

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & BUILDINGS

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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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Wednesday, May 18, 2022

Start: 3:45 P. M.

Recess: 3:55 P. M.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: HON. PIERINA SANCHEZ, CHAIR

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Alexa Avilés
Charles Barron
Tiffany Cabán
David M. Carr
Eric Dinowitz
Oswald Feliz
Crystal Hudson
Ari Kagan

Other Council Members Attending:

Ariola
Schulman
Yeger

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & BUILDINGS
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

[N/A]

1 SERGEANT PEREZ: Cloud recording is rolling.

2 Good afternoon, and welcome to New York City
3 Council's remote Committee Hearing on Housing and
4 Buildings.
5

6 Everyone, please turn on your video at this time.
7 Silence all electronic devices. Any written
8 testimony can be submitted to
9 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

10 Thank you, Chair Sanchez, we are ready to begin.

11 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much.

12 [GAVELING IN] [GAVEL SOUND]

13 Good afternoon, I am Council Member Pierina
14 Sanchez, Chair of The New York City Council's
15 Committee on Housing and Buildings.

16 We are here to vote on three bills to help
17 improve residential fire safety following a string of
18 devastating building fires in the City.

19 The cost of residential building fires has been
20 far too high -- human life -- city's housing stock.
21 These costs are preventable, and The City Council has
22 a responsibility to take measures within our
23 authority to ensure the safety of New Yorkers.

24 Recognizing that these bills are just one part of
25 a continuous effort toward a safer more equitable

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2 city, the Committee will vote on three bills today,
3 which represent a small but significant step towards
4 improving building safety and to help prevent
5 tragedies, like we saw at Twin Parks, from happening
6 again.

7 The first two bills are sponsored by Council
8 Member Feliz and aim to improve the enforcement of
9 self-closing door requirements, which are an
10 important, critical safeguard in preventing the
11 spread of fire and smoke when a building catches
12 fire.

13 Proposed Introduction Number 104-A, clarifies
14 that self-closing doors must return to the closed
15 position and latch shut. This is a clarification on
16 the definition and is an important one.

17 Proposed Introduction Number 105-A, reduces the
18 number of days a self-closing door violation must be
19 corrected from 21 days to 14 days, and requires HPD
20 to conduct re-inspection within 20 days afterwards.
21 It also increases penalties for self-closing door
22 violations.

23 The third bill, Proposed Introduction Number 155-
24 A, sponsored by Council Member Carr, is meant to
25 provide a measure of relief to small property owners

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2 whose buildings have been damaged by a fire by
3 waiving permit filing fees when they are needed to
4 repair damage caused by a fire or to correct a
5 construction defect discovered after the fire.

6 I am joined to today by my colleagues Council
7 Member Avilés, Council Member Barron, Council Member
8 Hudson, Council Member Kagan, Council Member
9 Schulman, Council Member Carr, Council Member Feliz,
10 Councilwoman Cabán, and Council Member Dinowitz, who
11 is very impressively also chairing a hearing at this
12 time.

13 And, with that, I want to now turn it over to the
14 bill's sponsors, first to Council Member Feliz and
15 then to Council Member Carr, to speak about their
16 bills.

17 Council Member Feliz?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you so much, Chair
19 Sanchez.

20 Good afternoon, I am Council Member Oswald Feliz.
21 I proudly represent the 15th district, which is the
22 district that was affected by the unspeakable Twin
23 Parks tragedy.

24 That tragedy that we saw on that ugly Sunday
25 morning was avoidable. Properly functioning self-

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2 closing doors would have prevented that unspeakable
3 tragedy in Twin Parks. Had those self-closing doors
4 properly functioned, smoke would not have filled the
5 entire building, and families would have been able to
6 safely escape that tragedy from that fire.

7 These fire safety bills will help ensure that
8 another similar tragedy never happens again. These
9 bills will ensure that self-closing door laws are
10 scrupulously honored and scrupulously and enforced.

11 The mandatory inspections and the increased civil
12 penalties will help ensure that violations -- all
13 housing violations -- but specifically on the issue
14 of self-closing doors -- that those violations are
15 taken seriously and they are promptly corrected --
16 and landlords that fail to do so are also held
17 accountable.

18 Self-closing door laws are critical tools to
19 fighting fires and are also critical to saving lives.
20 Again, in that Twin Parks tragedy, had those self-
21 closing doors worked -- 17 lives lost due to smoke
22 inhalation -- not one life would have been lost had
23 those self-closing doors worked.

24 So, I want to thank everyone who helped these
25 bills make it this far, including and especially,

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2 Speaker Adrienne Adams, and also members of our Fire
3 Safety Taskforce including Chair Sanchez, Chair
4 Ariolai, and Council Member Avilés, and Council
5 Member Farías.

