients in the hospital until we can find nursing homes for them.

I was wondering what we are doing to try and alleviate that type of situation, which is very critical today? I am really upset about that.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I think that is a very appropriate question because it really does tie into the whole issue of housing. A couple of months ago, I created, along with our Public Advocate, Joe Rodriguez, what I call a Nursing Home/Boarding Home Task Force, to look at the problem in the State of New Jersey. Because that particular problem, I think, is second to the prison problem in the State of New Jersey, in terms of being serious.

I came from a county government operation with a specialized hospital. I must tell you there were at least 300 people on a waiting list to get into that nursing home operation when I left.

Medicare is not my problem, as far as administration is concerned. We have Medicaid in our operation. But, the way the hospitals are structured right now, based on utilization review, they will not be reimbursed by Medicare and, therefore, they have to absorb that particular cost.

The purpose of the Nursing Home Task Force is to put the nursing home problem in perspective. We really have a Medicaid bed shortage in nursing homes. It is not necessarily a nursing home bed shortage, but a Medicaid bed shortage.

Looking at the needs, indications show we are talking about a need for possibly 4,000 beds. Certificates of Need came before the State Health Coordinating Council at the last meeting I attended, and 2,500 beds were put through the Certificate of Need process. Hopefully, they will be constructed, since we have had a turn in the mortgage financing area.

But, I have a particular philosophy and interest, and the problem of the nursing home person -- the elderly person -- is not going to be solved solely by nursing home beds. It is going to be solved by developing a continuum of care for those individuals who need some support at different levels in the community, whether it be a visiting nurse, a home health aide, day care, or whatever. If we can keep people out of institutions, in my opinion, that is probably a more humane type of treatment and certainly it is less costly.

So, what we are developing in the Department of Human Services, along with the Nursing Home Task Force, is, we are working on this continuum of care. We are waiting anxiously, right now, for the Medicaid waiver on community care.

Now, what will that do for those people in the community? It will remove the institutional bias of Medicaid. It will allow us to use Medicaid to keep someone in the home at half the price.

The Governor has recently put two initiatives in the budget from the Casino Control Fund which will support the community care waiver, and also personal care. This will be essential to sustain

people in their homes. We will probably then have one of the most interesting programs, where we combine people to help people.

We have the Welfare Health Aide Demonstration Program, where we are taking people that are on welfare, training them through the private sector as Home Health Aides, and using them to treat and sustain the elderly in their homes, in order to keep them out of the nursing homes. It is a very successful program. We just graduated the first thirty-five candidates.

As a matter of fact, the people that have applied -- in one county we had about 150 people apply for 25 slots. That is the way we are trying to take people off welfare and save money, and at the same time divert people and save on Medicaid.

So, it is the comprehensive approach of the continuum of care that I think is the answer to the nursing home problem that is plaguing the State of New Jersey, as well as the nation.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Commissioner, on that subject -- again, dealing with the problem of shelterless people -- there is going to be a tremendous need, in my judgment, and I think in the judgment of the members of this Committee, for linking those programs to new senior citizen apartments and housing construction, because we do have a tremendous shortage in that regard.

We will be counting on your Department and on your good offices in Washington, to link the construction of senior citizen housing to these home care programs, so that the continuum of care of which you speak, can be rendered to people in decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Presently, very frequently these programs of which you speak, such as homemakers and visiting nurses, do a wonderful job, but the basic problem of decent, affordable shelter remains. So, we can't just have new nursing homes and say, "Well, we hope you won't go into them needlessly," nor can we say, "We are going to keep you in filthy circumstances, or in rat-trap, deteriorated, sub-standard, unsafe houses."

So, I am sure every member of this Committee applauds your interest, and that of the Governor, in trying to keep people out of nursing homes, and preventing needless, tragic, and poignant institutionalization. But, again, it is not just a nursing home

problem. It is a housing shortage. And, I think page 7 of your testimony, indicating the need for affordable housing, is "right on" and does you credit.

To return to my earlier statement, if all we look at is emergency services, we might well be accused of providing new shopping bags for the shopping bag ladies. That is not what this Committee is interested in, and I know that is not what you are interested in.

I appreciate your testimony in that regard.

Assemblywoman Brown has a question.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LEANNA BROWN: Thank you very much. We appreciate your coming before us today, Commissioner. As you know, housing has been a long-time interest of mine. When I first came to the Assembly in 1980, we established the Housing Emergency Action Task Force, which delved into many of the questions that we are discussing here today. I commend the Chairman for holding these hearings. And, also, last Friday I was in Jersey City with Assemblyman Charles, as a Subcommittee member of this Assembly Committee, looking into some of the problems, as far as the people living in public housing is concerned.

Therefore, I have two questions to ask you. First of all, do you have any idea how many people we are talking about when we talk here in the State of New Jersey about the homeless?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: No, I really don't, and that is one of the problems, nationally. I think I might have mentioned before you came in that I met with the staff people for Governor Cuomo and I am now working with them. We are conducting a national survey on the homeless.

We have a questionnaire prepared right now that we are going to adapt specifically for New Jersey, to see if we can get a handle on the number of homeless. It is a very difficult area to track throughout the State.

What we are going to do is to use our governmental agencies and our private non-profit sector to see if we can get some idea as to the size of the population we are talking about.

Interestingly enough, it is not only numbers we need, it is also the character of the population, and that is most important if we are going to treat it effectively.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Two observations: I think we have to look carefully at who we are housing in our government subsidized and government-built establishments, because I have a feeling that maybe we are keeping people in those developments that really are far better off than the homeless population we are talking about here today. And, it doesn't make sense in some cases to have second and third generation people living in public housing, say in Jersey City, and have other people living in Liberty Park, and so on.

So, I think the two hearings -- today's and last Friday's -- are definitely related because as a nation we have put a fair amount of government money into the construction of housing. I am not sure we have been as successful in that program as we should have been.

I also would like to know -- and I would like your reaction to this -- whether or not there are rules and regulations that are by definition, making people homeless? By that I mean, I believe on New Jersey Nightly News last night there was a discussion about a family with two children who, because of some of the rules and regulations, the way we operate, and the way owners of apartments advertise for apartments, were literally made homeless. Do you have any thoughts on how -- maybe by legislation -- we can make what people can expect more uniform, as far as their rights are concerned when owning or renting an apartment, if they have young people?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Well, that is one of the things the departmental task force that I created quickly realized, that there were problems outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Human Services. And, I have recommended to the Governor that we create a statewide Executive task force to look at the problems.

That particular problem would fall under the Department of Community Affairs -- on housing. That is one of the things we can hopefully address by bringing together the Public Advocate, the Department of Community Affairs, the Department of Health, and the Department of Corrections, in order to discuss those kinds of issues. I do not have an answer for you on how we would address that right now.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Commissioner, concerning your first response to Assemblywoman Brown's question about the number of homeless, while you indicate that you don't have an absolute number to

give us this morning -- and that is perfectly understandable, since your task force is working on that -- clearly, from your own testimony on page 3, you indicate 1500 in Passaic County, 2500 in Middlesex County, etc. Would you be prepared to say that it appears reasonable to assume that there are probably scores of thousands of people in the same boat?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I think that would be perfectly correct to say at this point in time. I think the homeless also range from large cities, such as Newark, all the way down to the very small communities. I have had the opportunity to work with the Morristown officials and their particular problems, and that was interesting. Initially, the thought was that the homeless situation in Morristown was directly related to the institutionalization program, and when we did our survey in Morristown we found that only 20% of the people had at one time touched the mental health system. So, we are finding a different type of population, which is important for us to deal with.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Are there any other questions of the Commissioner?

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: The only other question I would like to ask the Commissioner, Mr. Chairman, is, you know, we do have some legislation in regarding the schools we abandon and also factories, and things like that -- to give the cities or municipalities an incentive to proceed with plans for homes, etc. We are expecting money from the Federal government, which is not too much; I know that. I know we are talking about some monies that we hope to get in the near future. Perhaps we can do this kind of thing with tax incentives. Will there be monies for construction coming in at a later date for those kinds of abandoned buildings, and things like that?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Right now, I don't really see that as a major project. We are waiting for the guidelines and I am sure there will be some money available for renovations to adapt these buildings.

The important point, I think, is, what we should do with this Committee is to establish the guidelines for the utilization of the money that is coming to the State of New Jersey, and then leave it to the local municipalities to locally determine how to deal with their shelters -- whether to use a school or other facilities. As best we

can, within those guidelines, we should see how far we can spread the \$1.4 capital. We might be able to get contributions for capital renovation, and use a matching program. But, that is something we are going to have to talk about -- how we are going to structure, and sort of multiply, that \$1.4 to deal with the problem.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: In conclusion, Commissioner, your testimony -- I think I understand it, but I want to be sure that I do -- indicates that your intention, and I think the intention of this Committee in working with you, is to see to it that the \$1 million, or the \$1.4 -- or if, in fact, it is a little larger, as we have some reason to hope it will be -- is principally going to be utilized in such a manner as to make it easier for the existing community and non-profit world to provide these services on a decentralized basis. We don't envision a new State shelter, or a homeless village, or any such thing. And, if we do move in the direction of making dollars available through a major housing lending institution, such as our Housing Finance Agency, that too would be decentralized, with control at the local level, is that correct?

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That would be the approach I would take. It think it should be a local determination as to how that municipality will deal with its homeless population, with the technical and financial support of the State and Federal government.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I would concur with that, and I believe the members of this Committee will concur with that. Thank you.

Assemblywoman Brown?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: I would be remiss if I did not thank the Commissioner for all the time and energy he put into trying to resolve the Morristown situation. It does raise the bigger issue, however, that the State does own many dwellings on the grounds of various institutions, whether it is Graystone or some of the prison facilities, etc. A study is coming out about how we are going to utilize the housing on public land -- State owned land, etc. Because, again, I don't think that we can afford to lose any housing whatsoever. And, if it is not being used for the purpose that it was

intended to be used for at one time, for the institution -- i.e. housing administrators, and so on -- it seems to me there may be other ways to put it to use without demolishing it because we just don't have enough shelter now.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: That is one of our priorities, dealing with the housing on the grounds of State institutions -- to use the housing for appropriate programs, whether they be used as group homes or for other types of programs.

There is a question that some people pose when we deal with the homeless: Do we want to create huge warehouses and go back to the past? I think when we deal with homelessness through community effort, we will not develop an institutional problem again for the State of New Jersey. But, I think we have to be able to support the communities that are adjacent to our facilities, and by appropriately utilizing the housing that we have for these types of programs will be helpful.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Well, by starting now maybe we will be in gear for next fall. The Chairman really tried hard to get something done this year.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I will say this, and then I will call on Assemblyman Watson. Commissioner, I think your testimony was absolutely correct in suggesting-- The last thing I said earlier was that we didn't want to just provide shopping bags for the shopping bag ladies. But, we are also not interested in providing new welfare hotels. I understand completely from your testimony that your goal is to make people independent and capable of living independent lives, find jobs and housing opportunities that they can fill in order to make them independent.

There is no intention, I do not think -- if I understand your testimony correctly -- to just renovate structures and let people live in them forever.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: You are correct.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I appreciate that. Mr. Watson.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: You hit on some of the things I would like to say. Number one, I want to thank you also for your appearance before the Committee. As always, you are willing and able to come before us and give us the advice that is needed.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: That's good county training.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: For Freeholders.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: For Freeholders, right.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I must say, when we are speaking of the warehousing of homeless people, I think we have an emergency here today. It is different than it was years ago. When you turn on your television, you see people -- as you stated -- in cardboard boxes in order to keep warm. If by chance we have to warehouse them someplace where it is warm, and feed them and clothe them, I think it is our responsibility to do this. I am for utopia, where some day we won't need these places, but as of now we should do what is necessary immediately, because it is of immediate concern.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: I would just like to make a comment. That is a very good point. We do have an emergent situation of temporary need. But, I liken it to flood control. People become concerned when it rains, but when the sun comes out, they forget about the problem of flooding. I really don't want the people to forget about the homeless. Once you take care of them and you put them in a large institutional setting, the problem is taken out of sight and we forget about the basic human needs of those particular individuals.

I think this is extremely important: We should not create another "dumping" into our institutional settings.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you very much, Commissioner. We appreciate your testimony. I am sure the Committee will get back to you.

COMMISSIONER ALBANESE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: At this time I would like to call upon the Honorable Douglas Palmer, Freeholder of Mercer County.

I note that Freeholder Palmer also has a prepared statement, some of which he may wish to read. But, the record will contain your full statement, verbatim.

FREEHOLDER DOUGLAS H. PALMER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. I would like to thank the Committee for offering me this time to speak on an issue which is very important to me. I know we have been talking about the homeless, and I know on our county level we put additional monies in our budget this year to

provide emergency care. So, I know this is very important, and I am glad to see your Committee taking on this task.

Also, it is a pleasure for me to work beside my former colleague on the Freeholder Board, Assemblyman Watson.

I am going to speak about the plight of the homeless, with regard to the rehabilitation of housing, which is important to me. Whenever I hear housing, I am ready to testify.

I would like to thank you again for this opportunity to speak. Let me say first that I am not a housing expert. I am a Freeholder from Mercer County, which is an urban county, centered in a city that is full of decaying and destroyed housing units. Those of you who come here for legislative sessions may enter Trenton by Calhoun Street or Princeton Avenue. The houses you pass on the way in are typical of properties all over the city that have been abandoned by their owners, and that are now owned by the City of Trenton.

I tell you, as I told the other Freeholders back in February, that the housing problem in the City of Trenton, and in other urban cities, is one big nightmare. On the one hand, I get an average of one call a day from people who need decent affordable housing, and on the other hand there are approximately 700 vacant city-owned buildings that need rehabilitation in order to make them livable.

It is not just the very poor and the elderly who live on minimum fixed incomes who can't find affordable housing in Trenton, Ewing, Lawrence, Hamilton, or Hightstown; it is the young people just starting out, and the men and women who work for very small wages and who are trying to find a decent place in which to raise four or five children and still be able to keep their elderly mothers at home instead of institutionalizing them, because there is, "no room at the inn."

I would wholeheartedly support the building of new State office buildings in Trenton. I think the Criminal Justice Building has certainly made Market Street look a lot more attractive. But, a city is not just office buildings, and Trenton is well on its way towards developing two distinct faces: an attractive complex of high-rise office buildings, peopled by thousands of workers in the daytime, and a wasteland of abandoned, rotting housing by day and night, just a few blocks away.

I know you are concerned, and we are concerned too, at both the county and local level. As a Freeholder, I supported the proposal by the City of Trenton to have the Mercer County Improvement Authority float tax-exempt bonds to help renovate vacant housing. The loans from the bond money would be repaid with monies recovered from the sale of the houses. Our Freeholder Board has made the City's housing problem an "agenda" for this year.

At our last meeting with the Mayor's Advisory Council, Freeholders discussed local housing needs with mayors from several of our municipalities. We recognize the City of Trenton is not the only Mercer County municipality with a housing problem -- Lawrence and Ewing also have old, decaying houses. The Mayor of Hopewell Township expressed concern that there is no affordable housing for their young people. We had hoped that monies would be available for housing needs through the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program for which New Jersey has been allocated \$11,715,000 in 1983. But, the Department of Community Affairs is targeting those monies for economic development proposals -- not housing.

Mercer County Freeholders established and supported a county Office on Housing which, with the help of Human Services block grant monies, administered through DCA, and monies from the Department of Energy in Washington, has conducted and is conducting, one of the most successful and cost-effective weatherization programs in the States.

The same information generated to certify people eligible for weatherization grants could easily be used to determine additional housing rehabilitation eligibility if additional monies were available.

Why not leverage the Housing Office's present efforts with additional funds -- and no additional paperwork -- so that they can expand into housing rehabilitation for low-income families, and provide them with somewhere to live?

There is no shortage of good will and earnest effort to improve housing stock and get people decent homes on the local level. We need more cooperative efforts, like the one on Colonia Avenue that matched DCA and City-of-Trenton monies to successfully rehabilitate six abandoned city properties.

I know many of you are also familiar with the Mill Hill Community Land Trust, which works with a non-profit group, ISLES, to help low and moderate income people who live in Mill Hill to buy the properties they have rented all these years -- often at a monthly mortgage rate that doesn't exceed what they paid in rent.

We are trying to deal with the plight of the homeless and those in sub-standard housing, within our resources at the county and local levels. Our resources, however, are not enough. There are too many people who want and need affordable housing, too many who virtually live in the streets, and too little in property tax monies that are our real source of funding.

We look to the State and to the Legislature for direction and for leadership, so that funding mechanisms can be developed to help our people, for they have nowhere to go.

Also, I am aware of certain bills that are in the Assembly and in the Senate, which haven't been passed yet. But, just to name a few that sound like very good bills, A-1308 provides that the HFA can initiate \$50 million and convert unused, non-residential structures into multiple housing accommodations for people of low and moderate income. And, in the Senate County and Municipal Government Committee, Bill A-1310, provides accessory units in residential dwellings for senior citizens.

There are a number of other bills that I think speak to the needs of the homeless, and I would ask for your help in the solution to this problem, because it is a problem -- not only a problem for the City of Trenton nor the County of Mercer, but a problem which is widespread throughout the country, particularly in our urban areas.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you very much, Freeholder. You are quite right, this Committee has joined with counties and local governments by way of generating a number of pieces of legislation which are designed --after they are passed and signed into law -- to solve the rehabilitation crisis, and the more affordable housing crisis.

Assembly Bill 1308, of which you spoke, is a bill that was generated in this Committee, and 1310 is a bill that was generated in this Committee. Assemblyman Charles has a bill in that also passed

this Committee, which encourages municipalities to take abandoned structures and rehabilitate them. Like the other two bills you mentioned, that has passed the Assembly and the Senate.

Assemblyman Brown has a bill in that has been moving through the Legislature. It would create a more flexible rehabilitation code without any diminution in safety.

Assemblyman Watson's bill provides for a new taxable bonding authority for MFA and HFA -- actually, for HFA -- to do similar things. It has passed the Assembly and is well on its way.

So, this Committee joins with you in your concern to rehabilitate these houses. I only have one question for you, and that is, is it your judgment that most of those bills -- some of which I authored, and some of which John, Joe, Charles, and Leanna have authored -- envision young families, as you suggested, as well as low and moderate income people, living in this housing and paying a mortgage, which sometimes will be on a lease/purchase basis? Again, that is something of which you spoke. None of those bills really speak to, nor anticipate, the notion that homeless persons would be sheltered there on an emergency basis.

Would it be your testimony that we ought to perhaps amend one or two of them to permit, or to encourage, that kind of use?

FREEHOLDER PALMER: Yes, I think there is a need to put in an amendment regarding the homeless people, insofar as the shelter aspect is concerned, because there is a problem and everyone is being affected. And, while you have to, and should, provide decent affordable housing for people with families we cannot forget the plight of our homeless, and this should be made an amendment to a bill.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I appreciate that testimony, because that is something we can do, even in advance. As you know, Freeholder, most of the housing bills of the type you mentioned are sponsored by the members of this Committee, who retain some control over the acceptance or rejection of an amendment even while the bill is in the Senate.

I am sure that Assemblyman Charles, Assemblywoman Brown, Assemblyman Watson, and myself could, in fact, effect the policy you are suggesting.

May I say that I appreciate your testimony, and I am going to take that under very serious advisement and look into the two or three bills under my sponsorship that you mentioned to see whether or not that would be constructive. So, I appreciate that suggestion.

Mr. Watson, do you have any questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I thought, Freeholder, that yours was an excellent presentation, and I am also aware that we have an Improvement Authority, one of the few in the State. I know you are taking advantage of the Improvement Authority to do those kinds of things you stated here in your presentation.

I just want to ask you how far along are we in trying to bring about this kind of legislation on the county level?

FREEHOLDER PALMER: Well, we are still in the formative stage. I know you are aware that there was a meeting held between the County Executive and the Mayor of the City of Trenton regarding this problem, and the meeting sort of broke down a little. But, my hope is that this can happen within the near future.

