

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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December 18, 2017
Start: 12:15 p.m.
Recess: 12:24 p.m.

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

B E F O R E:
CARLOS MENCHACA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Mathieu Eugene
Daniel Dromm
Peter A. Koo
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.

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

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TRANSCRIPTION NOTE: Spanish time stamp

at: 00:05:57.

[sound check]

[pause]

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Buenas tardes. My

name is Carlos Menchaca, City Council Member and

Chair of the New York City's Committee on

Immigration. [background comment] Oh... [pause]

[gavel]

Buenas tardes. My name is Carlos

Menchaca; I'm a Council Member but also Chair of the

New York City Council's Committee on Immigration.

The Committee will hear Proposed

Resolution No. 1484-A, a resolution calling upon the

state and federal government to extend protections

for undocumented youth by passing the New York State

DREAM Act of 2017 at the state level, as well as the

federal DREAM Act of 2017 at the federal level.

As you know, this is a topic that is very

near and dear to my heart; I have been a champion for

undocumented youth and young adults, this Committee

has stood strong, and the individual Council Members

that represent immigrant districts have stood up.

1
2 DREAMers deserve the right to attain the American
3 dream and it is our job to ensure that these
4 hardworking youth and young adults are supported
5 every step of the way.

6 Before going any further, I want to
7 recognize the following Council Members who are
8 joining us today, from Queens, Council Member Danny
9 Dromm and from Brooklyn, Council Member Rafael
10 Espinal and Mathieu Eugene.

11 Before going any further though, I want
12 to give you some background. The term DREAMer is
13 used to describe young undocumented immigrants who
14 were brought to the U.S. as children and know this
15 country to be their home. DREAMers assimilate into
16 American schools and internalize American beliefs;
17 often they do not know that they are undocumented
18 until they get a driver's license or cannot get a
19 summer job because they lack a social security
20 number.

21 In the U.S., every child is entitled to a
22 free K-12 public education, regardless of race,
23 nationality, native language, gender, or immigration
24 status, and is free to enjoy an education without
25 fear of unlawful discrimination. Unfortunately,

1 federal laws require that the applicants for
2 financial aid be legal residents, so undocumented
3 students, including DACA grantees, are not eligible.

4
5 As a result, roughly 65,000 undocumented
6 youth graduate from U.S. high schools with little
7 hope of attending college, simply because they cannot
8 afford it, and are ineligible to receive assistance
9 with their financing. More than 4,500 undocumented
10 students graduate from New York State high schools
11 each year, yet only 5-10% pursues a college degree
12 due to tremendous financial obstacles that they face.
13 Without access to federal tuition assistance,
14 scholarships, grants, or loans, these bright students
15 are left in limbo and with few opportunities for
16 advancement. As new jobs increasingly demand
17 advanced skills, it has never been more critical to
18 ensure that all students have opportunities to
19 continue their education and gain practical
20 experience.

21 At the state level, the Assembly
22 introduced the New York State DREAM Act in January of
23 this year; it is the fifth year this legislation has
24 been introduced, and now more than ever it's time to
25 make this law. We stood out front on the steps of

1
2 the City Hall where Council Members, state-elected
3 officials, borough presidents, and even the
4 Comptroller representative stood up and said yes to
5 not only the state DREAM Act, but federal.
6 Additionally, it would create a fund that would raise
7 private dollars for scholarships to college-bound
8 children of an immigrant parent.

9 This work is important. Without a path
10 to legal immigration status or a meaningful
11 opportunity to continue their education and
12 professional development, DREAMers are forced to
13 remain living in the shadows. The passage of the
14 DREAM Act in New York would allow students who are
15 New York residents, regardless of their status, to
16 have equal access to various forms of financial aid
17 so that they can continue in their higher education.
18 The federal DREAM Act would provide a pathway to
19 citizenship.

