

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

STATED MEETING

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October 17, 2019
Start: 2:18 p.m.
Recess: 5:40 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Corey Johnson
Speaker

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Adrienne E. Adams
Alicka Ampry-Samuel
Diana Ayala
Inez D. Barron
Joseph C. Borelli
Justin Brannan
Fernando Cabrera
Margaret S. Chin
Costa Constantinides
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Laurie A. Cumbo
Chaim M. Deutsch
Ruben Diaz, Sr.
Daniel Dromm
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.
Mathieu Eugene
Vanessa L. Gibson
Mark Gjonaj
Barry Grodenchik
Robert Holden

Ben Kallos
Andy King
Peter Koo
Karen Koslowitz
Rory I. Lancman
Brad Lander
Stephen T. Levin
Mark Levine
Farah Louis
Alan N. Maisel
Steven Matteo
Carlos Menchaca
I. Daneek Miller
Francisco Moya
Bill Perkins
Keith Powers
Antonio Reynoso
Donovan J. Richards
Carlina Rivera
Ydanis Rodriguez
Deborah Rose
Helen K. Rosenthal
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Ritchie J. Torres
Mark Treyger
Eric A. Ulrich
Paul Vallone
Jimmy Van Bramer
Kalman Yeger

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

2 ISRAEL MARTINEZ: Sound check for the
3 Stated Meeting of October 17, 2019, being recorded by
4 Israel Martinez, taking place in the City Council
5 Chambers, scheduled for 1:30 p.m.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: We are about to
7 have our ceremonials and I'm Council Member Inez
8 Barron. And also here is Majority, well, she was
9 here, Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo, who just stepped
10 out, and this is the part of the ceremonies where we
11 acknowledge the great work of individuals, of people,
12 and of organizations and take the time to call them
13 to be recognized, and I have the distinction of
14 calling forth the Hunter female basketball team to
15 come forward at this time to receive their
16 proclamation. [applause] So just gather around.
17 Come together, come closer. And also joined is Ms.
18 Anita Fisher, my staff person who was so instrumental
19 in making sure that this proclamation occurred, and
20 this proclamation is going to be read now by the
21 clerk.

22 COUNCIL CLERK: Council City of New York
23 proclamation. The New York City Council is proud to
24 honor the Hunter College Women's Basketball Team,
25 also known as the Hunter Hawks, for their outstanding

2 2018-2019 season. In February the Hunter Hawks
3 played fearlessly at the CUNY Athletic Conference to
4 defeat their competition 76 to 65 and garner the
5 team's first title since 2004. And whereas the
6 Hunter Hawks owe much of their success to the
7 profound dedication of head coach John Garrett and
8 assistant coaches Secret Stubblefield, Kristin Marco,
9 Jennifer Robbins, and whereas the Hunter College
10 Hawks is comprised of a dozen talented players -
11 Phoebe Valentin, Nicole Balan, Ashley Arias, Jade
12 Aponte, Theresa Lung, Morgan Gress, Christine
13 Patterson, Gabriela Basara, Jeanine Conway, Selena
14 Lynn, Marlena Budna, Edena Music, and whereas may the
15 Hunter Hawks inspire all New Yorkers with the hard
16 work, discipline, and dedication each player as
17 demonstrated, as well as their shared commitment to
18 teamwork, all of these young women have demonstrated
19 their strength of character and commitment to
20 excellence that will help them pursue their highest
21 ambitions in the years ahead and wish them continued
22 success both on and off the basketball court. Now
23 therefore be it known that the New York City Council
24 proudly honors and congratulates the Hunter Hawks,
25 the Hunter College Women's Basketball Team, for their

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2 outstanding teamwork that led them to the 2019 CUNY
3 Athletic Conference championship. Corey Johnson,
4 speaker for the entire council, Laurie M. Cumbo,
5 majority leader, Inez D. Barron, chair, Committee on
6 Higher Education, and many other members of the New
7 York City Council.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Big round of
9 applause for the Hunter Hawks. [applause] I'm, I'm
10 particularly pleased to present this citation because
11 Hunter, I'm an alum from Hunter College, graduated
12 class of January 1967, BA in physiology, minor in
13 psychology, and I'm so pleased to be able to share
14 this citation, and at this time we're going to have
15 comments from...

16 JADE APONTE: Jade.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Jade. OK, Jade.

18 JADE APONTE: We are honored to be here
19 at City Hall today and on behalf of Hunter College
20 and President Raab we would like to thank Council
21 Member Inez Barron for having us and recognizing our
22 success this year, and this is for you. [applause]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Now we have to
24 make sure that there is not more than \$25, because if
25 it is I can't accept it [laughs]. But thank you so

2 much and we're so pleased, we're honored that you're
3 combining the athleticism and the athletics with the
4 academics, and knowing that it takes all of that. I
5 also want to recognize Ms. Cook who's here. Thank
6 you so much. Appreciate you all. Thank you.
7 Congratulations. [applause] Congratulations,
8 congratulations, congratulations, congratulations,
9 very, very good. Ah, where is our photographer? OK,
10 we're going to take a group photo.

11 COUNCIL CLERK: Ladies and gentleman, at
12 this time please place all electronic devices, all
13 electronic devices to vibrate. Will all non-council
14 employees, non-council employees, please leave the
15 main floor of the chambers. Thank you. Madam
16 Majority Leader.

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Good afternoon
18 and welcome to the Stated Meeting of October 17,
19 2019. I am Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo. Will you
20 all please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

21 UNIDENTIFIED: All rise.

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I pledge
23 allegiance to the flag of the United States of
24 America, and to the republic for which it stands, one
25 nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and

2 justice for all. You may be seated. Quiet in the
3 chamber. Good afternoon and welcome to City Hall
4 today. We have perhaps the most important vote that
5 the council will take today. We have had many months
6 of hearings, deliberations, rallies, town hall, press
7 conferences to get to this point today. We thank all
8 of you for being here, for taking time out of your
9 schedule to be here for this very historical vote.
10 Given the volatile climate that we are in this nation
11 at this time for safety reasons we are asking that
12 this entire meeting be respected and that we hear
13 from each and every member. There are many opposing
14 viewpoints and each member of the City Council has a
15 different viewpoint that we need to hear today, and
16 we would like for all of you to be able to hear the
17 positions and the debates that are going to happen on
18 the floor today, because it is critical for each of
19 you to be able to go back to your perspective
20 communities to report what happened today. But,
21 again, as I stated, for safety reasons, particularly
22 given the way the balcony is constructed, we have to
23 make sure that we respect one another, that we hear
24 one another, and that deliberations take place in a
25 respectful manner. We don't all have to agree, but

2 we all have to respect each other's important
3 viewpoints that are going to be expressed today.
4 Unfortunately, the first outburst, the first
5 disruption is going to cause the entire balcony and
6 this chamber to be cleared, which will unfortunately
7 not allow everyone to hear the deliberations that are
8 very critical to the future of New York City. We ask
9 for your respect. We ask for the ability to have
10 mutual understands of respect with one another. So I
11 thank you again for being here today. As I stated at
12 the last stated meeting, my predecessor, the late
13 James E. Davis, was shot and killed right here in
14 this particular room. And so because of that we are
15 asking that we move in a respectful manner. Because
16 for each of the members here today they all want to
17 go back home to their families. So we want to make
18 sure that we have a safe, productive, and respectful
19 meeting. Thank you. We are now going to begin with
20 roll call.

21 COUNCIL CLERK: Adams.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Present.

23 COUNCIL CLERK: Ampry-Samuel.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Present.

25 COUNCIL CLERK: Ayala.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Present.
3 COUNCIL CLERK: Barron.
4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Present.
5 COUNCIL CLERK: Borrelli. Brannan.
6 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Here.
7 COUNCIL CLERK: Cabrera.
8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Here.
9 COUNCIL CLERK: Chin.
10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Here.
11 COUNCIL CLERK: Cohen.
12 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Here.
13 COUNCIL CLERK: Constantinides.
14 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Present.
15 COUNCIL CLERK: Cornegy.
16 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Present.
17 COUNCIL CLERK: Deutsch.
18 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Here.
19 COUNCIL CLERK: Diaz.
20 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Aqui.
21 COUNCIL CLERK: Dromm.
22 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Here.
23 COUNCIL CLERK: Espinal.
24 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Here.
25 COUNCIL CLERK: Eugene.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Present.
3 COUNCIL CLERK: Gibson.
4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Here.
5 COUNCIL CLERK: Gjonaj.
6 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Present.
7 COUNCIL CLERK: Grodenchik.
8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Here.
9 COUNCIL CLERK: Holden.
10 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Here.
11 COUNCIL CLERK: Kallos.
12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS:
13 COUNCIL CLERK: King.
14 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Present.
15 COUNCIL CLERK: Koo.
16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Present.
17 COUNCIL CLERK: Koslowitz.
18 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Here.
19 COUNCIL CLERK: Lancman.
20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Here.
21 COUNCIL CLERK: Lander.
22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Here.
23 COUNCIL CLERK: Levin.
24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Here.
25 COUNCIL CLERK: Levine.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Here.
3 COUNCIL CLERK: Louis.
4 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Here.
5 COUNCIL CLERK: Maisel. Menchaca.
6 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Presente.
7 COUNCIL CLERK: Miller.
8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Present.
9 COUNCIL CLERK: Moya.
10 COUNCIL MEMBER MOYA: Present.
11 COUNCIL CLERK: Perkins.
12 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Presente.
13 COUNCIL CLERK: Powers.
14 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Present.
15 COUNCIL CLERK: Reynoso.
16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Present.
17 COUNCIL CLERK: Richards.
18 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Present.
19 COUNCIL CLERK: Rivera.
20 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Present.
21 COUNCIL CLERK: Rodriguez. Rose.
22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Present.
23 COUNCIL CLERK: Rosenthal.
24 COUNCIL CLERK: Salamanca.
25 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Present.

2 COUNCIL CLERK: Torres. Treyger.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Here.

4 COUNCIL CLERK: Ulrich. Vallone.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Here.

6 COUNCIL CLERK: Van Bramer.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Here.

8 COUNCIL CLERK: Yeger.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Here.

10 COUNCIL CLERK: Matteo.

11 COUNCIL CLERK: Cumbo.

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Present.

13 COUNCIL CLERK: Speaker Johnson.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I'm here.

15 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you. We
16 have a quorum. We will now have today's invocation,
17 which will be delivered by the Very Reverend Antonio
18 Checo, rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, located
19 at 3350 82nd Street in Jackson Heights, Queens.
20 Please rise.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: All rise.

22 VERY REVEREND ANTONIO CHECO: In the name
23 of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Last
24 year the media paid lots of attention to the migrants
25 coming from, from the Middle East, the [Lebanons],

2 Syria, into Europe, through Greece and Italy. They
3 created an amnesty and for some reason a ship full of
4 migrant came one day later and they were told that
5 they were late, therefore they would not qualify for
6 the amnesty. Some of them said have mercy on us. We
7 have no food, no jobs, we are hungry, we're dying.
8 In last Sunday gospel Jesus on the way to Jerusalem
9 for crucifixion ten lepers approached him, also
10 asking for mercy. Jesus sent them to the authority
11 and they got healed on the way the authority who were
12 supposed to go to be the priest. In this case you
13 are the authority. The same way today the people
14 from Bushwick, from East New York, South Bronx, the
15 LGBT community, the prisoners, they are also,
16 actually I have to mention the family of the
17 policemen who were killed and the [inaudible] who
18 were killed, and the family of all of those people
19 who have been killed in our country they are asking
20 for mercy. You are here today to make decision and
21 from what I see I think it's going to be exciting.
22 So therefore I want to ask God to send his spirit on
23 all of you to give you the wisdom, the stamina, the
24 desire to keep in your hearts those people that are
25 appointed to you, our city, the state, our country,

2 the leaders of our country, so that you are able to
3 discern and to make the right decision for us. But
4 especially I want to ask God to send his holy spirit
5 on all of you, to give you peace and to fill your
6 heart and mine with compassion for those out there
7 who are in need of your decision to be the best for
8 all of them. And that I ask in Jesus's name. Amen.

9 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
10 Reverend Checo for that very timely prayer. I'd now
11 like to ask Council Member Danny Dromm to spread the
12 invocation on record.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you, Madam
14 Majority Leader. Reverend Antonio Checo, born and
15 raised in Santiago, Dominican Republic, migrated to
16 the United States in 1982 to complete a master's in
17 social work. He obtained his bachelor's degree in
18 social work from a Catholic university in the
19 Dominican Republic and completed a master's degree in
20 clinical social work at Fordham University. He also
21 obtained a master's in theology from the General
22 Theological Seminary in New York City. He was
23 ordained in 2007 and became a priest in 2008 in the
24 dioceses of Long Island. Father Checo was the
25 director of a UNICEF program in La Vega in the

2 Dominican Republic, program director of the HIV
3 program at St. Joseph's Children's Services in
4 Brooklyn, director of foster care and preventative
5 services at Harlem Dowling Children's Services. He
6 was an assistant to the deputy executive at Red Cross
7 and post September 11, post the September 11
8 terrorist attacks, and a medical, a mental health
9 clinician at Mount Sinai Hospital. Currently he is
10 the rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Jackson
11 Heights. I thank him for coming today and I ask that
12 you spread the invocation in full upon the record.

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
14 Council Member Dromm, and again, thank you so much
15 Reverend Checo for being here today. We will now
16 have the adoption of minutes by Council Member
17 Menchaca.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I move, motion
19 to adopt the minutes.

20 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you. We
21 will now go to messages and papers from the mayor.

22 COUNCIL CLERK: None.

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Communication
24 from city, county, and borough offices.

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2 COUNCIL CLERK: M, excuse me, M-191,
3 Finance Authority Act.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Received, ordered
5 printed and filed.

6 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Petitions and
7 communications.

8 COUNCIL CLERK: None.

9 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Land use call-
10 ups.

11 COUNCIL CLERK: M-192.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. At this
13 time I'm asking for a roll call vote on today's land
14 use call-ups.

15 COUNCIL CLERK: Adams.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Aye.

17 COUNCIL CLERK: Ampry-Samuel.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Aye.

19 COUNCIL CLERK: Ayala.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Aye.

21 COUNCIL CLERK: Barron.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I don't think she heard
23 you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Ah, I did.

25 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I'm sorry.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I'm trying to be
3 sure what it is that we're voting on.

4 COUNCIL CLERK: Land use call-ups.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Just the call-
6 ups?

7 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Land use call-
8 ups.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Aye.

10 COUNCIL CLERK: Borrelli. Brannan.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Aye.

12 COUNCIL CLERK: Cabrera.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Aye.

14 COUNCIL CLERK: Chin.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Aye.

16 COUNCIL CLERK: Cohen.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Aye.

18 COUNCIL CLERK: Constantinides.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Aye.

20 COUNCIL CLERK: Cornegy.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Aye.

22 COUNCIL CLERK: Deutsch.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: [inaudible].

24 COUNCIL CLERK: Diaz.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: No.

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COUNCIL CLERK: Dromm.
COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Aye.
COUNCIL CLERK: Espinal.
COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Aye.
COUNCIL CLERK: Eugene.
COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I vote aye.
COUNCIL CLERK: Gibson.
COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Aye.
COUNCIL CLERK: Gjonaj.
COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Aye.
COUNCIL CLERK: Grodenchik.
COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.
COUNCIL CLERK: Holden.
COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Aye.
COUNCIL CLERK: Kallos.
COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: With permission,
I'd like to vote on all Land use call-ups coupled on
items on the general order calendar and all
resolutions.
MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
granted.
COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I vote aye on
all.
COUNCIL CLERK: King.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: With permission I
3 would like to vote on all land use call-ups and
4 everything on the general order calendar today.

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
6 granted.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: I vote aye on all
8 call-ups, but I do vote no on the application of the
9 closing of Riker's Island and borough-based jails.
10 Thank you.

11 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

12 COUNCIL CLERK: Koo.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Aye.

14 COUNCIL CLERK: Koslowitz.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Aye.

16 COUNCIL CLERK: Lancman.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Aye.

18 COUNCIL CLERK: Lander.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Aye.

20 COUNCIL CLERK: Levin.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye.

22 COUNCIL CLERK: Levine.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Aye.

24 COUNCIL CLERK: Louis.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Aye.

2 COUNCIL CLERK: Maisel. Menchaca.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Aye.

4 COUNCIL CLERK: Miller.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Aye.

6 COUNCIL CLERK: Moya.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MOYA: Aye.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Aye on the
9 borough-based jails, including Land use call-ups, aye
10 on land use call-ups, all land use call-ups.

11 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

12 COUNCIL CLERK: Powers.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Aye.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Aye.

15 COUNCIL CLERK: Richards.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Aye.

17 COUNCIL CLERK: Rivera.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Aye.

19 COUNCIL CLERK: Rodriguez. Rose.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye.

21 COUNCIL CLERK: Rosenthal.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Aye.

23 COUNCIL CLERK: Salamanca.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Aye.

25 COUNCIL CLERK: Torres.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Aye.

3 COUNCIL CLERK: Treyger.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Aye.

5 COUNCIL CLERK: Ulrich. Vallone.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Aye.

7 COUNCIL CLERK: Van Bramer.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

9 COUNCIL CLERK: Yeger.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Aye.

11 COUNCIL CLERK: Matteo. Cumbo.

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I vote aye.

13 COUNCIL CLERK: Speaker Johnson.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I vote aye.

15 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

16 Today's land use call-ups are adopted by a vote of 46
17 affirmative and one negative. We will now have
18 communication from Speaker Corey Johnson.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam
20 Majority Leader. Good afternoon. I want to thank
21 you all for being here today for this very important
22 Stated Meeting. I want to begin by acknowledging
23 that this morning our country faced a great loss.
24 Congress Member Elijah Cummings, who has been a giant
25 in the fight for civil rights and justice died. His

2 leadership has been a blessing his entire time in
3 public service and he will be missed. As we do every
4 Stated Meeting, I want to recognize some of the
5 important events that have happened recently. Sadly,
6 we have lost two NYPD officers since our last Stated
7 Meeting. Officer Brian Mulkeen died in the line of
8 duty on September 29. We will be forever grateful
9 for his service. He was 33 years old.

10 Unfortunately, another member of the department has
11 died by suicide. NYPD Sergeant Lin Hong Lee died at
12 his home in Queens. He was also 33 years old.

