

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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Wednesday, August 10, 2022

Start: 12:14 P. M.

Recess: 12:44 P. M.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Hon. Lynn Schulman, Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joann Ariola
Charles Barron
Oswald Feliz
Crystal Hudson
Mercedes Narcisse
Marjorie Velázquez
Kalman Yeger

Other Council Members Attending:
Public Advocate Williams

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

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COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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2 SERGEANT HOPE: This is a microphone test for The
3 Committee on Health. Today's date is August 10, 2022
4 and it's being recorded by Dean Hope... This is a
5 microphone test for The Committee on Health. Today's
6 date is August 10, 2022; it's being recorded by Dean
7 Hope.

8 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: Good afternoon everyone, I
9 am Council Member Lynn Schulman, Chair of The
10 Committee on Health. I would like to start by
11 thanking my colleagues for being present today. We
12 have been joined by Council Member Yeger, Council
13 Member Ariola, Council Member Hudson, Council Member
14 Velázquez, and Council Member Narcisse.

15 Today we will be voting on a package of important
16 legislation related to maternal health, mortality and
17 morbidity.

18 In June The Health Committee held a hearing
19 alongside The Hospitals Committee following The
20 Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade,
21 reversing nearly 50 years of precedent and ending the
22 federal constitutional right to an abortion. We
23 discussed how this decision will have deadly
24 consequences -- consequences that will unfortunately
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2 fall hardest on Black women and birthing people who
3 already face a severe maternal mortality crisis.

4 Forced pregnancy policies will disproportionately
5 affect people of color, immigrants, LGBTQIA+
6 individuals, young people, and those who are poor.

7 While New York has more progressive laws
8 protecting a women's right to an abortion, we must
9 continue to do work to improve maternal health
10 outcomes. More people in the United States die of
11 pregnancy related complications than in any other
12 developed country. And while the number of reported
13 pregnancy related deaths has been declining in most
14 of the world, in the United States the maternal
15 mortality ratio has increased compared to similar
16 countries.

17 Across the United States, and in New York City,
18 maternal mortality disproportionately impacts Black
19 women and birthing people with Black people eight to
20 12 times more likely to die when giving birth than
21 their white counter parts. That is why today we will
22 be voting on a package of seven bills and four
23 resolutions that directly address the issues of
24 maternal mortality and morbidity. This includes:
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2 • Proposed Intro Number 409-A, sponsored by
3 Council Member Lewis, in relation to
4 increasing access to data on maternal
5 mortality and morbidity.
- 6 • Proposed Intro Number 472-A, sponsored by
7 Council Member Gutiérrez, in relation to
8 establishing a program in the DOHMH to train
9 doulas and provide doula services to
10 residents in all five boroughs.
- 11 • Proposed Intro Number 478-A, sponsored
12 Council Member Hudson, in relation to an
13 outreach and education campaign on the
14 benefits and services provided by doulas and
15 midwives.
- 16 • Proposed Intro Number 482, sponsored by
17 Council Member Lewis, in relation to
18 requiring the DOHMH to provide information
19 on polycystic ovary syndrome and
20 endometriosis.
- 21 • Proposed Intro Number 490-A, sponsored by
22 Council Member Menin, in relation to
23 requiring the provision of sexual and
24 reproductive health services by DOHMH.
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2 Counsel Harbani Ahuja, and Assistant Deputy Director
3 Sara Liss.

4 On that note, I want to turn it over to Council
5 Member Hudson to hear about her introduction.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you so much, Chair
7 Schulman, and good afternoon. I am excited that
8 today The Committee on Health will be voting on my
9 bill Introduction 478-A. As you know, this bill
10 would require the Department of Health and Mental
11 Hygiene to conduct an education and outreach campaign
12 about the services offered by doulas and midwives to
13 increase awareness of efforts to improve access to
14 such services and share information about free and
15 low-cost resources related to such services. It
16 would also require DOHMH to submit a report
17 describing the methods of outreach used to comply
18 with this section.

19 I am proud that my first local law enacted as a
20 member of The City Council directly relates to one of
21 my proudest achievements, my Black Agenda for New
22 York City, a policy blueprint aimed at improving the
23 lives of Black New Yorkers, because when Black folks
24 thrive, everyone thrives. Black folks are the most
25 at-risk of mortality and morbidity issues when giving

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2 birth, and my home borough of Brooklyn has the
3 highest number of pregnancy associated and pregnancy
4 related deaths. One clear way to reduce this gap is
5 to provide doula access to more folks to empower
6 birthing people to speak up for their health care
7 needs. I urge my colleagues on The Committee on
8 Health to pass this bill and the rest of this
9 package. Thank you again, Chair Schulman.

10 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: Thank you very much,
11 Council Member Hudson. On that note, I will turn it
12 over to the clerk to call the vote.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good afternoon, William Martin,
14 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on Health.
15 All items are coupled.

16 Chair Schulman?

17 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: Aye on all.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Yeger?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Aye on all, with the
20 exception of Resolution 95 on which I vote no.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Hudson?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Aye on all.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Narcisse?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Aye on all.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Velázquez?

1 COUNCIL MEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Aye on all.

2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ariola?

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Aye on all, with the
4 exception of Resolution 95, which I vote no.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK: So, all items on today's
6 Committee on Health Agenda have been adopted by a
7 vote of 6 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative, and
8 no abstentions, with Resolution 95 being adopted by
9 the committee. One moment. Resolution 95 currently
10 has 4 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative, and 2
11 abstentions. And the roll will be held open at
12 request of The Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: We are going to hold the
14 vote open. We are expecting other members of the
15 committee to come and vote. Thank you.

