

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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July 23, 2014
Start: 10:18 a.m.
Recess: 10:44 a.m.

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

B E F O R E:
DANIEL DROMM
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Vincent J. Gentile
Daniel R. Garodnick
Margaret S. Chin
Deborah L. Rose
Mark S. Weprin
Chaim M. Deutsch
Mark Levine
Alan N. Maisel
Antonio Reynoso

[background comments]

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 'Kay. Good morning everyone; my name is Daniel Dromm and I'm the Chair of the Education Committee of the Council. We're here today to vote on Avonte's Law and I'd just like to indicate my support for this piece of legislation. We feel that in its current version that it really meets the needs of all of the issues surrounding this; primarily children leaving school buildings, it also meets the needs of the individual schools; it's going to take into consideration that the Chancellor and the NYPD will conduct a survey of the schools to find out which schools are the neediest and what type of equipment those schools need.

In the course of the hearing we heard differing opinions about some schools who want audible alarms; other schools who do not want audible alarms; this is also going to address that issue; about some schools that want cameras in their schools, and this is also going to address those issues. So we think that we have come up with a very good piece of legislation to address the issue of children who run from school buildings.

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2 The other part of the legislation that I
3 think is really productive is the issue of training
4 of personnel, all staff in the school system to
5 prevent children from running in the first place,
6 because ultimately that's what we want to have
7 happen; we don't want children even getting near the
8 doors, but in the event that they do, we want to
9 certainly be sure that we're aware that somebody has
10 left the building through an unapproved exit in the
11 school.

12 So we feel that this piece of legislation
13 accomplishes all that and today we're here to vote
14 and I'm going to ask the clerk to call the vote and
15 if Council Member Cornegy arrives -- I know he had an
16 emergency this morning with one of his children, one
17 of his, I believe six children, and that's why he's
18 not here yet. So he is on his way and then he will
19 have an opportunity to make comment as well. So let
20 me ask the clerk to call the vote.

21 KEVIN PENN: Kevin Penn [sp?], Committee
22 Clerk, roll call on the Committee on Education, Int.
23 0131-A. Council Member Dromm.

24 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I vote aye.

25 KEVIN PENN: Gentile.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I vote aye.

KEVIN PENN: Garodnick.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

KEVIN PENN: Chin.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Aye.

KEVIN PENN: Rose.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye.

KEVIN PENN: Weprin.

COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Aye.

KEVIN PENN: Deutsch.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yes.

KEVIN PENN: Maisel.

COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Yes.

KEVIN PENN: By a vote of 8 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative; no abstentions, the item has been adopted. Members, please sign the Committee Report.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: 'Kay. We've been joined by Council Member Reynoso. And I'm going to ask that we keep the vote open for 20 minutes for other council members who are on their way. Thank you very much and I appreciate everybody coming in today to vote on this issue. Good. Council Member Reynoso; do you wanna vote?

[background comments]

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [background comment]

I'd also like to thank my staff for working on this, particularly Aysha Schomburg, Jan Atwell, Joan Povolny [sp?], Christina Perrotti and Medina... gonna try to say her last name -- I was a teacher, so I gotta try -- Mezamitadine [sp?], for her work as well; she's our newest finance analyst and very grateful to have her on board as well. So thank you very much to everyone.

[background comments]

[pause]

KEVIN PENN: Levine.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: I vote aye.

KEVIN PENN: Vote stands at 10 in the affirmative.

[pause]

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Good morning colleagues; thank you Chairman Dromm for giving me the chance to speak and for your leadership in the Education Committee. This morning the Committee will vote on a revised version of the Audible Alarms Bill, also known as Avonte's Law.

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2 Since the committee hearing in June,
3 we've worked hard to negotiate a version of the bill
4 that responded to concerns raised by witnesses and
5 that the Department of Education would embrace; the
6 bill you will vote on today is the result. I'm
7 satisfied that it will be effective and allow the
8 discretion that DOE and principals require. Rather
9 than waiting 90 days for the law to take effect, it
10 will be effective immediately upon enactment so that
11 DOE can begin planning immediately. DOE will have
12 until May 30th, 2015 rather than the close of 2014 to
13 report to the Council on their evaluation of where
14 alarms ought'a be installed and to provide a schedule
15 for installation. The additional time was agreed
16 upon to allow DOE to conduct a thorough evaluation
17 and procure the needed equipment cost-effectively.

18 DOE will also report to the Council
19 regarding the training of school principals in school
20 safety and student safety protocols annually,
21 beginning next May.

22 Not reflective in the text but agreed to
23 in negotiations are -- DOE will meet with Council
24 representatives this October to discuss the criteria
25 for determination of what doors will be alarmed; DOE

1 will begin installing alarms as soon as possible.
2 Most installations will take place over the summer
3 break 2015. These agreements reflect a real change
4 from DOE's former position that an investment in door
5 alarms is not prudent for an understanding that were
6 appropriate -- they are necessary for the safety of
7 our children. Thank you Chancellor Farina and Deputy
8 Chancellor Grimm for their leadership.
9

10 I've been in touch with the families of
11 Avonte Oquendo and Symeir Talley-Jasper; they are in
12 favor of the revised bill, as is Public Advocate
13 Letitia James, the Council of School Supervisors,
14 Teamsters Local 237, representing School Safety
15 Agents, the Citizens Committee for Children,
16 StudentsFirstNY, QSAC, the New York City Parents
17 Union, and other advocates.

18 I ask that each of you, many of whom co-
19 sponsored Int. 0131 months ago, continue your support
20 for this issue by voting yes today.

21 Finally, I'd like to thank Aysha
22 Schomburg, Jan Atwell, Joanie Povolny -- I'm sorry;
23 can we edit that [laughter] -- Joan, Tiza [sp?] and
24 Matt from Council, Ashley Thompson from the Mayor's
25 Office and my staffer, Dina Shaw-Gross [sp?] for

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their hard work on my first bill as a member of the
New York City Council. Thank you again.

[background comments, applause]

[pause]

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So this meeting is
now adjourned at 11... excuse me... at 10:44 a.m.

[gavel] Thank you.

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 29, 2014