

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 1  
CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID  
WASTE MANAGEMENT

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May 23, 2024  
Start: 12:07 p.m.  
Recess: 12:18 p.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Shaun Abreu, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Chris Banks  
David M. Carr  
James F. Gennaro  
Julie Menin  
Sandy Nurse  
Vickie Paladino  
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.  
Sandra Ung  
Inna Vernikov  
Kalman Yeger  
Susan Zhuang

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone  
3 check for the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste  
4 Management, recorded by Layla Lynch in the Council  
5 Chambers on May 23, 2024.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon, and  
7 welcome to the New York City vote on the Committee on  
8 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.

9 Please silent all electronic devices.

10 Chair, we are ready to begin.

11 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: [GAVEL] Good  
12 afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the Committee on  
13 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.

14 Thank you, Members of the Committee, for  
15 joining us today.

16 To minimize disruption, please place  
17 electronic devices on vibrate or silent mode.

18 I would also like to acknowledge the  
19 Council Members present who are here with us today,  
20 Salamanca, Zhuang, Ung, Vernikov, Nurse, Banks, Carr,  
21 and on Zoom, Julie Menin and Gennaro.

22 The purpose of today's hearing is to hold  
23 a vote on Intro. Number 97, sponsored by Council  
24 Member and Committee Member Sandra Ung, in relation  
25 to increasing the civil penalty for repeated

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2 littering violations. The Committee previously heard  
3 Introduction Number 97 at a hearing on February 27,  
4 2024, where it received testimony from  
5 representatives of the Department of Sanitation,  
6 environmental advocates, and interested members of  
7 the public.

8 I would like now to pass it over to  
9 Council Member Ung to speak about her bill.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Thank you, Chair  
11 Abreu and my fellow Committee Members, for giving me  
12 the opportunity to speak on behalf of Intro. 97. This  
13 legislation is an important step toward ensuring our  
14 city remains clean and vibrant for all who live,  
15 work, and visit here. The primary objective for  
16 Intro. 97 is clear, to address the persistent issue  
17 of litter and debris in front of commercial,  
18 manufacturing, and industrial businesses by  
19 increasing the fines for chronic violators of our  
20 City's sanitation laws. I want to emphasize that this  
21 legislation is not designed to place additional  
22 burdens on small businesses, which are the backbone  
23 of our economy. We all know that the majority of  
24 business owners are responsible and conscientious  
25 members of our community. However, we cannot deny

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2 there are some business owners who continually flout  
3 these rules, undermining our collective effort to  
4 keep our city clean. It is for these repeat offenders  
5 that Intro. 97 introduces stricter penalties. I am  
6 pleased to report that Intro. 97 has the full support  
7 of the Department of Sanitation. They agree that  
8 higher fines for repeat offenders will be available  
9 too in their mission to keep our city clean. Finally,  
10 I want to thank my fellow Committee Members. I know  
11 the negotiations with this bill have been a trying  
12 time for both you and your hardworking staff members,  
13 and I appreciate your patience and your support as we  
14 prepare to move this legislation out of the Committee  
15 and before the full City Council vote. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you, Council  
17 Member. I would like to thank everyone on my team in  
18 the Sanitation Task Force for their work on this  
19 bill.

20 I will now turn it over to the Clerk to  
21 take the vote on Intro. 97.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank  
23 you. Good afternoon. William Martin, Committee Clerk.  
24 Roll Call Vote Committee on Sanitation and Solid  
25

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2 Waste Management, Proposed Introduction 97-C. Chair  
3 Abreu.

4 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Aye.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:  
6 Salamanca.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Aye on all and  
8 congratulations, Council Member Ung.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Yeger.  
10 Gennaro.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: Aye.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank  
13 you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: Can you hear me?  
15 Did that go through?