But, as I said, floating a bond is just one solution to the problem, because it is going to need money from the private sector, and different kinds of incentives which would encourage developers to take on a project like this.

But, we are still at the talking stage right now in the county and in the City of Trenton.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I know that we just had a very successful program on Colonial Avenue. And, when I was a Freeholder, we talked about the Yard Avenue section, around the train station. There are beautiful buildings there that are all boarded up.

I think what you are doing here is commendable. I am pretty sure you have the full support of your Freeholder Board.

FREEHOLDER PALMER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I just hope that you will put some pressure to bear on the Improvement Authority to carry forth some of your ideas. I thank you for appearing here this morning.

FREEHOLDER PALMER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Assemblywoman Brown.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: One quick question, Freeholder. When Bruce Cole testified before the Housing Emergency Action Task Force, about two years ago, he specifically said that in the City of Trenton he felt that in a way some of the new publicly financed buildings that went up made things a little more difficult for the private landlord, who lost some of his or her tenants to public housing; therefore, the landlord was no longer able to keep his or her establishment afloat as a paying proposition. Is this a situation with which you are familiar?

FREEHOLDER PALMER: I am really not familiar with that at all, Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Okay. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you. We appreciate your testimony, and we feel it has been very useful.

It is my intention at this time, for those of you who are having scheduling difficulties -- and I understand there are people here who are having such difficulty -- to call on Mr. Lackock, then the Housing Education Committee of Middlesex County, and then Reverend Esmark, in that order.

Mr. Larry Lackock, Center Director of the Volunteers of America.

LARRY LACKOCK: My name is Larry Lackock, from the Volunteers of America. I will make my statement very brief, because I have to be down in Camden in about an hour.

We presently operate an emergency shelter in Camden. I think it houses between 25 and 30 people.

My Boss, Mr. Donald Dudley, who is the regional Executive Director for the Volunteers of America in this area, which includes middle Jersey, south Jersey, Philadelphia, etc., is very interested in reopening some type of emergency shelter program in Trenton, because at the present time we operate a pre-release center, at 144 Perry Street, which deals with people who are being released from prison. And, of course, we are under contract with the Department of Corrections and the Bureau of Prisons. Mr. Dudley is interested in devoting his ministry -- because the Volunteers of America is a non-profit, Christian-oriented, agency -- to the poor. And, if you come down to Perry Street any morning, or if you come late at night, you become very

aware that people are going to be there throughout the night, and that this is their home.

There have been old buildings torn down right around our building at 144, and fifteen or twenty old men have just moved old furniture into an open area, and that has been their home during the summer. Where their home will be during the winter, I don't know.

In operating the pre-release center, I still get calls every day from people, from the police department, and from other agencies, asking, "Can I put someone up?" Well, at the present time our facility can sleep fifteen people, but we are under contract with the Department of Corrections to bed those people.

We are very interested in doing something to help solve the problem. So, the Volunteers of America is very willing to be contacted if we can do something to help.

We have another piece of property on Delaware Avenue, which is a large five or six bedroom home that is presently being occupied by a staff member, but it could be used as an emergency shelter. And, we have some expertise in doing this, because we are presently doing it in Camden. We have made many mistakes down in Camden, but we would like very much to do something in the Trenton area.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I have only one question. I appreciate your testimony. Knowing that there are community organizations like yours, whether they be religiously oriented, as yours is, or otherwise, certainly encourages our Committee. I am sure that the Commissioner's Task Force Report, about which you may have heard earlier, will take advantage of that fact.

It was the Commissioner's testimony and mine, really, that inspired the bill we will be drafting to deal with the plight of the homeless in New Jersey. It will operate largely by decentralizing the State's efforts, and put it into the community's hands.

So, knowing that there are organizations out there, such as yours, that want to help, is very instructive for the committee, I think.

I have only one question. If you own a piece of property now in Trenton, and you have expertise from your experience in Camden, do you need any State involvement? Can't you just get started? What is holding you back?

New Jersey State Library

MR. LACKOCK: Well, there are a lot of problems. For example, in the pre-release center, we come under the Department of Community Affairs, and we have to have proper fire-fighting capabilities. We have to have food services, and so forth.

The pre-release center that we operate now at 144 was, up until two years ago, an emergency shelter. It was run by a Ms. Alice Parker. She was also connected with the Volunteers of American, and she has been very interested in continuing something like that, but she does not have a building.

The VOA changed the building from an emergency shelter because there was a need for a pre-release center.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: So, it would be your testimony that there are some regulatory difficulties with reference to meeting certain codes, and it would be your testimony, further, that there are some dollar needs with reference to food service, is that correct?

MR. LACKOCK: That's correct, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I appreciate that. There is a question apparently from Mr. Watson.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I too, Mr. Lackock, am happy to have you here this morning. My only question concerns the property you own on Delaware Avenue that could house five people. Are there problems in doing that with that piece of property?

MR. LACKOCK: Well, maybe, because it may not be zoned for that. But, I understand that it is much easier to have a piece of property zoned for an emergency shelter than it is for a pre-release center. So, it may not be as difficult.

We could not go in and just have a pre-release center there, because the community would not take to that. But, certainly, the need for the homeless-- You know, certain areas do not like these kinds of programs in their area.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Well, have you tried?

MR. LACKOCK: No, we haven't done anything in that regard yet.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Would you want to put that piece of property in order, just in case you would have to use it, rather than having one person staying in a large home like that -- a staff person?

MR. LACKOCK: Yes. A staff person is staying there just so the building is maintained. It could very easily be converted to house more than five people. It has five bedrooms and it has a large downstairs area, etc.

There are some physical plant needs that have to be attended to -- a leaky roof, and so forth. We also have to have the proper fire escapes for a building in which we are housing people.

So, there would be the necessity for some expenditure before it would be ready.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: And, on that subject, are you suggesting that the religiously-oriented sponsors are able or are not able to provide you with the dollars you need to do the rehab?

MR. LACKOCK: Well, at the present time, the Volunteers of America, as I indicated, is involved heavily in pre-release. We have two pre-release centers, one in Camden and one in Trenton, with the idea of opening others throughout the State, because the houses should be located near the area the people are going to return to in their community. So, we are into that. We are also in competition with other people who are into halfway houses.

The emergency shelter we have in Camden has been operating for many years and runs at a loss.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Mr. Lackock, I know Assemblywoman Brown also has a question, so I don't want to take too much of your time, knowing that you have a previous commitment. The question I am going to put to you is, can you envision, with your own resources, opening up a shelter for the homeless, or do you need extra help?

MR. LACKOCK: I am sure we need extra help.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you very much. Assemblywoman Brown.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Yes. I gather you need extra help because you have already said that you are losing money in your Camden operation. My question was going to be, what are two or three things you have learned from your Camden experience?

MR. LACKOCK: Well, of course, we get money from the United Way to operate that. But, the United Way has been cutting back, apparently, in their allocations. So, we found that the only way we

could come up with the money necessary to operate was to go out and do some fund raising. We have not been into that in the past, and that is something that my new boss wants to get started with.

Apparently, there are a lot of resources out there, but they just haven't been tapped. Apparently, they got a donation recently from Campbell Soup and RCA. Firms like that are very willing to do something. We just need to contact them.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: All right. And, I think, Mr. Chairman, it is important at this point to underscore for this Committee that this is a "biggie", and we do have several departments in State government that are concerned with this whole program. Are we going to hear from DCA today?

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I don't believe we are going to hear from DCA today, Assemblywoman, but I think that there is no question we will be having DCA testify on this issue at a subsequent meeting.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Super. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Let me just say this, by way of thanking you for your testimony. I believe that merely having these hearings, and listening to your testimony, and the testimony of others that may come, may be constructive, precisely by the way you addressed the issue in your last point, and that is by touching the conscience of the private sector. I do believe that by focusing attention on this problem, we may well see substantial donations -- whether it be bedding, food, or even shelter itself -- from individuals, companies, labor organizations, and churches in the State.

I would hope that will happen. I think the testimony you have given will be constructive in that regard, and I thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Could I just underscore that? I think we can expect a lot, and there will be a lot, forthcoming from the private sector. However, I think here in the State of New Jersey we have to come up with an overall game plan on how this problem can best be solved, year in and year out, so that these situations do not emerge like the floods, periodically.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I agree. Thank you very much, Mr. Lackock.

MR. LACKOCK: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: At this time, it is my intention to call upon the Housing Education Committee of Middlesex County. I have three names here, and they are all welcome to come to the table and testify, should they wish to do that -- Jeanne Stephens, Barbara Parenti and Jewel Daney.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: May I just say that you are most fortunate to have somebody from your county as interested in housing as the Chairman is.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: For the record, I would like to note that there is a prepared statement, and I assure you that the full text of your prepared statement will be in the transcript. I would also say, with your permission, by way of introduction, that along with the prepared statement for this meeting, members of the Housing Education Committee of Middlesex County, have provided the Committee with a document, which the Committee has already received. We are happy to have additional copies of that document which is called: "Housing for All; A Middlesex County Dilemma." The members of this Committee have been seised of that report. Staff has already analyzed the report. And, Commissioner Albanese and Sid Willis, representing Commissioner Renna, received this report at a recent conference, sponsored by the Essex County Housing Coalition and other groups, up in the Essex County College. So, I would ask that you do not summarize the report. A full transcript of the report is available to the members of the Committee, and I would ask, with your permission, that you devote yourself to your prepared statement, and your comments on it.

B A R B A R A P A R E N T I: Okay. The data we will present is taken from the report entitled, "Housing for All; a Middlesex County Dilemma." The report was prepared by the Housing Education Committee, which is a sub-group of the Middlesex Community Network of Social Service Agencies. The Committee is composed of various private and public social service organizations in Middlesex County.

In gathering the data for this report, the Committee contacted many social service agencies, private non-profit organizations, and church groups. Our findings indicate that, one, there is a critical shortage of affordable housing for the low income population of Middlesex County. Two, there is no permanent emergency

shelter to assist families in the county. And, three, there are 2,488 homeless individuals, most of these members of families. The majority of these were county residents and not a transient population.

According to the 1980 census, the county's total population is 595,000 persons. Middlesex County is the most heavily populated county in New Jersey. The total number of households in the county is 195,000, increasing by 17% over the past ten years. The population in need of housing is changing as a result of more elderly individuals living alone, an increased divorce rate, a greater prevalence of single parent households, and the State's deinstitutionalization policy.

In 1980, there were 77,596 households with incomes at 80% of the median income or below; that is, at \$18,260 per year, or less. In Middlesex County, 234,136 persons, or 39% of the total population are in this category. Within just a three year period, between 1978 and 1980, the number of households at or below 80% of the median income rose 5.4%. According to the 1980 Economic Census data, there are 19,275 households in Middlesex County with incomes less than 125% of the Federal poverty level of \$11,626. This accounts for approximately 25% of the population.

The problem of locating suitable affordable living arrangements for low and middle income individuals and families remains governed primarily by the shortage of existing housing stock. Over the past two decades, the average number of new dwelling units produced per year in Middlesex County has declined by forty-two percent. Within the existing housing stock, there has been a 20% increase in the number of unsound housing units, with a 1980 estimate of 10,888 substandard units.

Presently, the vacancy rate for rental units in Middlesex County is less than 1%. Movement out of the existing rental market has been slowed because middle income individuals can no longer afford the prohibitive cost of purchasing a home. This has the effect of severely restricting the filtering down of affordable housing units to moderate and low income families.

The number of new new multi-family dwelling units in 1980 is 42% less than the number in 1960. During the same period of time, a similar decrease in new single family units also occurred.

The development of housing units has followed a pattern manifested by single family units, and by construction in the most economically stable sub-areas of the county where per capita income is higher and unemployment rates are lower. The need for housing for moderate and low income families remains high, as housing is not being developed for them. Low income households are relegated to rental housing.

The situation is exacerbated by the county's changing demographic trends. The last decade has shown a decrease in the mean household size from 3.40 to 2.93, increasing the number of households by 17%. Since 1970 the number of households has grown from 168,076 to 195,181.

According to HUD guidelines, 77,596 households in Middlesex County are eligible for subsidized rental housing.

The HUD Section 8 Existing was introduced in 1978 to assist low and moderate income families secure adequate rental housing. From 1978 to 1981, only 907 Section 8 certificates were issued in the county. Currently, HUD is planning changes that will further decrease the program's effectiveness.

The proposed cuts in the low income programs would hit hard at some of the poorest families. The Reagan Administration's 1984 budget contains a proposal to raise the rents of low income families living in subsidized housing from 3% of income to 30% of income, plus 30% of food stamp benefits. This proposal is highly regressive and has its most severe impact on the nation's poorest families. The poorer a family is, the more food stamps it receives. Consequently, the poorest families would have their rents raised the most. Many poor families would eventually face rent increases of 50% to 100%.

The growing number of households in need of housing, coupled with the proportionate decline in the number of housing units being constructed, creates a housing crisis. Many of these individuals and families, unable to afford adequate shelter, often are forced to reside in dilapidated, unsafe housing. In 1980, the County Board estimated that 60% of Middlesex County's residents could not afford to rent a new apartment.

In most situations where a family or individual needs some form of temporary shelter or housing, the long-range need is for a permanent living arrangement. Therefore, the data showing the need for emergency placement for the homeless also indicates the need for some form of permanent housing as well.

Long waiting lists and extremely low turnover rates make public housing virtually inaccessible to low income families and individuals. Many municipalities elect to construct senior citizen housing instead of family units, therefore making it harder for families to find subsidized housing. Since 1975, only 206 subsidized rental units have been built for families, as compared to over 1300 units for senior citizens.

During a telephone survey in January, 1983, three municipal housing authorities in Middlesex County indicated that they were not accepting families on public assistance. Because they are trying to achieve an income mix, higher income tenants usually get preference.

As you can see by the table on page 8 -- that is in the Housing Report itself -- in a survey of 75 privately owned apartment complexes conducted in January of 1983, the vacancy rate for privately owned apartment complexes, where rents include utilities, is 0.0026%, or 46 vacancies out of 17,584 units. For those apartments where rents exclude utilities, the vacancy rate is 0.0048%, or 16 vacancies out of 3,292 units.

The second table on page 8 shows that rent prices have skyrocketed to a level far above the Fair Market Rates, established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Comparing these figures to the AFDC grants given to families -- that is on page 9 -- you can see that, for example, a family of four receiving \$414 a month could not afford to rent a one bedroom apartment, much less a two bedroom apartment.

The causes of this housing crisis are varied and include the following:

1. High prevalence of unemployment, as seen by the high incidence of mortgage foreclosures.
2. More elderly individuals living alone.
3. Increased divorce rate and a greater prevalence of single parent households.

4. The State's deinstitutionalization policy.

5 The implementation of the monthly status report retrospective budgeting system used by the county welfare boards.

Prior to the new amendments contained in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act -- P.L. 97.35 -- to Title 4-A of the Social Security Act, effective October 1, 1981, New Jersey had identified the implementation of monthly reporting/retrospective budgeting as a primary initiative of the State corrective action plan in the Aid to Families of Dependent Children Program.

The Monthly Reporting System provides for clients to complete and submit to the agency a monthly report regarding client income and circumstances as a condition for receiving Aid to Families of Dependent Children benefits.

Retrospective budgeting means that the amount of the assistance for a payment month is computed, based on actual income or circumstances which existed in a previous month. It is called the "budget month."

The budget month is the month in which income or circumstances of the eligible unit are used in computing the amount of the assistance payment.

Then we have a processing month, or a reporting month. That month is the month in which the eligible unit reports income and circumstances for the budget month -- the previous month -- to the CWA.

Then there is the payment month. That is the calendar month for which the CWA makes payments, based on the circumstances in the budget month, which was two months previous to that one.

A case example will help to clarify the impact of the monthly status report/retrospective budgeting system.

Mr. and Mrs. W came into the office on March 7th, requesting emergency assistance for themselves and their two children. The emergent situation was caused by Mrs. W's loss of employment on March 3rd, due to epileptic seizures. Mrs. W was earning approximately \$100 per week. The family's Aid to Families of Dependent Children grant is \$187 per month, making the total monthly income \$587. With the new system of retrospective budgeting, the family would not be eligible for an additional grant until May. This means the family's total monthly

income for March and April will be \$187 Aid to Families of Dependent Children. Since the family lost approximately \$400 a month income, they will be unable to pay their rent of \$352 in March and April, thus precipitating eviction and consequent homelessness. Their request for payment of the March and April rent was denied, because, based on the MSR reporting system, additional for the month of change -- that is the budget month -- are not permitted. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Does that complete your testimony?

MS. PARENTI: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Would other members of the Committee wish to add something to that prepared statement?

JEANNE M. STEPHENS: We both have a little bit to add to it. For the record, I would like to introduce Bob Correnti, from the Middlesex County Board of Social Services. And, I am Jeanne Stephens, from Catholic Charities. Jewel Daney, from the Middlesex County Housing Coalition, will give our closing remarks.

For the purpose of the survey and the report of the Middlesex County housing situation, the homeless are defined as individuals who have no place to live, or who are presenting housing problems so critical that they are facing homelessness. Such individuals include persons deinstitutionalized from psychiatric, medical, and substance abuse facilities, prisons, halfway houses, long-term unemployed individuals and their families, and evicted tenants. There exists a strong relationship between the problems of these homeless populations and the shortage of permanent low-cost housing in the county.

Currently, the only shelter in the county operates in New Brunswick. The Evangelical Shelter, which houses eight to twelve men, has been given to May 1st of this year to meet stringent building codes and to obtain a zoning use variance. While being helpful, this shelter does not come close to meeting the growing demand for shelter for the various homeless populations. Newark, Trenton, and Jersey City are often looked to by Middlesex County agencies to house our homeless, but these towns understandably cannot accept many additional homeless individuals and families.

Motel placement has been the only shelter alternative for most of the agencies and church groups placing the homeless. DYFS, the

Division of Youth and Family Services, is limited because of few allocated funds in preventing evictions or to making motel placements. Consequently, DYFS has been forced to separate families and to put the children in foster care, families whose sole or primary problem is lack of housing. Although the above solutions are found to be expensive and detrimental, most often there are no other alternatives.

Our survey of agencies and church groups responding to the needs of homeless populations found that in 1982, nearly 2500 individuals were homeless. Of these individuals, 56% were placed in a motel or in foster care. The remaining 44% were not assisted due to lack of funds, policies that prohibit assistance, or the lack of temporary shelter. The majority of homeless populations and monies were channelled through DYFS and the Middlesex County Board of Social Services, which deal only with families.

The survey figures, which you will find attached to a copy of my testimony, provide a conservative estimate of the size of the homeless population. Various churches contacted, for example, did not submit specific housing related statistics due to a policy of anonymity, or due to the fact that this data showed they provided assistance in a lump sum that included funds for food, fuel, rent, or motel costs. These church leaders, when asked about the people they served, expressed deep concern over the county's shortage, both of low-cost housing and of adequate temporary shelter facilities.

A cost analysis done on assistance to homeless individuals and families in 1982, showed 56% of the homeless, or 1400 individuals, were temporarily assisted at a total cost of over \$1 million dollars, or \$774 per person. In many cases, the need for permanent housing remained after they were temporarily assisted by an agency or church group.

The two agencies with the greatest costs, DYFS and the Board of Social Services, deal exclusively with families. In 1982, DYFS assisted 235 individuals in family situations at a cost of over \$800,000, or \$3,434 per person. The Board of Social Services assisted over 770 individuals in family situations, at a cost of nearly \$270 thousand, or about \$350 per person. In the case of DYFS, costs run incredibly high because foster care placement proves to be expensive.

Although it is the last resort, often foster care is the sole alternative to homeless, or near homeless, families.

The DYFS emergency fund used for ten months of 1982 was limited to \$7,000. This was used to keep families together in their existing housing situations by paying part of overdue rent or utility bills, or by paying a security deposit.