13 Sergeant Lee's death marks the tenth suicide by a
14 member of the NYPD so far this year. My condolences
15 are with their families and the men and women of the
16 department. If we could please rise for a moment of
17 silence.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: All rise. [moment of
19 silence]

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. This month
21 is also Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It is an
22 important time to remind those who are suffering from
23 domestic abuse that they are not alone. The city
24 provides support, which can be found at www.nyc.gov/nychope. I also want to acknowledge that this is

2 Breast Cancer Awareness Month, when people are urged
3 to get screened for breast cancer, and as you can see
4 by many of the members of the council here today we
5 are wearing a rainbow ribbon in honor of National
6 Coming Out Day and also Spirit Day, which was last
7 week. Everyone deserves to be accepted for who they
8 are and who they love. This week we also celebrate
9 the Jewish holiday of Sukkoth. If you have not seen
10 it already there is a sukkah outside of City Hall on
11 Broadway. This is the City Hall's first sukkah and I
12 want to thank Council Member Chaim Deutsch and the
13 Jewish caucus for their leadership. I urge everyone
14 to stop in and take a break from the hustle and
15 bustle of our city. Now, we are going to dive into
16 our legislative agenda for today, it is certainly an
17 important one. I'll start with some land use items.
18 We will be voting on five historic districts, four
19 located in Sunset Park in Council Member Carlos
20 Menchaca's district and the fifth is Doctors Row,
21 located in Council Member Justin Brannan's district.
22 In addition to these historic districts, we will vote
23 on 76-780 Myrtle Avenue, which will facilitate the
24 development of 59 units of supportive and affordable
25 housing in Council Member Robert Cornegy's districts

2 and we will be voting on two applications in Council
3 Member Jimmy Van Bramer's district, Vernon Boulevard
4 rezoning, which will facilitate three mixed-use
5 buildings and the 38th Street rezoning, which will
6 facilitate a seven-story building. Both applications
7 will be modified to include MIH option 1 only and in
8 Council Member Francisco Moya's district we're going
9 to vote on the LeFrak City Parking Garage to ensure
10 the continued use of the garage. The Beach Channel
11 Drive Clintonville Street rezoning and 71st Road
12 rezoning would legalize existing uses in Council
13 Member Eric Ulrich, Paul Vallone, and Karen
14 Koslowitz's respective districts. And Terence
15 Cardinal Cooke applications would facilitate the
16 rehabilitation of Flower Hill Nursing Facility, the
17 development of a 32-story residential building, a
18 PACE center for the elderly and a supportive housing
19 building in Council Member Diana Ayala's district.
20 There are also two land use items relating to the
21 urban development action area project, UDAAP, Blake
22 Hendricks in Council Member Inez Barron's district
23 and NME3, West 140th and West 150th Street in Council
24 Member Bill Perkins's district. We'll also vote on
25 the following Article 11 property tax exemptions out

2 of the Finance Committee - Crown Plaza Apartments in
3 Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo's district, will receive
4 a partial 40-year exemption to preserve 76 units of
5 affordable rental housing, and 2178 Atlantic Avenue
6 in Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel's district will
7 receive a partial 40-year exemption to preserve 16
8 units of affordable rental housing. Moving on, the
9 council will vote on the following pieces of
10 legislation. First, the council is voting on a bill
11 to prohibit vending on certain streets in Dyker
12 Heights, Brooklyn during the holiday season.
13 Introduction 1657-A, sponsored by Council Member
14 Justin Brannan, would prohibit street vending on
15 certain streets in Dyker Heights during the popular
16 Dyker Lights celebration. The ban would be in effect
17 from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. each day from
18 Thanksgiving until New Year's Day and will help
19 alleviate congestion in this residential neighborhood
20 over the holiday season. And I want to thank the
21 staff, Balkese Mirig, for her help on that bill.
22 Next, we're going to be voting on a comprehensive and
23 sound package of legislation to not only close
24 Riker's Island but on key measures that expands the
25 rights for those currently incarcerated and to ensure

2 communities impacted by the closure have important
3 resources. The first of our bills is sponsored by
4 Council Member Diana Ayala. Preconsidered
5 Introduction number 1742-A would require increased
6 reporting on the implementation of the borough-based
7 jail plan. It would require the Mayor's Office of
8 Criminal Justice to issue a progress report on
9 closing jails on Riker's Island and any related
10 efforts to both reduce the jail population in the
11 city and open jail facilities outside of Riker's
12 Island. MOCJ would also be required to report on
13 jail population trends, the timeline for the closure
14 of Riker's Island, budget and procurement of
15 contracts related to the closure, design and
16 construction of jail facilities and changes to inform
17 technology, infrastructure, and staffing plans. The
18 bill would also require an additional report from the
19 Board of Corrections on the impact of the
20 construction of city jails on compliance with Board
21 of Corrections minimum standards and the impact of
22 any significant changes to the design or construction
23 of any new facilities on incarcerated individuals.
24 The Board of Corrections would also be required to
25 issue a report on conditions and facilities prior to

2 the Department of Corrections housing incarcerated
3 individuals on conditions at such facilities. The
4 board would also be required to give access to
5 blueprints, program plans, and other materials
6 related to the design and construction of the
7 facilities. And I want to thank Brian Crow and Alana
8 Civen from the staff for working on this bill. Next
9 is preconsidered Introduction number 1762, sponsored
10 by Council Member Keith Powers, which would require
11 correctional facilities to be modernized and built in
12 a way that is more livable for people in custody.
13 The bill also allows incarcerated individuals to
14 decorate a designated area of their living quarters
15 and requires the Department of Corrections staff to
16 address people in custody by their names and
17 preferred pronouns where practicable. And I want to
18 thank Brian and Alana for working on that as well.
19 Next is Introduction 1590, sponsored by Council
20 Member Margaret Chin, which would require
21 Correctional Health Services, which operates all
22 mental health care for those in custody to
23 communicate with defense attorneys about the status
24 and progress of individuals with serious mental
25 illness. It would also help their attorneys identify

2 the right treatment and housing alternatives to jail
3 and prison so that we can rehabilitation people
4 rather than incarcerate them, and I want to thank the
5 staff, Daniel Adis, for his work on that bill. We
6 also have some legislation sponsored by Council
7 Member Steve Levin. Preconsidered Introduction
8 number 1759-A would establish a commission on
9 community reinvestment to be chaired by the
10 department of Social Services. The commission would
11 be required to issue a yearly set of recommendations
12 on investments that address the root causes of mass
13 incarceration. The first report would be due in
14 January of 2021 and the last report would be issued
15 in 2027, and I want to thank the staff who worked on
16 this, Brian Crow, Alana Civin, and Keshorn Denny.
17 Next is Introduction 153-B, and it would codify the
18 Three-Quarter Houses Task Force. Three-quarter
19 houses are typically one- and two-family homes,
20 larger apartment buildings, or other structures run
21 by operators who rent beds to single adults. Many
22 tenants are formerly incarcerated and typically their
23 only option would be living in a shelter or being
24 homeless. This [multi-agency] task force in this
25 bill would be charged with identifying and inspecting

2 these homes and when necessary helping people
3 relocate to other more appropriate housing options.
4 And I want to thank the staff, Aminda Kilowan, for
5 her work on that bill. And finally two land use
6 items that will change our city in monumental ways.
7 We will be voting on siting four borough-based jails
8 in Council Member Diana Ayala, Margaret S. Chin,
9 Karen Koslowitz, and Steve Levin's districts to
10 facilitate the closure of the detention centers on
11 Riker's Island as well as the existing detention
12 centers in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx to
13 build new, more humane facilities. In addition,
14 there is a preconsidered resolution on the filing of
15 a land use application regarding Riker's Island,
16 which authorizes the City Council to file a land use
17 application amending the city map to establish a
18 public place with a use restriction on Riker's
19 Island. The restriction is that Riker's Island shall
20 not be used for the incarceration of individuals
21 after December 31, 2026, and this will guarantee the
22 closure of Riker's. I don't think I am overstating
23 it when I say that for many of us this is one of the
24 most significant votes of our entire career. In
25 addition to closing Riker's, this plan will also lead

2 to the closure of the Manhattan, the current
3 Manhattan Detention Complex, the Brooklyn House of
4 Detention, and the Vernon C. Bain Correctional
5 Center, which is also known as the barge or the boat.
6 These facilities aren't as famous as Riker's Island,
7 but they are equally horrific and inhumane. Riker's
8 Island is a symbol of brutality and inhumanity and it
9 is time for us to once and for all close Riker's
10 Island. What we are doing today will reshape this
11 city for generations to come and will impact the
12 lives of every New Yorker. For decades, our city was
13 unfair to those who became involved in our justice
14 system and the overwhelming majority of New Yorkers
15 who got caught up in our justice system were black
16 and brown men. In too many cases they were
17 struggling with untreated mental illness or addiction
18 or poverty or some combination of the three of those
19 things and our city did not step up and offer them
20 the appropriate resources and solutions, only
21 incarceration. We let those New Yorkers down.

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Quiet in the
23 chamber.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: We cannot undo all of
25 the mistakes of the past. But as a city we must do

2 everything we can to move away from the failed
3 policies of mass incarceration. That is what we are
4 doing today. We are on the cusp of a new, more
5 humane era for our city and it took a lot of work to
6 help us get here. I want to commend and give
7 tremendous accolades to my predecessor, Speaker
8 Melissa Mark-Viverito, for her vision [applause] and
9 leadership and helping to bring us to this point.
10 Where is she? [applause] Melissa, thank you, thank
11 you for your leadership, for everything you've done
12 on this. And before I go any further I want to thank
13 four members whose leadership brought us to this point.
14 Council Member Diana Ayala, Council Member Margaret
15 Chin, Council Member Karen Koslowitz, and Council
16 Member Steve Levin. Balancing [applause], yes,
17 balancing the needs of your districts and the need of
18 our city was not an easy task, but you all did an
19 extraordinary job. Your commitment to doing the right
20 thing was inspiring and the epitome of public
21 service. We have spent weeks and months and well
22 over a year working together. You have fought hard.
23 You have been thoughtful, compassionate, empathetic,
24 and by your own life experiences to this point. I am
25 proud of every single one of you for your tremendous

2 courage, bravery, and length in the face of
3 opposition. You all inspire me. We would not be
4 here today without every single one of you, so I want
5 to say thank you Karen, thank you Steve, thank you
6 Margaret, and thank you Diana for everything you've
7 done [applause] to get us to this point. You all
8 have been heroes in this process and [continuing
9 applause] and I am proud of each one of you [claps].
10 What, what we are voting on today is a plan that is
11 responsive to the concerns of communities where the
12 facilities will be located. The plan is also
13 responsive to the concerns of the communities and
14 families that have been harmed, way too harmed, by
15 the long-term impacts of mass incarceration. It
16 makes significant citywide investments in housing,
17 mental health care, restorative justice, alternatives
18 to incarceration, alternatives to detention, and
19 violence prevention programs. We're not only closing
20 inhumane, dilapidated jails, but we're investing 391
21 million dollars in communities to help reform our
22 system and address the root causes of mass
23 incarceration. Nearly 70% of that, 265 million
24 dollars of that 391 million dollar number, 265
25 million dollars is new spending that is attached to

2 this plan and that is on top of 40 million dollars
3 that this City Council secured in the June adopted
4 budget to help people who are justice involved. We
5 are proud of these victories. These investments are
6 the heart of this plan that we're talking about
7 because if you look at the Close Riker's T-shirts of
8 the brave leaders that are in this room today
9 [applause], if you look at their T-shirts it says
10 "Close Riker's, Build Communities." Close Riker's
11 and build communities. This is not, this is not and
12 has never, ever, ever, been just about building new
13 jails. Of course we know that it is important to get
14 the facilities right. I have been to Riker's. I was
15 on Riker's last week with Council Member Chin, ah,
16 sorry, with Council Member Ayala and Council Member
17 Levin and Council Member, ah, Dromm. We walked
18 around Riker's Island. Riker's Island is a stain on
19 New York City. Riker's Island should have been
20 closed decades ago, and many of the people on Riker's
21 Island never should be there to begin with. I have
22 talked to formerly incarcerated New Yorkers. Many of
23 them are here today sitting in the balcony. They
24 have led this effort. They have led the coalition.
25 They were part of the Lippman coalition. They were

2 part of the Lippman Commission. They have met with
3 council members. They have told us their real-life
4 experiences. They've talked about the harm that has
5 been caused to them and their families because of
6 mass incarceration. They are the ones that joined
7 with Speaker Mark-Viverito to formulate the Lippman
8 Commission plan and to work with us every step of the
9 way. I am so proud of these activists and leaders
10 that brought us to this point. We would not be here
11 without each and every one of them [applause]. The
12 current jail facilities, the Brooklyn House of
13 Detention, the Barge, the Tombs, these are not
14 facilities that can be fixed. These facilities are
15 irredeemable. These facilities are dilapidated. It
16 would be inhumane to close Riker's Island down and
17 house people in those existing facilities. The
18 Brooklyn House of Detention does not have air
19 conditioning. It is like an oven in the summer. It
20 is unacceptable. It matters if you have air
21 conditioning in the summer and if you have heat in
22 the winter. It matters if you have sunlight and a
23 bathroom. It matters if you have services and
24 programming to help you when you are incarcerated.
25 This matters to not just of, not just those who are

2 incarcerated, but it matters to all of us New York
3 City that people are getting the care and help and
4 rehabilitation that they need. People were and are
5 tortured on Riker's Island. We visited solitary
6 confinement last week. It was like a bad horror
7 movie. It is sick and unacceptable. They come home
8 to our communities damaged and angry and sicker than
9 before they went in to a correctional facility. It
10 is in our interest to have facilities with
11 programming that prioritizes rehabilitation, that
12 prioritizes restorative justice, that prioritizes
13 mental health care, that prioritizes workforce
14 training, that prioritizes these issues and the
15 current facilities do not allow this. The facilities
16 are one part of this plan. The other part of the
17 plan are the investments that I mentioned. You
18 cannot have one without the other. You must close
19 Riker's and build and invest in communities
20 [applause]. We are investing, we are investing and
21 stopping violence before it happens. We are
22 investing in housing because it is difficult to stay
23 sober or keep a job or stay on your medication if you
24 don't have a roof over your head. We are investing
25 in getting the right mental health treatment for

2 people who should never be on Riker's Island to begin
3 with. [applause] I am proud of this plan and I am
4 grateful for the hard work that went into it by the
5 City Council staff and by the tireless advocates who
6 have held our feet to the fire to make sure that we
7 get this right. I want to thank the following
8 organizations: The Gatal Center for Health, Equity,
9 and Justice [applause], Just Leadership USA...

10 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Quiet in the
11 chamber.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: The Fortune Society,
13 Exodus Transitional Communities, the Very Institute
14 for Justice, the Women's Community Justice
15 Foundation, the Columbia University Justice Lab, as
16 well as an amazing man, an amazing man who has worked
17 hard, tireless, with Speaker Mark-Viverito and with
18 me over the last many years. I want to thank former
19 Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman [applause] and everyone
20 who worked on the independent commission for the New
21 York City Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform
22 Plan. And I want to thank my staff who worked
23 tremendously hard on this, my chief of staff, Jason
24 Goldman, who hasn't got much sleep these last many
25 weeks. He has a small baby and he's been doing this

2 every single day and night. I want to thank Laura
3 Popa, Peter Butler, Brian Crow and Alana Civin, Raju
4 Mann, the director of land use who has been
5 incredible and his team, William Pascone, who has led
6 this charge from day one, has been working for this
7 on a weekly basis for over a year in a calm, cool,
8 collected, organized, thoughtful and measured way,
9 George Sarkisian, Regina Paredo-Ryan, Latanya
10 McKinney, and Esha Wright. I'd also like to again,
11 again, I would like to thank my predecessor, Speaker
12 Melissa Mark-Viverito, for starting this conversation
13 and for getting us to this point today, and I want to
14 thank Mayor de Blasio and his entire staff, including
15 his chief of staff, Emma Wolf, for partnering with
16 the City Council to finally close Riker's Island. I
17 see Liz Glazer and her team are here today. I want
18 to thank you, Liz, and your team for your partnership
19 and help in securing these investments to invest in
20 communities, to build communities, [applause] you all
21 have been part of that. I am proudly voting yes to
22 close Riker's Island. [applause] This is the right
23 thing to do. We have an opportunity to reform our
24 justice system. We have an opportunity to invest in
25 communities. We have the opportunity to help people.

2 This will be a vote for a new criminal justice
3 system, a vote against mass incarceration, which is
4 what robbed this city and this country of generations
5 of men who left our system traumatized and broken,
6 and this is a vote that recognizes that dignity of
7 people and communities that have had their humanity
8 overlooked for decades. This is a vote of
9 conscience. This is a vote of progress. This vote
10 does not, to solve all of the problems that we face
11 here in New York City. We still have a homelessness
12 epidemic. We still have too many people not getting
13 the mental health care that we need. We still need
14 to break the school to prison pipeline. There is
15 still more work to do. But conditions matter. These
16 jails are disgusting. These jails should have been
17 closed years ago. We are doing it today. I will
18 proudly vote yes. Thank you all very, very much
19 [resounding applause].

20 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: We will now move
21 into general discussion.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Madam Majority Leader,
23 is it, I'm going to just call, if it's OK, on the
24 four of the members. You have that? OK.

