

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL RETARDATION,  
ALCOHOLISM, DRUG ABUSE AND DISABILITY SERVICES

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February 13, 2012  
Start: 1:33 p.m.  
Recess: 1:36 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
G. OLIVER KOPPELL  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Gale A. Brewer  
Daniel J. Halloran II  
David G. Greenfield  
Ruben Wills

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2 CHAIRPERSON KOPPELL: Committee on  
3 Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism,  
4 Drug Abuse and Disability Services. I'm Oliver  
5 Koppell, the chair. We're here to vote on  
6 proposed Resolution 94-A by Council Member Dromm  
7 and Council Member, you want to make a brief  
8 statement?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you  
10 very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate your  
11 leadership on this issue. The passage of  
12 Resolution 94 will send a powerful message to  
13 Albany that our city and state are ready to join  
14 16 states and the District of Columbia in  
15 legalizing medical marijuana. It's time for New  
16 York State Legislature to catch up with what a  
17 majority of New Yorkers already know. It's wrong  
18 to deny this palliative measure to patients who so  
19 desperately need it. Medical studies have shown  
20 the effectiveness of marijuana in treating a wide  
21 range of conditions from glaucoma to appetite loss  
22 associated with cancer treatment. Passing medical  
23 marijuana legislation means these patients will no  
24 longer be criminalized by the state simply for  
25 seeking relief from crippling pain and other

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2 debilitating symptoms. Resolution 94 is about  
3 valuing true compassion over rigid bureaucracy.  
4 It's about prioritizing the health of our  
5 community members over the federal war on drugs.  
6 I hope this resolution will not only push state  
7 legislators to act on medical marijuana, but will  
8 also move along the larger discussion about drug  
9 policy and enforcement in New York City. In  
10 recent memory, we have seen the long overdue  
11 reform of the Rockefeller Drug Laws. We have even  
12 heard positive words from the city's  
13 administration about limiting arrests for minor  
14 possession though actual implementation remains a  
15 concern. Passing medical marijuana legislation  
16 will be one more step toward a realistic and  
17 humane approach to drug policy. I want to thank  
18 all of my colleagues who signed on as co-sponsors,  
19 with special thanks to Council member Oliver  
20 Koppell for shepherding the bill through the  
21 Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation,  
22 Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Disability Services and  
23 I also want to acknowledge - - , Council Member  
24 Koppell for his efforts. I encourage all of my  
25 colleagues here today to vote yes on this

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important legislation.

CHAIRPERSON KOPPELL: thank you very much. I don't want to read my whole statement. I'll submit it for the record, but let me just say that on November 11<sup>th</sup> of last year, we held a joint hearing with the Subcommittee on Drug Abuse regarding the resolution and I think that that hearing demonstrated the laudable purpose of the resolution and I think evidence both at the hearing and subsequently indicate that some of the concerns with respect to the health effects of the use of marijuana were addressed, so I hope we'll pass this. I'm proud of the fact that in the assembly years ago, I voted to decriminalize small amounts of marijuana and I voted against the Rockefeller Drug Laws when they were proposed, and this in my opinion, although a laudable measure, does not go really as far as we ought to go with respect to decriminalization of marijuana, but I won't go into that. So I support the resolution. I'm pleased that Ruben Wills and Gale Brewer are here as well. Ruben Wills, chair of our Subcommittee, would you like to make any statement? Okay. Okay, so we'll take a vote.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,  
3 committee clerk, roll call vote on the Committee  
4 on Mental Health, Resolution 94-A. Council Member  
5 Koppell?

6 CHAIRPERSON KOPPELL: Aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Brewer?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote aye  
9 and I just want to say that I am a proud co-  
10 sponsor. I've had many friends who have used  
11 medical marijuana—obviously not legally, but it  
12 certainly eased the pain when they were ill, and  
13 second, I noticed over the weekend there was a big  
14 story about California and California, obviously,  
15 is able to legally have medical marijuana and they  
16 collect a great deal of state tax. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Wills?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of  
20 three in the affirmative, zero in the negative and  
21 no abstentions, item is adopted. Members, please  
22 sign the Committee Report. Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [off mic].

24 CHAIRPERSON KOPPELL: That's  
25 alright. We had a nice conversation. Little [off

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2 mic]

3 [long pause]

4 CHAIRPERSON KOPPELL: hearing is

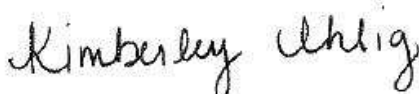
5 adjourned.

6 [gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature



Date \_\_\_\_\_3/4/12\_\_\_\_\_