Comparisons between shelter costs and hotel placements show hotel placements to be extremely cost-inefficient. The Guild Service Center in Newark, in 1982, found the estimated cost per person, per night, to be \$11, while motel placements can be as high as \$55 a night.

In our analysis, we did not include the cost of staff salaries or volunteer time needed to serve and to place the homeless. Such costs should be weighed when determining the overall cost and cost-inefficiency of the existing housing "solutions."

Finally, what we cannot measure in dollar terms is the cost of stress and physical suffering experienced by the homeless. Families and individuals may be forced to live in cars or in abandoned buildings, or to live separated from one another -- parents, children, and siblings -- or to live daily with the anxiety of not knowing when or how they can return to a more stable and permanent living situation. These costs remain great and immeasurable. Jewel?

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Jewel?

J E W E L D A N E Y: Although there are several reasons for an increase in the number of homeless persons, we cannot emphasize enough the lack of safe, low-cost housing as a major source of this problem. The construction of shelter is a temporary, albeit necessary solution to the problem of homelessness. We need to increase the supply of housing if we are to provide a long-term answer to the housing problem of low income people.

In order to increase the number of shelters, funding and technical assistance should be made available to non-profit groups to establish shelters.

President Reagan, in a special memo, outlined the use of Army Reserve Centers, and Navy and Air Force facilities as emergency shelters. In a second memo from HUD, Secretary Pierce outlined the use of HUD-acquired properties for lease to non-profit groups for shelter

use. Both these options should be explored by the Department of Community Affairs, or the Department of Human Services, and information should be made available to non-profit groups.

The growing number of homeless persons in need of shelter is obvious. Our Committee recommends that valuable resources not be spent on study, but it should be directed toward the actual construction of shelter, and the provision of support services.

Currently, there is no uniform procedure for the licensing and inspection of shelters. These processes should be established and operational as soon as possible in order for shelters to be established without delay and confusion on the local level. We also urge that shelters, like group homes, be a permitted use in residential zones.

AFDC and the Division of Youth and Family Service regulations should be reexamined so that low income people have better access to the existing housing stock. Allow the Division of Youth and Family Services more flexibility in the use of monies for housing crises, particularly to avoid foster placement.

As new legislation is proposed, we urge you to create enabling legislation, that is, legislation that will aid in breaking down attitudinal barriers, and allow communities to provide for their homeless in the most cost effective manner.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you very much for your testimony. I will begin the Committee's response and questioning by telling you that the situation you have described and documented with great care and with great professional competence is simply intollerable. It is, in substantial measure, the reason why I introduced legislation last year, and why I asked my Committee to meet today. It is why we have been meeting with Commissioner Albanese to begin the drafting of legislation that will appropriate the Federal dollars, and perhaps the State dollars, and move in the direction of loosening those inhibiting regulations.

This is simply intollerable in a county like Middlesex County, which is experiencing extensive growth and great new wealth. This speaks to the condition that Freeholder Palmer spoke about earlier: There are two distinct faces, the face of vast wealth because

of new industrial and commercial activity, and the face which shows people sleeping in cars and train stations. I am aware of the situation, and I thank you for bringing it to the attention of the State in this manner.

This is not going to be tolerated. We cannot go forward as a State, with half the population luxuriating and half -- or even a substantial amount -- in this condition. I think that finding 25% of the people in Middlesex County are eligible for subsidized housing is a shocking and arresting fact. Again, I thank you for bringing it to our attention.

I think your analysis on the question of the cost effectiveness of motel placements, and the both costly condition and inhumane policy of taking children away from their parents when it would be cheaper to pay the rent for a month, is simply intolerable. I don't suggest that this is the fault of any one individual. We know that historically bureaucracies often operate on the basis of shopworn, timeworn, and out-of-date conceptions.

The situation you bring to us today is not only poignant but is one that cries out for correction. I want to assure you, and I say this now as I said it in my opening statement -- I don't know if you were here at the time -- we are going to solve this problem. This Committee is going to draft legislation. We are going to fight with all the power we have in this Legislature to see that this legislation is, in fact, enacted to deal with these matters.

I have in hand a document which you may or may not have seen, "A Proposal for Comprehensive Emergency Shelter Program." It was submitted by Middlesex County, Department of Housing and Community Development, in cooperation with the County's Human Services Department, to Commissioner Albanese and Commissioner Renna, and it looks toward the development of an association with private charitable organizations who have already pledged dollars in Middlesex County to a shelter program. In this proposal, it is assessed that the County of Middlesex will require between \$34 thousand and \$63 thousand in additional help, to fully fund a variety of options for temporary shelter. I note that \$67 thousand, multiplied by 21, would come to \$1,400,000, or precisely the amount of money that Commissioner Albanese is hoping to get -- and I think we may get a little more than that -- from the Federal

government.

I am not indicating for one moment that each county will require \$67 thousand, nor do I want to be understood as saying to you that we are going to be funding this particular proposal at any level. That will be, appropriately, the decision of the Administration.

But, I do want to say to you that the analysis of the problem that you have provided is, in my judgment, correct. This Committee has worked hard to try to deal with more affordable shelter. Concerning some of the things you would have us do, I think the Committee is powerless. I know of no way to correct the rising divorce rate. I would love to sponsor a "happy marriage act," but I think the "happy marriage act" may be unavailing.

On the question of job opportunities for our people, certainly I have, and other members of this Committee and of the Legislature have a variety of job-stimulator, job training, and ancillary service legislation in, which I hope will be effective. But, despite all we do, whether it be seated at the Federal level or whether it be much that we have done here on the State level, we have participated in the national economy and the recession of the last three years, and in our county alone it has caused a diminution -- in a county which you know is burgeoning in substantial ways with relation to industrial and commercial activity. It has cost us 33,000 jobs in the last three years. So, we know, in Middlesex County, about unemployment. We know about the need for housing. We know about the divorce rate.

You have brought to us this morning a story that needs to be told and needs to be understood, irrespective of the long-term causes and irrespective of the intermediate long-range solutions, with reference to jobs, low income housing, or new subsidies. We all hope that the Federal government will initiate a new housing subsidy program this fall. I expect this will happen, and I will tell you that this Committee will be working in the fall on a new State-level housing subsidy program which operates on a loan fund, rather than just on a give-away basis. It will be a cost-effective program.

But, the story you tell of 2,500 people sleeping in cars, in train stations, and in alleyways, in a county which ordinarily has been understood to be one of the growth counties of the State, is totally

unacceptable. I would just like to state that I have no questions to ask, because I have to digest the information. But, I will say this: If we need regulatory reform, either in the area of zoning -- to permit this as an acceptable use -- or in the area of licensing, which would be consistent with Assemblywoman Brown's very important legislation on "rehab" flexibility, this Committee intends to address that question.

With reference to the DYFS regulations, the Commissioner spoke before about his intention to move in that direction, and I would hope that you would bring, and I can assure you that I will bring this particular recommendation forcefully to the front.

But, finally, it can't be done cheaply. It can be done cost effectively. But, it can't be done without some dollars. We can hope for major contributions and donations from the private sector. Your testimony must touch their heart, as it touched my heart this morning. We certainly will reach out to the corporations, the individuals, the churches, the synagogues, and the Federation of Jewish Communities across this State and ask for their help. But, nonetheless, as Assemblywoman Brown said forcefully and effectively earlier, it is a State problem. The State government has to deal with this matter. And, I can tell you on my part and I think on my Committee's part, we are going to do something. I will not rest quietly seeing next winter like this winter, and having another report from your Committee brought forward with these shocking and ugly statistics. That is the only thing I have to say.

At this time, I would like to call on Assemblyman Watson, and then I will call on Assemblywoman Brown.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have any questions, but I would just like to say to Ms. Sephens, Ms. Daney, and Ms. Parenti that they gave an excellent presentation here this morning. I see here where your booklet says, "A Middlesex Dilemma." I think this is a statewide and a countrywide dilemma that we are experiencing and I am going to review all of the material you put before us today.

I just want to thank our Chairman for the timely legislation that he put forth for the homeless in our Assembly. I think it all

came out of your Committee. His concerns are always there, but your Committee gave him the knowledge of what was taking place, and what had to be done. I think to start in a particular community or a particular county will enable us to go across the State and do something to make sure, as you said, Mr. Chairman, that next year at this time we can sit here with a different situation, and not have anyone say that we haven't dealt with the problem.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: And, we will not show piecemeal compassion. This will be for all of the counties of the State. Assemblywoman Brown?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: You all have spent a lot of time in putting your testimony together, and I think you are entitled to hear a little bit of reaction from the Committee members.

For the first time this morning, in your point number seven about education and attitudinal barriers, I think you hit on a very key point. The Chairman knows that I have been pushing housing conferences in the State of New Jersey, not that you haven't had super housing conferences in Middlesex County -- and some others have taken place in other counties. But, it is my understanding that the Department of Community Affairs will now hold three conferences this summer, possibly in a county like Gloucester in the south, and maybe in Union in the north -- places where there has not been as much activity in this field as you have evidenced in Middlesex County.

I think this is the key, because we have a lot of people out there, and having been a local government official myself, we have sometimes thought that maybe this housing problem was strictly in the urban areas. We have forgotten about the homeless in every one of the 567 municipalities throughout the State. It may be worse in some centers than it is in rural areas, but it is a rural/urban/suburban problem alike. I think if the local officials realize they are taking care of their own, rather than somebody from outside, it is going to hasten the process that we all want to see take place.

Second, I think it is key that we coordinate the activities, Mr. Chairman, between DCA and Human Services, because in a way I hope the emergency of the homeless problem will not start to get us off base as far as some of the land use decisions we are going to have to make

in the long run are concerned, because we cannot possibly, with public dollars, take care of all the housing needs out there. As a society, we just do not have that much money to put into the kitty. As you pointed out, under present rules and regulations, one-third of our population in the State of New Jersey is eligible to live in subsidized housing. This means there is a tremendous burden on the remaining two-thirds of the population. And, to tie in your remarks with some of my observations earlier, I am terribly concerned that we are putting all our public dollars -- or much of our public money -- into too few a number of individuals. In other words, it is very easy to subsidize and to service the people living in housing financed by the government. But, what about these people outside? In other words, when we put in our congregate food program, where did the Division of Aging find it easier to do it but in the public housing? So, those people not only gained the benefit of lower rent, but then they got the other services that were hooked in, which I don't object to, but I am aware of a great need out there. I am just wondering if we should broaden the number of people we try to service, rather than giving all the "goodies" to one particular segment of the population.

To get back to your point, I am not as concerned about the Federal government trying to make some of the people in public housing pay more of their own way, because I think to a certain extent many families who have lived in public housing for a number of years are really much better off than the people who we can't get into public housing are.

So, as far as the need for education, as far as the need for coordination, and as far as reexamining some of the public housing through newer eyes -- because this is 1983, and not twenty years ago -- I really appreciate the points you brought out this morning. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I would like to say, while our witnesses are here, that in preparing myself for this meeting, I had a meeting this week in my district with the Division on Aging, the HFA, the Division on Housing, the County Housing Department, and a number of others, and your last point, the point about the need for a cluster care situation for people who are not in public housing, so they can

receive congregate services, is one that I support wholeheartedly, not only in my role as Chairman of this Committee, but also in my role as Vice Chairman of the Aging Committee. I think I can tell you, Leanna, that we are going to win on that one. They are going to go to a cluster care concept.

There is no doubt that the greatest point made in your testimony, about the need for affordable shelter, is heard by this Committee. If we have spent most of our time talking about the homeless and short-term decent solutions, I don't want you to leave here thinking, "Well, the Committee heard us on the homeless and didn't hear us on the need for additional shelter." We have been putting out legislation. This Committee has put out about fifteen separate bills, which move in the direction of providing more affordable shelter.

We will take up, as a first priority this fall, a new program of multi-family and senior citizen housing which will dovetail with the Federal government and which will move in that direction. I don't want you, or any member of the public, to think we don't understand, that we just talked about the homeless and shopping bag ladies, and things of that sort, and that we didn't hear your largest point. This Committee needs no instruction, however -- although it is always good to be reminded -- on the need for decent, affordable shelter. Our focus this morning has been on the homeless, but we did get your larger point. I want you to know that.

I have no further comment, but I know that Mr. Watson does.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I just have a brief statement. I noticed in Freeholder Palmer's statement, he stated that he hoped the housing needs would be taken care of through the Community Development Block Grant of \$11 million that is to come into the State, but instead this money was going to be used to target in on economic development. You know, those kinds of things look-- Although it is needed, the priority is misplaced. I think housing and feeding the poor and making sure that they are taken care of is a priority. I think the Jobs Bill that was signed by Congress, could take care of the economic development situation in some way.

But, I think this \$11 million should be targeted in some way for housing. Maybe when DCA comes before us we can suggest that to them.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I know you will, Assemblyman.

Thank you for your testimony. We will now excuse the witnesses.

Is the Reverend Karl Esmark present? (affirmative reply) I will then call upon the Reverend Karl Esmark to testify. Reverend, thank you for coming.

R E V E R E N D K A R L E S M A R K: Thank you for the opportunity to attend. I have no prepared statement, so I will be reading from my own notes and making an extemporaneous kind of presentation. I hope that meets your needs.

The first thing is, as I sat down and looked around the room, I did not see any of the constituency that we are talking about represented here. There are tens of thousands of people in New Jersey with a particular and very peculiar kind of need for housing -- home and shelter. We have had, in the course of the last few months, contact with several thousands of those people.

The second thing is, I think the time has come for us to put aside the rhetoric and all the good words, and to get down to the business of confronting the problem and doing something about it in a constructive way. I think that means going beyond the creation of study committees. I think it means going beyond the constrictions of certain political allegiances and ties. I think it means meeting people where their needs are, and in this situation that is on the streets, at the bus stops, in the train terminals, and under the bridges. I think that as far as I am concerned as a clergyman, a large part of the problem we are facing today is a spiritual one. It is one in which a society has decided that a certain few are to be privileged, and that there are going to be many who will be lacking and will not have even the most basic amenities of life.

By way of historical comment, I will say what Winston Churchill said: that a society is known by the way it keeps its cemeteries. Many Americans believe we are known by the way we administer our jails. But, I believe in the end that, at least for today -- and perhaps for tomorrow and some time to come -- we are going to be known by how well we take care of all our people, and that is going to include those with the least, as well any benefits that accrue to those with the most.

Now, you yourself, rightly I think, commented on New York State, and New York State's emphasis, most recently, on providing a great deal of money -- in the tens of millions -- over the course of the next three years to address the problem of the homeless.

In New Jersey, as far as I know -- at least judging by my own experience, and I admit to the fact that is is limited -- we have had very little available to us in any form. For you, as political leaders of our State, to represent the homeless is to, in one sense, put yourself in a very difficult position. These folks -- most of them -- don't vote. They have to have a place of residence and they have to have a mailbox in order to vote. Nor do these people often pay taxes. As far as most of the other people of this State are concerned, socially these people are often people that are feared because they are unknown, or disliked because they are unclean -- or they are perceived to be unclean.

They, themselves, often have the same kind of image of their situation that we have. They feel the pain. They feel the frustration and the certain knowledge that they are the castoffs.

As far as who they are, they go all the way from business executives who have dropped out, to farm people who have never had an opportunity to find out who and what they are. They span the entire spectrum of our society. And, it is not without possibility that one day one of us might be among their numbers.

The types that come to us, from our experience in New Brunswick, have been a variety of individuals, men and women, couples. Recently, and most often, we have come into contact, unfortunately, with more families. I know that too has been mentioned here this morning. We find we can help some of these people. We find that we cannot help many in all the ways we would like to, because our service is limited. We find that we can offer them housing. We can offer them food, temporarily. But, their needs are going to go beyond this as well.

I think you are correct today to look at the problem in this way, and in this place, in order to start to do something about a horrendous problem that is growing day by day.

In my own case, in New Brunswick we have spent the last three years trying to establish a house for the homeless. It is called, "My Father's House." It was put in place the first part of February. It has been given a ninety day, what I will call "dispensation", which means that by the end of next month, we will, officially anyway, be out of business and out of grace. The program itself has been based on volunteer help from the very outset. Its initial funding was between \$8 and \$10 thousand. In the last six weeks, sixty-five persons have used the facility, some on multiple evenings. As it is located on George Street in New Brunswick, we are finding that a three year investment for a ninety-day program is a terrific amount of time and money to pay. And, based on that, if I were going to make a suggestion, or to make a plea to the State, it would be that you take the money you receive, as you receive it, and organize some kind of a task force of people from the State -- people who have specific and very special kinds of expertise -- and have them come into the communities and help us to organize the people in our communities who are interested in helping. They could help us to approach the State about the kinds of licenses, about the kinds of variances, and about the kinds of things the State knows about, and no one else knows, that have to be enforced and done. With that kind of help, we could put these things into place a lot sooner than a three-year period.

The second thing is, it would be helpful to me if that same group would create a pamphlet, or a brochure, that would state the problem clearly for the different communities, outline the possibilities, and then offer solutions as to how we can get local people involved. You see, my answer to problems is not to create a bigger bureaucracy; it is to see how the people in a democratic society, such as our Country has, who have legitimate concerns, can become involved in these kinds of programs -- and they are out there; they are in this room. So, I would like to see them do those things for us.

By way of my final comment, this is an appropriate time, I think, for you to have these discussions about this particular issue. This is a holy week in the Christian Church. Today is Maundy Thursday, and this evening in our church I will be celebrating the communion.

that is a recreation of the Last Supper. I am informed by many that it is the last supper for a lot of people. I am also reminded that our Lord was born in a stable because there was no room at the inn. I would like His next visit to be somewhat more appropriate and commodious.

When we are asked -- as we are asked by people of a concerned State -- "where will these individuals sleep, where will they eat, and how will they live?", I would like us to be able to say that there will be a place to sleep, and there will be food to eat, and every life, no matter how it might be perceived by others, has a deep meaning because it comes from a power that is far beyond our own. I thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Reverend, I thank you. I think the members of the Committee are touched. I know I am touched by your spirituality, and the suggestion you made. It is, in fact, Holy Week in the Christian Religion, and it is also Passover Week in the Jewish faith, and there is a liturgy there that speaks of housing strangers. So, I think we are all united in that view.

I think your remark about the need for technical assistance at the local level, and a pamphlet or brochure, has been duly noted and, of course, will be in the transcript. I can assure you that we will include that in the legislation that we are drafting.

I am tempted to say something about the City of New Brunswick and its need for you, Reverend, but at a State meeting all I will say is, thank God there are men like you in the State. Whatever we can do, and whatever we can achieve legislative consensus for, we will do. I appreciate your testimony.

John, did you have any questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: The only thing I would like to say to the Reverend Esmark is that I appreciate your being here this morning. Your testimony has really given us hope.

REVEREND ESMARK: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you very much. If you give that kind of testimony typically, you will get very few questions, Reverend.

I am not sure that anyone I call on next is going to appreciate the opportunity to follow that testimony, but, nonetheless, I will continue our hearing this morning with Mr. Jerry Thiers from the New Jersey Catholic Conference. Is he here?

New Jersey State Library

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KALIK: I just came up with him.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Is he here?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KALIK: He is on his way in. May I come up?

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Yes, I wish you would. I would like to welcome to this table a very distinguished member of this Legislature, the Chairperson of the Assembly State Government Committee, a ranking member -- I believe the Vice Chairman -- of the Assembly Revenue, Finance, and Appropriation's Committee, and now in her third term in the Assembly, the Honorable Barbara Kalik of Burlington County.

A S S E M B L Y W O M A N B A R B A R A F. K A L I K:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the commercial. I happen to be one of the lucky people, I have a home. I am not homeless. And, when you put your bill in, several months ago, for \$30 thousand for New Brunswick's homeless, I must admit to you a sense of jealousy came over me, because I hadn't thought of it before you did. I thought about it, and I thought about it. We look at the urban areas as hotbeds, or places where homelessness is prevalent. I come from a beautiful suburban area of single family homes with beautiful lawns and tree-lined drives, and I must tell you that in my beautiful suburban county, most of it rural, we too have homelessness. As a matter of fact, we have something called, "Emergency Services," which has been dealing with the homeless for years. And, I would like to tell you that in the past two years, they have gone from serving 200 people a month to serving 1,000 people a month in our beautiful, suburban Burlington County.