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: So in General
3 Orders we are going to start with Council Members
4 Diana Ayala, followed by Council Member Karen
5 Koslowitz, followed by Council Member Steve Levin,
6 and followed by Council Member Margaret Chin, who
7 will be speaking first and then we'll follow with
8 Council Member Inez Barron, followed by Council
9 Member Carlos Menchaca, and then followed by Council
10 Member Dromm.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Council Member Ayala.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Got confused.
13 Good afternoon everybody, colleagues. Today's vote
14 goes beyond the brick and mortar decision to build
15 borough-based jails. Today's vote is about delivery
16 on a promise that this body made two years ago to
17 close Riker's Island. It is about honoring the work
18 of directly impacted leaders, so that many of whom
19 have dedicated the past decade or more of their lives
20 fighting for this very moment. Today's vote is about
21 embarking a historic opportunity to redefine our
22 criminal justice system and greatly shrink the number
23 of people incarcerated in our city. We all know that
24 Riker's Island is antiquated. We know it's unsafe
25 and inhumane. Reimagining our system demands

2 disclosure. We can no longer tolerate the penal
3 colony that is Riker's Island and we must move
4 forward in creating a smaller, fairer, and more
5 humane system that values the dignity of justice-
6 involved people. With reduced height and a projected
7 jail population of 3300 by 2026 the borough-based
8 plan will shrink our city's [inaudible] footprint and
9 will put us on the path to decarceration in a
10 tangible way. We are going from 11 jails to four.
11 From a capacity of 14,000 beds to 3500 beds. This
12 body has never been interested in an expansion plan.
13 Since day one our goal has been to minimize our jail
14 system. And that is exactly what this plan will do.
15 As an elected official I have the responsibility of
16 representing all of the individuals that make up my
17 community. This includes representing constituents
18 on Riker's and those who were formerly incarcerated
19 there. Out of all of the neighborhoods impacted by
20 this plan, the South Bronx has been the most affected
21 by mass incarceration. That is why since this
22 proposal was announced early last year I have fought
23 for holistic investments rooted in restoration. My
24 staff and I have met with local youth groups,
25 justice-involved people, seniors, public housing

2 residents, community board members, clergy leaders,
3 and social service providers to cultivate a community
4 investment plan reflective of their needs. I am
5 proud to stand here today and share that our vision
6 will be brought to fruition with millions of dollars
7 earmarked by the administration for various
8 investments. Some of those significant investments
9 we secured include A New You Hub from My Haven, a new
10 community center for High Bridge, renovations for
11 community centers coupled with expanded programatic
12 funding for those sites, capital dollars for both our
13 schools and public housing developments and expansion
14 of the Cure Violence Program, a new senior center in
15 Millbrook Houses, plus a commitment to develop deeply
16 affordable housing on several lots. I am immensely
17 proud of our investment package because it was
18 directly shaped by the impacted community and will go
19 a long way in transforming the social service
20 landscape in our neighborhood. It is a package that
21 is directly aligned with Just Leaderships Build
22 Communities platform, which recognizes that a well
23 resourced environment is key to prevention people
24 from going to jail in the first place. Some are
25 referring to the investments as concessions and

2 negotiations. They are not. These investments are,
3 are a hefty down payment on the healing that the
4 South Bronx deserves. Advocates are correct that
5 without these programs and services we will continue
6 to feed into the system and that is contrary to our
7 collective goal. With these benefits in place I have
8 great hope for the future of my community. And I
9 will continue to fight vigorously to ensure that all
10 of those beautiful young people that I represent have
11 a fair shot at life. While there are legitimate
12 concerns about this plan, I want to remind my
13 colleagues and everyone watching that we cannot
14 condemn the failures of our criminal justice system
15 without having a plan to address them. This is
16 frankly irresponsible. No plan is perfect. But this
17 plan is the only plan that gets us closer to closing
18 Riker's Island and it is our moral imperative to do
19 so. The fight to close Riker's Island is personal to
20 me. As many of you know, my brother has a serious
21 mental illness and has been in and out of the prison
22 system for over two decades. His repeated encounters
23 with the criminal justice system has contributed to a
24 decline to his social, emotional, and mental well-
25 being. His story, which is the story of countless of

2 other formerly incarcerated people, drives my
3 commitment to this plan. Because of him, I dare
4 replace our current system with one that is holistic,
5 responsive, and, most importantly, human. Before I
6 cast my vote, I want to thank my predecessor, Melissa
7 Mark-Viverito, for spearheading this effort during
8 her tenure. I also want to thank Speaker Johnson,
9 his incredible staff, Judge Lippman, my colleagues,
10 Council Members Levin, Chin, and Koslowitz, and I
11 would [inaudible] Council Members Powers and Dromm
12 for their support throughout this process. I also
13 want to thank the mayor and his, his team, who have
14 been incredible throughout this process as well. But
15 most importantly I want to thank all of the advocates
16 and formerly incarcerated leaders from Just
17 Leadership, Beyond Rosie's, Exodus Transitional, The
18 Cattall Center, Bronx Connect [applause] and
19 countless other organizations for fiercely advocating
20 for this plan. If it wasn't for you we would not be
21 here today. Thank you for sharing your stories with
22 us, inspiring us, keeping us accountable, and pushing
23 us to deliver on this moral imperative. Thank you,
24 and with that I vote proudly vote aye.

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
3 Council Member Ayala. I received some text messages
4 that I did not receive previously. Council Member
5 Danny Dromm was actually up next.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you very
7 much. I just want to mention the names of some of
8 the folks who have died during my tenure while I have
9 been in the City Council and, as many people know, I
10 was one of the first elected officials to call for
11 the closure of Riker's Island. I think it's really
12 important that remember those who died, so let me
13 start with Kalief Browder, the child who was tortured
14 to the point of suicide. Layleen Polanco
15 Extravaganzer, the transgender woman who died in
16 solitary confinement. Dorone Murda, who baked to
17 death in his cell. Rolando Perez, Jr., who was
18 denied medication and left for dead after a seizure.
19 Jason Echavarria, who was ignored after eating a
20 packet of powdered detergent that was given to
21 detainees to clean out their sewage-flooded cells.
22 Ronald Sphere, who begged to see a doctor but was
23 refused and instead beaten to death by an angry
24 corrections officer. And my friend, who survived
25 Riker's but is dealing with a lifetime of trauma.

2 And the countless New Yorkers who have known
3 firsthand the brutality of what has become known as
4 Torture Island, Riker's Island. I dedicate my vote
5 to you, to our speaker, our former speaker, Melissa
6 Mark-Viverito, and to our current speaker, Corey
7 Johnson, and to the advocates who have fought so
8 tirelessly over the years for this day to come.
9 Thank you very much. [applause]

10 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
11 Council Member Dromm. Council Member Menchaca.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I rise and
13 speak to you all colleagues as the chair of the
14 Immigration Committee. Serious questions have been
15 raised in these last final weeks towards the vote
16 that asked me to understand the things that I
17 believe. I believe there is nothing in the plan that
18 guarantees investments in our communities to address
19 poverty and insecurity. I believe that the mayor's
20 plan does not actually close Riker's Island, despite
21 the last-minute and admirable attempts by my
22 colleagues. I believe that this is not a vote to
23 further the cause of ending mass incarceration by
24 attacking its root causes. Instead, I believe this
25 vote only enriches developers in the short term while

2 leaving the fate of Riker's in the hands of a future
3 mayor and a future council. Yet, the mayor asks us
4 to trust him. I do not trust this mayor. Do you?
5 He asks us to trust that his investments will hold
6 even though the majority are nonbinding. He asks to
7 trust that the new jail facilities will not be jails,
8 even though there are no design commitments and over
9 200 architects reject his proposal. And he asks us
10 to trust him because he says he wants to close
11 Riker's. I do not believe a mayor who since 2015 had
12 to be dragged kicking and screaming to endorse the
13 closure of Riker's. A mayor who continues to
14 criminalize poverty by arresting immigrant delivery
15 workers and carving out exceptions to legal
16 representation for immigrants currently in detention.
17 A mayor who has not already tried to demolish unused
18 jails on Riker's Island, even though there is a path
19 to do so. Today, I believe that no matter the
20 outcome today we must unit for the ultimate closure
21 of Riker's Island and continue reforms to end mass
22 incarceration and build communities, not new jails.
23 I believe in this body. I believe in you all,
24 colleagues, and in our speaker, and I believe in our
25 creativity and the ability to listen to people and

2 the ability to get things done. We've been proving
3 it the last few weeks and as we frantically scramble
4 to make the mayor's plan better, even though it's
5 unsalvageable, I believe we should continue that work
6 and we should continue forcing the mayor to make real
7 investments in our community, and we should force the
8 mayor to demolish the unused jails now, today. We
9 should be fighting to end mass incarceration and all
10 cages. [speaking Spanish] I vote no on the borough-
11 based jail plan. [applause]

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I will now have
13 Council Member Karen Koslowitz.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Nearly four-
15 and-a-half years ago the proposal to finally close
16 Riker's Island and open a borough-based jail in my
17 district came to my attention, and thanks to former
18 speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, who started this with
19 the Lippman Commission. While understanding the
20 importance of closing the inhumane hell hole that is
21 Riker's Island, I was troubled by aspects of the
22 mayor's original proposal. However, understanding
23 the high likelihood that this proposal would be
24 approved, I made it my priority to sit down at the
25 negotiating table and do the hard work of governing.

2 It was my goal to make a better deal for my
3 community, those that fall through the cracks of our
4 criminal justice system and those that work at our
5 jail facilities. Through many, many, many
6 conversations that I have had with the mayor and his
7 administration I am proud to have secured many
8 concessions that will make the facility better blend
9 into our community. I also believe that the final
10 proposal will better serve those that are
11 incarcerated and those that have loved ones that are
12 incarcerated. We significantly reduced the size and
13 the height of the building. The facility will now
14 stand 195 feet tall, or 19 stories high, a big drop
15 from original 29 stories. We got rid of the proposed
16 centralized infirmary, which was taken all people
17 from all boroughs, have, halved the square footage of
18 the building, significantly reduced the density of
19 the building, nearly cut the number of beds in half
20 to 886, created hundreds of necessary parking spaces.
21 We're investing millions of dollars into our schools,
22 significantly investments are going into the
23 neighborhood's infrastructure. We've secured
24 important resources for our seniors. We're providing
25 essential necessities, and we've secured 25,000

2 square feet for community use. Now, some of my
3 colleagues and members of the public do not support
4 this plan. To them I ask have you ever been to
5 Riker's Island? [applause] Have you ever been to the
6 Queens House of Detention? Because I have visited
7 both locations and I can tell you that both are
8 absolutely inhumane and are an embarrassment to our
9 great site. New Yorkers, no matter their
10 transgressions, do not deserve to rotate in this
11 tiny, dilapidated cages at Riker's or the Queens
12 House of Detention. Especially up to 80% of the
13 detainees at Riker's have yet to be convicted of a
14 crime. If we as a body want to do the progressive,
15 moral, and just thing we will vote yes on this
16 proposal, because voting no with no substantial
17 alternative, will absolutely mean that Riker's Island
18 will stay open for generations to come. There is
19 nothing moral, just, or progressive about that. Let
20 me also speak to my constituents, particularly those
21 in Kew Gardens, whom I have heard from a lot the last
22 several months. While I know that some of you do not
23 understand my position on this proposal, I am
24 confident that the future will calm your concerns.
25 Remember that for 40 years the Queens House of

2 Detention housed 500 inmates in Kew Gardens. I've
3 been in the community for 56 years and I can tell you
4 that facility did not jeopardize the safety of the
5 neighborhood. It did not negatively impact property
6 values and it did not change the character of the
7 neighborhood. It is my highest priority that as we
8 move to forward on this proposal that there remain an
9 open dialogue between the mayor and me to ensure that
10 any negative impact in regards to the construction of
11 the facility and the facility itself be minimized.

12 I've been in the City Council for over 20 years, both
13 in the '90s and now. And this is the most difficult
14 proposal that I have ever come across my desk. It,
15 there is, there is a lot of nuance, a lot of passion,
16 and a lot of emotion. I can tell you that nothing of
17 this magnitude comes to fruition without a lot of
18 hard work from a lot of individuals. I would like to
19 thank at this time Judge Lippman, who had come
20 forward with the Lippman Commission, and of course
21 the council's speaker past, Melissa Mark-Viverito. I
22 would also like to thank our people, who have been
23 there with every question that I have had - George
24 Sarkisian, Raju Mann, John Douglas, and Amy Levitan.
25 You've also been wonderful, magnanimous, on this

2 whole thing. I also want to thank Brian Crow,
3 Lillian Pascone, and a special thanks to Jason
4 Goldman for being there every time I would call and
5 ask a question. And of course to my four, three
6 other colleagues that we've worked together and we
7 stood together. I want to say thank you to Diana, to
8 Margaret, and to Steve. Thank you. And I also want
9 to thank people from the mayor's office, Liden
10 Sleeper, who I didn't let breathe for a few days in
11 the past couple of weeks, and Tahara Moore and Joseph
12 Thompson. And a special and appreciative to our
13 speaker, our great speaker. I knew from day one that
14 you would lead this body in a wonderful way, and I
15 just want to thank you for being there for me,
16 calming me down when I got nervous, and just being
17 there. Thank you so very much. And lastly I will
18 end [inaudible] would not support this proposal if I
19 believe it would have a negative impact on the
20 community that I love. I've represented this
21 community for two decades and have lived in it for
22 more than a half of a century, and I could never in
23 good conscience harm my neighborhoods. I
24 passionately believe that this is a stark opportunity
25 to rethink how we treat those that the city

2 incarcerates. I urge my colleagues to vote yes.

3 [applause]

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
5 Council Member Koslowitz. In the interest of time,
6 because we did start the Stated Meeting late, we are
7 going to allow the members who have borough-based
8 jails in their district to speak unlimited, but for
9 the remainder of the members we're going to have to
10 start the clock because we have not even done the
11 vote. So at this time we're going to go Council
12 Member Margaret Chin and then followed by Council
13 Member Steve Levin. We're going to begin now at this
14 time.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: [inaudible]

16 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: No, you're going
17 to speak.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: [inaudible]

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Excuse me,
20 Council Member Diaz, everyone that has signed up to
21 speak will speak, but we are going to have utilize
22 the clock in order to be respectful of everyone's
23 time. You will have an opportunity to speak.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: [inaudible].

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Council Member
3 Diaz, this conversation is closed. We're going to
4 now begin with Council Member Margaret Chin, followed
5 by Council Member Steve Levin.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Majority
7 Leader. From the beginning I have held firm to my
8 belief that Riker's Island must close. Years ago
9 people would have scoffed and called this goal
10 impossible. But now this is a goal that so many
11 years share with convictions, including the majority
12 of the people in this room. The point that we are at
13 today, the moral and policy conversation that New
14 York City is having now about envisioning a more
15 humane criminal justice system that invests in lives,
16 and our road map to achieve that goal. This did not
17 happen, originate with a single plan. I want to be
18 clear. What got us here to this point was a
19 painstaking, year-long movement, not driven by
20 outsiders, but by those who are directly impacted by
21 the system they sought to change. They have
22 withstood the unimaginable and in spite of criticism
23 continue to fight to shut down Riker's once and for
24 all. I want to tell the advocates and the survivor
25 of Riker's Island we see you and we thank you. To my

2 constituents, I hear you. This was not a perfect
3 process. From the beginning we fought for greater
4 transparency, community engagement, and a stronger
5 plan that address your concern about construction
6 impact, public health safety, and community
7 investment. But I think it's really for Chinatown.
8 It's helpful to remember that the Manhattan Detention
9 Center has coexisted with the neighborhood for
10 decades and the plan for the rebuilding a new site is
11 not creating a new jail, but will transform the
12 Manhattan Detention Center into a more humane and
13 safe facility. This is a critical step that we
14 cannot skip on the path to close Riker's. I wanted
15 to, you know, thank my constituents for their passion
16 and advocacy. Because of that, we were able to
17 secure a health and safety plan for the senior
18 resident and [Chung Park], funding for community
19 space and construction mitigation. Working with the
20 resident, we secured a significant height reduction
21 from 450 feet to 295 feet. This 155-foot drop ensure
22 that the proposed jail will not be out of scale with
23 the neighborhood. But my duty as a City Council
24 member cannot end at the edge of lower Manhattan.
25 Today we are offered a choice. Do we finally condemn

2 the moral stain that is Riker's Island to the history
3 book, or do we let this opportunity slip by? Seizing
4 this opportunity was not a decision I came to
5 lightly, but there is no guarantee New Yorkers will
6 see a chance like this for very, very long time. We
7 can no longer tell those who are trapped in a
8 horrific cycle of incarceration to wait. We must
9 turn the page. I want to thank all the advocates who
10 have passionately challenged us to think bigger. But
11 today's vote is not the end of our work to create a
12 truly fair criminal justice system. We must continue
13 to invest in our communities, move people with
14 serious mental health needs out of our jails, expand
15 alternative to incarceration, and end the broken
16 policy designed to target marginalized people of
17 color. And I wanted to thank our speaker, Speaker
18 Johnson, for all your courage and support. You were
19 behind us every step of the way. And my three other
20 colleague, Council Member Ayala, Koslowitz, Levin, we
21 band together, we hugged each other, we say this is
22 the right thing to do and we are not going to give
23 up. There are so many people who helped us along the
24 way. Speaker, your whole team, Jason and everyone,
25 and, and the land use staff, Raju, and Jeff Yang who

2 at Little League met with community people, holding a
3 hand to find out exactly how we can get it done.

4 Finally, to my staff, who have spent so many
5 countless hours, listening to constituents with me.

6 We went to a lot of public hearing. I got called all
7 kinds of names. But it doesn't matter, because this
8 is the right thing to do and we cannot let this

9 opportunity slip behind me. No matter how we vote

10 today, I know everyone has come to a judgment based

11 on their own firmly held belief. But I firmly

12 believe and I am proud to vote to close Riker's now.

13 And I also wanted to thank our former speaker,

14 Melissa Mark-Viverito, for your leadership, for

15 starting the Lippman Commission, and thank you to

16 Judge Lippman, who I have also met with. My

17 community met with us and also the mayor's team, even

18 though it wasn't smooth sailing all the way, but we

19 got you to really listen to the concerns of my

20 constituent. And I think that what we have been able

21 to put together will really close Riker's and help us

22 build community. Thank you.