16 Uh, it... No, before that Council Member
17 Narcisse would like to make some comments.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: [INAUDIBLE]

19 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: Okay, uh, at this time, I
20 would like to call on Council Member Narcisse to make
21 some comments.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Thank you, Chair and all
23 of my colleagues.
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2 I would like to make a statement, because this is
3 very important especially nowadays where we are, uh,
4 with maternal health and all. In a city with a fair
5 share of racial and socioeconomic inequities, one of
6 the most glaring ones is the vast disparities, which
7 continue to exist in maternal health care. As a
8 nurse for over three decades, mother of four, woman
9 of color, and member of this body, I am so proud that
10 we have focused our efforts on reducing these
11 disparities. The laws we are moving out of this
12 Health Committee today will empower those giving
13 birth in our City and increase education,
14 understanding of the process, care, and expose them
15 to the potentially lifesaving resources they are
16 fully entitled to. I thank my colleagues for their
17 hard work on this important issue. Our efforts today
18 will save lives and make our city a more equitable
19 place for all, which is what we are supposed to be,
20 for all. To The Health Committee today, I thank you
21 for the opportunity to be part of the team that sees
22 that women are an important, key component of our
23 city, so thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: Thank you, Council Member
3 Narcisse. We now will be on a temporary recess,
4 thank you.

5 Public Advocate? We are joined by Public
6 Advocate Jumaane Williams who would like to talk
7 about his legislation, uh, Public Advocate?

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair,
9 I really appreciate it.

10 As mentioned, my name is Jumaane Williams, Public
11 Advocate of the City of New York. I want to thank
12 Chair Schulman and all of the members of the
13 committee for guiding these bills to today's vote.

14 I have, for a long time, been pushing Black
15 maternal health in particular. I have been an
16 advocate of these bills [INAUDIBLE] further push our
17 efforts to eliminate negative impacts of expecting
18 mothers before, during, and after the birthing
19 process. I began pushing these pieces of legislation
20 about two or three years ago, uh, never knowing how
21 much it would affect me personally. People may not
22 know, [INAUDIBLE] had these bills before I had dealt
23 with it personally. That was a testament to having a
24 very diverse staff. It was Black women in particular
25 on my staff who came to me with this problem; we

1 pushed it, and lo and behold, uh, it would affect
2 myself and my wife, uh, just a few years after.
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4 In New York City, Black women are eight to 12
5 times more likely to die during childbirth than their
6 white counterparts. This is often due to medical
7 personnel minimizing, dismissing, or overlooking the
8 health concerns of Black patients. This,
9 unfortunately, is much higher than even the national
10 average of two to three times.

11 Today, the committee will consider the passage of
12 one proposed local law and two resolutions that I
13 introduced. The first, Intro Number 86, is co-
14 introduced with Bronx Borough President Vanessa
15 Gibson, would require the City to conduct a public
16 education campaign in all facilities that provide
17 obstetric and gynecological care. The main goal of
18 this bill is to educate patients about the City
19 Standards for Respectful Care at Birth, health care
20 proxies, and different rights that they all have as a
21 patient.

22 Similarly, I have two resolutions that are being
23 discussed today: Resolution Number 92, co-introduced
24 with Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso,
25 which calls on the United States Congress to pass and

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2 President Joseph Biden to sign the Black Maternal
3 Health Momnibus Act of 2021.

4 Lastly, Resolution Number 244, calls on the
5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to
6 increase funding for By My Side, a doula program
7 under Healthy Start Brooklyn -- with more funding,
8 this can provide doulas to all low-income birthing
9 people in New York City. For far too long, maternal
10 mortality has been ignored, in particular all
11 pregnant women and people in communities of more
12 color have disproportionately experienced maternal
13 health care inequities. Our proposal today -- and
14 resolutions -- will help change an unjust system that
15 has long denied women and people of more color in our
16 city the care they need and deserve. Having seen my
17 wife, from before we had doctors who listened to her,
18 I didn't even understand how bad it was until we
19 found doctors who actually listened to her. And,
20 thankfully, uh, my baby girl, Imani (sp?), is
21 healthy; my wife is now cancer free. I also know
22 that we have access to a lot of privileges that
23 people don't, and we want to make sure that we
24 rectify that as soon as possible.

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2 So, I just wanted to thank you again, to you and
3 all of the committee members, in peace.

4 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: Thank you very much, Public
5 Advocate. We voted for all of the resolutions and
6 the intros before you came here, and they all passed.
7 We are actually keeping... We are just on recess,
8 because we have one other member who is going to come
9 to cast their vote.

10 So, The Health Committee is back from recess. I
11 am going to ask Council Member Barron to cast his
12 vote for the legislation.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you so much, I
14 appreciate the wait and the time to vote. So, I vote
15 aye on all items. I went through them briefly, but
16 any changes, I'll do it on the floor, but right now,
17 aye on all.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you very much.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: [INAUDIBLE]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: The committee hearing is
21 now over. [GAVEL SOUND]

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: One second, hold on, hold on.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Oh...

24 COMMITTEE CLERK: [INAUDIBLE]... (CROSS-TALK)

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: I'm sorry, we have to
3 tally the votes.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Final tally now, uh, items of
5 The Committee on Health, all items have been adopted
6 with a vote of 7 in the affirmative, 0 in the
7 negative, and no abstentions, with Resolution 95
8 being adopted by the committee -- 5 in the
9 affirmative, 2 in the negative, and no abstentions.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you very much.
11 Now, the committee is [GAVEL SOUND] over.

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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 August 29, 2022