They have attempted to do this on a budget of \$15,000. You know, they cannot provide housing, because there are no houses, and so they send these people to motels at the rate of ten, or twelve, or fifteen, or twenty dollars a night, and then they attempt to find some kind of temporary shelter for them. They cannot send people to a motel to sleep without providing some kind of supper, some kind of breakfast, and some kind of sustenance money before to sending them on their way to who knows where?

So, I, in fact, asked Mr. Lesniak -- who put a bill in similar to yours -- if I could attach a request to his bill seeking

some money for Burlington County. He graciously said I could, and I think that was when you decided that we should look at this situation, statewide; that we should not, in fact, be as parochial as we would all be because it was a problem that was, in fact, statewide.

It seems to me that this problem, since we are so fortunate in New Jersey due to the fact that our unemployment rate has not, in fact, equaled that of the rest of the country, has caused us to become a haven for those who are unemployed, and who think for some reason that they can come to New Jersey and get a job quicker than they can in other parts of the country. They have come here with their families in cars.

I heard the Reverend talk about bus stations, train stations, and places where the homeless could stay. I must tell you, we do not have bus stations. We do not have train stations. We have people who come and knock on the door.

I encountered someone like that three years ago, and I have to tell you that I let them in, and they stayed with me for two and one-half years. (laughter) This was simply because I could not, in fact, turn somebody away who came to my front door with a suitcase and said, "I have no place to live." I am getting rid of my big house now, not because of that experience but because it is too big for me, and I won't be able to do that anymore. I think that is a situation that we all find ourselves in. We would like to be able to do that, but we also would like to be able to refer people to an agency, or some kind of place where we know this kind of service can be provided.

I just came to tell you that we, in the suburban areas, have as much need as you in the urban areas, and I am so glad that you are giving us that consideration.

Mr. Thiers is supposed to be here, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I will call on him later. I appreciate your testimony very much.

Barbara, I am not surprised; I am delighted that other members of the Legislature have come, as you have. Others are scheduled to speak later.

Assemblyman Frank Kelly, who is not with us on this particular date, has a similar story, and it is a story that he

declined to tell on the floor of the Assembly. I think it wrong for me to tell it, rather than Frank, but I can tell you that he too has had a personal experience with a homeless person, and he wound up handling it in a very touching and appropriate fashion. So, the legislators across the State know this problem, and the fact that you tell me and this Committee that it is in your suburban and rural county is testimony to the need for a statewide bill. Thank you, Barbara.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KALIK: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I would also like to say something. The testimony by our beautiful Assemblywoman here is nothing new. Her concern has always been there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KALIK: Thank you, John.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I would also like to say, Barbara, that on April 26th I am appearing before the Revenue Committee, asking for an appropriation for next year on behalf of the homeless.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KALIK: Mr. Chairman, let me indicate to you that I chair the Federal Aid Subcommittee, and of course we are talking here in terms of Federal dollars.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KALIK: And, I certainly would be more than happy to, in fact, put in a resolution -- I am sure Mr. Watson would go along with that -- for those Federal dollars to be appropriated in just that fashion. If you would just give me the page, line, number, etc., I think we could get that in as quickly as possible, and attempt to deal with it through the Federal Aid Subcommittee.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I appreciate that. I will be appearing before your Committee on April 26th.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KALIK: Very good. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you.

All right, we will hold up on the testimony of Mr. Thiers then. He will be with us shortly. We have been talking about Trenton, and we have been talking about Middlesex County, and we have talked a little bit about Burlington. I wonder if Ms. Anne Christensen from the Shelter Homeless People Task Force of Hudson is here? Ms. Christensen, let me say that this Committee is deeply concerned with the housing problem across the whole State. The problems of Hudson County have

been brought to our attention with great force by the Committee's distinguished Vice Chairman, Joe Charles -- Assemblyman Charles -- who is from your county. Assemblyman Charles is unable to be with us, but as you know he chairs, at my request, the Subcommittee on Public Housing, and only last week he had a major public hearing in Hudson County on those very legitimate and deep concerns. So, I would say to you that you are not only welcome here by the Committee as a whole, but welcomed in absentia by your own distinguished Assemblyman, Joe Charles. With that, I welcome you to our hearing.

ANNE CHRISTENSEN: Thank you. I am very happy to be here. I do not have a prepared statement, although I have zerox copies of pertinent material, if I may enter it into the record.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Yes. Without objection, this will be entered, verbatim, into the hearing transcript. Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Thank you. I too feel it is very appropriate that the hearing is being held this week. It is Passover. To me, it commemorates the deliverance of God's people, and also our courage and faith in the face of odds. I think your task is to go against great odds by trying to persuade the rest of the Assembly to see the validity of sheltering homeless people. It is also Holy Thursday, a day on which Christ gave a mandate to love one another as He has loved us.

I plan to speak about the scope of the problem, my experience with the problem, and any recommendations that I might have.

Jersey City, as you may know, according to the 1980 census, has one out of five people living below the poverty level. I feel since homeless people do not fill out census forms, that we may even have more than that. I think homelessness is a symptom of many problems. It is a symptom of unemployment, no jobs, and benefits that have run out. By the way, everyone that I have met at the shelter -- over 200 people in two months -- has expressed a great desire to have employment. It is a symptom of expensive or non-existing housing, deinstitutionalization of mental patients, alcoholism, evictions, people that are sick and out of work, welfare grants that are only \$119 a month, or disability, which is only \$178 a month, burn-out victims, and inflation.

I would like to explode the myth that people choose to live this way. I feel I have not met one person who has a phobia about being inside and being warm. I think once a spiral starts for a person, it is very hard to climb back up. There are great, great demands in Hudson County. There are very few agencies out there to help them. There is Anthony House, that shelters women and children. The Salvation Army and Flynn House are consistently filled. I do not feel, with all due respect, that it is extraordinarily important at this point to have an exact number of how many homeless people there are. I think we all agree that there are homeless people. Once you get into programs, you are going to find out what the numbers are. It is almost impossible to do your research ahead of time.

I would also point out that there is nothing for families who wish to stay together in Hudson County, in terms of shelter. The types of people that we have seen at St. John's Episcopal Shelter, agewise, range from nine months to seventy-seven years of age. We have young, black, men and women, families, alcoholics, people in wheel chairs, the blind, the deaf, and the mentally ill. People are alienated and disconnected. They have a poor self image. They are downtrodden. They are ignored. They are victimized. They are the working poor. We have people who have had jobs and who cannot afford to find a place. They are one step away, sometimes, from disaster. They are at a low ebb.

I cannot begin to tell you the stories of despair that people have told me -- of people who said they go to sleep at night and they wonder if they are going to wake up sane, the pressures of living on the street are so intense. People who have been suicidal, feel, again, on the edge -- on the brink. Friends of mine sell plasma to eat. They go to the local bank twice a week. It is a real grind to survive on the street.

This can, indeed, happen to anyone. I think that emergency shelters are, in a way, a safety net, a safety net that has to be patched up. It can be a social services intensive care unit. And, I think it is a safety net that has to become a trampoline.

I have not put myself into this work to continue to have emergency shelters. There may always be a need to have emergency shelters, but, again, the real need is affordable housing.

Briefly, to give you our task force's history, we are an ecumenical group based in Hudson County, that has perceived a need. We are still unincorporated. God knows how we have gone this far without legal sanction, but we will get to doing that some day. We started in November. We perceived the need, and we started shopping around. First, we just blindly, optimistically thought, "Well, we see the need, why doesn't everyone else?" And, nobody was leaping forward to do anything. We analyzed it a little bit and we realized that people were broke. We started by realizing: "The emergency is this winter; we have to do it right now. The churches and the synagogues are the people who are going to have to start a program." But, still, nobody was stepping forward, and our perception was that it was the lack of money and it was the fear of leaping into this. So, our task force agreed to be the agent. We shopped around. We said, "Give us the the space and we will do everything else." Finally, St. John's Episcopal Church in Jersey City, which is near the Medical Center, agreed to help.

We opened, covertly, on Friday, January 28th. We announced our opening in the newspaper on Monday, January 31st. Public notice in the newspaper was on February 1st. At my office, I received a call from the Fire Department, and I was told that this was an unlawful use of a facility, and that we were to cease and desist sheltering homeless people. We were inspected that night, after great soul searching, and after Bob Hayes, the Attorney for the National Coalition for the Homeless, hopped on the PATH train with me and come to Jersey City to inspect the sanctuary and to have a meeting with the fire officials, who did not arrive.

The next day, a summons was served. The third day, we were in court with three pro bono lawyers. I feel this was extraordinarily quick work on the part of justice in Hudson County. We were able to mobilize many concerned people, and the press.

By the way, I want to point out that I have the strongest admiration for the people in the fire department. My father was a fireman. I wholeheartedly agree that people have to be safe and protected. But, their ruling was that we needed a certificate of occupancy. They said we were a boarding home, and as a boarding home

we needed a sprinkler system, smoke alarms, call stations that ring in the fire house, etc.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Excuse me. I have been called away for a moment, and I have asked Mr. Watson to chair the meeting in my absence. I will be back.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: At the February 3rd court hearing, we were allowed to have fifteen people, and we were told to come back to court on February 18th, after we had discussed things with the fire department. We did, and we were told we needed all those things, plus they threw in a few more -- we needed fire alarms and smoke alarms. We did this, and then we went back to court. After doing all of that, the third time the number allowed was raised to twenty people. Of course, by now we had forty people a night coming to this very large church hall -- a very open area.

At first we were told to set up until March 31st, and we accepted that as we worked on other options. Then were told we could set up until April 15th. We have opted to close tonight. Tonight is also our last supper with our friends, and we are now moving into a stage of advocacy with the city government, and perhaps the State government too.

We are still under the jurisdiction of the court even though we have cleared the violations. We have to appear again on April 15th.

I tell you, on the record, that we have sheltered sixty people a night, in what I feel are very safe conditions. We have no smoking. We have an open area. We have many smoke alarms and fire extinguishers. We have three people who stay awake on fire watch all night.

In reference to the sprinkler system, I would point out that sprinklers do not turn on until about three hundred degrees Fahrenheit, and anyone in that open hall would have burned up long ago.

A sprinkler system is perhaps very much needed in a situation where you have enclosed rooms and you do not wish the fire to spread, or property to be damaged.

My reason for going into such great detail is, from the State there must be a "handy-dandy" set of the same regulations that "mom and "pop" organizations can refer to in setting up an emergency shelter. I would like to point out that Hackensack tried to set up a shelter in the Salvation Army Hall. They were just going to let people sit in chairs. They were not even allowed to open because the building inspector called up and said, "You are obviously a sit-up dormitory and I am not sure what the rules are, but you just can't open until I check it out." Well, it went back and forth. The Salvation Army was not allowed to open. There was a lot of public pressure. Finally, the ruling came down that they were probably a motel -- yes, that was it: "You are a motel, and you have to apply those regulations."

I have a set of the BOCA Code, and I know what motel regulations are like. I think that is a prohibitive use of codes, and I think any code official in any town that wants to stop sheltering homeless people can have a field day with this. There must be some way people can be protected so that they don't have to choose the option of either not burning to death or not freezing to death.

I point out that we have had over two hundred different people, from January 28th through March 31st. I would also point out that we didn't have a terrific deal. We had no beds because we were told we were not to be a dormitory. People slept on the floor -- on rugs that were put on the floor. There were no showers. I have to tell you that the "essence of shelter" is not something that you would want to bottle and sell. It is pretty awful. And, I would have to apologize to these people -- you know, "we don't have a better place for you." Yet, two hundred different people came to us. We didn't even have enough blankets. At one point we were told, "You cannot cook in the kitchen." We disregarded that order because it became very expensive to buy cold cuts.

I would like to talk briefly about the problem that homeless people have with welfare. As you know, one is allowed either \$119 in general assistance, or if one is disabled and not able to work, he or she is allowed \$178. I don't have to tell you what a furnished room in Jersey City costs.

There also seems to be this myth, which I was pleased to hear the Commissioner explode, that you do not need a permanent address. He has informed me that he will get in contact, personally, with Jersey City on that.

I have also been informed over the phone that since people have received free room and board at our shelter, they are going to get cut back one-third of their allotment. Now, this seems to be extraordinarily hard-hearted.

Also, we were going to advise our friends to buddy-up, and get two or three people to room together. But, if you do that, your allotment is cut further. I know that you have compassionate hearts, and I would also point out that what I am going to do now does not reflect on any personal plight in your life, but I have here envelopes for each one of you that are life histories, in brief, of real people.

Mr. Schwartz, you have received \$178. I sacrificed our monopoly set for this. Okay. A room costs \$50 per week, plus \$50 security. There are five rent days this month. Don't forget, it costs \$1.25 to cash your check. You can afford to live in a room and eat for one week. You also forfeit your deposit because you didn't stay one month. P.S., since you had been in an emergency shelter and received free room and board, your grant has been cut back one-third; please return the overpayment.

Mr. Watson, you have received \$119. You have also received \$1,000. You have been driven by financial desperation to run drugs for someone. Unfortunately, you were caught. The family, "has put up big bail money for you." You are afraid to offer state's evidence. You are going to do time, but you will have a roof over your head -- as they say, "three hots and a cot."

I will read the other three people's, briefly -- or would you rather I proceed?

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Well, I would rather you permit the information provided in the other three envelopes to be--

MR. CHRISTENSEN: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Without objection, it is so ordered.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Okay. I made my point. I know that you know the point I am trying to make, but you have to bring that point home to the other people in the Assembly.

In terms of counseling, or services that homeless people need, there is no alcohol detoxification program in Hudson County. I urge you to support the bill before you, in order to get monies for alcohol rehabilitation programs. We have had to smuggle people into other counties and out of state to get them treated.

Community services for the mentally ill also needs to be broadened. And, affordable housing, of course, is very important.

You know, there are a lot of people who will say to you, "Well, this is going to cost a lot of money, and what are the benefits?" Well, here are the benefits: There were people who survived the blizzard of this year. There are alcoholics who have been rehabilitated. A leg was saved. It would have been more costly to the taxpayers if this man's leg had to be amputated. A man's arm was saved when he did not receive the medication from the Medical Center to stop the infection. We paid for it out of pocket. Suicides were prevented. Unfortunately, one man's suicide was not prevented. Recently, on March 29th, in Jersey City, a man killed himself, a man who was homeless and unemployed. I have to feel very deeply that if there had been more help for this person, he may not have killed himself.

The crime rate has been lowered. Ex cons have told me this. When I said, "Where would you be if you weren't here? I was told, "You know, there is a lot less crime on the streets these days." There have been fewer cases of frost bite. A few people have started to become taxpayers again, people who have gotten jobs and have that cushion so they could move into an apartment.

I have to say in human benefits it has been a very precious experience. These people are both helpless and homeless. They are the meek of the earth. They are the people who are not taking up knives and guns for their survival.

In terms of recommendations, what does the shelter need? It needs to be a safe place and a warm place. It needs to have sleeping accommodations. They can be mats on the floor that roll up; they don't have to be luxurious beds. It needs showers, storage areas for personal belongings, and a place where they can get phone calls, job interviews, mail, counseling, referrals, and food.

There is a very key point in your recommendations to your fellow Assembly members, and that is that any solution to the problems of homeless people has to take on a three-pronged approach. It has to be government; it has to be religious organizations, and it has to be the social agencies. We need space. We need money. We need volunteers. We need counseling skills. We need to avoid the warehouse approach. We should keep in mind the National Coalition for the Homeless' recommendation of the three-tier approach to emergency shelter.

The first tier is to get people off the streets, to help them survive. The second tier is to give them the counseling that they need in order to plug in. And, the third tier is affordable housing.

Also, I would add that emergency shelter is not just a nighttime need. It is a twenty-four hour need. You can't turn people out on the street to get crazier, or hungrier, or victimized in the daytime hours. You should provide a comprehensive proposal that covers twenty-four hours a day.

Shelters do not have to be costly. There are buildings that are owned by churches or government agencies -- a school building, a church hall. Buildings can be rehabilitated in Jersey City. There are talented homeless people who are electricians, carpenters, plasterers, and painters. They would love to have an opportunity to work, to have a stake in something. The cost would only be heat and staff. Guests have been helping our shelter. They are quite willing to help and quite able to help. You can tap into community service, prisons, and parole folks who have been in our shelter and who have been of great help. Food can be donated from churches and food banks.

In summary, I would say that I am almost embarrassed because we are asking for so little. Again, I point out that I am not speaking directly to you; you are obviously very committed. This is a message, in the record of this hearing, to all of your fellows. We are just asking to preserve human life. I have often asked myself, during very rough times, "Why is it that people don't see the need?" And, I feel in a way, to use theological term, that it has to be a conversion experience. People have to be turned towards this problem. They have to have the heart to see it. I urge you to act now. It is not a

wintertime problem; it is an emergency. If there were a catastrophe, an earthquake or a flood, we wouldn't have studies; we would jump in and we would do it. I would ask that you must say to your fellows: "You must act as if you too were going to be on the streets." I thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I thank you for your testimony. I apologize for missing a minute or two of it. It is poignant, it is apt, it is first-hand, and it is useful and instructive for the Committee. I do not have one bit of doubt in my mind that you save lives. I do not, in any way, question that. We know that our social programs do save lives. In my own town, in the year before we started our Senior Citizen Program, there were four senior citizen suicides. There have been none since. So, we know that. We know that you are right. And, we know that you are saving lives.

What you asked, as near as I can tell -- you don't have a prepared statement, so I am going to have to read the transcript in order to study it with care -- seems "doable" to me. I want to say one thing to you, just in case you did not hear it earlier. I guess I have two things to say. One is that we are going to act. There will be a resolution drawn up by this Committee prior to the cessation of the Revenue, Finance, and Appropriations Committee activity. We are going to ask them to appropriate the little over one million dollars of Federal money that is coming to New Jersey for this cause, and before this year is over it is my hope that we will have some of the Federal money pumped out. I will also appear, as I said earlier, before the Appropriations Committee on April 26th, asking for a State appropriation.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: I will be there too.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Okay. I appreciate that support.

I do think the emphasis you have put on shelter is appropriate. I think we want to balance that. If you heard some of the earlier statements we made, we want to balance that with some of the other kinds of counseling that you spoke of, which is not always thought of as a shelter activity -- you do, and I commend you. That is not always the case. Some of the people who have come before us and talked about shelter have not included counseling. That is what I

meant earlier when I said this Committee is not interested in providing new shopping bags for shopping bag ladies. We don't just want to recycle destitute people into temporary housing. We do want to do the counseling and the job training in order to give the hope and the creativity needed.

I really have no questions. I have to study this in order to ask you questions. I will assure you of this: One, the Committee will take action; and, two, every person who has testified here and every group that has testified here will get a copy of our various resolutions and bills, the first of which -- as I told you -- will be out before April 26th -- for your comment in advance. So, I thank you.

Mr. Watson

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ms. Christensen for appearing.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: I'm sorry I sentenced you to jail.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: We are also going to give you back your monopoly set.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Oh, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I was going to ask you if we could spend it.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Not in Trenton.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I would like to ask you a couple of questions. Number one, what is your funding source now?

MS. CHRISTENSEN: It is totally out of good people's pockets -- and very much in debt, I might add. We have no government money.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: No government money at all. Have you applied for any county help or local help?

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Well, as I mentioned -- maybe I didn't mention this -- we formed in November, found a place at the end of January, and in four days, we opened. Now, many people in the business-- You see, our method is the entrepreneurial method, which is not the text book or the bureaucratic method. We were so moved by the urgency of the situation that we didn't sit down and figure out how much money it was going to take, and we didn't know if we were going to have the money. So, we plunged in.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: My second question is, you were saying there should be some emergency "regs" coming from -- or recommendation -- this housing committee.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: (continuing) To make sure that you don't misplace people in an emergency. And, I wholeheartedly agree with what you are saying. How would you structure that?