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,

24 Council Member Chin. We will now hear from Council

25 Member Steve Levin, and moving, as everyone has done,

2 this has been an incredible experience to see and hr
3 everyone's discussion, so we applaud like this in the
4 council just to keep things moving smoothly. Council
5 Member Levin.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, Madam
7 Majority Leader. My friends, I am very humbled to be
8 speaking today as we are set to take this fateful
9 vote. I would like to first say to everybody who has
10 spoken up so passionately and so honestly, from the
11 depths of their being and experiencing, that we have
12 heard you, that we hear you today. We respect and we
13 honor your voice. And to my colleagues here today I
14 know that that however you vote this vote will be a
15 manifestation of that oath that we all made to
16 ourselves when we were sworn in. Not the oath to
17 defend and protect the City Charter and the
18 Constitution, but the oath to do the most good for
19 the most people, and that is what we are called here
20 today to do. Several years ago when the world got to
21 know what had happened to Kalief Browder, how he
22 spent years at Riker's Island, much of that time in
23 solitary confinement, based on the accusation of
24 stealing a backpack and how he died as young man as a
25 direct result of the trauma that he experienced at

2 Riker's Island, robbed of his entire life, his entire
3 future, and as he said in his own words, his
4 happiness. We as a city and as a society were called
5 to examine our conscience. Kalief Browder died in
6 our name. But I believe that his death was not in
7 vain. The Close Riker's campaign, which was born out
8 of this tragedy, seemed impossible in 2016. But it
9 was the dedicated righteousness of everybody who
10 organized, who protested, who called on city
11 officials, the mayor, council members, to reckon with
12 what was being done in our name. The efforts of the
13 Close Riker's campaign and every person who dedicated
14 themselves to it breathed life into our democracy and
15 they are true heroes. And this council's speaker,
16 Melissa Mark-Viverito, took on this cause with her
17 entire heart, having worked for years alongside
18 Council Member Danny Dromm to address conditions on
19 Riker's Island. Her vision, by empaneling Lippman
20 Commission, chaired by Judge Jonathan Lippman, was
21 absolutely essential in laying the path to today.
22 And I want to thank Melissa Mark-Viverito, our former
23 speaker, I want to thank Judge Jonathan Lippman, and
24 all the people who worked on the Lippman Commission
25 for seeing the potential before us, for seizing the

2 moment, and for challenging us in city government to
3 respond. We would not be able, we would not be at
4 the precipice of this momentous vote if were not for
5 their efforts. And today after a multi-year process
6 we are voting to finally close Riker's Island once
7 and for all. This has been a difficult process but
8 if it were easy we would have done this a long time
9 ago. It took the courage of those formerly
10 incarcerated and those who have been directly
11 impacted to lead charge. I'm also very proud of the
12 leadership of my friend, Speaker Corey Johnson, who
13 has been absolutely steadfast in his approach. Fact-
14 based, deeply rooted in his sense of decency and
15 humanity and empathy. I could not be more proud to
16 be associated now and forever with Margaret Chin,
17 Karen Koslowitz, and Diana Ayala. I have seen you up
18 close throughout this whole process and you are my
19 heroes. Dostoyevsky once said you can judge a
20 society by entering its prisons. For far too long,
21 we have been rightfully judged by the world and by
22 history by Riker's Island, DHOD, the Tombs, and the
23 Barge. We have a moral obligation to our brothers
24 and our sisters to end this scourge as quickly as we
25 can and that is what we are voting on today. As part

2 of this plan, as the speaker said, we are investing
3 into communities harmed by incarceration and shifting
4 towards a system that provides resources instead of
5 jail time. Ending a system based on criminalization
6 demands that we replace it with something better.
7 Programs, housing, and support systems are needed to
8 address the root causes of why people are put into
9 the [carcial] system in the first place. And so
10 today we are committing real dollars to invest in our
11 communities and address our city's housing, social
12 services, health care, and community justice needs.
13 This includes new funding for transitional and
14 supportive housing for justice-involved populations,
15 mental health crisis response teams and respite
16 centers, and increased funding for cure violence
17 programs citywide. I am particularly proud of the
18 funding we were able to secure for restorative
19 justice programming. Informed by the leadership of
20 innovators like Miriam Caba and Danielle Serad,
21 [people speaking] restorative justice offered us,
22 offers us the ability to achieve...

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Quiet in the
24 chamber.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: It offers us the
3 ability to achieve real healing and accountability
4 for violent crimes. If we provide the opportunity
5 for accountability rather than punishment, we create
6 the potential for restoration for both the victim and
7 offender, and take a step forward in healing our
8 communities. This is how we shift away from a
9 culture of incarceration. The council will newly
10 invest 10 million dollars into restorative justice
11 programs, which is a tenfold increase, with an
12 increased focus on community-based rather than just
13 court-based solutions for felony-level cases. In
14 addition to this funding, we have also secured a
15 community of justice innovation fund, a first-time
16 public-private partnership that will examine funding
17 opportunities to strengthen community justice and
18 public safety by focusing on truly community-based
19 investments. We need innovation in criminal justice
20 spaces, I'm sorry, in community justice spaces, and
21 we need to look to the experts - local leaders who
22 live and breath this work every day and are doing the
23 work of uplifting their communities. These
24 investments will move us dramatically closer to a
25 world that does not rely on incarceration as a

2 primary response to somebody who's in need of
3 support, and will provide critical resources to keep
4 people out of the criminal court system. I want to
5 thank Mayor Bill de Blasio and his team at City Hall,
6 in particular Tahira Moore, Leiden Sleeper, Emma
7 Wolf, Dan Abramson, Julia Kursen, Jatad Floyd, Jordon
8 Stockdale, as well as Liz Glazer, Dana Kaplan, and
9 Chelsea Davis from Mock Jay and others that worked on
10 this from Mock Jay, in addition Joseph Thomas from
11 the mayor's office, who from the day that this action
12 was announced have all taken on this challenge with a
13 real seriousness of purpose. I would also like to
14 thank the members of the Brooklyn Neighborhood
15 Advisory Committee for their amazing commitment of
16 time, and conscientiousness to this process. They
17 made their community concerns known in a thoughtful
18 manner, but more significantly they prioritized the
19 citywide needs for community justice reforms that
20 while helping to reduce the size of the buildings
21 themselves were really priorities, the real
22 priorities for the NAC were that they realized that
23 we are not doing this just to close some buildings
24 and open new ones, some jail buildings and open new
25 ones. We are doing this to change our city and by

2 extension how our society addresses community justice
3 for future generations. I especially want to lift up
4 the amazing work of Just Leadership USA, Cattall
5 Center, Judge Lippman, Tyler Nanz, and everyone who
6 worked on the Lippman Commission report, Exodus
7 Transition, Beyond Rosie's and the Women's Community
8 Justice Association, Fortune Society, Osbourne
9 Association, Vera Institute of Justice, and many
10 others. Their work and advocacy, which has been
11 based in unshakeable faith, has been as solid as the
12 Rock of Gibraltar. I'd like to thank council staff
13 that has worked so tirelessly on this and put up with
14 me with a lot of patience - Jason Goldman, William
15 Pascone, Raju Mann, George Sarkisian, Brian Paul,
16 Brian Crow, Alana Sevin, Isha Wright, Regina Parada-
17 Ryan, Latanya McKinney, and everybody else that
18 worked on this. Thank you. I just also want to
19 acknowledge specifically advocates and those who have
20 been formerly incarcerated and leaders in the
21 communities for their, for their great partnership -
22 Darren Mack, Fidel Guzman, Brandon Holmes, Sharon
23 Wright-Harrigan, Dana Hoskins, Harvey Murphy, Rita
24 Zimmer, Serita Daftari-Steel, Isha Schreibersdorf,
25 Insha Rahman, Candra Clark, Tomika Graham, Zachary

2 Keltz-Nelson, Darlene Jackson, Danielle Rosario,
3 Shane Correa, and I have a couple more that I'll get
4 do on, during, ah, Donna Hilton, Curtis [bell], let's
5 see, hold on, I'll get, I'll do more on when I
6 explain my vote. Just, just a couple more people,
7 and in closing I'd also like to thank everybody who
8 spoke up in objection to this plan, including those
9 in the no new jails movement, including Miriam Kaba.
10 While we have not agreed on many fundamental issues,
11 I acknowledge their dedication and their commitment
12 to decarceration. They have made abolition of jails
13 and prisons a central part of this conversation, and
14 I believe that we now have a better plan because they
15 have and probably will continue to hold us
16 accountable.

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Quiet in the
18 chambers.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: This vote today
20 will reflect on this council for many years to come.
21 We collectively as a city are once and for all saying
22 that we must end the era of mass incarceration and
23 criminalization and usher in the era of community-
24 based justice. Thank you.

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you. Quiet
3 in the chamber. We will now hear from Council Member
4 Inez Barron.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Ah, thank you
6 Madam Majority Leader. I first want to acknowledge,
7 as have so many of my colleagues, the work that was
8 done by the former speaker, I don't know if she is
9 still here, Melissa Mark-Viverito, and Danny used to
10 sit next to me and he was always talking about
11 Riker's and the conditions, so I have to acknowledge
12 him as well. To all of the advocates who are here on
13 this issue, I thank you for coming, I thank you for
14 your restraint. You've really been very restrained.
15 I thank you for that. And for all of the persons who
16 have been involved in whatever level, I thank you for
17 your input. I want to make it very clear. I am
18 supporting closing Riker's. I support closing
19 Riker's and I separate that from the new jails. I
20 see the two as distinct. So I support closing
21 Riker's, and I want that very clear on the record.
22 Historically, penitentiaries started when slavery
23 ended, [applause] and it became a way...

24 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Quiet in the
25 chamber.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: ...of continuing
3 free, cheap labor once slavery had ended and those
4 offenses which had previously been fines were
5 criminalized and became felonies and people were
6 incarcerated so that they could be a part of the
7 convict leasing system. So that's the origins. So
8 now as we talk about, um, the people who were
9 talking, well, someone recently said at an interview
10 that the criminal justice system is often referred to
11 as broken. But it's doing what it was intended to
12 do. [applause] It's doing and continuing the origins
13 of how it began. For me, the problems are
14 inappropriate detention due to, ah, over-policing,
15 due to judicial discretion where some judges will
16 allow some people to be released in their own
17 recognizance and others to be detailed and not be
18 able to meet bail. So that's a part of the problem.
19 The other is the, ah, over-policing and
20 unconstitutional acts by the NYPD, since we're
21 talking about New York, that put people in situations
22 where they can be detained. And with all of that
23 there is insufficient and inadequate intervention and
24 services which we're now hearing about in great
25 measure. When did this great epiphany come that this

2 is what we need to be able to reduce the number of
3 people? Now we understand, we woke up last week or
4 last month or two months ago to understand. This is
5 what we need. We've needed it all along. And I
6 question now why it's such a great, ah, push to this
7 at this time, connecting it to No New Jails. And
8 with all of that, we need to address the culture
9 that exists at Riker's. We need to make sure we're
10 not just now dispersing what's been centralized in
11 one location and putting it in four new locations. I
12 just want to end by saying that I think that the
13 intervention, the mentoring, the, ah, affordable
14 housing that is needed and the jobs that need to be
15 available to those persons are critical. And as we
16 talk about, closing Riker's and doing something else,
17 let's think outside the box. Why do we have to have
18 these kinds of institutions that keep people. We
19 need to, I think, give those, ah, organizations, the
20 Cure Violence, the Violence Interrupters, they have
21 given results. Why not let them be the entities
22 where persons who would otherwise be detained, you
23 better be here at 9 o'clock every day because we're
24 going to train you, we're going to give you the
25 mental, ah, healths services that you need, and all

2 the things that we're talking about that are so
3 needed. So I think that we need to, our challenge is
4 to change the racial discrimination that is the basis
5 of interventions and situations where people are
6 detained, and I'll be voting now, but I respect all
7 of you and I believe we need to move forward and be
8 even stronger and more creative in how we address
9 those persons who have greater needs. Thank you.

10 [applause]

11 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
12 Council Member Barron. Quiet in the chamber. We
13 will now hear from Council Member Powers, followed by
14 Council Member Diaz, followed by Council Member
15 Lander.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Thank
17 you for the opportunity to speak. As many have
18 stated, today is a very big day in New York City as
19 Riker's Island is an, is emblematic of a broken
20 criminal justice system, not just for New York, but
21 for this entire country. Today's vote allows us to
22 close Riker's Island and we are doing that, tear down
23 outdated facilities in the boroughs and move on from
24 an era where we treated jails and detention as the
25 solution to so many of our city's problems. This

2 process started with individuals impacted by the
3 criminal justice system who are focused on reform and
4 decarceration. It was a big idea that seemed to have
5 no chance a few years ago. I admit myself that like
6 many others I needed some convincing that this was
7 possible. The individuals that built this plan, and
8 many are up here today, did the work to make it
9 happen. They were in the halls of the state
10 legislature in Albany advocating for the reforms.
11 They were in the City Council attending our hearings.
12 They were in our offices making the case for a
13 different path forward. And now they are here today
14 to see their organizing work. What began as a
15 rallying cry and a slogan has become a reality. For
16 two years I have had the opportunity to be part of
17 this conversation, a part of this movement to improve
18 the treatment of incarcerated individuals, and to
19 transform the city's justice system. In my tenure,
20 in our tenure, we've passed several important bills
21 already to make the justice system more fair. We
22 have held oversight hearings on safety and secure,
23 programming, transgender housing, and sexual abuse
24 that shed the light on systematic issues that exist
25 and time and time again we have seen how necessary

2 this day is to mend much of that work. For those who
3 refuse to believe it, this has always been about
4 changing the criminal justice system and closing
5 jails. This plan puts New York City on the path of
6 reducing our footprint. It puts us on the path of
7 reducing the overall amount of beds and available
8 capacity and improving the physical structure and the
9 day-to-day lives in those buildings. But it does not
10 end here. We have to continue to push for safer
11 operations and better facilities to better the needs
12 of both those who work there and stay in there. We
13 must keep working to institute real cultural change.
14 We must do more to prevent individuals from jail in
15 the first place, and I will remind everybody that is
16 our job. As City Council members, our job is to
17 continue to do that. We can blame anybody we want.
18 Some of us will still be here and some of us will
19 still care about this work. It our job, it is
20 incumbent on us, not to just move off of Riker's
21 Island and close it, but to continue to do that work
22 that many of have done before I got here and that
23 many of us will continue to do past this, and many
24 more in the future will continue. We will be passing
25 a number of bills accompanying this that I think will

2 help make this process even better. I have
3 legislation I hope all of you will support to set
4 some minimum design standards in the facilities so we
5 correcting some of the mistakes that have been led to
6 the conditions that of today's jails, but also to
7 memorialize the conversations that have been had all
8 along the way. I want to thank commend many of those
9 who helped us get here today. We've mentioned the
10 former speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito, who really
11 kicked off this process, Judge Jonathan Lippman, who
12 I believe is here. I want to thank the speaker and
13 the mayor and all their staffs for recognizing the
14 significance of this and my colleagues who are
15 joining us in this historic vote. I want to add to
16 all the thanks to Alana and Brian and Lillian, to my
17 staff, Abigail, Tazara, to Jason Goldman, to all of
18 those, to Raju, it's a long list of those who put in
19 lots of hours, seen and unseen, to make today,
20 today's vote happen. And to Steve and to Diana and
21 to Margaret and to Karen, you are a very big reason
22 of why we are closing Riker's and I am very proud to
23 call you my colleagues. This is a beginning of a
24 very big shift in New York City and hopefully this
25 will lead the way, the way, for the rest of the

2 nation to reimagine justice. Thank you. I will be
3 proudly voting aye later. Thank you.

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
5 Council Member Powers. Council Member Reverend Diaz.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Thank you, Madame
7 Chair Lady. You were so impressive to listen to the
8 speaker so posturing, so in pain, defending the
9 projecting. The speaker used the word as inhumanity,
10 speaker used words as discrimination and savagery.
11 It was very powerful. Forty-five minutes describing
12 all the wrong things about the city's doing to the
13 inmate. What the speaker failed to say I'm going to
14 say. Because he said the humane part of the, what
15 we'll feel, that we had to do good for the neighbor,
16 for whoever, for everyone. And saying that they want
17 to create four new jails, one in the Bronx, one in
18 Queens, one in Manhattan, and one in Brooklyn. None
19 in Staten Island. Nobody asked why. Why? According
20 to information that I have the majority of the
21 [inaudible] a great portion of inmates in Riker's
22 Island come from Staten Island. And not only that,
23 that this body that is supposed to be the progressive
24 body of the world, they took this occasion, four
25 ULURPs, and they made it into one. Each county is

2 supposed to have, and they Board of Allocation decide
3 whatever and they read it, but no, each four ULURPs
4 into one. Eat it, that's what they say. And maybe
5 respect the position of Planning Board Number One in
6 Bronx County that unanimously, the planning board
7 formed for member of the community unanimously voted
8 against. We don't care about that. They didn't care
9 about that the borough president of the county is
10 against it. They don't care about that. They didn't
11 even care about that the community around Bateman
12 House [inaudible] there, they don't want it. They
13 don't care. We know better than you and we will do
14 this, with four ULURPs in one and you're gonna, we're
15 gonna stick a jail in your neighborhood. None in
16 Staten Island. All because the, the speaker said the
17 inhumane situation of the inmate. [inaudible]
18 speaker, ladies and gentleman, and the prior
19 leadership of this county, of this group, previous
20 leadership. I never saw that passion, that
21 [inaudible] in protecting it [inaudible] of NYCHA.
22 That's inhumane. You want to talk of inhumanity?
23 That's inhumane. You never took that passion
24 [inaudible] the children in NYCHA that are dying from
25 poison, from lead poisoning. That's inhumane. Never

2 took that passion defending the people of NYCHA that
3 they commute, they don't have [inaudible], they don't
4 have money. Oh. We have 60,000 families living in
5 shelter. Worse, worse, doing worse than the inmates
6 are doing. There's no passion for that. The passion
7 is we got inmate we got to protect. OK. There's no
8 passion. We've got 60,000 family live in the
9 [inaudible]. But no one cares about that. We're
10 going to come here to talk about how disastrous is
11 the condition people are in Riker's Island. What is
12 going to happen to the land of Riker's Island after
13 that happens? So ladies and gentleman, let me tell
14 you something. We [inaudible]. We got to take care
15 of the inmates. They have to have air conditioning.
16 They have to have technology. They have to have the
17 best. [inaudible] you should come to the Bronx to
18 our, to our community schools in the summer. And go
19 to those schools til you see how are our children
20 [inaudible] they have no air conditioning. They have
21 no air conditioning. So who put the passion in
22 finding money to put air conditioning for our
23 children? No, nobody cares. OK. Nobody cares. But
24 to the, for the inmate on Riker's Island we got to,
25 we got to have the air conditioning. They deserve

2 better. Tell that to the 60,000 families in
3 shelters. Tell that to the people in, in, in NYCHA.
4 Tel that to the children in our [inaudible] school
5 during the summer. Go ahead. That's inhumane.
6 That's, that's the screaming nation. That's abusive
7 to spend close to 10 billion dollars to create four
8 new jails so they could have air conditioning. You
9 want [inaudible]? We don't want [inaudible] for, for
10 our [inaudible]. Pay 2 billions out of that. Pay
11 Riker's Island, rebuild Riker's Island, make your
12 ball field park [inaudible] they could have football,
13 they could have the best life if what you want is to
14 get them a hotel on Riker's Island. Go ahead, you
15 stupid [inaudible]. Build them, rebuild Riker's
16 Island. Make it better.

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Reverend Diaz.

18 If you could begin to wind your comments down.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: No, I know, ah,
20 what was that? No, that's not the, that's not the
21 rule.

