

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

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December 17, 2025
Start: 10:53 a.m.
Recess: 11:05 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - 8TH FLOOR - HEARING
ROOM 1

B E F O R E: Robert F. Holden, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joann Ariola
Simcha Felder
Sandy Nurse
Vickie Paladino

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Inna Vernikov

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone
3 check for the Committee on Veterans recorded on
4 December 17, 2025 located in Hearing Room 1 by Nazly
5 Paytuvi.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet down, please.
7 Thank you.

8 Good morning, and welcome to today's New
9 York City Council vote for the Committee on Veterans.

10 At this time, please silence all
11 electronic devices.

12 No one may approach the dais at any time.

13 Chair Holden, we are ready to begin.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: [GAVEL] Good morning.
15 I'm Council Member Robert Holden, Chair of the
16 Committee on Veterans. Today, the Committee will vote
17 on 11 pieces of legislation. Introduction 465 of 2024
18 sponsored by Council Member Inna Vernikov to amend
19 the Administrative Code of the City of New York in
20 relation to requiring the Department of Housing
21 Preservation and Development to submit reports on
22 veteran preference in Mitchell-Lama developments.

23 Second one is Introduction 684-2024
24 sponsored by myself to amend the New York City
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Charter in relation to requiring each community board to establish a Veterans Committee.

Third one is Introduction 685 of 2024 sponsored by myself to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York in relation to procurement opportunities for veteran-owned business enterprises.

And Introduction number 686-2024 sponsored by myself to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York in relation to supporting veteran vendors.

Introduction number 687-2024 sponsored by myself to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York in relation to waiving permit fees for mobile food unit commissaries that reserve space for veteran vendors.

Introduction 688-2024 also sponsored by myself to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York in relation to cure periods for certain violations by veteran service organizations.

Introduction number 959 of 2024 sponsored by Council Member Joann Ariola to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York in relation to providing rental assistance to homeless veterans.

Introduction number 1171-2025 sponsored by myself in relation to requiring a study and recommendations on the feasibility of implementing a pilot program to provide reconsolidation of traumatic memories therapy for veterans.

Introduction number 18 of 2024 sponsored by Council Member Vickie Paladino calling on the New York City Department of Education to observe Veterans Day the Friday before November 11th if it falls on a Saturday and the Monday after the 11th if it falls on a Sunday.

And Resolution 311-2024 sponsored by myself calling on the New York State Assembly to pass and the Governor to sign Senate Bill S 2028 and the Assembly 2965-A to establish a property tax exemption for veterans with 100 percent service-connected disability.

And Resolution 465-2024 sponsored by Council Member Joann Ariola calling on the New York City Housing Authority to include an admission preference for public housing in its next proposed agency plan for all veterans of the US military.

The Committee originally heard these pieces of legislation in December of last year and in

February of this year, and we heard testimony from the New York City Department of Veterans Services, administrators, advocates, and others.

Now, I'd like to ask Minority Leader Ariola to provide remarks on her legislation.

MINORITY LEADER ARIOLA: Thank you, Chair. Our veterans deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, and we must do better to make sure that when our troops return from serving our country they are given every resource they need to succeed in the life after military service. Too many of our veterans are currently living either on the streets or in shelters. That is why I look forward to the advancement of Intro. 959 which will amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York in relation to providing rental assistance to homeless veterans and Reso. 465 which calls upon the New York City Housing Authority to include an admission preference for public housing in its next proposed agency plan for all veterans of the United States military. It's time for New York City to put our veterans first. Thank you for the time, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: And thank you, Minority Leader Ariola.

And I'd like to ask Council Member Vernikov to provide remarks on her legislation.

COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Thank you, Chair. Good morning.

Today, this Committee will vote on Intro. 465, a local law requiring the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to submit reports on veteran preference in Mitchell-Lama developments. I introduced this bill a few years ago and then reintroduced it because Mitchell-Lama housing, with its mix of co-ops and apartments, has a veteran preference that is not well-known within the veteran community. We also need accountability measures and reporting on whether this preference is active and whether it's being used by the well over 100,000 veterans in New York City and by some estimates as high as 200,000. There's much work to be done in the areas of helping veterans stay in the city. Rent is extremely high and, despite much debate, that isn't changing tomorrow or in the next four years. Making sure the veteran preference is available to actual verified veterans, making sure the Mitchell-Lama buildings are properly maintained, and ensuring this preference is being utilized is an important tool

already at our disposal. I'd like to thank my Colleagues for their support today. Thank you to the bill's bipartisan co-sponsors, bill drafters, the Committee, especially Chair Bob Holden, the American Legion Post 917, whose Commander Mike Munoz is here with us today, and finally I'd like to thank my Legislative Director Troy Olsen, who is an Army veteran and would be here but he's currently with his wife welcoming a baby girl into this world as we speak. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: And thank you Council Member Vernikov for that important piece of legislation.

Finally, the legislation I am sponsoring is focused on strengthening how New York City supports its veterans at every level. These bills ensure veterans have a voice in their communities through veterans committees on each community board, expand economic opportunities for veteran-owned businesses and vendors, and reduce unnecessary burdens on veteran service organizations, and explore new approaches to addressing service-related trauma. This package of bills is about removing barriers and creating real pathways for veterans to succeed after

their service so I'm proud of this legislation. I think we all should be proud of the Committee that we are putting forth these very, very important pieces of legislation.

So, I'd like to thank my Staff and the Committee Staff who worked on preparing for today, including Daniel Kurzyna, my Chief-of-Staff; Daniel Dougherty, my Legislative Director; Alejandro Carvajal, the Committee Counsel; Regina Paul, the Committee's Senior Policy Analyst; and Margaret Barnsley, the Committee's Financial Analyst.

Is there any testimony? No testimony?
Okay.

So, I'd like to William Martin to call the roll.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call vote, Committee on Veterans. All items are coupled.

Chair Holden.

CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Nurse.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I vote aye on all except for I'm going to abstain on Intro. 684. I just have some reservations about forcing the volunteer

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2 community boards to establish a veteran committee.

3 You know, a lot of them struggle with capacity, so

4 I'm just going abstain from that one. Otherwise, I

5 love this package, and thank you, Chair.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
7 you.

8 Felder.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Aye.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
11 you.

12 Paladino. Marmorato. Ariola.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: I vote aye on all,
14 and I congratulate you, Chair Holden, this being your
15 last Committee hearing for a vote for putting forth
16 such an impactful package of legislation. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: And thank you for
18 that. We're going to hold the vote open, and I thank
19 you all and, oh, you don't, all right, so we're going
20 to leave the vote open and thank you so much. Thank
21 you.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Council
23 Member Paladino.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
3 you.

4 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Council Member
5 Paladino will like to give a statement on her
6 legislation.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Thank you very
8 much.

9 I'm proud to celebrate the passing of
10 Resolution 18, which calls on the City of New York
11 Department of Education to properly observe Veterans
12 Day on the preceding Friday when November 11th falls
13 on a Saturday and on the following Monday when it
14 falls on a Sunday. This legislation was inspired
15 directly by students and teachers and families in my
16 District whose voices made it very clear of the
17 importance of honoring our veterans in a meaningful
18 and consistent way. Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: And thank you,
20 Minority Whip Paladino.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
22 you. Committee results. All items have been adopted
23 by the Committee with five in the affirmative, zero
24 on the negative, no abstentions, with Introduction
25 684 being adopted by the Committee with four in the

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2 affirmative, zero in the negative, and one
3 abstention.

4 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: This hearing is now
5 adjourned. [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 December 28, 2025