MS. CHRISTENSEN: The point is, the regulations on the books for dormitories are apparently the strictest and the best in terms of someone's safety. You don't live in such a safe place, neither do I. And, yet, this is a real emergency situation. I want people to be safe, but I don't want them to be legislated out of an opportunity to be in a safe enough place. There do have to be guidelines. I don't want the church to open a firetrap.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Right.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: I am not a code person, but you should--

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: We will have to take this up with the Committee. I just thought that you would probably have some recommendation. That's fine. We will address this problem.

My third question is, you said that this was a big auditorium?

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: And, you had problems finding blankets and things of that sort?

MS. CHRISTENSEN: We were not allowed to have cots. We were told, "We are bending the rules. We will let you do it. It is an emergency. But, we are bending the rules, and don't even think about cots because then it would really be a dormitory, and cots go up in smoke" -- and all this kind of stuff.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Where did you get your money from?

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Donations and \$30 from the Red Cross.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I would suggest one other place, Civil Defense; they generally have a lot of extra blankets in the counties that could be used. But, other than that, I really appreciate your testimony here today. We will take this into consideration.

MS. CHRISTENSEN: Thank you very much. Thank you both

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you. At this time, I will call on another very distinguished member of the New Jersey General Assembly, a woman whose concern for people has been manifested since her election to the Assembly, and before that, as an elected official in her county, the Honorable Cathy Costa. I note as Ms. Costa comes to the witness chair, that she serves as the legislative representative for the New Jersey Commission on Aging. She is a distinguished member of the Revenue, Finance, and Appropriations Committee, and she serves on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. She is somebody who has talked to me personally, and I know she has talked to the other members of the Legislature about the plight of the homeless. With that, I welcome you to our Committee hearing, Cathy.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CATHERINE COSTA: Thank you, Assemblyman Schwartz. Assemblyman Watson, it is good to see you. I must commend you, first of all, for having this hearing. As you know, this is a very serious problem, and you are aware of it and so am I aware of it. We are putting in bills, trying to help people -- help the needy -- and I would just like to give my views on what I see, as far as my county is concerned.

I still serve as a Freeholder in Burlington County. I was listening to the young lady just before me, and I was very interested in what she had to say. She made a lot of good sense, and I also detected a little bit of anger, which I can thoroughly understand. One looks about and says, "Why aren't these people helped? Why isn't somebody doing something about it?" Then you look at politicians and say, "Why aren't they helping?" I guess maybe we get to view politicians as being hardhearted sometimes. But, I have not seen that, being a politician and having a lot to do with politicians. It is just a matter of trying to find a way to help these people.

I have a bill in that calls for some \$200 thousand, to be administered through counties to volunteer organizations, because right now I didn't know of any other way to do it.

In my county, we have volunteer groups--

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Excuse me, Assemblywoman, that bill is not before this Committee, is it?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COSTA: I don't know. It is A-3159.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I will check that out. It is not my judgment that it is, but please go on.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COSTA: In my county, right now we are trying to find out what kind of assistance we have for people. Our assistance consists of volunteer groups who are asking people to take a family in, or a person or two, for an evening, just to give them shelter and some help. Food is taken care of by donation. The food problem isn't so bad. We get help through Catholic Charities, and other places where we obtain food. But, it is the place to sleep that presents a problem.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COSTA: In my capacity as a Freeholder, people come to me with many problems that a Freeholder does not normally handle. One of them was a social worker who called me and said, "I don't know where else to turn. I have tried everywhere else, Cathy. Can you help?" It concerned a man and his two sons. They were living in a chicken coop for about six months. And, as you know, there are no windows in a chicken coop. They had a fire outside in order to warm themselves. The man was ill and his son was trying to find a job. He was over eighteen. The other one was sixteen years old, and I felt they could come under Welfare. She told me that they couldn't get anything through Welfare because they had to have a domicile in order to be eligible for anything. Well, that's when I hit the ceiling, of course, and I started moving a few mountains and got these people into a motel. Therefore, they had a domicile and we were able to get them some help through Welfare.

A man called me recently, and he and his wife and four children were living in a car. I tried to get them some help. It is a matter of trying to convince their relatives sometimes. You can't even get their relatives to help.

We have a family who is living in a tent -- well, there are more than one -- in a certain area of my county, in Browns Mills. A very frail young woman who just had a baby came to the Welfare Board trying to get help. She didn't have a place to stay. She was thrown out of where she was living. The only way we could convince her mother to take her in was by bribing her with some bags of food. So, these are the problems that come before us.

Mainly, we have a problem with single adults who have had some alcoholism problems, and their families don't want them. They walk around the streets. One could never get them a job, because after all, they smell, and there is no place for them to go. This includes a large segment of our population.

Another problem we have is, we are a corridor State, and a lot of people are coming north looking for jobs and sleeping in their cars because they have no place to sleep -- and there are no jobs for them.

So, we desperately need sort of a "Rescue Mission". Some counties have a Rescue Mission. In my county we don't have a Rescue Mission. I think the other counties are really getting annoyed with Burlington County putting their people into the Missions of the other counties. This is something that we desperately need. We need emergency money in order to shelter people. I have been looking into schools. We do have a lot of schools that have been closed due to the declining enrollment. That might be one avenue, but there are a lot of rules and regulations as far as taking over the schools is concerned.

So, this is something that I would like to see this Committee work on -- affordable housing, number one, and a Rescue Mission, number two, for emergency placement of people if there is no place to put them.

I was speaking with a social worker just today and she said, "I can guarantee you that at about 4:15 today we will have people coming in saying, "We have no place to stay," and with the holiday coming, we will be closed tomorrow and there just won't be anywhere to place them.

So, this is the plight. I am sure you are aware of it. I just thought I would give you the experiences of my county, and hopefully we can come up with something.

ASSEMBLERMAN SCHWARTZ: Your testimony is, of course, very apt, Cathy, in my judgment. Let me say a few things. One is, as Commissioner Albanese said, and as I said in my opening statement, there is going to be over a million dollars coming to the State of New Jersey out of the Emergency Anti-Recession Bill that the President

signed last week. I will be appearing before your Committee on April 26th, asking for a resolution to appropriate those dollars in a way that will be in conformity with your legislation, Ray Lesniak's legislation, my legislation, and that of others. That will pump the dollars out to the counties, and from the counties to the various non-profit and social agencies. So, that is going to go forward.

On that date I will also speak with your Committee, in the hope that there will be a State appropriation for certain kinds of things that are unlikely to be eligible for Federal activity -- a small State appropriation, but nonetheless a State commitment as well as the Federal commitment.

Commissioner Albanese appeared before us concerning a number of questions, one of them dealt with the question of needing a legal domicile. He informed us that he has changed that policy, so I know that you are pleased with that -- with reference to municipal and general assistance.

Much else that you tell us is of interest and is valuable. Learning about the problems and of your activities is helpful to the Committee. We knew about people living in the street. We knew about people living in cars. The shopping bag ladies -- the one thing I have said repeatedly throughout this meeting is that we want to be sure this Committee does not draft a bill for new shopping bags for shopping bag ladies. We want to solve the problem, not just throw some dollars at it. But, I did not know about people living in chicken coops. I didn't know about people in Burlington County living in tents. It just enlarges our vision, and I hope it deepens our commitment. We need legislators like you to tell us the stories. You know, despite all the talk -- we can have angry people from Jersey City and frightened people from around the State, and we can have all the data that Middlesex County came with this morning; a mountain of new data generated in the last three weeks on top of the statistics we saw -- the bottom line is, and I am speaking to somebody who knows, it takes forty-one votes in the Assembly and twenty-one in the Senate, plus the Governor's signature to do anything. We are going to need your help. With your help, and with the help of the others who have testified before us -- other legislators -- and with the work of the Committee, perhaps we

can put together a series of bills, not just one bill, because we have had testimony about the need for regulatory change, both in the area of zoning and flexible rehab codes, and the need for technical assistance as well as the appropriation you spoke of, and that I responded to. So, we need about three or four bills, it seems to me. Maybe we will put them in under this bill and maybe we won't. But, in any case, we are going to need your support. We are grateful that you came.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COSTA: Thank you. The emergency part is the housing, somewhere to put people overnight -- to give them some place to stay. As the young lady before me said, the second part will come later. I think what we have to do is to take care of the emergency first, and find some rehabilitation for them.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I appreciate that.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I would just like to say to Cathy that you are always on the right side of people's issues, and I am always happy to be with you. We served together as Freeholders for many years. When you say, Mr. Chairman, that she comes with great experience, that is true; she comes with great experience, and I am just happy to be able to serve with her.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COSTA: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you. The members have appreciated your testimony this morning, Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COSTA: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I had previously called Mr. Thiers, is he back in the room? (negative response) Okay. Then at this time, I will call, if he is in the room, the Reverend Gerhardt Kugler of Union City.

Let me announce as the Reverend approaches the witness table, that it is my intention not to break for lunch, but to continue forward with this hearing. The hearing is scheduled to culminate around 2:00 or 2:30 P.M. I will now ask Assemblyman Watson to assume the Chair in a few minutes to continue the hearing, and I will be returning myself in about fifteen or twenty minutes.

But, we will begin now with the testimony of the Reverend Gerhardt Kugler. Welcome.

REVEREND GERHARDT KUGLER: Thank you for the opportunity to be here and for your concern -- your individual concerns as well. I do not have a formal statement. I do have copies of the update on the shelter that we are running at our church, which runs through December 12th. We are working on a current update. But, our reason for being involved, and a countywide perspective, are presented in this past update. I would not enter that.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: You would not enter it in the record?

REVEREND KUGLER: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Okay, without objection, I will not enter it into the record.

REVEREND KUGLER: My comments will be cohesive enough. I would appreciate these being entered through, of course.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: They will be, Reverend.

REVEREND KUGLER: From August 1, 1981, through November 1, 1982, we provided the only -- and I say that tragically, not braggadocio -- free, therefore truly emergency, shelter for homeless, non-alcoholic men in all of northern New Jersey. That is run in our Parish Hall, with our congregation's mixed blessing. They have approved it, because in our structure the vote of the congregation is the bottom of the pyramid of the power base. Although I encouraged them to do this, I could not have done it without them.

I am the only full-time staff person at our shelter. I devote half of my time to the shelter, with the congregation paying me to be their Pastor full-time, but they allow me to do this. So, it is an effort that the congregation is really doing, and allowing.

In Hudson County we have had Anthony House, which you have heard of before. It is a shelter for women and children. It has existed for three years and has been run by a Franciscan Order. There has been at least one shelter for battered women. There are also shelters for alcoholic men, although not enough.

I am part of the Shelter Homeless People Task Force, which Anne Christensen chairs. We were privileged to have the founding meetings of that organization in our Parish Hall at St. John's Lutheran Church in Union City. We are still sheltering, and we are not going to close down until we run out of resources. We hope that we can phase

out by replacement, and I thank you for being a big light at the end of that tunnel.

Agin, for fifteen months, we were the only shelter for non-alcoholic men in all of northern New Jersey. If we knew of any other, it would have been easier to drive people there on a nightly basis, twenty or thirty miles even, than to do what we have been doing.

On November 1, 1982, Catholic Community Services of the Newark Archdiocese, opened a shelter with Federal money, just for the Cuban boat people, predominantly the men from the Port of Mariel exodus in Cuba, in April of 1980.

It was the homelessness of that particular group, the Mariel refugees, who impacted Union City and West New York -- in fact, the entire northeastern part of New Jersey and parts of New York -- that caused us to jump in.

Our congregation housed a nine-to-five ecumenical Lutheran/Catholic refugee service agency. -- again, with Federal money. The rectory is right next door and after five o'clock, and also before eight in the morning, those in great need would be at that door. I have literally found men sleeping in my doorway and at the foot of the entrance to the basement Parish Hall refugee office. This was one year, or fourteen or fifteen months after the refugees were in our area, which meant that Federal monies and the monies that the agencies had were running short. We have one of the highest rates of unemployment in our area, plus we have been impacted with about 15,000 of those refugees.

So, I just jumped in personally, with the blessing of the congregation, to take people in -- specifically that group, but not only that group. We have housed, since August 1, 1981, a total of 380 persons, predominantly men, but not only men; there were six or seven women and as many children. This was in our Parish Hall. When women were there, we would use my office, or the sacristy, or whatever, with a heater at night.

One hundred and ninety-three of the three hundred and eighty were the Cuban refugees, for a total of 7,150 to date. So, the average stay in our setting is twenty days. We wouldn't put anybody out into the street until some resource would come along, a job, or welfare, and

we would encourage both and put a little pressure on both. Our average nightly population is sixteen. It has been reduced to ten since February, because of the other shelters that have opened up over the winter in northern New Jersey. And, those shelters are, of course, the ones just for refugees in Newark. This is going to be open for sixteen months -- through two winters.

Then, we have St. John's Episcopal, which you have heard about, in Jersey City, which opened in February -- the end of January. Then we have the Hoboken Clergy Coalition at St. John's Lutheran Church, which at the beginning of this month opened up a shelter. They are going to try and go into the middle of April. And, Bergen County has its trailer in the county parking lot. I think they are thinking of closing soon, but they would like to stay open longer. Then, the Newark Coalition has a trailer, with sixty chairs. I think they got an extension, at least to the end of April.

The point is, at least by the end of April most of the other shelters, with the exception of the one that is just for the refugee men, Anthony House for women and children, and those for alcoholic men, will be closing, which means our particular situation, which flies just by faith, on a band-aid kind of operation, might be inundated. Although we have never had to turn anybody away, we have never had more than twenty-four. Tonight, or at least tomorrow night, with the closing of the shelter in Jersey City, I have some fears.

Our congregational setup is, we are poor, but we have gotten about \$16,000 in donations from churches, individuals, some arms of the church, some social agencies -- nothing from any municipality, although we have appealed to all. The cost to our congregation has been about \$35,000 in that twenty months time, and our total non-property assets are about \$18,000. This is our one hundred and fifth anniversary as a congregation, and at the end of this year we cannot project existing as a congregation with a full-time pastor for the first time in one hundred and five years.

It is a faith operation and I am not in despair about that. I have gone through my stages of grief and I am much more hopeful. I really feel God's grace has held us together.

I see The problem of homelessness close to the intensity of hunger, and I see it needing immediate medical attention. It is just God's mandate and some Golden Rule kind of empathy that says we have to do this -- and none of us are very far from it.

I am not trying to get involved in any kind of schmaltzy do-gooding. I don't do it perfectly in our shelter. It is a school of character for me as well.

We have some volunteers. We do not have volunteers overnight. We have gotten no hassles at all, believe me. Everybody sends people to us, from the Port Authority to the local mental health facilities, and the local welfare departments and police departments. We have had referrals from as far as Trenton State Hospital and even Kings County Hospital in New York.

I think not having any hassles is as bad a problem as getting hassles: Everybody will let you do it, and they will send people to you, meaning that they will not have to do it. So, it is a little less poignant a problem than St. John's Episcopal has been subjected to, but it is still part of the problem of public agencies not wanting to pull their resources together.

I want to thank the State, through its Cuban-Haitian Task Force for always having had, from the beginning of the refugee influx, money available to shelter the Cuban refugees. But, there wasn't anybody who would take that money -- none of the existing social agencies, including my church nationally, and none of the municipalities. Eventually, Catholic Community Services did. So, I am thankful for that Task Force which used Federal money. As mixed feelings as we have had about the refugee influx, Federally there was always money available to provide shelter if a county or municipality would pick it up. DYFS was the channel for that, and Carlos Westly would go hat in hand saying, "Well, we need a shelter; here is money for it; who is going to take it?" And, nobody did. But, eventually Catholic Community Services did, after fifteen months.

I also want to thank the Human Resources Division, or whoever handles welfare for the refugees, for putting some pressure on Hudson County; they provided Federal monies through the Welfare system to the Cuban refugees. Although the Cuban refugees had money available to

them, why were they on the street? It was taking two to four months for them to receive Welfare. County Welfare was processing only five or six refugees at a time, which means they would have to stand in line as early as six o'clock in the morning, and I would drive some of them down there to be among that number.

So, they were backed up. Money was available for shelter, money was available for welfare, but it was not getting through the pipeline. Hudson County, I guess, was trying to push the poor out, and if you can put any pressure on local welfare delivery services for the refugees with that Federal money -- and that is apart from municipal welfare, which is a different situation -- pressure is needed there also.

I see in our General Assistance Manuals not enough money maybe, but some money -- if budget lines could be realigned -- and a philosophy and physical structure to take care of homelessness, and we have to decide as a society if we want to do that or not. I see, with you here, a lot of encouragement that this will be done, and I am thankful for that. I need that encouragement, personally.

When it comes to the homelessness of the general population, from the beginning we always had a percentage of homeless men from the general population. Since November 1st, when the Cuban refugees had been very aptly taken care of by the Newark Archdiocese, we have had almost an equal number, nightly, of homeless men from the general population. And, they qualify, most of them, for municipal welfare. After a year, because I was so wrapped up with the Cuban refugees, I did not get a chance to focus on what was available through municipal welfare for single men and women. I was going under the myth that they had to have an address, which was kind of a self-defeating structure: You had to have money to have an address, and if you don't have an address and you were applying for money, you were not going to get any.

We called in Mr. Latzanich, from the State Department of Welfare, who is a kind of "enforcer" for municipal welfare in Hudson and Essex County. Seventy-five percent of the -- I don't need to tell you this, but it has to be said publicly because a lot of people don't know this -- municipal welfare money is State money. So, the State sets the standards and pays the bill. But, the client coming in for

municipal welfare is not aware of his or her rights. The client comes in humiliated, feeling guilty, and accepts what any authority figure tells them. It is easy for a caseworker to get cynical after a while, and that is usually what comes across -- cynicism.

A client bill of rights, as we see in nursing homes, should be posted in every Welfare department. I found case workers who didn't know -- and these are the laws that are available to the client -- that within twenty-four hours of a person saying they are homeless, if it cannot be proved that he or she is not homeless, that person is entitled to a full grant, without having to have an address. They didn't have to have an address. What having an address means is, the client has to do some work. They have to look for a place, get a note from a landlord who would be willing to accept the \$119 a month, and get his name and phone number. That note would be taken to the Welfare office, and Welfare, within twenty-four hours, has to pay that potential landlord. So, having an address doesn't mean having to have a place to live, but having permission to live somewhere. A lot of clients don't know that. A lot of agency people don't know that.

Also, if a room, etc., cannot be found in the local municipality, but can be found three towns away -- or five -- the local municipal Welfare can host, and has to host, that person who is homeless in their community, up to two months. That can be done. People don't know that.

Also, Welfare cannot say, if they are homeless and it cannot be proven they are not homeless, "Well, go back to the town you came from," or, "Where were you last?", or, "Come back tomorrow," or, "Come back next week," which often happens. Again, the client accepts that as an authority figure's concerned knowledge and it is actually illegal, if not immoral.

There is not enough work. In the twenty months that we have sheltered people -- everybody knows about us -- I have had maybe two calls about job possibilities to send the men to. If I know of jobs that are available and they don't go, I will ask them then, of course, to leave the shelter.

Coming to a conclusion, I don't want to romanticise shelter ministry. There is a percentage of people who are -- you know,

anti-social and who don't use the welfare money in the right way, or who might blow it and still come back, or who don't look for work. They would all prefer a heated place, but don't plug in because of some morality problems. But, you still need a place to unconditionally shelter people, as you find in New York State -- maybe a separate structure from other shelters, especially in critical weather. This you do out of mercy. This we have to do out of mercy.

