

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

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March 19, 2018  
Start: 10:22 a.m.  
Recess: 11:07 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway-Committee Rm, 14<sup>th</sup> Fl.

B E F O R E: DONOVAN J. RICHARDS  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

JUSTIN L. BRANNAN  
FERNANDO CABRERA  
ANDREW COHEN  
CHAIM M. DEUTSCH  
VANESSA L. GIBSON  
RORY I. LANCMAN  
CARLOS MENCHACA  
I. DANEEK MILLER  
KEITH POWERS  
YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ  
PAUL A. VALLONE  
JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Good morning. I am Council Member Donovan Richards of the 31<sup>st</sup> district in Queens and I'm proud to serve as Chair of the Public Safety Committee. Thank you for joining us today as we vote on proposed Intro Number 605-A sponsored by Council Member Levin, he could not be here this morning, but he sends his regards and is happy that we are moving this legislation to require the NYPD to submit reports on the enforcement of marijuana possession. I'd like to thank the members of the Public Safety Committee who are here. We're joined by Council Members Vallone, Powers, Deutsch, Rodriguez, Menchaca and Lancman. The enforcement of low level marijuana offenses in New York City has long been a social justice issue. For decades communities of color have received a significantly disproportionate amount of the enforcement even though research tells us that people of all races use marijuana at a similar rate. Last month this committee together with the Committee on the Justice Committee Chaired by Council Member Lancman held an oversight hearing on enforcing marijuana laws. In advance of that hearing we requested data from the

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2 NYPD including data which would be required by the  
3 bill we are voting on today. Not only did the NYPD  
4 fail to give us that data we, we requested before the  
5 hearing but the Department's testimony at the hearing  
6 did not suggest the need to address this  
7 disproportionate policing is a priority for the  
8 department. Needless to say, I for one feel the  
9 council's oversight on this issue must not let up and  
10 for this reason we are going to higher heights today  
11 and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of proposed  
12 Intro 605-A, so we can continue to hold the NYPD  
13 accountable for their enforcement practices and work  
14 to eradicate racially biased policing, needlessly  
15 roping people into the criminal justice system and  
16 wasting millions of taxpayer dollars on a substance  
17 that nine states plus Washington D.C. has already  
18 legalized. I want to thank Council Member Levin for  
19 his leadership on this issue, I'd like to also thank  
20 Council Member Rory Lancman who's been a steadfast  
21 partner in this and now we are going to ask our  
22 Committee Clerk to call the roll and begin the vote.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: William Martin,  
24 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on Public  
25 Safety, Chair Richards?

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CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Deutsch?

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: I'll explain my votes?

CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Yes, sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, although that this bill is a... is a reporting vote on the disparity of marijuana use I just want to say for the record as I mentioned at the hearing before that before we talk about or think about reducing any type of enforcement on marijuana use I just want to mention that first... firstly DA Gonzalez has a new program called Project Clear where if they take someone in for drug use they will be given an opportunity to go to rehab which I fully, fully support because jail is not an option and it's not a cure for anyone on substance... who... on, on substance abuse. Secondly, I've also mentioned that alcohol causes impaired judgements so if someone drives and they get pulled over and has a .08 alcohol level then they go to jail for driving while intoxicated but the fact is, is that if someone uses marijuana and then enters a vehicle his or her judgment is equally, almost equally impaired so we need to come up with

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2 ways to try to figure out that's... we, we need a way  
3 to test if someone smokes marijuana and then goes  
4 into a vehicle because marijuana stays in your system  
5 for weeks and there's no way for an officer who pulls  
6 someone over who's DUI to determine if that person  
7 just had a joint or it was he smoked a joint weeks  
8 ago. So, I just want to say that for the record and I  
9 vote aye on this bill.

10 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Thank you  
11 Councilman Deutsch.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Lancman?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: [off-mic] Aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Menchaca?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Permission to  
16 explain my vote?

17 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Yes, sir.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you. I  
19 just want to also support the, the bill and really  
20 change the relationship with our NYPD to bring more  
21 transparency to this discussion. I think the  
22 questions that Council Member Deutsch are, are good  
23 ones and I think the reports going to actually answer  
24 some of those questions. The enforcement I think some  
25 of the hypothesis out there are that we're not

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2 necessarily enforcing drivers, we're... this is... this  
3 stuff is happening our communities, on our streets  
4 and the kind of focus for black in Latino communities  
5 is real and we're going to see that where the  
6 enforcement is actually happening so I'm, I'm, I'm  
7 really looking forward to answering a lot of Council  
8 Member Deutsch's questions in this in this reporting  
9 and this further engagement. So, with that I vote  
10 aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Rodriguez?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Permission to  
13 explain my vote?

14 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Council Member  
15 Rodriguez, yes sir.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Okay. So,  
17 even though we don't have the same type of  
18 segregation of the 1960's still today we live in a  
19 city and a society where children and young people  
20 lead some type of segregation and one of the things  
21 about how the justice system works for black and  
22 Latino compared to others. We would like to see a  
23 society or city where everyone is treated equal and  
24 we believe that by this bill NYPD will be mandated to  
25 provide the data, the statistics and therefor will

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2 allow us to push better policy on how they deal with  
3 the marijuana in our society so with that I vote aye.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Vallone?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Aye.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Powers?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Aye.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: By a vote of  
9 seven in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no  
10 abstentions Item.. Introduction 605-A has been adopted  
11 by the committee.

12 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Okay, we'll hold  
13 the vote open for 15 minutes.

14 [off-mic dialogue]

15 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Continuation of  
16 roll call, the Committee on Public Safety,  
17 Introduction 605-A, Council Member Brannan?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: I vote aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: The vote now  
20 currently stands at eight in the affirmative.  
21 Continuation of roll call, Committee on Public  
22 Safety, Introduction 605-A, Council Member Williams?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I vote aye.  
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2 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Continuation of  
3 roll call, Committee on Public Safety, Introduction  
4 605-A, Council Member Miller?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I vote aye.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: This is.. this  
7 legislation is, is really important piece to getting  
8 us where we need to be that we no longer experience  
9 these disparities throughout that... our city and those  
10 who are being disproportionately impacted will  
11 receive the dignity that they deserve. So, I want to  
12 thank the Chair for bringing this to the floor and,  
13 and looking forward to the total body to pass it.  
14 thank you very much and I vote aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Final vote,  
16 Committee, Committee on Public Safety, Introduction  
17 605-A has been adopted by the committee; ten in the  
18 affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions.

19 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Alright, this vote  
20 is now closed, and I want to thank Beth Golub, Casey  
21 Addison, Steve for their work in getting us here as  
22 well. Thank you and now this vote is closed.

23 [gavel]  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date

April 15, 2018