6 This is a bill that will improve fire safety in
7 the City of New York by helping ensure that in the
8 case where there is a fire, families can safely
9 escape, this will improve fire safety and it will
10 save lives. So, uh, I am hoping that my colleagues
11 support me in this bill and support our quest to
12 improve fire safety in the City of New York.

13 Thank you so much.

14 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Okay, thank you so much,
15 Council Member Feliz.

16 I would also like to acknowledge that we have
17 been joined by Council Member Yeger.

18 Uh, Council Member Carr?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chair Sanchez.

20 You know, I urge my colleagues to vote in support
21 of Intro 155-A today. This bill is introduced in
22 response to a fire that took place on Staten Island
23 that was in result of a defect in a home that only
24 affected the home that was subject to the fire, uh,
25 but as well as others in the same development. And,

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2 so I think it's appropriate for the City to
3 facilitate the rebuilding of homes that are damaged
4 by fires related to defects as well as those who
5 discover that they have this defect and now want to
6 take action to prevent a similar tragedy from
7 occurring to them. And, if the City has an
8 opportunity to help small home owners save a little
9 time and go through a less effort, uh, to safeguard
10 their homes and their lives than we should do that.
11 And that's what this bill intends to do.

12 I really appreciate the support of The Speaker,
13 Minority Leader Borelli and all of his encouragement,
14 in particular, uh, the leadership of Chair Sanchez
15 and her team, uh, Committee Counsel, Audrey Son; as
16 well as Chair Ariolai and Chair Feliz for their
17 leadership, uh, on this issue in the wake of the
18 terrible tragedy in Council Member Feliz's district.

19 So I urge all of my colleagues to vote yes, thank
20 you.

21 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, thank you so much
22 Council Member Carr.

23 I know want to turn it to any committee, uh,
24 members who have questions. I see Council Member
25 Barron, I see your hand is up?

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2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very much, Madam
3 Chair. These are very, very important lifesaving
4 bills, lifesaving pieces of legislation, I'm very
5 honored. I just wanted to ask the Chair's permission
6 to vote on all the bills on the calendar. I do have
7 to make a presentation. The Chancellor of Higher
8 Education is waiting for me to beat him up. He would
9 be very disappointed if I didn't get there to put a
10 whoopin' on him. So, I am requesting to be excused,
11 and I vote aye on all of the items.

12 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Sure, then, thank you so
13 much, Council Member Barron... (CROSS-TALK)

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, [INAUDIBLE
15 00:07:29]

16 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: [INAUDIBLE 00:07:30]
17 William, that's okay with you? Got it? Alright, to
18 thank you so much, Council Member Barron.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Alright, wonderful.

21 So, I will... I will now ask the clerk to call
22 the roll.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk,
24 roll call vote Committee on Housing and Buildings;

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1 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & BUILDINGS 10
2 Proposed Introductions 104-A, 105-A, and 155-A; items
3 are coupled.
4 Chair Sanchez?
5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Aye on all.
6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.
7 Dinowitz?
8 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: (NO RESPONSE)
9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Dinowitz?
10 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: (NO RESPONSE)
11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Yeah, we'll come back...
12 (CROSS-TALK)
13 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I will [LOST CONNECTION]
14 [INAUDIBLE 00:08:09] and we can come back.
15 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Feliz?
16 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Aye on all. Thank you.
17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.
18 Avilés?
19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Aye on all. Thanks to my
20 colleagues for this work. It's very important.
21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.
22 Cabán?
23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: With gratitude to my
24 colleagues, and aye on all.
25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

1 Council Member Hudson?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: I am aye on Intros Number
3 104 and 105, and I abstain on Intro Number 155.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

5 Council Member Kagan?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Aye on all.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

8 Carr?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: I on all.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

11 Council Member Dinowitz?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Uhm, hello.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Yes, sir, we'll take your vote
14 whenever we're ready.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Yes on all.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you, sir.

17 Okay, by a vote of 9 in the affirmative, 0 in the
18 negative, and no abstentions, Introductions 104-A and
19 105-A have been adopted by The Committee.

20 And with a vote of 8 in the affirmative, 0 in the
21 negative, and 1 abstention, Proposed Introduction
22 Number 155-A has also been adopted by The Committee.

23 Chair, that is a full committee, you can close at
24 your convenience.
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CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much, Clerk.

And, thank you, to everyone who is here today.

So, at 4:00 p. m. The Committee on Fire Safety will be voting on several other pieces of legislation. And, I would also just like to note that, uh, I want to appreciate the leadership of Council Member Feliz, and Council Member Ariola, and so many of you who have come together to respond and introduce legislation. This is just the first package, and there is a lot more coming down the pike, and I look forward to improving and finalizing those pieces of legislation with you all. Thank you so much.

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, 2022