There is also a percentage of people who need sheltering just out of plain justice -- those caught in the economic crunch, etc. A lot of those are mentally ill, released from hospitals, local and State, they have no place to go, and they don't get the proper Welfare services. They have to wait two months for SSI to come along. So, we need levels of sheltering, unconditional sheltering. We need places for women and children -- maybe for families together, and maybe another place for self-starters who will plug in right away. I wouldn't suggest a mix of all homeless people.

There is a lot of prejudice against the homeless, wrongly so, which, in the definition of prejudice, I would like to compare to having a hospital: No one is adverse to having a hospital. Well, maybe some people don't like living next to a hospital, so let's compare it to a hospital emergency room. All kinds of people come in, but it is the only hospital that services the area. One can run in with one's child, but he or she might find some undesirable people are there, as well as a policeman or guards that might be needed. But, no one denies that we need a hospital or an emergency room setup. And, when we provide shelters, we are going to have some people who might seem undesirable or who will be undesirable, but you don't wipe out the whole concept because some might be manipulative.

I am very happy with the New York City model. That is fifty percent State money, and fifty percent municipal money, by law. For over seventy years, New York City has provided shelter unconditionally, seven days a week, on a twenty-four hour basis. And, when the Coalition for the Homeless put pressure against the City two years ago, it wasn't that the City and the State were not doing anything. They were housing about eighty-five percent. They weren't taking care of another ten or fifteen percent, and the Coalition was right in saying,

"You have to go one hundred percent." Now, the City is saying, "Okay, it is a growing problem. We are doing what we can, but there are five or six percent that we can't handle." Then the municipal and State government has the right to ask the private sector to help with that gap that they cannot fill. You should not expect the private sector to do more than about ten or fifteen percent.

What you are allowing today -- the private sector is telling you: "Hey, we have the whole problem. We can't do it." I look forward to your carrying a larger burden and addressing it in order to fill those gaps. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Reverend Kugler, it was so nice of you to come here and present your testimony before this Committee.

Many things that you have spoken of we have discussed in many ways today. But, there are a couple of questions I would like to ask you because there were two points that I do not think were raised by many of the people who testified here today. You stated that you had to drive the Cuban boat people early in the morning to make sure they were in line early enough to be serviced. I am looking at this on a broader base, because of the kind of emergency situation that exists, where many people are unemployed and they need help. Would you say we need more case workers at the local Welfare boards -- the intake people, the people who should be there to make sure that those people are serviced during the whole day?

REVEREND KUGLER: Absolutely. And, there is correspondence between the State Welfare Division, who monitors that Cuban/Haitian money and Hudson County Welfare. The money has been made available from the State. The State hasn't done a great job of enforcing it, which means to actually threaten -- well, they did threaten to come in and take over Hudson County Welfare delivery services to the refugees. That was threatened for two years, but it was never done. I wish they would have done it. I think they came for one weekend, once.

Money was made available for more case workers. Hudson County -- and we met with Mr. Jones, the man in the county who is responsible, or who heads the Division of Human Resources -- said they couldn't get people. Hudson County Welfare pays, I think, \$9,000 for a case worker, and Essex County pays \$13,000. So, Hudson County is

deliberately not using the State money to attract people, to attract bi-lingual people, and it keeps a high case load and a low number of case workers to discourage, I think, the poor from coming to Hudson County.

The State has said this. You can approach the State Cuban/Haitian Task Force on this, as well as the State Welfare Division on the use of this money. I have seen some of this correspondence. I have some of it home. I have been on task forces working with the Cuban refugees who have lamented this problem. To move Hudson County politically takes a great deal of pressure. Unless the State is going to come in and do it, Hudson County won't do it. I don't know if that problem has been resolved. It has been speeded up a little, but I have been involved with homeless men in general -- not the refugees -- since November, and I would drive people down there.

If I called the County Welfare Supervisor about a case that I had, I would get served, but I would get people, clients, who would come in and say they didn't get served.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: You know, I served in the county as a Freeholder for many years, and I know for a fact that many times there were people who were there for most of the day. They would end the day and close at around 4:30, and the employees would go home. Those in need would then have to come back. It has been my feeling that there should be some employees who work overtime, in order to make sure those people who stayed all day received service. They are there because they are hungry. They are there because they need homes. They are there for many, many reasons. To have to come back -- they don't even have the money to get back by bus, and I think that while they were there they should have been serviced.

One other point that I would like to make is, I think there should be people servicing the people who have these kinds of problems on the weekend. There should be an emergency team on the weekend, so that people who come under an emergency situation -- such as fires, when they have to be placed -- can be serviced. We had the good fortune -- we still have the good fortune -- of having a beautiful Director of Welfare in my county. I can call him. He will make sure that things are taken care of for people who come under that kind of an

emergency. But, you don't know in other places. I feel that at all times there should be an emergency kind of a setup, whereby people are taken care of.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: We are in very turbulent times and I think those kinds of things will make it better for people. I am going to take that under advisement, and we are going to discuss that.

REVEREND KUGLER: Nine to five, Monday to Friday doesn't cover it.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Well, it is good that you appeared before us. Thank you very much.

REVEREND KUGLER: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: We have from United Progress a Mr. Greg Adkins who will testify this morning.

G R E G A D K I N S: Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, it gives me great pleasure to be able to sit here and speak to you today. It does not give me pleasure to discuss the problem that we are discussing, that being the need for an emergency shelter.

One does not need to look far in order to see the need for emergency housing in the Trenton area. However, the exact number of homeless people in the area at any one time may be impossible to isolate.

There are hundreds of individuals and families out in the street at the very moment this hearing is taking place and they are in desperate need of shelter. Social service providers know that these people will sleep in your office overnight if you'll allow them, because the need for emergency shelter is an immediate need. The call may come any time of day or night. That one call represents the first, and probably the last, time you will hear the voice on the other end pleading for somewhere to stay. By the time statistics are gathered in an attempt to estimate the need, many of the families in the statistics have lost contact with the agency.

On February 5, 1980, I visited a mother of three small children, including a three-month-old baby, who just moved into an apartment without electricity, heat, or hot water. When I told that mother that it wasn't safe for her to live in that apartment, she challenged me to find a better place. Needless to say, I couldn't find a better place and she stayed. I often wonder where she is today.

During that same week, I found another mother of three small children who had lived for sometime in an apartment which had holes in the floors, falling stairs, electrical shortages in nearly every light fixture and outlet, birds nesting in an upstairs closet, and no heat. Electric service for the apartment was registered in the landlord's name and was discontinued because of non-payment. The only difference between living in that apartment and being out in the street was that the apartment cost \$200 per month and the street was free.

Many may wonder why human beings live under these conditions. Those who deal with these situations daily know that these individuals have no choice. Fire victims, families whose homes have been placarded by inspectors and other homeless individuals know that there is nowhere to turn.

One of the first places called in Trenton in the hunt for emergency housing is the Trenton Housing Authority. But, a call to the main office quickly reveals that there are approximately 2,540 families on the waiting list for units. For three bedroom units the staff is currently working on applications that were placed in 1971, a twelve year wait. Two bedroom applicants are now being serviced from 1975. If you are a one bedroom applicant, you are lucky. Staff has worked its way all the way up to applications dating from 1976. Fire victims or other families in emergency situations were placed by the Housing Authority on an accelerated basis. The list of families who awaited these emergency placements frequently topped seventy. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development forced the Housing Authority to discontinue the emergency placement policy approximately two years ago.

The same story surfaces at the relatively new North 25 Housing Complex in Trenton. In 1981, a total of 4,573 families had applied for the 233 units that were available in that complex.

An assessment of potential emergency shelter beds known to United Progress, Incorporated's staff reveals the following:

There are approximately 240 total potential emergency shelter beds available in this area. However, of these 240, 12 beds are reserved for runaway and homeless youth to age 18; 122 beds are reserved for males only; 20 beds are reserved for battered women; 30

beds are solely for alcoholics being detoxified; and 36 beds are halfway house beds for continued treatment of recovering alcoholics. That leaves just 20 beds that are actually available to house individuals or families on an emergency basis. Alice Parker, a very dedicated woman, who runs the Trenton area soup kitchen, reports that she is about to open an emergency shelter in Trenton as soon as renovations to a South Clinton Avenue building can be completed. The total capacity of the shelter will be 28 beds.

It is clear that many more emergency shelter beds are needed in this area. In Trenton, out of a total housing stock of 34,564 units, 47.7%, or 16,500 units, are substandard; 7.7%, or 2,654, are overcrowded; and only 2.8%, or 957, are vacant. In 1981 and 1982, United Progress, Inc., operated a Housing Referral Program, where low-income families in need of housing were provided with a list of available units. Families and individuals visited the UPI office at a rate of over 100 per month, hoping to find some place to live.

Recent budget cuts have dictated that that program be eliminated.

The future does not look bright for the poor and homeless. An estimated 21% of Trenton's population lives below the poverty level. Six hundred eighteen of the 1,300 clients seen by the UPI "Detox Program", annually, are homeless. High utility bills and discontinuances of service are forcing hundreds of families to use radically dangerous measures to heat their homes. I have personally seen families with homemade woodburning stoves set up in their livingrooms, with no ventilation, or using small outdoor camping sets in their homes to keep warm. Individuals group around fires that are set deliberately in abandoned buildings in order to keep warm. One family was even using gasoline in a kerosene heater.

Trenton's first soup kitchen in over three decades presently serves up to 300 individuals daily in the two hours they are open. Many who visit the soup kitchen are carrying their belongings because they intend to stay, at the soup kitchen or anywhere they can.

The solution is to establish a shelter of at least 100 beds in the Trenton area to meet the dire need. Funds have been made available via the Jobs Bill, recently passed by Congress. The Bill

reportedly carries \$50 million for emergency shelter. The State should seek to secure those funds and commit a portion to Trenton and other cities faced with caring for the homeless. United Progress, Inc., which is a community action agency that serves the Trenton area, is prepared with staff and resources from the Community Services Block Grant, to provide counseling and permanent housing referrals for those housed in an emergency shelter. But, we must have funds to renovate a building and purchase supplies.

In our particular situation, money that is given to the counties is not going to help us. We need to ensure that a shelter is established within the City of Trenton. Eighty-six percent of the families that reside in Mercer County that are on AFDC -- Aid for Families with Dependent Children -- reside in the City of Trenton. So, the City of Trenton has been forced to pick up the burden for housing the majority of the poor in Mercer County.

The statistics presented here today demonstrate the need, but action is what is required to meet the need. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Thank you, Mr. Adkins. Before we go into your presentation, I would like to recognize someone who is here with you this afternoon, someone I have known for years. She has worked in community service programs for many, many years, and is affiliated with the Mercer Street Friends, Ms. Mercedes Moore. Ms. Moore.

M E R C E D E S M O O R E: I would like to say very little. I would like to make a suggestion. We have a large problem with housing in the City of Trenton. You were given all the statistics in Greg's presentation. One of the biggest problems we are having is, even though we had the problem before of not enough housing and people on the street, now we are dealing with a large segment of deinstitutionalized clients from the State Hospital. This is my suggestion and I would like it to be studied: Hold onto the clients for the time being until we can make some progress in providing some place to house these clients in the City of Trenton.

We are not only receiving patients from the local hospital, we are also receiving patients from the other counties.

We would like housing for our teen women, and that is one thing nobody spent much time talking about today -- women, and where they live.

Greg mentioned that we have about 200 beds. I get an awful lot of women in the center, single women, or women whose families are grown and who have no means of support because they have been cut from AFDC, and they have no place to live. I find that it is a big problem placing our women in the City, even when they come out of the institutions. They have special problems. They like to take a bath once in a while, and places like that are hard to come by.

I have asked a lot of questions about space for women, such as, "Why don't we have space for women as we do for men?" Most of the time we can get someone to house men, but we can't get anyone to house women.

I would like to make another suggestion that I often thought about. When it gets real cold, we have a lot of municipal buildings, and we have a lot of State offices. They are kept warm. They have running water and toilets. They have all these facilities and they are left empty in the evenings and on weekends. I see no reason -- and I have no problem with this -- for not opening these places up and using them when we don't have other space for clients. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Thank you, Ms. Moore. Mr. Adkins and Ms. Moore, I would just like to thank you for appearing before our Committee this morning. You gave excellent presentations.

I know in your last paragraph, on page two, you stated that there is a Jobs Bill with \$50 million in it for emergency shelter, and that Trenton needs at least one hundred beds. What kind of dollars are needed for that type of facility? Do you have any idea?

MR. ADKINS: Well, that may vary, depending on the generosity of the local municipality or the State government, in terms of supplying a building. Of course, the number one concern is money for renovations. The condition of the building that is going to be the site for the shelter will determine what is required, in terms of renovation monies. So, that would be difficult to answer right now.

I am sure there are buildings available that we could probably move into right away, buildings that need very little in terms

of renovation money. The problem is being able to secure one of those buildings, and being able to provide supplies and furnishings for the building.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Would UPI be the force to bring this about in the City of Trenton?

MR. ADKINS: Yes, definitely. As a matter of fact, we have met with municipal officials. We have a one hundred and twenty-five bed YMCA, right now, that is closed in the City of Trenton. That is a possible site for an emergency shelter. But, I believe there is some difficulty, in terms of ownership of the building. Once we can clear that up, we are going to require some renovation monies in order to get that building back into useable condition. That would provide, as I said, space for one hundred and twenty-five beds, immediately.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: I think it would be good for this Committee to get some kind of a formal proposal. I know there is a YMCA that just closed, which is an ideal situation, in the City of Trenton -- and we do have a need there. I would like you to forward whatever information you have on that building either from UPI or the Mercer Street Friends, so that we might look at that proposal.

I have one other question for Ms. Moore. You said that the State hospital clients are released to the street, and that you would like them to at least hold the clients until you find space or homes for them. Is that true? Are they just released from the hospital?

MS. MOORE: I don't really mean that they are just released to the streets. I would like to clarify that. I am sure they have boarding homes. I know they have boarding homes in the area. But, sometimes a lot of the clients who come out of the hospitals do not get along too well in their boarding home situation. Whenever that person can't adjust to our bureaucracy and leaves the boarding home, he or she goes into the street and someone else replaces that client in the boarding home. So, I am finding that a great deal of them come to the office to see me. Or, they have been given the name of the Mercer Street Friends Center with my name, and they are told to come and see me.

I find that a great many of these people are women, and they carry all of their belongings, as Greg said, on their backs or in a

bag. I have give-away clothing and food, but in many instances they do not have any place to go to in order to warm up the food, or the canned goods that I have to give away. Sometimes they change their clothes in our bathroom and leave the old clothing behind. Most of the time, I try to refer them to a place where they can have breakfast -- and don't ask me where, because we manipulate all of this and we could get in trouble -- or, I give them money, money that I have raised, to purchase breakfast in the morning. By all means, I refer them to Alice's program for lunch.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: Very good. Well, once again I want to thank you for appearing here. We will take this under advisement.

MR. ADKINS: Thank you.

MS. MOORE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Is there a representative from Mayor Holland's office present? (no response)

Okay. I will then call Mr. Gerry Thiers, Director, Department of Social Concerns, New Jersey Catholic Conference.

G E R R Y T H I E R S: Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you very much for this opportunity to speak. I will be very brief. In my office at the Catholic Conference, which represents the Catholic Diocese here in New Jersey, I work extensively with our Catholic Charities agencies, who are quite often involved in providing services to the homeless.

We would like to give you a couple of models and information about the types of programs we have, and some of the figures we have put together so as to help you to gauge the problem of the homeless here in New Jersey.

I have a study that I would like to hand to you. It is a very interesting one from Catholic Community Services in the Archdiocese of Newark. Perhaps you have some of this information already. I don't know. This is more of a survey type of study, which assesses the problem in the Newark area, and also looks at it statewide and presents models for programs. I think that it provides a pretty good summary of many of the problems throughout the State.

One of the main issues that this study shows is that New Jersey's figures are quite often unavailable on a statewide basis. In

Newark, when agencies are questioned, some guess that two or three hundred people need to be served, but it is just a guess.

Also, this study found that in terms of the homeless, rather than this problem involving older people in their forties and fifties, there is now more of a prominence of people in the twenty-to-thirty age bracket. Their histories include mental illness. They have been hospitalized and released. They are ex-offenders. They are refugees. And, they are temporarily unemployed people.

This study goes on to state what the researchers feel is the most important factor that goes into determining this: The State's push toward deinstitutionalization; the worsening economy; social service cutbacks, and emergency housing shortages.

On page six of the study, you will get an idea of the scope of the problem. At the bottom of the page, there is a section on "Archdiocesan Efforts on Behalf of the Homeless." Really, there are two shelters that are operated. One is a Guild Service Center, which is based in Newark. This has a capacity of fifty-five, and it serves homeless alcoholic men. We also have, aside from the Guild Service Center, several transitional mental health centers, which are targeted specifically toward psychiatric patients.

There is also, in the Archdiocese -- this isn't operated by Catholic Community Services, but it is under Catholic sponsorship -- a Committee for the Homeless at St. John's Church in Newark. This provides short-term shelter for the homeless, using a mobile home.

There are other programs that you see here also. I hope that this will be of some help to the Committee.

One other program I would like to show you is interesting. It is one that is operated by our Burlington County Community Services. Again, I will just give you a brief summary as to what it is like. This program is different from a shelter program. What the Burlington Family and Community Services does is -- this is part of the Catholic Welfare Bureau in the Diocese of Trenton -- they will take many people that need emergency housing and they will use a motel for a very short-term crisis situation. Then, working with the family and friends of the person, they will try and resolve the situation and hopefully have the family or friends look into the problem and help to

take care of the person. If not, as you can see, there are various other alternatives on a longer term basis that they use, such as volunteer housing, a rented room or apartment, share-housing, boarding homes, or out-of-county shelters.

This program seems to be working very well, and it seems to present an alternative to the shelter concept, which is very valid also.

In terms of our recommendations, we really hope that assistance will be coming from the Federal government for the homeless. We would be most happy to assist the Committee in any way possible, and to provide any information we can, based on our experience on how to best serve this population. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you very much. I have no questions, but your offer to be helpful as we develop legislation, and, more specifically, your offer to render technical assistance regarding the rules and regulations that may govern shelters is most appreciated.

If there are no other questions, I want to thank you. We will be in touch with you.

MR. THIERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Mr. Charles Dillman of the American Red Cross.

I apologize to those members of the public who are here, waiting to testify. The hearing is taking a great deal of time, and, hopefully, we will expedite things shortly.

CHARLES DILLMAN: I would like to take just a moment to instruct the Committee on the relationship of the American Red Cross to the State, because I find that in many cases people are not familiar with it.

We are an official instrument of the United States Government. In the State of New Jersey we work under an agreement with the Governor of the State, which is administered by the Emergency Management Office for the State of New Jersey. Now, this is strictly with relation to disaster.

Within the State, we handle -- mostly through financial assistance -- the working poor. This year we will probably exceed 6,000 individuals who will receive assistance from Red Cross. Now, we

could double that figure, because we also service poverty level people, people on Welfare; however, we do not provide financial assistance to them, unless it is in the form of a night or a weekend in a hotel or a motel until they can contact a proper agency.

The problem we are running into is, it was easier for us last year, on the national level, to serve 500,000 people through 7,000 major disasters than it was to serve the cities in the northeastern United States.

Take Trenton, for example. There is only one hotel left. They will not take our clients. There is only one hotel in the county that will take our clients. We had 150 families last year that needed help, and when I say last year, I am talking about November, December, January, and February -- four months.

The City of Newark had 3,500 people in need of help because of house fires, building collapses, and things of that nature. Again, we could not find a place to take these people to, even though the money was available. It is becoming more costly.

Now, the National Red Cross took a serious look at this, since it involves the whole country. New York City has been sending 200 to 300 people a night into New Jersey, to see if we can help them. You may have seen on the news one night last week, that people were evicted because of the fear that their building was going to collapse. The Red Cross said: "Well, we can take you to New Jersey," but they didn't want to go to New Jersey; they wanted to stay in New York.