16 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Yes.  
17 Thank you, Council Member Gennaro. Thank you. Menin.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Aye and  
19 congratulations, Council Member Ung.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank  
21 you, Council Member Menin. Nurse.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I vote aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Ung.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: I vote aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Banks.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: If I may be allowed  
3 to explain my vote.

4 I just want to congratulate Council  
5 Member Ung and thank her for working with me and  
6 being accommodating and meeting my concerns that I  
7 had earlier on and, again, congratulations on the  
8 bill. Aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Zhuang.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Carr.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Permission to  
13 explain my vote.

14 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Permission granted.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you so much. I  
16 just want to speak briefly on Introduction 97-C. I'm  
17 absolutely sympathetic to the needs of communities  
18 who have really bad actors littering their streets  
19 and neighborhoods. Bad actors is maybe an  
20 understatement. Some of the pictures I've seen from  
21 places across the city are outrageous. However, I  
22 remain concerned, despite improvements at the bill  
23 since introduction, that it could be that actors who  
24 do not deserve to be punished to the degree  
25 envisioned by the legislation could end up being

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2 punished as such along the same lines as those who  
3 are the truly bad actors, and that's why I'm hoping  
4 that at some point down the line we could pass other  
5 measures that will protect business owners, not from  
6 this Commissioner. I think this Commissioner and her  
7 team are phenomenal, but we have to pass legislation  
8 that envisions the agency at some point being in less  
9 capable hands, and so that's why I'm hoping that we  
10 have some kind of photographic evidence requirement  
11 adopted down the line, and that's why I'll be voting  
12 no on Introduction 97-C and aye on the rest. Thank  
13 you.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Vernikov.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: No.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Paladino.  
17 Yeger.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Mr. Chairman, may I  
19 be excused to explain my vote?

20 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Permission granted.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you very  
22 much. As the gentleman from Staten Island said, we  
23 want a cleaner city and there are a lot of things  
24 that we can do to get a cleaner city. The bill that  
25 we're voting on today doesn't penalize the people who

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2 actually make the city dirty. It penalizes the  
3 victims, the store owners, the business owners in  
4 front of whose business the perpetrator, the  
5 litterer, walked and dropped their coffee cup or Kit  
6 Kat wrapper, and the argument that I've heard is,  
7 well, there are businesses that say, look, in a great  
8 city like New York, it's cost of doing business,  
9 we'll take the fine and have a great day, but we're  
10 not going to bother cleaning, and I don't think that  
11 represents the majority of business owners in the  
12 city. What I do believe, though, is that argument is  
13 belied by the language of the bill. What we're doing  
14 is we're raising the third violation so, in other  
15 words, somebody got one violation, they got a second  
16 violation the same year, they got a third violation  
17 in the same year, we're raising that by 50 bucks. If  
18 somebody is inclined to say that they don't care  
19 about getting a ticket, the 50-dollar difference from  
20 450 to 500 is not going to make them start caring,  
21 but what it does do is it penalizes the store owner  
22 that happens to be unlucky enough to have their store  
23 in front of a bus stop and, for the extra 50 dollars,  
24 I think there is a point in time that we have to say,  
25 what are we doing to New Yorkers in this Council?



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2 What are we doing? Do we care not one iota about the  
3 actual people who are trying to just make it in this  
4 city and, for that reason, notwithstanding the desire  
5 as stated to have a cleaner city, I vote no. Thank  
6 you.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: With a  
8 vote of eight in the affirmative, three in the  
9 negative, and no abstentions, item has been adopted  
10 by the Committee and the roll will be held open at  
11 request of the Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you, Clerk.  
13 We'll keep it open.

14 Continuation roll call, Committee on  
15 Sanitation. Proposed Introduction 97-C. Council  
16 Member Paladino.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote  
19 of nine in the affirmative, three in the negative,  
20 and no abstentions, item is adopted.

21 CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you, everyone.  
22 I'll see you at the Stated Hearing. This hearing is  
23 hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]

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25

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 June 28, 2024