20 If enacted, the benefits of these pieces
21 of legislation would greatly improve the quality of
22 life for our youth and young adults residing in New
23 York State. It is clear that an investment in New
24 York's DREAMers is an investment in New York's future
25 and it is time to end the state and federal

1 governments' inaction. Before they go to holiday
2 season, we are saying a New York City, and tomorrow
3 we'll vote on the floor of the City Council, that
4 they go back to session and make sure that we pass a
5 clean DREAM Act.
6

7 And in solidarity: **[00:05:57] Spanish.**

8 Thank you and I will now call on the
9 votes for the Committee and we also have been joined
10 by a good friend from Queens, Peter Koo.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good afternoon, this is
12 the Committee on Immigration, December 18, 2017, vote
13 on Resolution 1484, beginning with Chair Menchaca.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I proudly vote
15 aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: And Council Members
17 Eugene.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: May I explain my
19 vote? I just want to commend Chair Menchaca and also
20 The Speaker for this very, very important
21 legislation, this is a very, very important
22 legislation, because I think this is not only the
23 right thing to do, but this is a smart thing to do
24 not only for the children, for the DREAMers, but also
25 for the City of New York and for the United States of

1
2 America. We are talking about children, young people
3 who are dedicated, who have the courage, the ambition
4 to go to school to become somebody, to be part of the
5 fabric of this country; to contribute to the fabric
6 of this country; they want to be doctors, nurses;
7 elected officials, so we have to give them the
8 opportunity. We say all the time, the young people,
9 they are the future of this society; they are the
10 future of the nation; this is the opportunity for us
11 to give them the opportunity they need to become the
12 future of this City, the future of this nation. In
13 addition to that, we are talking about human beings,
14 children who don't have any recollection of where
15 they were born; they don't even know, some of them
16 didn't even know you know they were not American or
17 there exists a distinction between them and the other
18 young people. I think this is the right thing to do;
19 we've got to do, this is a win-win situation. And
20 they are intelligent, they are brilliant; if we don't
21 do that; we are going to do a disservice to this
22 nation, and I commend all of those advocates, those
23 people who have been there fighting, advocating for
24 the DREAMers, and I hope the state and the federal
25 government, you know our colleagues in the state and

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2 the federal government will do the right thing. With
3 that, I vote yes.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Dromm.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: I'd like to say
6 that I'm voting yes on this piece of legislation and
7 thank Council Member Menchaca and The Speaker for
8 introducing it; it is a very important piece of
9 legislation, and I'd also like to thank Chair
10 Menchaca for his dynamic leadership of this Committee
11 over the last four years; he's done an outstanding
12 job and has many accomplishments under his belt.
13 Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Koo.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote aye and I
16 also want to thank Chairman Menchaca for his
17 leadership and his dedication on this Committee, and
18 I also want to thank The Speaker, because they both
19 worked together, passed many modern [sic] bills for
20 the immigrants. Thank you very much, Chair Menchaca.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Espinal.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: I'd just like
23 say; I don't think that Mathieu Eugene could've said
24 it any better, so I stand behind his words 100% and I
25 want to congratulate Carlos Menchaca on getting his

1 resolution passed and let all the advocates know that
2 New York City stands behind you and New York City
3 stands behind the DREAMers. Let's keep the DREAM
4 alive, and I vote aye.
5

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. By a vote
7 of 5 in the affirmative, 0 in negative and 0
8 abstentions, Resolution 1484 passes.

9 [pause]

10 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I want to thank
11 all the members of the Committee for their incredible
12 work; this will be the last time that we meet as a
13 committee until we come back in the next session, so
14 it's a really proud moment for us all on a committee
15 that we've done some good work; we're standing up
16 strong and we hope to come back to the City Council
17 next session in the New Year with renewed commitment,
18 not only to our DREAMers, but all immigrant families.

19 So I want to thank our staff, my Chief of
20 Staff Veronica and our Counsel to the Committee,
21 Indiana Porta and everyone who has done so much work,
22 The Speaker's staff to central staff, thank you so
23 much and we'll see you in the New Year. Thank you.
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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 January 11, 2018