Our national organization is taking a different look at the situation than you are. We have decided, after 100 years' experience at operating mass shelters on a mass basis, the only thing that can be done is to establish our own permanent shelters. Red Cross Chapters are authorized to start capital campaigns for funds from any source to start buying old hotels and putting them back into operation under Red Cross supervision. And, the reason we recommend this is because we have all categories of people. We may go out and find a typical lower-middle-income family that was burned out on Friday night. Well, we can't take them to the same shelter where other classifications of people are taken -- people with small children and so forth. So, we

must have a facility that has a certain amount of dormitory space, and a certain amount of typical apartments, etc. That way, we can take care of the total population.

Another thing we have learned in 100 years is, nothing is free. With 1.5 million volunteers, it still cost us \$49 million to handle the 7,000 disasters in the United States this year. And, when you go into the cities and start talking about rehabilitating these hotels-- I refer to Greg's testimony. I am also a trustee on the UPI Board. I served on a committee to look at the "Y". We are talking about \$1 million to renovate that building, where the utilities alone cost \$140 thousand a year. Now, let's look at that in relationship -- I just mentioned 3,500 people receiving assistance from the Red Cross in November, December, January, and February. That only cost \$150 thousand. We are talking about paying a utility bill of \$140 thousand in only one building, that will take care of only 100 families.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Right.

MR. DILLMAN: A lot of thought has to go into this. Our organization in New York City, where they can afford it, is seriously considering buying two old hotels in the City and operating them as a hotel. And, instead of us paying \$500 or \$600 a night to the local motel, we will reimburse ourselves and put the money back into the City.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Does that conclude your testimony?

MR. DILLMAN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I have only one question for you, sir. I am mindful that the Committee has less than an hour now in which to complete this hearing, and some other people are still here waiting to be heard from -- perhaps even less than an hour, depending upon the schedule of my colleagues.

I don't think -- maybe I judge wrong -- that there would be substantial support in the Legislature, either the State Legislature or the National Legislature, for us to get involved in permanent shelter of the type you are talking about. I may be wrong, but I think most of my colleagues are talking about temporary shelters, and individual case management, looking toward counseling and training in order to get people into permanent situations.

Would it be your testimony, or your judgment, that perhaps this could be done in partnership with the Division of Labor, whereby the State could facilitate, through its grant dollars -- whether they be Federal or State dollars -- temporary shelters, and your agency could perhaps handle the more permanent shelters?

MR. DILLMAN: That's correct. Also, the State could consider picking up of deficits. Take the City of Trenton. To take care of 100 to 150 families a year, it would cost Red Cross about \$70 or \$80 thousand. Now, in reality, what you are getting for that money amounts to almost ten times that amount. In fact, I know the budget in Trenton. It is \$220 thousand for Red Cross. But, services are worth over several hundred thousand dollars in value, because we are talking about volunteer services. The deficit only runs \$27 thousand a year, to have a complete service. In other words, we have that additional money, plus our national support. We could start helping other organizations, which we do. We assist the soup kitchen. We assist UPI. And, also, under the funding we are discussing, I understand that there is \$50 million earmarked to be distributed by FEMA -- Federal Emergency Management Agency -- with an ad hoc committee that includes members from Red Cross, Salvation Army, the United Way, and others. That is the money that I recommend should come to an agency such as Red Cross, and it would be supplemented by city, county, and State governments -- or however it could be done.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Yes. We are aware that there are substantial dollars slated to come to non-profit organizations, and others, which the State will not even appropriate. We understand that.

Thank you very much. Are there any questions or comments?

If not, I am sure the Committee joins me in thanking you.

MR. DILLMAN: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Is Sergeant John Doe here? He is not here to testify.

Is Beverly Beavers here?

MS. BEAVERS: Brenda Beavers.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I'm sorry. My mistake. Brenda Beavers, Director of Social and Correctional Services, Salvation Army of New Jersey; also representing the Committee for the Homeless of Newark.

BRENDA BEAVERS: Sergeant Doe is here. He is out of the room right now, but he will be available for questions, if necessary.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: All right. We appreciate your staying and taking this time. In the interest of the time, and the Committee's wish to conclude this hearing, I would appreciate it if you would go directly into your presentation.

MS. BEAVERS: Thank you. There has always been a population of homeless individuals. The Salvation Army has been in the business of helping homeless people in the 102 or 103 years it has been in this country. But, because of the effort to deinstitutionalize, the lack of jobs, and the lack of low-cost housing, these social problems have become more complex.

We have all discussed who the homeless are today. May I add that in Newark we have an additional 7,000 people living in public housing as squatters. Theoretically, they are homeless.

Efforts are underway to remove these people from public housing units because of reductions in the Federal appropriations for housing. However, there is no place for them to go.

The Committee for Homelessness has been a part of a community effort in the City, and I am very pleased, after hearing some of the other cities in this State talk about their concerns with their municipalities, that Newark has been most cooperative in their effort to share the responsibility by responding to the homeless.

We look at the problems. The General Assistance Grant of \$119 is very unrealistic. In one of my trips with the police department, we visited one hotel that makes the Kansas City Stock Yard look good. The rent was \$35 a week, and we found that the residents were not people who were on City Welfare, but they were people who were working and who had to come home at night to those kinds of conditions. People living on \$119 cannot afford an apartment.

I am pleased to say that we have had many discussions with our Municipal General Assistance Program people and they are working with us. They do accept the address of our trailer -- I will speak about that in a minute -- as an address, so that we can initiate the General Assistance Grant for a client. I know there are some efforts

here in the State to increase the grants, and I can only ask your support for those efforts to increase General Assistance and ADC programs. I believe there are hearings on the 19th and the 26th concerning that effort.

It should be noted too that homelessness is not a criminal justice, police, or fire issue; yet, in Newark it is the police and firemen that are often faced with the problem of dealing with homeless people. Police and fire budgets represent the majority of a municipality's budget, and, yet, at the same time, these resources are inappropriately being used to provide human service/social service kinds of services. Rather than have people commit crimes in order to find warmth, or add to the numerous police service "nuisance calls", or build fires in vacant buildings, I ask you to consider responding to the homeless on a more positive, not only humane but more cost-efficient basis.

I would like to share with you--

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: What would that be?

MS. BEAVERS: Pardon me?

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: What is that humane, cost-effective recommendation?

MS. BEAVERS: Okay. I will give you some recommendations. Part of the problem is that the existing support systems in the city and State, public and private services, do not meet the need. The mental health system is an example where people are being returned to the community. These are individuals for whom the normal, traditional type of response treatment does not work. Therefore, our existing services need to be creatively readapted to the needs of the homeless population.

Such an individual was recently released from one of our local hospitals after being treated for pneumonia. We know him as Otis. This is Otis in his home. This is where he was released to from the hospital. After being treated for pneumonia -- and I will pass these around -- Otis was found dead outside that box about a week later. The existing systems, again, do not work.

We need support staff to provide counseling services, as you have already mentioned, as well as finding some more permanent solutions.

I have a couple of other pictures to offer here -- some faces. Under this bridge, we found people living and eating -- cooking their meals. You might note the date under the bridge is 1935. This picture was taken in 1983.

The Homeless Committee, which has been referred to by some of the other speakers today, is a coalition of municipal government, social service agencies, churches, and the corporate community in Newark. We recognized, after about a year's discussion, that December was upon us and that it was cold and we could not come up with a more permanent solution, but we needed to address the issue in an immediate way. The trailer, which was referred to before is a construction site trailer, 60' by 12'. It is home for over 60 people each night. It is home because--

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: What is the size of this trailer?

MS. BEAVERS: Sixty by twelve. It is a construction site trailer. It is full of metal chairs, where individuals can come in to get out of the cold. It is a step up from the doorway. It is protection from the elements. What we intended to be protection from the cold for a couple of months, we now find is becoming a more permanent need for homes and apartments in the city, and yet we have been unable to respond to that need, and this is the end of March. We have extended the trailer because for some reason in the last two weeks, while the weather might be getting warmer, we are finding that we have had to turn people away at night because "there is no room at the inn."

The use of mobile facilities could be adapted. We are looking at temporary solutions as well as permanent solutions, and this is something that could be developed further.

Again, the Salvation Army, as I said, has been in this business before, but we stress that this is a cooperative effort, that without State and local cooperation, and without working with other agencies, no one agency can do it alone. We have to work together. I would just like to see a continued partnership with the State and the local areas -- that we all work together, public and private. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you. That was very powerful testimony, in my opinion. If there is one picture I would like to see, I think it is a picture of the inside of your trailer.

MS. BEAVERS: We can get that for you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I really don't know what to say, because my own reaction at the moment is very mixed. I suppose in a way, your testimony suggests that the trailer is a success story. On another level it sounds as though it is not such a pretty story.

MS. BEAVERS: It is not such a pretty story. It is not a comfortable place to be, and people fight to be there because it offers some protection.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Ms. Beavers, I don't have any questions. I am not sure whether this Committee even has a response. I certainly do not, as Chairman of the Committee, have a response to that testimony.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATSON: It was nice to have you here.

MS. BEAVERS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: I have a question.

MS. BEAVERS: Of course. I thought so, from Morris County.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: And as one who has spend a fair amount of time in the City of Newark. You were talking about the squatters in public housing. These are people who are currently, for example, living in the halls, and living in areas of the cellars. In other words, you are not referring to maybe four people living in a public unit that is only supposed to have one; these are people who are physically--

MS. BEAVERS: They are physically living in vacant or even public housing units that are occupied, but in apartments that have been closed up. When you come down Rt. 280, you will see many of the highrise buildings, and you will notice that where they have been boarded up, the boards, or the metal, or whatever it is they use, have been bent back to let air and light in. People are living in those places -- 7,000 people.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Well, this does get into the question of those units and whether they should be closed, for starters, when we have such a crying need for housing.

My last question concerns the available public housing in Newark. Do you know what the vacancy rate is in Newark?

MS. BEAVERS: There is no vacancy rate.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Are you sure of that?

MS. BEAVERS: In public housing?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

MS. BEAVERS: No. Because what they are trying to do now is to work with the population that is in there, the squatters. They are trying to place them in any kind of vacant apartment that might be available. But, as soon as a new building goes up it is filled.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: And, nobody has come up with any proposals for doing anything with those shells?

MS. BEAVERS: No. As a matter of fact, it is my understanding that many of them are to be torn down, because Federal regulations want them to reduce the number of public housing units.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Thank you for your testimony, Ms. Beavers. We would appreciate it if you would provide the Committee with a picture of the interior of your trailer.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Before you leave, I am sorry I had to leave, but I had to go to a bill signing, and in going to the bill signing I saw Gary Stein. He referred to the committee that is being established by the Executive branch, of which Mr. Albanese talked about.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: It is on the homeless. I was just wondering if it would be appropriate for this Committee, as a result of today's hearing -- if either of the two of you feel the same way I do -- to recognize the fact that there is a linkage between the homeless problem and the general housing shortage. Certainly, that is the theme I have heard today, but if I am the only one that has heard it I don't want to say this. But, as a result of today's testimony, I think it would be timely if we went on record saying, "Yes, we approve very highly of having a homeless committee, but we hope that everyone who is serving on that committee is going to understand the linkage between that and the Housing Task Force that Gary Stein already has in place."

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: If you or your staff will prepare a resolution -- or we could have John prepare that resolution -- we will adopt it. I will vote for it. This Committee has a meeting on April 11th.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: All right. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Ms. Grace Mazzatelli, Social Work Supervisor, Mercer County Board of Social Services.

While Ms. Mazzatelli approaches the witness table, I would like to ask if there are any other people in the audience who expect to testify? (affirmative answer) Your name, sir?

MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Robert Murphy.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: You will be the last witness, Mr. Murphy. Ms. Mazzatelli, thank you for coming.

G R A C E M A Z Z A T E L L I: Good afternoon. I have a prepared text that I would like to submit as evidence, but I am not going to really discuss it at this point. The text itself doesn't deal with solutions to the problem of homelessness. I wasn't really sure that was something I could bring up today.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: You have a solution, but you weren't sure we would listen, or what?

MS. MAZZATELLI: Well, basically yes -- I guess so.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Well, whatever else your testimony is about, please inform the Committee if you know of any solutions because we will embrace you and your solutions.

MS. MAZZATELLI: No, I do not have a solution to the problem, just some ideas. Obviously, the problem is widespread.

I am a supervisor of one unit at the Welfare Agency in Mercer County. There are an additional four units that work in this problem area. The statistics that I present in the written piece are only for the unit I supervise, which is a service intake unit, and which deals with crisis intervention.

What I basically did was, I went back and I reviewed monthly reports from 1980, 1981, and 1982, and what I found was that my unit alone was dealing with 151 families every month -- or an average of 151 families every month -- that were either homeless at that time, or threatened with homelessness -- with the loss of shelter.

If we want individuals, our client population -- or an average family size for our client population -- at this point is 2.9. It has decreased since "Reaganomics" and the Omnibus Act has come into effect.

The report deals with a lot of the different causes of homelessness in the area -- economic conditions, domestic violence situations, fires, natural disasters, etc. Those are not all the causes. Obviously, they are many and widespread.

One of the people who was here before was from a social service agency -- a Welfare Board, as we were called -- and spoke of one of the problems in dealing with the cause: It is the monthly reporting system which all county welfare agencies are now on. We have only been on that for approximately four months, and the number of families that we see affected by it is unbelievable. The month of December happens to be a month when a lot of part-time people, who are out there working, tend to work many more hours than they normally do. The month of February was the month those people found they were receiving no welfare assistance -- no money, basically, to help themselves or to help their families. They were getting grants of maybe \$50 to live on, to pay rent with, to pay utilities with, and to buy food with.

We are finding that more and more of our clients who are trying to help themselves, are finding themselves in situations of homelessness, based on evictions.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: Excuse me for interrupting. They don't get the check in February because they worked too many hours in December, is that what you are saying?

MS. MAZZATELLI: That is exactly the way it works. Or, if they worked in December and happened to lose their job at the end of December, they will not get a regular welfare check until -- let's see, December, January, February -- March. That means that for the month of January and the month of February they may have no income at all. That's how it works. That is causing us to have a lot of problems.

The other area I would like to address is the whole area of emergency assistance. In our manual it states that we can provide emergency assistance -- these are payments made in addition to the

welfare grant -- in cases where there is a natural disaster, such as fire, flood, or tornado, or domestic violence situations, where there is physical abuse by a member of the household, or in situations beyond the control of the client. We feel that there has to be a change in interpretation in that area.

The Department of Public Welfare does not consider a family who is getting \$273 a month in welfare, and who is paying a \$200 or \$250 rent, plus utilities, as being in an emergency situation if they are evicted due to non-payment, because they chose to make sure that they had heat or electric in their households.

It apparently is felt that it is easy to find low income permanent housing. Well, that is a myth. It is a myth in Trenton, definitely. People are living in holes in the wall, basically, and paying \$250 a month for them. If we go into the outlying areas -- the Hamilton area and the Lawrence area -- the rents in those areas are just too expensive for most of the people who are living on welfare assistance, or who are low-income people. You don't even have to be on welfare to be unable to live in those areas.

So, we feel if there is any way that there can be some type of a change in that emergency assistance interpretation, it would help.

Additionally, even if we deal with that problem, we are not dealing with the problem of the family who is not eligible to receive welfare, because emergency assistance is only for people who are AFDC recipients or SSI recipients, as per the guidelines of the programs. We still have many people on unemployment benefits right now, or on disability benefits, that basically are finding it extremely difficult to meet monthly costs. They have nowhere, in essence, to turn.

The only other issue that has been brought up one hundred times here is the issue of temporary emergency shelter. We have only one shelter that we can refer people to and not have to worry about making a payment if the family happens to not be eligible to meet our guidelines, and that is the Rescue Mission Shelter. We are very grateful to them, but it doesn't meet the need at all times, and particularly in the winter.

One other point. The young lady -- I forget where she was from -- was talking about St. John's Episcopal Shelter, and she

indicated a need for some sort of guidelines from the State. You have heard about Alice Parker before. I have been working somewhat with Alice for the last four years. Over the past year and one-half that woman has received money from sources that were non-governmental, and she has had bedding, and a number of other things that are necessary for setting up a shelter, but she has not been able to get approval from DCA or from city housing inspectors in order to do it.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Ms. Mazzatelli, let me say that it is really only on your last two points that I think this Committee is going to make any progress. We as individual Legislators are concerned about the long-term, poignant, perhaps tragic failure of our existing welfare system and our job-getting and job-creating system. But, the Committee is unlikely to draft a bill to increase the welfare grant, or to have a better eligibility criteria, or to make jobs happen. As individual legislators, yes, we maybe able to help, but not as a Committee.

It is in the area of the provision of emergency shelter -- I think those were your last two points -- that this Committee is going to be working on. We are going to be drafting legislation to appropriate Federal money, and perhaps to have a small State appropriation for those things concerning a shelter that are not eligible for Federal money. We are going to be drafting legislation precisely on your last point, to specify rehabilitation and other guidelines, such as zoning restrictions, and to provide technical assistance to county, municipal, and non-profit social service agencies in the creation of those shelters.

So, I will be modestly optimistic in response to your testimony about providing some help, by providing deregulation, or clarification, or more flexible guidelines for shelters, and perhaps some money for shelters. I really don't see -- speaking for myself, maybe this is a tragedy -- this Committee dealing with the long-term causes you identified. The Essex County group came in and said the same thing -- you know, concerning the divorce rate and unemployment, and all those basic long-term causes. I don't think legislators generally deal very well with that. And, I know this Committee is not going to be able to deal with it -- at least I don't see much of a role

for us concerning your reporting system, as tragic as it may be. I don't think this Committee's writ runs that large. So, I think we are going to deal with your last two points. I know your testimony has been constructive, but I wouldn't want you or anybody else to leave this room thinking we are going to take on welfare and job training in this Committee -- at least I don't think so.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: I agree wholeheartedly. But, one interesting observation is, there is talk, as you know, about eventually putting in legislation that will require municipalities to look into its housing needs. I think, again, there is never one right way to do things for society. Sometimes we tackle things with big answers and sometimes we tackle things with little answers.

I think we are coming to a period in history where we have to try to handle as many things as close to home as possible. You know, when we talk about municipalities providing a diversity of housing for the people that live within their borders, I think we should include something about the homeless as well. Because, on strictly the municipal level, there may be ways of handling an emergency shelter within a community so as to avoid that migration into areas where there is more of a problem, such as Newark and Trenton. Maybe they will break it down neighborhood by neighborhood, rather than just taking the city as a whole.

I think that could be inserted, in some way, into the legislation that eventually comes down the pike, as far as giving the local governing officials the responsibility to look at not only the housing picture, but also the homeless.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: I wish you would make us more aware of that legislation at another time. Thank you very much for your testimony.

I will now call upon and welcome Mr. Robert Murphy from the Rescue Mission in Trenton.

You know, I couldn't agree more. I had a situation in which-- We had a program in a town that I represent, which was largely funded by private donations, not of money but of things. Then the program got to be a government program, and the donations stopped coming. So, I don't disagree with the notion of maintaining a very

strong local push. You know, we have to provide dollars and technical assistance for some of this, but as I said before when the Commissioner was here -- and I think you were here also -- I don't want to see State shelters. I really don't want to see the State's involvement being anything more than facilitative with modest dollars when private charity won't do the job.

Mr. Murphy, I appreciate it. You have been the most patient of all, as you will see if you look behind you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: I am sorry to eat in front of everybody, but I come from the Appropriations Committee and we just go all day.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: We are about to hear your testimony and adjourn. So, I appreciate your patience deeply.

ROBERT MURPHY: The Rescue Mission is similar to the Salvation Army.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: That super operation in Morris County.

MR. MURPHY: There is no relation though.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: There is no relation?

MR. BROWN: Our Rescue Mission is separate from any other one. There are probably thousands of them, some of them are Gospel Rescue Missions. We are what is known as an Industrial Rescue Mission. We have been working with homeless males for over 60 years.