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Reverend Diaz,
23 the rule is that you have 2 minutes to speak.
24 Anything above that is permission granted by me.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: No, that's not the
3 rule, Madame. The rule is 10 minutes.

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Would you like
5 for me to read you the rules?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Wait, OK, Madame, I
7 don't want to argue with you. Would I, would I,
8 would I...

9 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: So I'm asking you
10 to wind down your comments so that everyone will have
11 an opportunity to speak today.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Oh.

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: You have spoken
14 longer than all of the members.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: [inaudible]

16 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I'm asking you to
17 wind down your comments.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: You understand my
19 language?

20 UNIDENTIFIED: Speak Spanish.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: I under, see
22 [laughs]. I understand the procedure. The other guy
23 was there, [inaudible] Levin. He was, he was, ah,
24 announcing very, very...
25

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: He was granted
3 permission because one of the borough-based jails is
4 in his district.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Can I have the same
6 courtesy? Could I have the same courtesy?

7 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I asked you
8 politely to begin to wind down your comments.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: May I ask...

10 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Simple as that.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: And I asked you,
12 can have the same courtesy of the rest?

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I'm asking you to
14 wind down your comments.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: So I don't have the
16 same courtesy?

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Excuse me?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: I don't, I don't
19 have the same courtesy like the rest.

20 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Council Member
21 Diaz, everyone has had an opportunity to speak. If
22 you could be respectful of your other colleagues.
23 There are eight other members who would like to
24 speak.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Oh I've, I've been
3 disrespectful? [person shouts from audience] I'm,
4 I, see that? Thank you very much.

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you. Next
6 member, Council Member Lander.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you, Madam
8 Majority Leader. I do just want to say I'm proud to
9 be a member that did act to make sure that every
10 single classroom in New York City will in fact have
11 air conditioning and it'll be done before we start
12 building any of those new jails, so [applause] that
13 is worth noting. That we got done a couple years
14 ago. At Yom Kippur services last week I spent some
15 extra time at the...

16 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Quiet in the
17 chamber.

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Sit down, please.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: At our Yom Kippur
20 services last week I spent some extra time with the
21 words of Isaiah 58, in which God rejects the fasts of
22 those who stop eating for the day but who allow
23 injustice to continue, saying is not this the fast I
24 desire, to free those who are wrongly imprisoned, to
25 set the oppressed free, to break every yoke. Sitting

2 in schul I thought about the imprisoned people that I
3 had visited last winter, locked in frigid cold cages
4 in the Metropolitan Detention Center in Sunset Park
5 and those in the brutally sweltering heat at the
6 Brooklyn House of Detention that I visited during the
7 heat wave this summer. I'm still wrestling with
8 those words today. I don't like voting to build
9 jails. Of course I would rather spend that money on
10 housing, on schools, our community centers, and I
11 know that we are not breaking every yoke. Still, I
12 believe that the plan we are voting for today, made
13 better by consistent public pressure and by the hard
14 work of so many people in this room are colleagues,
15 and many, many more. It is our best chance to turn
16 the extraordinary organizing work of the Close
17 Riker's campaign into tangible official city-
18 sponsored decarceral policy. And it is the most
19 likely path to incarcerating the fewest people in the
20 least inhumane conditions. Now if we were to vote no
21 there is some chance that we could close Riker's
22 without building new jails. That's a powerful vision
23 and it hums with the prophetic energy of Isaiah. But
24 it seems to me, and I think we have to wrestle with
25 this and I think we have to wrestle with this and

2 take it very seriously, far, far more likely that
3 Riker's, The Barge, The Tombs, and the Brooklyn House
4 of Detention would remain open indefinitely with
5 17,500 cages in those abominable conditions that so
6 many of us has seen. Now, that is not what prison
7 abolitionists want and it's now what I would want or
8 I would fight for. But given the challenges of
9 overcoming the status quo, even when we have a
10 commitment, given the lack of clear policy consensus
11 that would result from a no vote today, given the
12 divisions of New Yorkers we're seeing even of this
13 floor, I mean, many of those will be voting no today
14 want to keep Riker's open.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: Right.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And given the
17 very real likelihood of backlash. I mean, have you
18 watched the videos of New Yorkers opposing homeless
19 shelters? I honestly think that is what is most
20 likely to happen if a no vote were to come out of
21 this chamber today. Indefinite continued Riker's,
22 indefinite continued Brooklyn House of Detention,
23 17,500 inhumane cells. Now, of course this plan is
24 not perfect. I wish we were banning solitary today.
25 I wish we were investing far more in building

2 communities. But we cannot miss another chance to
3 cement the closure of Riker's Island and the
4 brutality that it represents. Just ask my friend and
5 mentor, who is up in the balcony, Herb Stirs. Herb
6 started the work to close Riker's in 1980 as deputy
7 mayor for criminal justice and he has not stopped
8 fighting for it over four decades. He marched every
9 step of the way with Just Leadership, including the
10 3-and-a-half miles we marched together to Riker's
11 Island in that beautiful and powerful march at the
12 beginning of this campaign, um, and we are lucky,
13 Herb, to have you with us here today, and I'd like to
14 just make sure people acknowledge and thank you for
15 your work. Come on, let's hear it for Herb Stirs.

16 [applause]

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Council Member
18 Lander?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Yup, yup.

20 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: We're going to
21 ask you start to wind down your comments.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I'm going start
23 to wind down, Madam Public, ah, Madam Majority
24 Leader.

25 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Is today's plan
3 on its own a guarantee? Of course not. Those of us
4 who want a decarceral future and especially those of
5 us who vote for this plan will have a responsibility
6 to keep organizing to make sure that reforms are
7 implemented and promises are kept. That is how
8 democracy works, and that is what we will have to
9 keep doing if we want to cut the number of those
10 incarcerated in half, if we want to close Riker's and
11 put it to better use, if we want to invest in
12 communities what they all deserve. I pledge to it.
13 I hope however you vote today you pledge to it as
14 well. One last thing I know for sure. I will not
15 stop hearing the voices of those folks I met at MBC
16 or the Brooklyn House of Detention, or of Kalief
17 Browder, or of the advocates on all sides of this
18 debate, or sometimes even of Isaiah calling us to
19 account and to continue working to break every yoke.
20 Thank you.

21 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
22 Council Member Lander. We will now be followed by
23 Council Member Holden.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you,
25 Majority Leader. The closing of Riker's has become a

2 religious movement, a symbol of criminal justice
3 reform that will not actually solve the criminal
4 justice system's problem. The plan before us today
5 completely lacks common sense. Billions of dollars
6 have already been invested on Riker's Island
7 throughout the years and that infrastructure could be
8 totally revamped for much less than the city will
9 spend on this borough-based jail proposal. The vast
10 majority of the people in this room today have never
11 given a thought to reinvesting in Riker's and
12 changing the culture there by transforming its
13 facilities into modern, more humane criminal justice
14 complex that includes stand-alone mental health
15 facilities, family centers, green space for
16 recreation, improved transportation through the use
17 of ferries, and jails that allow more light and air
18 inside. Instead, we are voting on whether or not to
19 build skyscraper jails in the middle of already
20 congested communities without even seeing complete
21 designs of the buildings. The plan does not take
22 into consideration the risk that these jails will
23 present in the event of an emergency. Nor does it
24 consider the possibility of future spikes in crime,
25 which I have seen in the past decades. If, if the

2 council votes in favor of this plan today it will be
3 a vote against the best interests of the constituents
4 who would elected us. It will also be against the
5 best interests of detainees and correction officers
6 who will continue to endure the same situations in
7 even more confined vertical spaces. I believe this
8 plan is irresponsible. This decision was rushed, and
9 this council is not doing its due diligence. This is
10 why I am voting no today. And I don't need extra
11 time. Thank you.

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
13 Council Member Holden. We will now go to Council
14 Member Richards, followed by Council Member Ampry-
15 Samuel.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you,
17 Majority Leader, and I want to start off by saying I
18 am not a pastor. I missed church Sunday. But I'm
19 reminded of a verse in Genesis chapter 4, verse 9,
20 "Am I my brother's keeper?" Today's vote shouldn't
21 be about political opportunism, and it must not be
22 about NIMBYism. Today's vote is about justice for
23 all of those who are living in a permanent undercaste
24 system. Incarceration cannot be about barbarism. We
25 are a civilized nation, where we should be able to

2 punish and rehabilitate without dehumanization.

3 Today is about what Dr. King said 50 years ago. The

4 fierce urgency of now. Justice delayed indeed is

5 justice denied. For decades the Jim Crow, the New

6 Jim Crow, in the form of mass incarceration, has been

7 kept well alive, shepherding in black and brown faces

8 on an island that serves to honor Richard Riker,

9 Riker, a man who abused the Fugitive Slave Act for

10 decades. And while he died in 1842, in 2019 the

11 physical and mental chains of slavery have continued

12 to choke black and brown lives to death in this so-

13 called land of the free. Where mothers, children,

14 and families are torn apart, leaving destabilized

15 communities across our city. I represent one of

16 them, Far Rockaway. Because we all know when you get

17 out of jail physically that doesn't mean you're out

18 of jail mentally. Today I'm reminded of a 19-year-

19 old young black man who couldn't make bail, who

20 languished, languished on Riker's Island for three

21 years over accusations of stealing a bookbag. And

22 while Kalief Browder isn't here to witness this vote,

23 I want his mother to know that his death was not in

24 vain. But I'm not gonna stop there. I'm not gonna

25 stop there.

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Quiet in the
3 chamber.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: The man in the
5 White House, representing our nation, who sparks
6 sensationalism and historical hysteria that led to
7 the wrongful convictions of the Central Park Five,
8 including Corey Wise, who languished on Riker's
9 Island for far too long. Don't shed no crocodile
10 tears for them and vote against this plan. We owe it
11 to them to close that hell hole called Riker's
12 Island. We owe it to every person who stepped foot
13 on Riker's and never came home the same, my family
14 members and friends included. We owe it to every
15 family member who took off work to take several
16 trains and buses to visit their loved ones on Riker's
17 only to get turned around at the bridge because of a
18 lockdown. We owe it to those detainees who drove on
19 those buses over the bridge and whose dreams were cut
20 short and left on that bridge. We owe it to the
21 public defenders, the corrections officers, the
22 health [inaudible] the professionals who spent far
23 too much time trying manage a broken system on
24 Riker's Island. But most of all, we owe it to the
25 next generation of at-risk youths that could have

2 their lives derailed in the hell hole called Riker's
3 Island and for God, by God's grace, I was not one of
4 them. But very close.

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Can you begin to
6 wind down your comments?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I proudly vote
8 yes today for Kalief Browder, Corey Wise, my family,
9 friends, and all of those who have had stories just
10 like this, too numerous tell. I just want to end by
11 thanking my colleagues. I call them the Freedom
12 Riders of 2019 in New York City. My colleagues,
13 Karen Koslowitz, Diana Ayala, Steve Levin, Margaret
14 Chin, and most of all our speaker, for their bravery
15 in getting this done. You exuberated bravery, and
16 Karen, I want you to know that I have so much more
17 respect for you because I know for a fact that were
18 people in your community, some people, who said put
19 that jail on Jamaica Avenue. OK? But I want to
20 thank you for standing up for black and brown,
21 because you don't look like my. My complexion is a
22 littler darker than yours. But you stood up for
23 justice and I want you to know I have such a deep
24 respect for you. With that being said...

25 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I will proudly
3 vote aye later. [applause]

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
5 Council Member Richards. We'll now hear from Council
6 Member Ampry-Samuel.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: I'm
8 actually sad today. I wish I could stand here and
9 say something different, but that would be fake. We
10 are closing Riker's. This is about the plan. Since
11 2017 I've expressed my concern about Riker's Island
12 and have stated the need to close Riker's. Let it be
13 known I am support of the closure of Riker's. I come
14 from a world of trips to Riker's, a world of going up
15 north to visit family members, not tours. I also
16 come from a background of visiting jails and prisons
17 as a human rights officer for the United States
18 government. Every New Yorker who has been in
19 Riker's, either waiting for the court date or
20 visiting family deserve a more heartfelt intentional
21 planning and they deserve more now, not just a list
22 of negotiated commitments over the past few days or
23 weeks. In order to provide humane living conditions
24 in our city's jails, we must first acknowledge that
25 we are talking about people, people with lives before

2 they existed in an incarcerated or detained state.

3 We should be talking about people with the people,
4 men and women to deserve to have stable homes and a
5 reliable education system, a career path, healthcare,

6 among basic building blocks that have proven to keep

7 Americans from living the life in and out of the

8 prison system. But we as a body for planning of this

9 magnitude, addressing an unjust system of racism and

10 mass incarceration, this process has been

11 inappropriately rushed. I don't have enough minutes

12 in my remarks to explain all the flaws in the process

13 of us getting to this vote today. What we have

14 adopted for the borough-based plan in some

15 communities. We left many others most affected by

16 the school to prison pipeline relegated to the

17 sidelines, an afterthought. I noticed because I

18 represent those communities, although I don't

19 represent the building where it will be built. The

20 41st Council District includes what is known as

21 million-dollar blocks. That means we spend a million

22 dollars a year on average in New York City and in the

23 state incarcerating my constituents in just one

24 block. Million-dollar blocks in Brownsville, Crown

25 Heights, Bed-Sty, and East Flatbush. Their

2 circumstances are my concerns, and this process did
3 not address the circumstances that led them to
4 Riker's Island, that led them to the state
5 penitentiary, or those coming home daily, reuniting
6 with their families, or the inability to reunite with
7 their families. My fight has been about funding for
8 preventive programs and funding to address violence.
9 I've received tons of promises over the past 48 to 72
10 hours. I simply asked for details about the plan and
11 the prioritization of the districts most impacted
12 with specific programs, similar to what Council
13 Member Ayala was able to accomplish in the Bronx.
14 That would be amazing across the city in communities
15 with the same need. So as I move forward with my
16 colleagues, my only goal and my only vision is to
17 make sure that the communities I serve, those that
18 look like my community, have the support and the
19 resources they need and deserve that's tangible. I
20 have to go home to my district and explain this vote.
21 I have to explain to my constituents. I have to go
22 home to my district and explain this vote. I have to
23 explain this to my constituents with tangible
24 results. I can't do that today. But I do want to
25 say congratulations to my colleagues on your

2 victories. I really do see them as victories and I'm
3 happy for you. I wish I could say the same for
4 Brownsville, East Flatbush, Crown Heights, and
5 Bedford Stuyvesant, those million-dollar blocks. But
6 I look forward to having a voice on behalf of my
7 people in the next phase of planning, because it was
8 not included in this process. My vote is for my
9 district, always left out of discussions and
10 decisions. My vote is with my people.

11 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you. We
12 will now hear from

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you, and
14 even though I'm sure most of you can imagine my vote,
15 congratulations to some of my colleagues for, ah,
16 for, ah, working hard at least on something. I've
17 been pretty public about my opposition...

18 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Quiet in the
19 chamber. And Council Member Borelli, could you
20 please speak into the mic.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: It's so short,
22 though, I'm so tall.

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: [laughs]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: OK. So I've
25 been pretty, ah, pretty outspoken about my opposition

2 to the plan, specifically where the jails will be
3 going, the idea of closing Riker's Island in the
4 first place, but I only rose today just to make one
5 mention of something and I know most of my colleagues
6 here know, know I do like them very much. But it
7 does concern me that with two exceptions nobody had
8 mentioned the ongoing attacks on correction officers.
9 Had this been any sanitation garage and hundreds of
10 sanitation workers were assaulted, you know, dozens
11 per month were stabbed, slashed, beaten, this would
12 be the only thing the City Council would be talking
13 about. If it was happening in any school or any DP
14 facility, or any, any city facility elsewhere where
15 thousands of our employees were under constant threat
16 of attack and suffering serious illnesses, it would
17 be on the front page of all the newspapers from our
18 friends over there and our cameras over here. So I
19 am concerned that not only is the plan not addressing
20 the immediate needs of correctional officers but that
21 there just seems to be no focus on that aspect
22 overall, so thank you.

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
24 Council Member Borelli. We'll now hear from Council
25 Member Grodenchik.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
3 Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo. It's been a long path
4 for us to get to this point, but some things are
5 certainly clear. Riker's Island is old. We haven't
6 built a jail there in 30 years, and none of the
7 people that built that jail are still around in the
8 Corrections Department today. It has to be closed,
9 and anybody who doubt that should read Pre Parerra's
10 report on what happened to adolescent males who were
11 incarcerated on Riker's Island. I doubt that you
12 will get past the summary. That is how shocking it
13 is. I don't want to be a party to that and my
14 conscience doesn't allow me to be. This process, as
15 I said, has been challenging. Information has been
16 difficult to come by. As recently as the preliminary
17 budget hearings we couldn't get hard facts and
18 anybody who knows me knows that I am very careful how
19 we spend the taxpayers' money. And 8-3/4 billion
20 dollars is a lot of money, even in New York City, and
21 some people rightfully argue that we could be doing
22 other things with this money, but I believe that this
23 city is big enough and has a big enough heart and
24 enough money to do all those things that we need to
25 do and we will do them here in New York City. I

2 think that the move to borough-based jails is common-
3 sense approach to government. My colleague, Diana
4 Ayala, a few minutes ago, maybe a few hours ago,
5 suggested that no plan is perfect and she's
6 absolutely right. It's not a perfect plan. This
7 plan is going to change some, and I understand. I've
8 been in government long enough to know that plans
9 change, hopefully for the better, not always, but
10 hopefully for the better. I believe in second
11 chances. Every day I wake up I figure it's a new
12 chance. I've been granted a new chance. I believe
13 in third chances and fourth chances and tenth and
14 fifteenth and twentieth chances because we're all
15 human and we all make mistakes and people need those
16 chances. I want to talk about something that I
17 rarely talk about and that's my oldest brother.
18 Sixty years ago almost when there were no drug
19 rehabilitation facilities my oldest brother was a
20 heroin addict. Most heroin addicts at that time,
21 almost all of them, in fact, went to jail, because
22 that's what you did with heroin addicts in the late
23 fifties and early sixties. You sent them to jail.
24 My brother got a progressive judge, maybe a common-
25 sense judge, maybe a bit of a conservative judge. I

2 don't know. But he offered him a chance at a place
3 called Daytop Village, which was located in
4 Councilman Borelli's district in Butler Manor. And
5 my parents and my other siblings spent a lot of
6 weekends, taking the ferry to Staten Island, there
7 was no Verrazano Bridge in those days, and visiting
8 my brother. And it took him a couple of years. He
9 got out of Daytop and he spent a good chunk of his
10 life helping other people to escape the throes of
11 drug addiction. He is living today in Florida and he
12 is the sweetest guy in the world, except for Donovan
13 Richards [laughter]. But I don't know that he would
14 have survived jail, and I know that what we're doing
15 today is a much more humane approach to criminal
16 justice in this City of New York. The *Wall Street*
17 *Journal* today said that we led the way on reduction,
18 great reductions in crime in this city and that's
19 taken place over the last quarter century. So I like
20 to think that our great city that has led the way on
21 so many different things will lead the way in a new
22 era of penology and helping people, and giving them
23 second chances and third chances and fourth chances,
24 and as many chances as we as a society can afford to
25 give them. So in honor of my brother I proudly vote

2 eye on all today, and I thank you for indulging me,
3 Madam Majority Leader.

