

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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October 19, 2023
Start: 11:15 a.m.
Recess: 11:22 a.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Sandra Ung, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
Shahana Hanif
Lincoln Restler
Lynn C. Schulman

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning. This is a
3 microphone check for the Committee on Governmental
4 Operations. Today's date is October 19, 2023. Located
5 in the Chambers. Recording done by Pedro Lugo.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and
7 welcome to the New York City Council vote of the
8 Committee on Governmental Operations.

9 At this time, can everybody please
10 silence your cell phones.

11 Chair, we are ready to begin.

12 CHAIRPERSON UNG: [GAVEL] Good morning. I
13 am Council Member Sandra Ung, Chair of the Committee
14 on Governmental Operations.

15 I would like to welcome my Colleagues who
16 have joined us, Council Members Schulman, Brewer,
17 Hanif, and Restler.

18 At today's hearing, the Committee will be
19 voting on a bill sponsored by Council Member Brewer
20 that will add additional options to list documents
21 and verifications that can be used as proof of
22 identify and residency needed to apply for the IDNYC
23 identification card. The IDNYC program was first
24 launched in January 2015 and was designed to provide
25 all New Yorkers, regardless of immigrant status, with

2 an affordable, safe, and widely accept government-
3 issued form of identification. This program also
4 targeted formerly incarcerated individuals, those who
5 experience homelessness, and the (INAUDIBLE) for the
6 purpose of obtaining a proper ID. A key feature of
7 the IDNYC program is it accepts a wide variety of
8 documentation as proof of identity and residency than
9 most other types of government-issued ID. This allows
10 people that may not have access to the documentation
11 required to obtain most other forms of state-issued
12 identification to get an ID. By all accounts, this
13 program has been a resounding success with more than
14 1.5 million cards issued through the second quarter
15 of this year. New York is experiencing a drastic
16 increase in asylum-seekers with over 120,000 arriving
17 since the spring of 2022. Many of these asylum-
18 seekers lack identification. They have documents
19 confiscated when they present themselves to the
20 border or they have only consular identification
21 cards, driver's license, or birth certificates issued
22 by their country of origin, which aren't widely
23 accepted in the United States. Having an American
24 government-issued form of ID is crucial for those
25 newcomers in New York, allows them to open bank

2 accounts, access public buildings, simplify
3 interactions with NYPD, but obtaining a government ID
4 requires documentation, documentation that many
5 asylum-seekers do not have. This bill we'll be voting
6 on today will make it easier for asylum-seekers,
7 justice-involved individuals, and other New York City
8 residents to obtain a widely accepted form of
9 identification. The additional documents the bill
10 will add to the list of what's acceptable to obtain
11 IDNYC and will include documents issued by federal
12 immigrant authorities, electronic verification
13 through the Department of Correction, and release
14 offender verification cards. This bill also amends
15 the documents accepted for proof of residency to
16 include rent verification for emergency housing
17 deemed appropriate by relevant agencies.

18 With that, I want to thank Jayasri
19 Ganapathy and Erica Cohen from the Central Staff for
20 the work they did putting this hearing together as
21 well as my own Chief-of-Staff, Alexander Hart, and my
22 Communications Director, Shane Miller, for their
23 assistance.

24 Now, I will turn it over to Council
25 Member Brewer to give a statement on her bill.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
3 much, Chair Ung, and thank you to the Staff and
4 certainly to Sam Goldsmith from my office.

5 I was around in 2014 when the City
6 Council created the IDNYC, and I think all of us,
7 residents and undocumented individuals, were pleased
8 to have a legitimate government-issued photo ID. That
9 2014 law, as we heard, specified the documents an
10 applicant could use to demonstrate identify and proof
11 of residency, and it was a real addition to those
12 coming to the United States and to New York in
13 particular because previously you could only get
14 something sometimes from the Consulate General's
15 Office. The law states that the administering agency,
16 in this case Human Resources Administration, may
17 accept "any other documentation that the agency deems
18 acceptable." However, that was always challenging to
19 staff because the decision to deem a document
20 acceptable falls on individual HRA employees who
21 processed the applications, and we've heard from
22 workers at the HERRCs and at the shelters that it's
23 luck of the draw sometimes. That's why we're working
24 and passing hopefully this law. Sometimes documents
25 issued by federal immigrant authorities are accepted

2 as proof of identify. Obviously, this has been a real
3 issue recently. Other times, they are not. Sometimes
4 letters from HERRCs are accepted as proof of
5 residency but not always. We've heard this over and
6 over again from families in my District and across
7 the city. So 790-B would expand the list of
8 acceptable documents as you heard. U.S. Department of
9 Homeland Security forms I385, I862, and 220A. Those
10 are all federal. Also, another one, Order of
11 Supervision. Number two, verification through the
12 Department of Correction Individual Lockup System,
13 that verification would be accepted, and "a released
14 offender ID card issued by the New York State
15 Department of Correction and written verification
16 from emergency housing that receives City funding."
17 As we said, that has been a challenge in the past.

18 I want to thank Chair Ung and the Members
19 of this Committee for your support and to say I hope
20 this helps individuals who are trying really hard to
21 get identification. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Thank you, Council
23 Member Brewer.

24 Now, I will turn it over to Legislative
25 Documents to take the vote.

2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
3 you. Good morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk.
4 Roll call vote Committee on Governmental Operations.
5 Proposed Introduction 790-B. Chair Ung.

6 CHAIRPERSON UNG: I vote aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Brewer.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Hanif.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Restler.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Permission to
13 explain my vote.

14 Back in 2014 and 2015, I was working
15 full-time on the IDNYC program and personally led the
16 negotiations with the NYPD Intelligence Division to
17 determine what documents would be accepted for proof
18 of identification and proof of residency, and, with
19 helpful input from the Council at that time, we I
20 think created a form of IDNYC that was broadly
21 accessible to New Yorkers, but this legislation by
22 Council Member Brewer absolutely responds to the
23 needs of asylum-seekers and migrants that have
24 recently arrived to New York who need and deserve the
25 IDNYC, helps improve access for formerly incarcerated

2 individuals, and is an absolutely valuable addition
3 to what has been a tremendously success program where
4 over 1 million New Yorkers have already benefited
5 from government-issued photo ID. Working on the IDNYC
6 program is one of the things I'm most proud of in my
7 career, and I really want to thank Council Member
8 Brewer, Chair Ung, Council Member Hanif, and others
9 for their work on this legislation today. Thank you.
10 I'm an aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
12 you. Schulman.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: With a
15 vote of 5 in the affirmative, zero in the negative,
16 and no abstentions, item has been adopted by the
17 Committee.

18 Madam Chair, that is a full Committee.

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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 October 26, 2023