

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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June 20, 2016  
Start: 11:22 a.m.  
Recess: 11:54 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,  
16th Fl.

B E F O R E:  
JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Rosie Mendez  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez  
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.  
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.  
Mark Levine  
Helen K. Rosenthal  
Ritchie J. Torres  
Barry S. Grodenchik  
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.  
Eric A. Ulrich  
Daniel Dromm

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

2 [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Good morning  
4 everyone, thank you for coming. I'm Council Member  
5 Jumaane Williams, Chair of the Council's Committee on  
6 Housing and Buildings. I'm joined today by Council  
7 Member Grodenchik, Rosenthal, Torres, Levine,  
8 Cornegy, and Dromm.

9 We're here today to conduct a vote on  
10 Proposed Int. No. 0871, sponsored by Council Member  
11 Dromm. This legislation will require single-occupant  
12 toilet rooms to be usable by a person of any gender.

13 I understand that Council Member Dromm  
14 would like to make a brief statement concerning the  
15 bill; I'll allow him to do that now.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you very  
17 much Chair Williams for helping move forward this  
18 important piece of legislation. Very happy to say  
19 that Int. 0871-A represents yet another step toward  
20 equality as we resolutely celebrates Pride Month  
21 through out collective pain after Orlando.

22 Most New Yorkers take their unfettered  
23 access to bathrooms for granted, yet every single day  
24 transgender and gender nonconforming individuals must  
25 grapple with the fact that their choices may lead to

2 harassment or worse. Other cities, from Washington,  
3 D.C. to West Hollywood, California already recognize  
4 that designating single-stall bathrooms as all-gender  
5 is an easy way to create a welcoming environment for  
6 transgender and gender nonconforming individuals, and  
7 of course, as an added bonus, anyone looking for an  
8 unoccupied bathroom will now have more options.

9 Simply put, single-stall, all-gender  
10 bathrooms make sense. The significance of this  
11 measure however goes well beyond the confines of our  
12 local bathrooms. We as the nation's largest city  
13 have the chance to repudiate the bigotry of certain  
14 individuals throughout this country, including North  
15 Carolina Governor Pat McCrory and the North Carolina  
16 State Legislature, who are perversely obsessed with  
17 the bathroom habits of others. Their recently  
18 enacted anti-LGBT law belongs in the toilet.

19 I encourage all the members of the  
20 Committee on Housing and Buildings to vote in favor  
21 of Int. 0871-A to help move our city forward and also  
22 to send a message that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and  
23 transgender lives matter. Thank you very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you, Council  
25 Member Dromm.

2 In the wake of the nationwide marriage  
3 equality, overall acceptance of certain transgender  
4 celebrities and characters, it sometimes seems that  
5 the fight for equality for LGBTQ individuals may have  
6 been won; unfortunately, as we have so recently been  
7 reminded, that is not the case. At the Council's  
8 first hearing for this legislation, we heard  
9 testimony indicating that a number of transgender and  
10 gender nonconforming individuals had experienced  
11 harassment and even violence while simply trying to  
12 use the bathroom that most clearly conform to their  
13 gender identity. Just over a week ago, sadly, 49  
14 people lost their lives to a man who hated them for  
15 who they loved and it's inconceivable to me that  
16 people should be subject to violence and harassment  
17 just for using the bathroom that comports with their  
18 gender identity. Unfortunately, while the world is  
19 moving toward a more **[inaudible]** society, we are not  
20 there yet; therefore, I would like to encourage all  
21 of my colleagues to vote in favor of this  
22 introduction.

23 Before I do that, I do wanna say; this is  
24 the least that we could be doing and I wanna be on  
25 the record of making sure I say I support the

1  
2 stronger bill that North Carolina passed and is  
3 fighting; there is no danger in that bill; people who  
4 are opposed to it simply... it's just a matter of what  
5 people are used to. I've been in countries where  
6 they had no gender in the bathroom; I've been to  
7 places in the city; it causes no problem. I'm not a  
8 member of the LGBTQ community, but I do understand  
9 and see pain and believe that we have a duty as much  
10 as possible to ease that pain; particularly that  
11 we're not causing pain to others.

12 A friend of mine posted an article that I  
13 did wanna take a second to read and it's *New York*  
14 *Times*.

15 It says, "Thousands of homosexuals hold a  
16 protest rally in Central Park, thousands of young men  
17 and women homosexuals from all over the northeast  
18 marched from Greenwich Village to the Sheep Meadow in  
19 Central Park yesterday proclaiming the new strength  
20 and pride of the gay people, from Washington, Boston  
21 and Cleveland, from Ivy League colleges, from Harlem,  
22 the East Side and the suburbs they gather to protest  
23 laws that made homosexual acts between consenting  
24 adults illegal and the social conditions that often  
25 make it impossible for them to display affection in

1 public, maintain jobs and rent apartments. As the  
2 group gathered in Sheraton Square before marching up  
3 the Avenue of the Americas, the whole [sic] what the  
4 participants described as a "gay-in" in the Sheep  
5 Meadow. One of the organizers said, 'A new militancy  
6 was developing among homosexuals. We're probably the  
7 most harassed, persecuted minority group in history,  
8 but we'll never have the freedom and civil rights we  
9 deserve as human beings unless we stop hiding in  
10 closets and in shelter of anonymity,' said 29-year-  
11 old Michael Brown, the founder of the Gay Liberation  
12 Front." That article was published on June 29, 1970;  
13 unfortunately, it could've been just written a few  
14 days ago, so we obviously have a long way to go.

15  
16 I'm proud of this bill; thank you, Danny  
17 Dromm; I look forward to voting yes and suggest all  
18 my colleagues to the same.

19 I'd like to thank my staff for the work  
20 they did to assemble this hearing, including Nick  
21 Smith, my Deputy Chief of Staff, my Legislative  
22 Director, Jen Wilcox and Megan Chin, Counsel to the  
23 committee, Guillermo Patino and Jose Conde, Policy  
24 Analysts to the Committee, and Sarah Gastelum, the  
25 committee's Financial Analyst.

2 I'd now like the clerk to please call the  
3 roll.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,  
5 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on Housing  
6 and Buildings, Int. 0871-A. Chair Williams.

7 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I vote aye and  
8 wanna give a shout-out to Frank Ellicott [sic], the  
9 ever existing and fighting for rights. [sic]

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Cornegy.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I vote eye.  
12 Shout-out to Brian.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Espinal.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: I vote aye and  
15 also a shout-out to Brian.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Levine.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: I can't be left  
18 out; I gotta vote aye and shout-out Brian.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rosenthal.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I vote aye and  
21 shout-out to Brian.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Torres.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I vote aye; a  
24 shout-out to Brian and Danny Dromm, who is the  
25 standard of LGBT activism in the City Council, so.



2 And I obviously believe that we all have a human  
3 right to use the bathroom that honors our gender  
4 identity, so I'm proud to support this legislation.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK: Grodenchik.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: No shout-  
7 outs, but aye.

8 [laughter, background comments]

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ulrich.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I vote aye and  
11 shout-out to Coby [sp?].

12 [background comments]

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 8 in the  
14 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,  
15 the item has been adopted.

16 [background comments]

17 [pause]

18 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Alright, I'm gonna  
19 hold the roll open for 20 minutes and say thank you  
20 to my colleagues.

21 [pause]

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation roll call  
23 on Committee on Housing and Buildings. Council  
24 Member Rodriguez.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

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COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 10

COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote now,  
Committee on Housing and Buildings stands at 9 in the  
affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions.

[background comments]

[gavel]

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 July 7, 2016