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you, thank
5 you, and thank you for sharing your truth. I'd not
6 like to call on Council Member Rodriguez, followed by
7 Council Member Van Bramer, and then followed by
8 Council Member Espinal.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,
10 Majority Leader. Thank you, Speaker. Thank you,
11 former Speaker [inaudible] Mayor de Blasio and all
12 the colleagues. When I was elected in 2009 I
13 introduced a language for the legislation to close
14 Riker's Island. I was told that the city didn't have
15 jurisdiction to close Riker's Island. It happened in
16 the previous administration, but when we, the
17 progressive, took over the City Council and we had a
18 [inaudible] we agreed on everything, but we
19 understood it was time for us to move forward. We
20 started having a real discussion, real conversation.
21 Where if we have a president and his follower
22 promoting violence and most of the funding go into
23 the military instead of social services, when we look
24 at the 13th Amendment documentary that show the
25 incarceration is an extension of slavery, let's call

2 it what is. We have to stop it. This is still the
3 results of a society that live in the past in real
4 segregation and I still today, as we are trying to
5 move forward and a real discussion, if you are black,
6 Latinos, immigrants, poor, you have a higher
7 percentage to be stopped by the police and to be sent
8 to a detention center. So today we are not expecting
9 that with the plan that we will be voting today we
10 will close this chapter. This is only a beginning of
11 an effort where we are committed to not only
12 celebrate Rosa Park, Martin Luther King, Cesar
13 Chavez. We are committed to leave our fingerprints,
14 to leave a nation but we should change our number.
15 We have more peoples in jail than any country in the
16 whole world. That's a number. And that affect all
17 cities and we are not excluded. We visited Riker's
18 Island today with Daniel Dromm and [inaudible] Lisa
19 Crowley, she also was moving some ideas for criminal
20 justice reform, the day came today, you know, I
21 called my colleague, don't take it personal. This is
22 about being immigrants, being poor, being black,
23 being Latino, living in a community that is
24 segregated. As we talk today the only think that I
25 call the speaker is that we use your leadership and

2 work with the mayor to built a second phase of these
3 investments. We also should add an additional 10
4 billion dollars to build CBOs in our local community,
5 to provide those CBOs who are serving those poor
6 neighborhood and immigrants their own buildings so
7 that they don't have to struggle to provide the
8 services because if you are poor children, an
9 immigrant children, you don't have the same program
10 of art and music and gymnastic and education that a
11 middle class and the upper middle class children get
12 in our city. [speaking in Spanish] So today we will
13 be voting to close Riker's Island...

14 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
15 Council Member.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...to make,
17 make a reform and this is only a beginning. Thank
18 you.

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
20 Council Member Rodriguez. Now we're going to hear
21 from Council Member Van Bramer and then Espinal.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you
23 very much, Madam Majority Leader. First, I just want
24 to say how much I respect this process today and my
25 colleagues and the activists, whether we agree on how

2 we're voting today or we disagree I think, ah, ah,
3 except for maybe a couple, ah, things, ah, debates
4 like this highlight how good this body is and how
5 decent the members here are and how regardless of how
6 we're voting, people are voting their conscience and
7 are sharing deeply held feelings and emotions. I
8 don't, ah, cast aspersions on anyone's motivations
9 and why they're voting and how they're voting today.
10 I want to start by saying that I, too, believe
11 Riker's is a human rights atrocity and it must be
12 closed. And I want to acknowledge the work, as so
13 many have before me, of Council Member Dromm, Speaker
14 Melissa Mark-Viverito, all the activists who forced
15 the city to realize that it must close. We've got to
16 be able to have these challenging public policy
17 debates that are emotional because they're so
18 important, yet they're civil. Ah, almost all of us,
19 almost all of, want to close Riker's. But it's how
20 this plan gets there that presents issues for me. I
21 want to say also that Councilwoman Barron, I want to
22 uplift her comments and associate myself with her
23 remarks. Ah, so many people, ah, in the past have
24 said Inez Barron is so smart, but boy is she radical,
25 but boy is the world catching up to you, Council

2 Member Barron. I also want to say, ah, to Council
3 Members Menchaca, Council Members Chin, Council
4 Members Levin, we may be in different places on this,
5 but boy do I have so much respect for each of you. I
6 believe that systemic and structural racism and
7 violence inflicted on black and brown communities for
8 generations represents the greatest sin of this
9 nation. And the criminalization and brutalization of
10 people of color led to mass incarceration and the
11 prison industry complex that we seek to end here
12 today. All of that coming to an end should be all of
13 our life's work. But that's precisely why for me
14 voting to invest 10 billion dollar right back into
15 that system is something I cannot do. Closing
16 Riker's Island brings desperately needed justice.
17 Absolutely. But given the scale of violence
18 perpetrated against communities of color it's maximum
19 justice that we must seek today. So we must close
20 Riker's. And it will close. I support that. But I
21 am no on the plan to build four new mega jails to
22 accomplish that. Thank you.

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,

24 Council Member Van Bramer. And we will have Council
25

2 Members Espinal and then followed by Council Member
3 Gibson.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you, Madam
5 Majority Leader. My comments are in the same vein as
6 Alicka Ampry-Samuel and Inez Barron. I represent
7 East New York, Bushwick and Brownsville, communities
8 that if you look at the numbers have some of the
9 highest incarceration rates and a lot of our
10 constituents are sitting in Riker's Island. But
11 before I say anything else, I want to make it clear
12 that I do believe that Riker's Island should close.
13 I do believe that my colleagues have done a great job
14 in fighting to get all in the investments they can
15 out of this plan, and I do believe that our, our
16 incarcerated deserve to have better facilities. The
17 issue is very personal to me and my constituents on
18 many fronts. I've visited Riker's Island on many
19 weekends, was subjected to the same long bus ride,
20 the long wait times, and the many pat-downs before
21 seeing a loved no evidence. On one night I stood
22 outside for 24 hours while waiting for a bail to be
23 posted. Hearing the stressful noises of the landing
24 airplanes at Laguardia and breathing in the toxic
25 chemical that pollute the island, I thought to myself

2 at that moment that Riker's Island is an island of
3 hell. But I am voting no because I feel the
4 conversation City Hall has started has not gone far
5 enough. Like many people in Riker's today I was born
6 in East New York in the height of the crack epidemic.
7 My neighborhoods were handed over to cops instead of
8 social workers and had no where to go but street
9 corners instead of social programs. They ended up in
10 Riker's. When the city should have been pumping
11 money into nurturing and strengthening my community
12 they instead neglected and abandoned it. I am voting
13 no because I can't vote yes on a plan that spends 8.7
14 billion dollar but does not match this investments in
15 all at-risk communities in the city. Where are
16 billions to break the school to prison pipeline?
17 Where are the billions to clean our air? Where are
18 the billions to keep our streets safe? What we are
19 saying by not matching this plan dollar to dollar is
20 that we can afford to incarcerate New Yorkers in
21 newly built facilities, but we cannot afford to make
22 long-term investments that will prevent the youth of
23 today from being incarcerated tomorrow. There are
24 too many half-formed solutions. We need to fully
25 invest in building stronger, well-rounded

2 communities, and I believe we can do better. Thank
3 you.

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
5 Council Member Espinal. We will now hear from
6 Council Member Gibson, who will close this session.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you, Madam
8 Majority Leader. Good afternoon to all of my
9 colleagues. Thank you for being here. This
10 afternoon this City Council will take a bold and
11 courageous step to finally close an institution that
12 has been a systemic environment of abuse, of
13 mistreatment, and violence all around. For far too
14 long Riker's Island has been a sad state of culture,
15 of violence for detainees, the uniform staff, the
16 medical staff, the legal division, and every one that
17 works that every single day. After so many months of
18 advocacy by those most affected the advocacy groups,
19 CBOs, legal service providers, and so many others, we
20 are presented with this unique opportunity to do
21 something different, to finally address criminal
22 justice reform and change the culture and atmosphere
23 by which we reform, rehabilitate, and reshape the
24 lives of those accused of crimes in our city. Today
25 we act on an issue that has plagued far too many

2 communities of color and young men and women of
3 color, many of which I represent in Bronx County. So
4 I want all of my colleagues to understand how we got
5 here today. Twenty years ago the incarceration rate
6 at Riker's was 20,000 detainees. Today we are 7000.
7 Crime rates spiked in the 1980s and '90s. We were
8 hit with the crack epidemic. And now today the
9 lowest numbers in crime that we have seen in decades.
10 This body, this City Council, has historically for 20
11 years invested in ATIs and ATDs and re-entry work,
12 providing alternatives for young men and women
13 involved in the criminal justice system and it's
14 proven successful. The New York City Crisis
15 Management System, which we started in 2011 in five
16 neighborhoods to focus on a holistic approach to
17 addressing gun violence with wrap-around services for
18 clients to succeed, and now today 30 million-plus
19 dollars invested, over 22 areas across five boroughs.
20 Couple that with supervised release programs, mental
21 health services, transitional services, more re-
22 entry, restorative justice, plus all the new state
23 policies coming down to this city, including bare
24 reform, speedy trial, and open discovery, colleagues
25 we're on our way to reducing the jail population even

2 further and giving our constituents a more humane and
3 safer environment that is closer to home. So for
4 this body today I choose to be on the right side of
5 history for my constituents, who live the everyday
6 reality of today's Riker's Island. I choose to
7 improve the conditions by which those who are
8 detained, accused, not guilty, and also the uniform,
9 medical staff, everyone who works on these jails
10 every day, they all deserve better. And it's our
11 responsibility to do right by them. That's what we
12 were elected to. This proposal before us, my
13 colleagues, is beyond our egos. It's beyond our
14 personal views and simply put...

15 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
16 Council Member Gibson.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...it's
18 transformational. And so I ask all of you to
19 understand this is more than the construction of four
20 buildings. We have to be bold enough, courageous
21 enough, and deliberate enough to do right by our
22 constituents. And I thank everybody, the speaker,
23 the former speaker, Chief Lippman, and everyone who's
24 played a role in this. Thank you for your relentless
25 efforts and holding our feet to the fire. I will

2 stand with my people of the Bronx and I'm voting yes
3 on this proposal and every item on today's agenda.

4 Thank you.

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
6 Council Member Gibson. And we are now going to go to
7 the report of special committees. But prior to doing
8 that, I just want to remind members as we move into
9 the vote in the Council Handbook on the rules of the
10 council, 9.160, the two-minute rule, a member
11 desiring to be excused from voting or to explain a
12 vote at a stated meeting may when his or her name is
13 called make a statement for no more than two minutes.
14 So we are now going into the report of special
15 commissions.

16 COUNCIL CLERK: None.

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Reports of
18 standing committees.

19 COUNCIL CLERK: Report of the Committee
20 on Consumer Affairs and Business Licensing, Intro
21 1657-A, Street Vending.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Amended and coupled on
23 general orders.

24

25

2 COUNCIL CLERK: Report of the Committee
3 on Criminal Justice, preconsidered Intros 1742-A,
4 1759-A, and 1762-A, Riker's Island.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Amended and coupled on
6 general orders.

7 COUNCIL CLERK: Report of the Committee
8 on Finance, preconsidered Reso 1093, Business
9 Improvement Districts.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
11 orders.

12 COUNCIL CLERK: Preconsidered LU 555 and
13 Reso 1100, and preconsidered LU 556 and Reso 1101,
14 tax exemptions.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
16 orders.

17 COUNCIL CLERK: Report of the Committee
18 on General Welfare, Intro 153-B, three-quarter
19 housing.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Amended and coupled on
21 general orders.

22 COUNCIL CLERK: Report of the Committee
23 on Land Use, preconsidered Reso 1091, city map
24 amendment.

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2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
3 orders.

4 COUNCIL CLERK: LU 496 and Reso 1102
5 through LU 499 and Reso 1105, landmark designations.

6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
7 orders.

8 COUNCIL CLERK: LU 513 through LU 526 on
9 page 9, borough-based jail system.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Approved with
11 modifications and referred to the City Planning
12 Commission pursuant to Section 197-D of the New York
13 City Charter.

14 COUNCIL CLERK: Excuse me, excuse me. LU
15 527 and Reso 1106, UDAAP Queens.

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
17 orders.

18 COUNCIL CLERK: LU 528 and Reso 1107,
19 Doctors' Row Historic District.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
21 orders.

22 COUNCIL CLERK: LU 529 and Reso 1108,
23 sidewalk cafe.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Approved with
25 modifications and coupled on general orders.

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2 COUNCIL CLERK: LU 531 through LU 533,
3 Vernon Boulevard, Broadway rezoning.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Approved with
5 modifications and referred to the City Planning
6 Commission pursuant to section 197-D of the New York
7 City Charter.

8 COUNCIL CLERK: LU 534 and Reso 1109, LU
9 535 and Reso 1110, LeFrak City Parking Garage.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
11 orders.

12 COUNCIL CLERK: LU 538 and 539, 35th
13 Avenue rezoning.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Approved with
15 modifications and referred to the City Planning
16 Commission pursuant to Section 197-D of the New York
17 City Charter.

18 COUNCIL CLERK: LU 540 and Reso 11110
19 through LU 542 and Reso 1113, zoning map amendments.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
21 orders.

22 COUNCIL CLERK: LU 543 and 544, Terence
23 Cardinal Cook.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Approved with
25 modifications and referred to the City Planning

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2 Commission pursuant to Section 197-D of the New York
3 City Charter.

4 COUNCIL CLERK: LU 545 and Reso 1114,
5 through preconsidered LU 557 and Reso 1117, various
6 applications.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
8 orders.

9 COUNCIL CLERK: Report of the Committee
10 on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction, Intro
11 1590-A, mental illness reporting.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Amended and coupled on
13 general orders.

14 COUNCIL CLERK: On the general order
15 calendar now, LU 513 and Reso 118 through LU 544 and
16 Reso 1137 on page 21.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
18 orders.

19 COUNCIL CLERK: Resolution appointing
20 various persons Commissioner of Deeds.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Coupled on general
22 orders. And at this time I'm asking for a roll call
23 vote on all of the items that were just read off that
24 is on today's general order calendar.

25 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

2 COUNCIL CLERK: Adams.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Permission to
4 explain my vote?

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
6 granted.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you, Madam.

8 Today we vote on a plan to close Riker's Island, and
9 as one who has had a child in the system, however
10 brief, I would rather have had my child closer to
11 home. As one who was raised by a proud mom, who is a
12 retired captain from the New York City Department of
13 Corrections, my directive from my mother was that
14 Riker's should have been closed a long time ago.
15 Today, colleagues, is the only opportunity that this
16 sitting body will have to vote to close Riker's
17 Island. We cannot wait for the possibility of a
18 maybe, a possibility of another plan, a possibility
19 of another proposal. Today is the only opportunity
20 that this sitting body will have to vote to close
21 Riker's Island. So on the strength of my strong
22 proud mother, on the strength of all, the present and
23 formerly incarcerated individuals that pushed us to
24 not only invest in new buildings but pushed us to
25 invest in new opportunities, I stand on their

2 strength today to say I vote aye to close Riker's
3 Island on the strength of my mother, on the strength
4 of my child, on the strength of those that are
5 flourishing, dying, and depressed on Riker's Island
6 as we speak. Thank you, Madam Majority Leader.

7 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
8 Council Member Adams.

9 COUNCIL CLERK: Gibson.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I vote aye on
11 all, and thank you once again, colleagues, for your
12 tremendous passion and commitment to making the, the
13 lives better of all New Yorkers. I vote aye on all.
14 Thank you.

15 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL CLERK: Ampry-Samuel.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: I vote aye
18 on all, with an exception. I vote no on the borough-
19 based jail system bills, and I do congratulate my
20 colleagues on your victories.

21 COUNCIL CLERK: Ayala.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I vote aye on all.

23 COUNCIL CLERK: Barron.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Permission to
25 explain my vote?

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
3 granted.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. I
5 just want to call my colleagues' attention to Land
6 Use 545. It is a land use item which has an infield
7 project with new homes that have been built and the
8 income targeted requirement are those from 80 to 100
9 percent of the AMI. Once again, those are homes that
10 are targeted for people whose incomes are between 80
11 to 100 percent of their AMI and there are nine two-
12 family homes and there are four three-family homes.
13 And I want to encourage us to look for those kinds of
14 opportunities for home ownership at a price that
15 people can actually afford. And finally I vote aye
16 on all with the exception of 513 through 516 and 518
17 through 526. As my colleague has said, this, these,
18 this, these borough-based jails do not address the
19 conditions that led to people being detailed. It
20 does not address the inappropriate detention that
21 disproportionately affects black and brown. It does
22 not address the subjectivity of judicial discretion
23 with favors whites. It does not address the
24 unconstitutional practices of the NYPD, which again
25 addresses the black and brown communities and poor

2 communities. And it does not address the
3 insufficient, inadequate intervention vis a vis
4 education, mental health, economic development, jobs,
5 and affordable housing. And it does not address the
6 culture that presently exists in Riker's. So for
7 that reason I'm voting no on those. Thank you.

8 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
9 Council Member Barron.

10 COUNCIL CLERK: Borelli.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you. I
12 vote aye on all, except preconsidered Intro 1759 and
13 1762, land use items 513 through 516, 518 through
14 526, and preconsidered Reso 1091. Thank you.