We have 150 permanent homeless men who run the Rescue Mission. They drive the trucks, work the shop, and work the stores. And, we are providing overnight shelter for 40 men. We have been doing this all winter long. Most of them are on city welfare. They come in. They get a night's lodging. They take a shower. They get breakfast, and they are on their own. This is 40 men every night, for the past year and one-half. Most of them are all the same.

I know that with \$119 a month they can't find an adequate room. I know they can't find a good room to rent. Now, for the males we have been doing it so long that it is fairly easy for us. They don't get a whole lot. They get a bed and a chair. It is somewhat like-- I heard this remark: "You are warehousing people." I hear that often. I say, "Well, that is the way it is; that's the best we can do. If somebody can do better -- you know, why not?"

Across from the Rescue Mission we own a small building, which we call our emergency shelter for women and children. It has been filled since we opened, and 20 people will fill it. It is just too small. So, we have women and children in there. They have a place to stay, a certain sense of privacy, and we provide them with meals and clothing.

Most of them are on Mercer County welfare. Grace Mazzatelli will give us a call and say, "I have a family that has been evicted, can you put them up?" If we have room, we will put them up. So, there is a constant turnover. But, it is just an emergency shelter.

The reason we can do it probably easier than most people can is because we have a resident for our own residence, and the cook will simply cook 20 extra meals. You know, a lot of things that are done on an institutional basis are easier to do for 20 more.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: That is a good point. Your testimony would then be, insofar as possible it may be cost-effective to graft new temporary shelters onto institutions that already have laundry services or cooks, or what have you.

MR. MURPHY: Yes, It would.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: You know, that's a point worth noting. I appreciate that testimony.

MR. MURPHY: I am not sure if the Salvation Army would want to get involved in that way.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Well, I happen to know that there are some colleges and universities that have dormitories and all those things you have just talked about. So, while I am not necessarily ready to endorse a university-based shelter program, I am not going to rule it out either. I hadn't thought of that -- the fact that you have a cook makes it possible for you to do things cheaper than if you had to go out and get one, right?

MR. MURPHY: Right. We have a huge clothing room. People donate clothing to us that we have solicited and we just take the women and children over and let them pick out what they need.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: We appreciate that.

MR. MURPHY: I can repeat everything that was said this morning also.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: Mr. Murphy, let me say that I have no questions to ask you. I would just like to thank you for your testimony. You will receive, as will every other person who testified today, or who wrote to us, a copy of the bills as they are drafted, some of them perhaps as early as three weeks from now.

We appreciate your testimony today. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BROWN: It was very nice of you to come, Mr. Murphy.

MR. MURPHY: It was my pleasure.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHWARTZ: The best to you, and I now declare this hearing adjourned.

(Hearing Concluded)

MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

M E M O R A N D U M

State Assembly Housing and Policy Committee
TO: Chairman: Mr. David Schwartz - Middlesex Co.

FROM: Grace Mazzatelli, Social Work Supervisor

Homelessness as viewed by the Social Service Intake Unit of
SUBJECT: the Mercer County Board of Social Services

DATE: March 31, 1983

I am presently employed by the Mercer County Board of Social Services as a Social Work Supervisor in the Service Intake Unit. One of the primary responsibilities of this unit is in the area of crisis intervention, and because of our involvement in this area of service, homelessness and problems related to housing are a primary concern.

Homelessness, as it will be used in this report, will be defined as any situation which threatens to place a family in a situation where there has been a loss of shelter or where a loss of shelter is imminent.

In order to attempt to provide this committee with information as to the extent of the problem of homelessness, I have reviewed monthly case logs and monthly reports for the years 1980, 1981 and 1982, of the Service Intake Unit. The information which follows refers to number of families affected by homelessness, as our agency maintains records in this way. If the number of individuals affected is the desire of this committee, all figures can be multiplied by 2.9 which is the average family size of our client population.

After reviewing the above monthly reports, the average number of families affected by homelessness/imminent homelessness for the three year period is 115 families per month. During the winter months, November thru March, this number more than doubles. Acknowledging the fact that our agency primarily services families receiving AFDC assistance or SSI, the numbers represented above do not fully represent the total number of families or individuals who are faced with this problem.

One of the major causes of the problem of homelessness is the economic condition of the families involved. With the present economic climate, more and more families are finding it difficult to meet monthly expenses. The AFDC grant amounts have not kept up with the rate of inflation or the cost of living. Additionally, more families are losing primary wage earners due to high unemployment and have found themselves in a situation where UIB benefits or AFDC grant amounts are insufficient to meet monthly bills. What this has caused is loss of housing due to evictions and foreclosures, or imminent homelessness based on several issues, such as, inability to make major housing repairs, loss of PSE&G service, failure to provide oil for heat, etc.

247

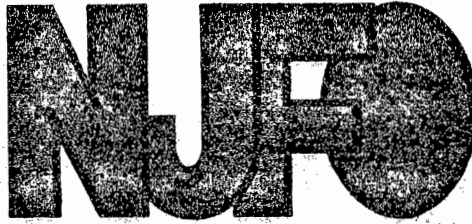
The second major cause of homelessness seems to be related to landlord-tenant problems, unrelated to non-payment of rent situations. These situations are in the majority during the winter months and are basically related to families in need of temporary emergency housing due to repairs being needed to heating systems or pipes, and to situations where the landlord has failed to provide heat, either by failure to purchase oil or pay PSE&G. We have been relatively successful in securing the assistance of housing inspectors in having these problems corrected, but this does not occur overnight. In some situations, families were not able to be placed as there was no available temporary emergency placement. In those situations when repairs are not abated, families are assisted in securing other housing.

Natural disasters, such as fire and floods, are also cause of homeless situations. During the three year period 1980 thru 1982, 255 cases were serviced due to fires in residences.

During the same period, another 241 cases were serviced due to Domestic Violence, where physical abuse occurred or was threatened. Related to this cause, are familial disputes where based on differences within the family structure, dysfunction occurs, and members within the household are asked to leave their normal residence.

The causes of homelessness are varied. They could also include areas, such as, overcrowdedness, transients, mental health problems, etc. The above causes only represent a small number of the numerous reasons why a family may find themselves faced with homelessness.

NEW JERSEY



FARMWORKER OPPORTUNITIES

J. CENTRAL OPERATIONS OFFICE
27 LANDIS AVENUE
INELAND, N.J. 08360
09) 696-1000

April 28, 1983

The Honorable David C. Swartz, Chairman
Assembly Housing & Urban Policy Committee
75 Paterson Street
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903

Dear Mr. Swartz,

New Jersey Farmworker Opportunities (NJFO) is a non-profit agency funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), under Title III, Section 303, of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). The primary purpose of this agency is to provide employment and training opportunities to migrant and seasonal farmworkers. In our daily contact with farmworkers we have become familiar with their emergency and supportive service needs.

An immediate and critical problem faced by farmworkers is insufficient emergency food and shelter services. Because inclement weather conditions have delayed the preparation and harvesting of crops in South Jersey, farmworkers migrating to the area have been unable to find work. Also, averaging an annual income of only \$3,025 and exhausting their meager savings in order to migrate from one work site to the next, farmworkers arriving in New Jersey seldom can afford to pay for food and housing while awaiting the agricultural season to begin.

For those farmworkers who meet the DOL Section 303 eligibility guidelines for program participation, NJFO can provide a limited amount of emergency services until a referral can be made to the appropriate community agency or public assistance program.

Recent federal and state reductions in the availability of funds for the operation of private community-based social service agencies, in addition to the growing reluctance on the part of some municipal governments to recognize migrant and seasonal farmworkers as legitimate candidates for entitlement programs under their auspices (see enclosed articles),


has created a "service delivery gap" with predictable adverse effects.

For these reasons I strongly urge that any legislative action, which may be taken as result of the public hearings held by your committee on the problems of the homeless, include provisions to fiscally and programmatically address the emergency food and shelter needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

I respectfully request that the comments contained in this letter be included in the public testimony presented before the Assembly Housing and Urban Policy Committee on March 31, 1983.

In closing, I would like to extend to the Assembly Housing and Urban Policy Committee the technical expertise of this agency should consideration be given to the above mentioned recommendations.

Sincerely yours,


David D. Ozenbaugh
State Director

DDO:cgm
encl.

cc: Assembly Housing and Urban Policy Committee Members

<u>Agency/Organization</u>	<u>Individuals</u>	<u>Placed</u>	<u>Cost</u>
St. John the Evangelist Church New Brunswick	30	motels	\$600
FISH (Church Emergency Service)	125	motels	\$1,800
Edison/Metuchen Clergy Assoc.	56	motels	\$1,736
Catholic Charities, Perth Amboy (UNABLE TO ASSIST)	31 (70)	motels 0	\$950 ---
God Squad, New Brunswick	15	motels	\$390
New Brunswick Council of Churches	25	motels	\$300
COPSA (Rutgers Mental Health) (UNABLE TO ASSIST)	(12)	0	---
Urban League (UNABLE TO ASSIST)	(66)	0	---
Salvation Army, New Brunswick	28	motel/gas voucher	\$840
Housing Coalition of Middlesex Cty. (UNABLE TO ASSIST)	(441)	0	---
Division of Youth & Family Services	235	foster care & emergency funds	\$807,000
Middlesex Cty. Bd. of Soc. Services (UNABLE TO ASSIST)	774 (156)	motels 0	\$267,102 ---
Outreach Center (Rutgers Mental Health) (UNABLE TO ASSIST)	(71)	0	---
Red Cross (Disaster Housing Assist.) (UNABLE TO ASSIST)	70 (110) *	motels 0	\$6,000 ---
Municipal Welfare Offices ** (UNABLE TO ASSIST)	15 (158)	motels or other 0	n/a ---
TOTALS	2,488	1,404 (56%)	\$1,086,718
UNABLE TO BE ASSISTED: 1,084 (44%)			

* Total of 180 persons requesting disaster assistance, including emergency housing.

** See attached sheet for breakdown by municipality

NOTICE OF EVICTION

To: _____

Reference: Order of the Municipal Court of Jersey City, N.J.,
Housing Section, Judge Elaine Davis presiding.
Date of hearing, Feb. 18, 1983

We regret to inform you that you must vacate the sanctuary of St. John's Episcopal Church, 120 Summit Ave., as of ~~April~~ April 1. This eviction comes through no fault or misconduct of your own. Rather, the city government has determined that it is illegal for a person to sleep in a church. The city government has further determined that the church and the sanctuary operators have failed to take adequate steps to protect you from fire -- specifically, installation of a sprinkler system and automatic alarms connected to fire headquarters.

At a Municipal Court hearing Feb. 18, Judge Elaine Davis ruled that the sanctuary must close April 1. At another hearing March 11, Judge Davis extended her deadline to April 15. By the time of the March hearing, however, the church had made commitments to other community groups to use the basement sanctuary area for social and cultural activities beginning April 1.

The city government was formally notified in writing March 14 that the church sanctuary would close April 1. This notice contained an urgent request that the city government provide a shelter for homeless people. The city is not rich, but it does have the necessary resources to help you, and its leaders have had enough time to get ready.

If the city government fails, we will try to arrange other help for you. Although we cannot make any guarantees, please maintain hope that things will get better. There are people who care about you and will continue to fight for your right to a safe place to sleep and enough food to stay ~~alive~~ alive.

With deepest regrets that our sanctuary was forced to close too soon,

The Rev. Will Wauters
Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church

Anne Miller Christensen
Chairwoman, Shelter Homeless
People Task Force

April 1, 1983

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

From: St. John's Episcopal Church, Jersey City
Shelter Homeless People Task Force

To: Churches Merchants
Landlords Social service agencies
Rental agencies Health care ~~providers~~ providers
Employers Police officers

Please help our friend, _____.

The bearer of this letter was until today a guest in a free public shelter for homeless people at St. John's Episcopal Church. Because of a court order obtained by the government of Jersey City, we have had to close our shelter and turn our friends back out to live on the streets in all kinds of weather, at the mercy of every criminal and hostile person. The court order was based on a fire department complaint that the church had been converted illegally to residential use and that the residents were in ~~xxx~~ danger of dying by fire if allowed to remain in the church.

The bearer of this letter may need any or all of the following things:

A job, or just a chance to earn a few dollars for a few hours.

A free night's lodging or a rented room that's affordable to a person whose total income (the normal welfare grant for a single person) is \$119 a month, or less.

A meal or a reduced price for purchased food.

Free or low-cost treatment for illness or injury. A free or low-cost medical prescription.

A place to bathe or wash clothes.

A bargain on clothing or items for grooming or hygiene.

A smile and a friendly hand. A change of attitude from a few policemen who refer to homeless people as "boppies" and harass them or beat them just for fun. Less hostility and rejection from everyone.

Please try not to be afraid of our friend. Please help.

The Rev. Will Wauters

Anne Miller Christensen

April 1, 1983

Mr. Val Jackson
Jersey City Welfare Director

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Please assist the bearer of this letter in accordance with Sections 451 and 451.2 of the New Jersey General Assistance Manual. Also Section 452.1.

The bearer of this letter, _____, has been evicted by court order from an unsafe building as of April 1, 1983.

The building from which this person has been evicted is St. John's Episcopal Church, 120 Summit Ave. The church, as you know, has been the site of a free public shelter for persons too poor to obtain commercial lodgings.

Because of the Fire Department's successful prosecution of complaints based on the building and fire codes, the bearer of this letter and many other persons will be forced to live on the streets unless your office provides assistance under the regulations cited in the first paragraph.

The mass evictions from the church have been entirely beyond the control of the persons affected. The evictions have been done to comply with an order of the Jersey City Municipal Court, Housing Section, Judge Elaine Davis presiding, issued Feb. 18, 1983. At a subsequent hearing, March 11, Judge Davis extended her deadline for closing the shelter from April 1 to April 15. However, by the time of the March 11 hearing, the church had already entered into commitments with community groups to use the shelter space for evening social and cultural activities. We understand that the city's legal action against the shelter operators will be dismissed when the defendants appear once again before Judge Davis and certify to her that the shelter has been closed.

Please help the bearer of this letter all you can.

The Rev. Will Wauters
Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church

Anee Miller Christensen
Chairwoman, Shelter Homeless
People Task Force

129 77th St.
North Bergen, N.J. 07047
March 13, 1983

Mr. John Kennedy, Corporation Counsel
Jersey City Law Department
280 Grove St.
Jersey City, N.J. 07302

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

This letter is to notify the city government that the Shelter Homeless People Task Force wants the city to assume responsibility for protecting homeless people beginning April 1.

We believe that the government of Jersey City has a legal as well as moral obligation to perform certain functions to protect the lives, safety, and health of all persons within the municipal boundaries. The city might wish to argue that it has no obligation to assist any person who has no home, no safe place to sleep. We hope the city will not waste time and money trying to defend such a position.

Our organization is unable to continue its shelter project at St. John's Episcopal Church. Our volunteers are exhausted. Our treasury is perpetually empty. Some of our members have gone into debt to keep the project going. The term for which the church hall was made available to us is nearing its end.

In addition, the city government has vigorously opposed our humanitarian efforts. Almost from the first day, the city government has harassed us, hamstrung us, and ordered us to close. My wife and Father Wauters have been treated like criminals. The action against us was based on the building and fire codes, but I think it was really motivated by myths and prejudices that inspire a widespread feeling of hatred and disgust toward homeless people.

It was only because of our attorneys and the intervention of a few kind people in the city government that we were able to accomplish anything.

Our organization is willing to help the city set up its shelter. It can be done quickly, easily, and cheaply, unless someone wants to be obstructive. Our shelter, for example, opened just four days after Father Wauters told us we could use his hall. There are free or low-cost sources of labor and food. The city probably could operate a year-round shelter for 70 or 80 people for with a budget of \$100,000.

We hope the city will not invent obstacles to prevent it from doing its duty. Our position is that since the codes governing free public shelters for the x homeless have yet to be written, any structure will do. If homeowners and paying tenants are allowed to live in frame buildings with no sprinklers and no automatic alarms connected ~~into~~ ~~into~~ directly to fire headquarters, then it is silly and cruel to require the homeless to stay out on the street unless they can be accommodated in the highest class of fireproof structure.

Let us work together so that logic and compassion may prevail over fear and hatred, so that the city's poorest may obtain a small measure of relief from their intense suffering. You will find that most homeless people are quite normal and decent if you take the time to meet some of them and talk with them.

Our attorney, Michaelene Loughlin, will be away for a couple of weeks. If you wish to respond, My wife Anne, the chairwoman of the task force, is available from 9 to 5 weekdays at (212) 572-2696. That is a direct line to her office at Random House Inc. Our home number is 861-4148 in North Bergen, and I am usually there in the late afternoon and early evening. One or both of us can usually be reached at the shelter between 7:30 p.m. and 10 any night. 133- - -

Sincerely,



Mark Christensen

cc: Mayor and Council
Legislators
Clergy
Attorneys
National Coalition for the Homeless
Press

March 15, 1983
For immediate release

SHELTER HOMELESS PEOPLE TASK FORCE
Anne Christensen, Chairwoman, (212) 572-2696, 9-5. Available
at home, 861-4148, or at St. John Episcopal Church,
332-4142, during nonworking hours.

The operators of a free public shelter for homeless
people have called on the Jersey City government to take over
the project as of April 1.

"We are not optimistic about the city's willingness to
do anything for these people," said Mark Christensen, a
spokesman for the Shelter Homeless People Task Force.

"Since the city has fought hard to close our shelter, it is
doubtful that the city will rush to open a shelter of its own.

"There are some caring people on the city council and
in the mayor's office, but not enough of them, I'm afraid."

The task force's appeal for a city-run shelter was
~~contained~~ contained in a letter delivered Monday to the city's
corporation counsel, John Kennedy. Copies were delivered to
Mayor Gerald McCann and the city council.

(more)

Shelter
Take 2

In the letter to Kennedy, Christensen said the city's opposition to sheltering ^{the} homeless ~~people~~ was "motivated by myths and prejudices that inspire a widespread feeling of hatred and disgust toward homeless people."

One myth, Christensen said, is that homeless people prefer to live the way they do. "Somewhere there might be a person who has a phobia about going indoors, but I've never met such a person. All our guests used to live in houses or apartments, and they want to live that way again. They just don't have enough money, or the places they can afford have no vacancies."

There is no typical homeless person, Christensen said.

"Each is different. We have young, healthy men eager for jobs. We have old people, up to age 75, well past working age. We have women with young children. We have sheltered crippled people, a blind man, and a deaf man.

"Several of Jersey City's homeless people have severe drinking problems, but almost without exception, they want to dry out and get their lives back to normal. Unfortunately, there is no alcohol detoxification program in Hudson County."

SHELTER
Take 3

At the task force's most recent appearance in Municipal last Friday, Court, Judge Elaine Davis extended until April 15 her original April 1 deadline for closing the shelter at St. John's Episcopal Church, 120 Summit Ave. However, Christensen said the shelter still must close April 1 because the church hall has been committed to other uses based on the judge's original deadline.

Christensen said a city-operated shelter need not be elaborate and expensive. "Almost any space will do," he said. "Comfort and attractiveness are not really important. However, a good shelter must meet three criteria besides offering food and beds.

"First, people must feel safe and welcome. A shelter won't do any good if people are afraid to go to it.

"Second, people must be allowed to bathe and wash their clothes and have use of a phone and a mailing address. A person has no hope of getting a job or lodgings if he is dirty and stelly and can't give an address or phone number.

(more)

SHELTER
Take 4

"And third, you need a staff that's able to do some really good social work. A shelter needs to be something like a social-services intensive-care unit. Somebody has to help the people get hooked up with jobs, permanent housing, rehabilitation programs, training, any benefits they are entitled to ** whatever is required in a particular case."

Christensen also appealed for landlords and real estate people to help open doors for the homeless. "Some of our people have jobs or pensions or disability benefits. They could afford the rent at a lot of places, but they have trouble when you add on the security deposit and the agency fee."

One real estate agency is already taking referrals from the shelter, but Christensen said more help would be welcome. The shelter's phone number is 332-4142, after 7:30 p.m.