15 COUNCIL CLERK: Brannan.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Permission to
17 explain my vote?

18 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
19 granted.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: It's great to
21 see so much press here to cover my Dyker Heights
22 Lights Christmas bill [laughter], landmark
23 legislation. I just want to, um, congratulate. You
24 know, you hear a lot about, you hear a lot of talk
25 about political courage, and it is not easy to

2 balance the needs and desires and doing the best for
3 your district while also doing what's best for our
4 city. So to Margaret and Steven, Diana, and of
5 course Karen, it's really, really something to look
6 up to and admire the courage that you, you guys have
7 had and of course Speaker Johnson in leading the way
8 on this, ah, something that when it first came up,
9 um, under Melissa, Speaker Viverito, was really, we
10 never thought we'd see it happen, and here we are,
11 taking the first step to make it happen. So, um, and
12 with thanks to, ah, Jason Goldman for helping me with
13 my local bills today as well, ah, I vote aye on all.
14 Thank you.

15 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL CLERK: Cabrera.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Permission to
18 explain my vote?

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
20 granted.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so
22 much. I want to first thank the speaker, for whether
23 we hold differences of opinion, the fact is we did
24 have a fair process. Today I'm concerned about the
25 8.7 billion dollars that we're going to incur in this

2 as a result, a direct result of these bills. Let me
3 tell you what that's going to translate into. Right
4 now we're paying 9 billion dollar in service debt.
5 Nine billion dollars. This year we're going to go
6 into 10 billion dollars. What that means, for the
7 first time, as a matter of fact, for the very first
8 time in the history of New York City we're going to
9 owe over 100 billion dollars. Meaning that next,
10 next, this year coming up when we sit down and we
11 start talking about all of the projects that we want
12 to get done in our district, we talk about all of the
13 community services that we desparately need and we
14 applaud the cure violence community that has worked,
15 but they need more resources. We need more community
16 centers, such as those are we going to see in the
17 Bronx, Council Member Ayala's district. We applaud
18 what we're getting in those districts. But the fact
19 of the matter is we're going to be lacking the
20 resources. Sooner or later we're gonna hit this
21 wall. We're gonna hit a wall when we're gonna start
22 finding ourselves and not being to pay to help our
23 young people because at the end of the day, let me
24 tell you, I'm tired seeing our young people getting
25 incarcerated. Tired of seeing them not having jobs,

2 not, every, every year we have to come here and fight
3 with the administration to be able to get more summer
4 jobs, instead of having jobs on demand for every
5 single one of our young people, so our young people
6 could have a greater opportunity. And with that I
7 vote no on LU 513 through 516, 518 through 26, no in
8 preconsidered 1742, 1759, 1762-A, and 1091 and aye on
9 the rest. Thank you so much.

10 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

11 COUNCIL CLERK: Chin.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I proudly vote aye
13 on all. Thank you.

14 COUNCIL CLERK: Cohen.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Aye.

16 COUNCIL CLERK: Constantinides.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Aye on
18 all.

19 COUNCIL CLERK: Cornegy.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Permission to
21 explain my vote?

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
23 granted.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Riker's has been
25 a symbol of torture, trauma, and extreme violence and

2 it's time to close it down. Too many generations
3 have been failed by Riker's, a decrepit campus of
4 facilities which is a symbol of New York City being
5 home to one of the most devastating egregious penal
6 systems in the United States. It's time for a new
7 start. It's time for reform. The status quo is
8 unacceptable. For years before running for office or
9 representing the 36th District, I worked on Riker's
10 Island in the Department of Social Services and in
11 the Department of Substance Abuse. I remember
12 fighting for access to the housing units and trying
13 to get out of my office and provide direct support to
14 people who were incarcerated. As an elected
15 representative of one of the most incarcerated
16 communities in New York City, I recognize the urgency
17 of ending mass incarceration and a massive overhaul
18 of our pretrial detention system that the closure of
19 Riker's Island requires. An overhaul that advocates
20 were able to bring into fruition in this year's state
21 legislative session. One of my proudest moments in
22 the council was sponsoring and ultimately passing the
23 Kalief Browder bill into law in 20 17, which requires
24 the city to provide access to education and social
25 services to people awaiting trial. Shrinking the

2 system and approving this ULURP in combination with
3 the state-level criminal justice reforms allow us the
4 opportunity to close Riker's and continue pushing
5 forward with decarceration policies, like increased
6 mental health, alternatives to incarceration, and
7 diversion programs. The transformative, I'm sorry,
8 the transformative systematic change we seek to
9 achieve in making these choices will not happen
10 overnight. But delaying any further will only ensure
11 the inevitable - continued existence of Riker's, the
12 Tombs, the Brooklyn House, and the Barge. The status
13 quo is unacceptable and a better future is within our
14 reach. That's why I'm voting yes to all.

15 COUNCIL CLERK: Deutsch.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: No on Intro
17 1742, 1759, 1762, and Reso 1091, and no on LU 1513 to
18 516, and 518 to 526. Aye on the rest.

19 COUNCIL CLERK: Diaz.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Permission to
21 explain my vote?

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Gracias.

24 [laughter]

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet down please.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Gracias.

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet please.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Gracias. [speaking
5 in Spanish] My vote is for my family, for the people
6 that live in NYCHA, for those that doesn't have a
7 voice to defend them because they had to suffer every
8 single year without money because they have no money
9 to fix the boiler and my vote is for those children
10 that have to suffer in our poor school because they
11 have no air conditioning and they have no money to
12 fix them. My vote is for those 60,000 families that
13 live in, in shelter because there's no money for
14 housing. I cannot vote to spend 10, 11 billion
15 dollar to build four jail building while they are
16 suffering. So I'm voting no in LU 513 to 526, and no
17 in Resolution 1118 through 1130. And also no on
18 Resolution 1092. Thank you very much. [inaudible]
19 bye. Mucho gracias.

20 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

21 COUNCIL CLERK: Dromm.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: I proudly vote aye
23 to close the hell hole known as Riker's Island and on
24 all other items on the calendar.

25 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

2 COUNCIL CLERK: Espinal.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: I proudly vote
4 aye on all except the land use callups in regards to
5 the borough-based jails.

6 COUNCIL CLERK: Eugene.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I vote aye.

8 COUNCIL CLERK: Gjonaj.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I vote aye on all
10 except for preconsidered Resolution 1091.

11 COUNCIL CLERK: Grodenchik.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you.

13 I'm not going to make additional remarks except to
14 say that, sorry, can't help myself [laughter]. You
15 know, this isn't about a choice between this or that.
16 I don't think based on my four years almost here that
17 you'll find somebody more concerned about the cost of
18 doing business in the City of New York. It's not
19 cheap. We know that. But we can do both and we have
20 to do both, and we have to help the people in NYCHA,
21 and we have to fix our streets, and we have to fix a
22 lot of things in the city, and we do that. We spend
23 tremendous amounts of money. And we're not spending
24 8-3/4 billion dollars tomorrow. It's going to take a
25 long time to spend all that money, and hopefully

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2 it'll be a smaller number than that because the
3 facilities have gotten smaller. So with that, I vote
4 aye on all. I'm going to waive the balance of my
5 time.

6 UNIDENTIFIED: Sit down please. [person
7 shouting]

8 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Quiet in the
9 chamber.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I only have
11 one vote, folks. I waive the balance of my time
12 because my council has tickets to a team that plays
13 something that resembles baseball in the Bronx
14 tonight. Thank you, Council Member Grodenchik.
15 Again, we have asked that we respectfully hear all of
16 the votes. Any further outbursts in this way will be
17 taken as an assault on the security of this body and
18 you will be escorted. So continue with the vote, and
19 this is the final call and the final warning on this
20 particular issue. Next.

21 COUNCIL CLERK: Holden.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Aye on all,
23 except preconsidered Reso 1091, LUs 513 to 516, LUs
24 518 through 526, and all accompanying resos.

25 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

2 COUNCIL CLERK: Koo.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Majority Leader, may
4 I explain my vote?

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
6 granted. Actually, you know, to save time I'm not
7 going to explain my vote. I vote yes, yeah.

8 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: There, appreciate
9 it. [laughter]

10 COUNCIL CLERK: Koslowitz.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Can I explain
12 my vote?

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
14 granted.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I'm not going
16 to talk long. I just forgot to mention Alexander
17 Zinn from my office who worked very, very hard with
18 me on this issue. So I want to say thank you. And I
19 also want to thank Adrienne Adams for having those
20 long hearings that were really great and informative.
21 So to Adrienne, thank you. And I vote aye on all.

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

23 COUNCIL CLERK: Lancman.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Aye.

25 COUNCIL CLERK: Lander.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Permission to
3 explain?

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
5 granted.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: All right. I
7 have some concerns with Council Member Brannan's
8 Christmas tree lighting bill, but I've decided I'm
9 going to go with it anyway.

10 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: [laughs]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Um, when I joined
12 the formerly incarcerated leaders and organizers from
13 Just Leadership on the steps of this building four
14 years ago in 2015 as they launched the campaign to
15 close Riker's I do not think I would have believed
16 that four years later we would get to sit in the
17 chambers and vote to do it, organizing matters, I
18 hope everybody who believes in it on all sides will
19 keep doing it. I vote aye on all.

20 COUNCIL CLERK: Levin.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Permission to
22 explain my vote?

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
24 granted.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, Madam
3 Majority Leader. I also want to acknowledge several
4 people that I did not before. I'd like to
5 acknowledge Ms. V, Victoria Philips, who was so
6 excellent at our hearings and provided live update on
7 a message board that was, that allowed us to see her,
8 her thoughts in real time and opinions in real time,
9 and we appreciate that. I'd also like to thank my
10 staff who worked tirelessly on this for a number,
11 many, many months, ah, Glumani Bravo Lopez, Deidre
12 Cheatham, Jonathan Bouchet, Nicole Hunt, Ben
13 Solitare, Betty Lester, and Elizabeth Adams, my
14 legislative director, who did a tremendous amount of
15 work on this. And I would also like to acknowledge
16 Chair Adrienne E. Adams for providing such an even-
17 handed leadership as chair during this process in the
18 hearing and beyond, and for, um, and for reminding us
19 why we're here doing this and with a moral clarity
20 that, that rings like a [bell]. I want to thank her.
21 And with that I vote aye on all. Thank you.

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

23 COUNCIL CLERK: Levine.
24
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you.
3 Permission to briefly explain my vote, Madam Majority
4 Leader? [people shouting in background]

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Please close
6 out.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Will you clear the
8 balcony?

9 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: We are now going
10 to exit the balcony.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: We're going to clear
12 the balcony.

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Sergeant at Arms,
14 please clear out the balcony.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Is it me? It's
16 me, right? Yeah, OK. [laughs] Wow. Levine, Levine,
17 it's like a trigger word, the name Levine, it's like
18 a trigger word. [laughs]

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: We are sorry for
20 the inconvenience, but we cannot, we cannot tolerate
21 things being thrown from the balcony. It compromises
22 the security and the safety of every individual here,
23 and we have to all see that. Throwing things over
24 the balcony compromises the safety of every member in
25 this body. We understand that others were not

2 participating, but we cannot tolerate things being
3 thrown over the balcony. It's inexcusable. It's
4 dangerous, it's unfair, it is inappropriate. I
5 apologize to those of you who are here to witness
6 this particular vote, but we cannot compromise the
7 safety of this body. Thank you, thank you for your
8 participation. When items are thrown over the
9 balcony you've created an unsafe environment. Thank
10 you for your participation. We appreciate you being
11 here. We apologize that you have to leave because of
12 the actions of others. Thank you. Thank you. We
13 are now going to continue with the vote. We left off
14 with Council Member Steve Levin. We left off with
15 Council Member Mark Levine.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: It's a common
17 mistake.

18 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Quiet in the
19 chamber.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Ah, I'm
21 disappointed that no one wanted to hear me explain my
22 vote. Ah, I simply wanted to express my profound
23 gratitude and admiration for Council Member Diana
24 Ayala, Council Member Karen Koslowitz, Council Member
25 Margaret Chin, Council Member Steve Levin, for

2 Speaker Corey Johnson, for former council speaker
3 Melissa Mark-Viverito, thank you for your leadership,
4 for being thoughtful and compassionate and
5 principled. Because of you, we are undertaking what
6 is without a doubt the most important and certainly
7 the left decarceration project in America today,
8 which will not only transform criminal justice in the
9 five boroughs of the New York City. It will set an
10 example that will reverberate nationally and beyond.
11 Thank you to everyone in this body past and present.
12 Thank you to all the advocates and leaders throughout
13 the city who made this possible. I proudly vote aye
14 on all.

15 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL CLERK: Louis.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Permission to
18 explain my vote?

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
20 granted.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you. First,
22 I would like to thank Speaker Johnson for your
23 leadership throughout the process and for taking the
24 time to speak with me. I have a lot of respect for
25 Council Members Koslowitz, Chin, Levin, and Ayala

2 through these process. You were very strong, so I
3 respect you all for your decision and for the process
4 that you allowed to take place. I also want to thank
5 my colleagues, Council Members Ampry-Samuel, Barron,
6 Espinal, and Yeger for taking the time to meet with
7 me, speak with me, and help me understand the
8 process. I hope some of you remember that I'm a new
9 member and a woman of color, who represents a
10 district that has been disproportionately affected by
11 mass incarceration of black and brown people. I can
12 say certainly that closing Riker's is crucially
13 something that we need to do, but building borough-
14 based jails will not remedy our already broken
15 criminal justice system. We continuously speak about
16 the affects of a criminal justice system designed to
17 punish people who look like me, who my neighbors,
18 family, friends, constituents, but the process we,
19 but this process I believe will not solve or change
20 the problem, but it will move the problem. I am not
21 comfortable with rebuilding new jails while we have
22 yet to address the issues on the ground in
23 communities that let the cycle continue to
24 perpetuate. In addition, I am not comfortable with
25 the fact that my colleagues in central Brooklyn while

2 we have yet to address the issues on the ground in
3 communities that let the cycle continue to
4 perpetuate. In addition, I am not comfortable with
5 the fact that my colleagues in central Brooklyn were
6 left out of the conversation that will dictate the
7 futures of our constituents. Riker's is definitely a
8 dark stain on the city and it needs to be closed.
9 But the process needs more oversight. While member
10 deference is very important, ah, we weren't
11 considered in the process, but I believe this is an
12 opportunity to add black and brown council members in
13 the conversations and the ongoing process to ensure
14 that we end the pipeline destroying our communities.
15 My hope is that with the millions of dollars that's
16 being put into community investments that the
17 administration will earmark funds for communities
18 like East Flatbush, by providing more schools, a real
19 recreation center, and a substantive restorative
20 justice plan created to protect officers, like my
21 brother, who was stabbed over four times at Riker's.
22 A real treatment plan and a strategy to deal with
23 inmates that have mental health issues and a real
24 work force place center in neighborhoods like
25 Flatbush. This was a very hard vote for me. My

2 district is split because of this vote and I need you
3 all to understand that this was very hard for me, but
4 I vote aye on this particular topic and hope to
5 continue to work with you all through this process.
6 Thank you.

7 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

8 COUNCIL CLERK: Menchaca.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Permission to
10 explain my vote?

11 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
12 granted.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Ah, I know
14 we've been focused on a few of the land use items. I
15 want to point you to the Sunset Park South historic
16 districts. There are four districts in front of you.
17 You may not notice this, but it's incredibly
18 uncommon, rare, in fact first time ever that the
19 agency, the historic, um, land bill, Landmarks
20 Preservation Commission, is allowing for four
21 districts to move forward at the same time and that's
22 a tribute to the incredible work that Sunset Park is
23 doing. I want, I want you to point, I want to point
24 you Sunset Park and the work that we're doing every
25 day. We are a community that's going through massive

2 gentrification pressures and our communities are
3 incredibly diverse. Yet we come together and we talk
4 and dialogue with respect about the things that are
5 important to us in our neighborhood, and these four
6 applications resemble that kind of power, and so with
7 that I want to lift up the courage of Sunset Park to
8 continue to push me to join in their work and also
9 lift up the courage that we're having here today with
10 the honest discussions around closing Riker's and the
11 borough-based jail system. The courage that is going
12 to be required after this vote is to remain unified,
13 and I hope that we can do that as a body. I will be
14 voting no on the borough-based jail systems, so you
15 can jot me down no on that part. But I also want to
16 say a few words to Judge Lippman and former speaker
17 Melissa Mark-Viverito because I remember those early
18 conversations and we were talking about closing
19 Riker's and that's what I want to do. And I know
20 that's what we're going to do. But today, and this
21 is my conversations I was having last night with
22 Council Member Reynoso and Torres. We spent a lot of
23 time on the phone last night, and how beautiful it is
24 that we're talking not about closing Riker's, we're
25 talking about how. And that is a revolutionary step

2 and I can't wait to take more revolutionary steps
3 with you. I vote aye on the rest.

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL CLERK: Miller.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Permission to
7 explain my vote?

8 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
9 granted.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Madam
11 Majority Leader. So there's been a lot of a
12 conversation about describing the inhumanities what
13 is Riker's Island, ah, inmates, and as well as the
14 Department of Corrections staff and particularly
15 correctional officers that are often forced to spend
16 double and triple tours on, on Riker's Island. Over
17 the past two years we've, it's been a lot of
18 conversation and consultation, ah, about those
19 inhumanities that got us all to the point that
20 understand that Riker's Island is a blight that has
21 to be eliminated and, and closed. But understand
22 that closing Riker's Island for, for many of us, for
23 those of us who live and suffer those [scourge] that
24 represent communities that have been
25 disproportionately impacted, that have, um, that the

2 closing of Riker's Island is simply the lowest bar
3 when it comes to criminal justice reform. It is the
4 low-hanging fruit that does not address many of the
5 issues that have perpetrated the incarceration that
6 we have seen. But as my colleagues have said and
7 demonstrated today that there's been a lot of
8 consultation. There's been a lot of leadership, um,
9 around this issue and it's gotten us to the point
10 that we've spoken, that we've talked, that we've
11 talked about services, we've talked about policy,
12 we've talked about programming that addresses those
13 issues. Has it gotten us completely there? We are
14 on, so we are certainly on our way. But I would like
15 to add my commitment to continue to work with Karen,
16 Margaret, Steve, and Diana as well as the Speaker to
17 continue to fulfill our collective goals of not just,
18 ah, closing Riker's Island but eliminating the mass
19 incarceration that we have seen. And part of that
20 conversation has to be a real conversation about a
21 system that has historical perpetuated
22 disproportionate incarceration of black and brown
23 folks, a court system as juris and all the things
24 that have happening. I'm looking forward to...

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
3 Council Member.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Excuse me, I'm
5 looking forward to the implementation of the laws
6 that have been passed in Albany over the past
7 session, put [inaudible], but more importantly
8 working with my colleagues here to make sure that we
9 make real change, um, when it comes to criminal
10 justice reform. With that, I'll be voting aye.
11 Thank you.

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

13 COUNCIL CLERK: Moya.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MOYA: I vote aye.

15 COUNCIL CLERK: Perkins.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Thank you. In
17 tribute to the Central Park Five I vote aye on all.

18 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you for
19 your vote.

20 COUNCIL CLERK: Powers.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I vote aye on
22 all.

23 COUNCIL CLERK: Reynoso.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Permission to
25 explain my vote?

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
3 granted.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you.
5 Every single person, every single person in jail
6 represents a failure by our society, a failure to
7 provide opportunity, a failure to provide healthcare,
8 a failure to support those who need it most. And
9 there is no greater representation of that failure
10 than Riker's Island. Riker's is a torture chamber
11 where detainees are subject to inhumane treatment,
12 permanently traumatizing some of our most vulnerable
13 citizens. Our current justice system is more
14 reflective of an ancient eye to eye philosophy,
15 predicated on revenge rather than rehabilitation.
16 The system reflects our most base desires for
17 retribution rather than a higher ideal of pursuing
18 positive outcomes for tragic events. Our history is,
19 the history of this system can be directly traced to
20 our country's original sin, slavery, and is a direct
21 manifestation of white supremacy and the subjugation
22 of black and brown people. We must do better and
23 closing Riker's once and for all is something that we
24 must do today. I do want to say in Spanish for my
25 Spanish language media as well [speaking in Spanish].

2 And I just want to give a big thank you to Melissa
3 Mark-Viverito for the work that she did in her time
4 as speaker in making sure that she championed an
5 issue that everyone thought we were absolutely out of
6 our minds for pushing, and now we're here actually
7 doing it because of her leadership and her strength.
8 So I want to thank you for that, and thank you to
9 everyone who voted in favor and not, and we will be
10 working to do better. Thank you, Speaker Corey
11 Johnson.

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: And how do you
13 vote?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I don't know.
15 [laughter]

16 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

17 COUNCIL CLERK: Richards.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Ah, quickly,
19 permission to explain my vote. Ah, last summer or
20 the summer before I had the opportunity to visit
21 Riker's and to really speak to many of those young
22 men and women who were being detained there, and one
23 of the things I heard overwhelmingly, I thought we
24 were gonna hear complaints overwhelmingly about food.
25 But the complaint was for the need for a better law

2 library, the need for more vocational training, the
3 need for more job opportunities when they got out,
4 and I just want to lift them up because I really left
5 the island a lot more inspired by those young people
6 who the world has literally turned their back on,
7 backs on. So with that I want to vote aye for those
8 young people I met there.

9 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

10 COUNCIL CLERK: Rivera.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I just want to
12 thank my colleagues for leading this thoughtful
13 discussion on criminal justice reforms and for
14 realizing and committing to continuing a focused
15 conversation beyond today's vote. Our work is far,
16 far from over. I vote aye on all.

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

18 COUNCIL CLERK: Rodriguez.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Permission to
20 explain my vote?

21 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
22 granted.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you
24 again, Speaker, Mayor de Blasio, Jason, Emma, our
25 chief of staff of the council and the mayor and the

2 four colleague, Steve, Margaret, Ayala, and Karen,
3 and the advocate. As I said before, this plan is
4 only a beginning. This is not the end. I believe
5 that we should end as we have visions with a big
6 goal, we should end to bring the City of New York
7 without one person being in a detention center. That
8 will happen and we create good-paying job and we
9 invest in the same quality of education to every
10 single child in New York City. That will happen when
11 we respect each other. That's what happen when we
12 end the racism and discrimination, but until we get
13 there we need to be, ah, to put together the best
14 plan to give dignity of anyone that we sent to the
15 detention center. I call for the City of New York
16 also to start exploring to establish a reparation to
17 the population of New Yorkers who have spent time in
18 Riker's Island, an institution full of corruption,
19 violence, human rights abuse, where the lives of
20 minors were destroyed. [speaking in Spanish] I can
21 tell you that for me it was not an easy one, at, at
22 the end to just vote it for the plan as a whole
23 because I don't believe in a society where we should
24 have jail. However, I do chose the speaker, I do
25 chose Jason and Mayor de Blasio, my colleague, when

2 it comes to, you know, putting together a plan or
3 reinvesting in our community. Every year we've been
4 investing more, 150 million dollar to the private
5 sector to create jobs. But those jobs are only in
6 the midtown area. Those jobs are in Brooklyn and
7 Long Island City. If we want to attack poverty and
8 violence we need to invest the same amount of money
9 for any private sector that create good pay job and
10 to invest to provide the same quality of education to
11 everyone. With that, I vote aye.

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

13 COUNCIL CLERK: Rose.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Permission to
15 explain my vote?

16 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
17 granted.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I want to
19 congratulate Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. When she
20 first discussed this, um, many people said that it
21 wasn't possible. So I want to congratulate her for
22 her insight and foresight. I want to thank my
23 colleagues and Speaker Johnson for their grace and
24 courage, many times under fire, for shepherding this
25 groundbreaking and historic legislation that will

2 truly change the trajectory of the criminal justice
3 system for all black and brown people and with that I
4 vote aye on all.

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

6 COUNCIL CLERK: Rosenthal.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Permission to
8 explain my vote?

9 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
10 granted.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you. I
12 wholeheartedly join with my colleagues in fulfilling
13 our moral duty to approve this historic plan to shut
14 down the deadly, abusive, decrepit, Riker's jails
15 forever. This is one of the most important votes I
16 will make as a member of this body and I truly thank
17 the leadership of our colleagues, Melissa Mark-
18 Viverito, Corey Johnson, Karen Koslowitz, Margaret
19 Chin, Diana Ayala, and Steve Levin. Your fierce
20 negotiations set us on the trail, ah, to closing
21 Riker's successfully. But we're not just closing
22 Riker's. We're reducing the number of city jails
23 from 12 to four. We're creating humane facilities
24 that will bring detainees closer to their families
25 and critical resources. As chair of the Committee on

2 Women and Gender Equity, there is one commitment I am
3 especially proud of - the administration's pledge
4 that if an appropriate and more centrally located
5 site becomes available they will work with advocates
6 and the council to assess its feasibility for use as
7 a women's jail in lieu of the current plan to house
8 women in a space adjoining the men's Queens facility.
9 I will work closely with Close Rosie's, the Women's
10 Community Justice Association, and other advocates to
11 seize this historic opportunity and lay the
12 groundwork for a stand-alone criminal justice
13 facility for women, trans, and gender nonconforming
14 New Yorkers. Today the vast majority, 85% of females
15 held on Riker's are mothers. As the number of
16 incarcerated women continues to drop, we need a
17 facility with sufficient space for much-needed
18 programming, mental health therapy, substance abuse
19 counseling, medical personnel, and, most importantly,
20 space for children and other family members. If I
21 may just wrap up.

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: We need a
24 facility that fully integrates a trauma-informed
25 guiding philosophy to help women build support

2 networks and break the cycle of incarceration and
3 recidivism. A facility that supports recovery,
4 rehabilitation, and family reunification. A facility
5 that enables incarcerated women to move forward with
6 their lives. Today we are taking a profoundly
7 important step toward that vision. I proudly vote
8 aye on all.

9 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

10 COUNCIL CLERK: Salamanca.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Permission to
12 explain my vote?

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
14 granted.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you.

16 While there should be no debate on the closure of
17 Riker's, the course that the administration has taken
18 to get there has lacked the critical feedback of
19 community stakeholders in the Bronx. [inaudible]
20 city follow the recommendations of the Lippman
21 Commission to build borough-based jails at locations
22 of existing detention centers near county courthouses
23 in three of the four boroughs. The administration
24 cited a location that is more than two-and-a-half
25 miles away from the Bronx Courthouse. The response

2 from the community and elected officials alike was
3 immediate in their opposition to the location.
4 Nevertheless, the administration moved forward with
5 their plans, leaving many in the South Bronx
6 wondering if a commitment to the meaningful community
7 engagement was a convenient bullet point on their
8 presentation. Additionally, the community's
9 dissatisfaction with the new borough-based plan
10 extends to the broken promises of previous
11 administrations to keep the Vernon C. Bain
12 Correctional Center, otherwise know as The Barge,
13 operating. Asking our community to accept a brand-
14 new jail without closing The Barge first is wholly
15 unacceptable and disingenuous to Bronxites. I have
16 given the administration numerous opportunities on
17 public hearings to address this concern relating to
18 The Barge, but have been vastly disappointed each
19 time at not even hearing most preliminary estimate
20 timelines to sinking the boat. Even without citing
21 the other issues that have originated from the
22 council hearings over the last two months, I cannot
23 vote in favor of certain actions on this land use
24 application in its current form. The administration
25 cannot simply ignore the valid concerns of the

2 community and expect us to accept this decision. I
3 implore the mayor to continue exploring all siting
4 options near the Bronx County Courthouse where this
5 jail belongs, once and for all. And for once and for
6 all sink The Barge. And for that reason I will be
7 voting no on LUs 518 and 519, and aye on all. Thank
8 you.

9 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

10 COUNCIL CLERK: Torres.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Permission to
12 explain my vote?

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
14 granted.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: In the 1990s
16 there were well over 20,000 people on Riker's Island.
17 By 2026 the number will fall to 3300. The closing of
18 Riker's Island, combined with a more than 600% plunge
19 in the New York City jail population, represents one
20 of the most extraordinary strides towards
21 decarceration ever to be undertaken by any city in
22 the United States. What would have been unthinkable
23 only a few week, a few years ago, is about to become
24 the law of New York City. The plan before us has
25 four core elements. First, it would close Riker's

2 Island. Second, it would reduce the jail population
3 to historic lows and in doing so end the era of mass
4 incarceration. Third, it would reduce the overall
5 number of jails in New York City. The city will
6 ultimately have fewer jails, not more. And fourth,
7 it would replace old jails whose conditions of
8 confinement have become unlawfully unsafe and
9 inhumane, a fact the opposition overlooks. My
10 council district was home to Kalief Browder. Accused
11 but never convicted of a crime, Kalief languished for
12 three years in Riker's Island, where he was
13 psychologically tortured by solitary confinement and
14 physically brutalized by violence at the hands of
15 fellow inmates and correction officers. The trauma
16 of his confinement was so profound that he ultimately
17 took his own life. Even when Kalief left Riker's
18 Island, Riker's Island never left him. Communities
19 of color continue to bear the scars of mass
20 incarceration. One cannot separate the ends from the
21 means. One cannot separate closing Riker's Island
22 from the very plan that would enable the closing of
23 Riker's Island. The underlying question on which the
24 City Council is voting is whether to close Riker's
25 Island and whatever the nuances of your own beliefs

2 about criminal justice reform the vote before us
3 presents a simple stark choice. We can either vote
4 to keep Riker's open indefinitely in pursuit of a
5 perfect plan or we can vote to close Riker's once and
6 for all. I choose to close Riker's Island. Mr.
7 Speaker, I vote aye.

8 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

9 COUNCIL CLERK: Treyger.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Permission to
11 explain my vote?

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
13 granted.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Yes, I've waited
15 a long time [laughter]. Number one, there is a
16 funded plan for air conditioning in all New York City
17 schools because of this New York City Council. And
18 for anyone to reference NYCHA or schools I question
19 how many doors you've knocked on to help elect a
20 senate Democratic majority up in Albany. I know the
21 Speaker has. The former speaker has as well. Many
22 of the ills we face in this city is based on the
23 disinvestment from Albany and Washington. So let's,
24 number one, get that straight. Now we get to my
25 comments. I, like many of my colleagues, feel keenly

2 the historical weight of the actions which are before
3 us today. Under the leadership of Speaker Viverito
4 following the persistent advocacy of groups like Just
5 Leadership and the Close Riker's and Beyond Rosie's
6 Coalition many of us committed to the moral urgency
7 of closing Riker's Island, which is plagued by
8 violence, brutality, isolates incarcerated people
9 from their families and communities, and keeps the
10 conditions and impacts of incarceration outside of
11 the public consciousness and our collective
12 conscious. I will be voting yes today because,
13 simply put, I thought that this vote is necessary to
14 close Riker's. Many families in my district have
15 suffered from the impacts of mass incarceration and a
16 justice system which too often criminalizes poverty.
17 Parts of my district, particularly Coney Island, have
18 been irrevocably harmed time and time again by
19 policies crafted with abject disregard for
20 communities of color, red lining, autocratic urban
21 renewals plans, disinvestment in affordable and
22 public housing, and inequitable resource in the
23 public schools, among many others. I fully
24 understand why people directly impacted by
25 incarceration would question the ability of

2 government to make meaningful progress when the
3 history of our communities has, was littered with
4 broken promises. Make no mistake. This plan, even
5 with nearly half a billion dollars in added
6 investments to the points of agreement is not
7 sufficient to fully achieve justice for communities
8 impacted by mass incarceration. If I could have one
9 more minute. However, for me to vote no would give
10 credence to the prevailing sentiment from just a few
11 years ago that closing Riker's was overly idealistic
12 and impossible. There will be not another
13 opportunity to vote to close Riker's in the near
14 future. I do not have confidence that there is the
15 political and bureaucratic will to close Riker's
16 outside of this vote. This is the day of decision.
17 We have the opportunity to reaffirm the commitment to
18 the moral obligation to close Riker's and continue
19 the historic arc of the criminal justice reform work
20 on the city and state level.

21 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And I'll just
23 close, I have more, but I'll just close by saying it
24 is no coincidence that one of the most compassionate
25 and consequential justice reform bills in this

2 council to close Riker's was led by three powerful
3 and extraordinary women, plus Steve Levin [laughter],
4 Karen, Diana, Margaret, Steve, you're all
5 extraordinary. I vote aye.

6 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

7 COUNCIL CLERK: Vallone.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Permission to
9 explain my vote?

10 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Permission
11 granted.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, no one
13 will ever say we're not a passionate body of City
14 Council members. Ah, and thank you for letting us
15 have our time today, Madam Majority Leader. I rise
16 as someone who actually served on the Board of
17 Corrections for years and spent much time on Riker's
18 Island with our board members, with these council
19 members, watching Danny Dromm go through the halls
20 with Corey and fighting for change and seeing the
21 sadness that permeated Riker's Island. Sadness from
22 everyone, sadness from the correctional officers,
23 from the detainees, the family members, those who
24 suffered and languished on that island. No one here
25 is advocating at all to keep Riker's Island open.

2 The status quo must end. It is on our backs to
3 decide how to reform that system and there's two very
4 keen proposals that we were looking at - reinvesting
5 and destroying and rebuilding Riker's Island or
6 community facilities. And while we struggled with
7 that, I just wanted to add to our members today,
8 while we talk about the reforms that are needed there
9 are many voices that come to us in many different
10 forms, and there's also the voices of the mother that
11 buries a child, and a family member that suffered a
12 murder, and those who had violent felonies committed
13 against them, and they come to us and say am I safe?
14 Those who commit those crimes must be incarcerated in
15 a correctional facility that can handle them and
16 protect others that shouldn't be there. That is also
17 on our table today, and I say please don't forget
18 those voices while we build that facility for the
19 future. So the argument for me is, always been,
20 sorry, always been to keep Riker's Island, but with
21 today's vote to rezone and a resolution to change
22 that we no longer have that option. And I commend
23 Karen Koslowitz and the delegation chair for her
24 leadership to find a viable option close to the court
25 system and it's hard to argue against a facility

2 close to a, to that system. So that's my, my dilemma
3 today and my argument and thank you all for trying to
4 get me to that place. I vote aye on everything
5 except for preconsidered Resolution 1091, and vote
6 yes on all other items. Thank you, Madam Majority
7 Leader.

8 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

9 COUNCIL CLERK: Van Bramer.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I vote no on
11 Land Use 513 through 526 and accompanying resolutions
12 1118 through 1130 and aye on all others.

13 COUNCIL CLERK: Yeger.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you. I vote
15 aye on all, with the exception of Intro 1762,
16 Resolution 1091, and Land Use 513 through 516, 518
17 through 526, and the accompanying resolutions. Thank
18 you.

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

20 COUNCIL CLERK: Matteo.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: I vote no on Land
22 Use 513, 516, 518, 526, with all the accompanying
23 resolutions, preconsidered Resolution 1091. I also
24 vote no and no on 759 and 762, aye on the rest.

25 COUNCIL CLERK: Cumbo.

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I vote aye.

3 COUNCIL CLERK: Speaker Johnson.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Today has been a
5 historic and important day here at the New York City
6 Council, and I am grateful for all of the members who
7 spoke up. It was an intense day of people figuring
8 out the best way forward with their own conscience,
9 and I am proud of this body. I am proud of Speaker
10 Mark-Viverito getting us to this point and turning
11 the reins over to all of us who got to continue here
12 after 2017. I think today is a day when Riker's
13 Island is demolished. Today is a day that the
14 history books will look back on as a good day for the
15 future of New York City, as getting rid of a profound
16 and painful symbol of inhumanity and brutality that
17 was allowed to fester and be in the East River for
18 far too long. So today is not the end of the
19 journey. Today is a good step in something concrete
20 to move this city forward. We still must push for
21 additional funds on combatting homelessness and
22 interrupting violence and getting people the services
23 that they need in communities all across the city.
24 But, again, let's make no mistake about this. This
25 is a step forward. This is progress. This is the

2 right thing to do. And so I am grateful. I want to
3 just end by again singling out a few people who I
4 mentioned before. The staff here at the City Council
5 has been working around the clock and I am
6 exceedingly grateful to Jason Goldman, William
7 Pascone, Jennifer Fermino, Raju Mann, Brian Crow
8 [applause], Alana Sevin, Esha Wright, Latanya
9 McKinney, ah, Regina Paredo Ryan, and, excuse me?
10 And George Sarkisian, and I want to make sure that I
11 don't, ah, forget anyone because these folks have
12 been working, I want to thank Peter Butler as well.
13 All of them have worked so, so, so hard in getting us
14 here today and I think this is a day that we will
15 look back on as a great day for the future of New
16 York City and the City Council did something very,
17 very good today. So I proudly, proudly, proudly vote
18 aye on this plan. Thank you.

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you,
20 Speaker Corey Johnson, for your leadership. We'll
21 now have introduction and reading of bills.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: All bills are referred
23 to as committees indicated on today's agenda.

2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Just need 30
3 seconds. All items on today's general order calendar
4 are adopted by a vote, quiet in the chamber...

5 UNIDENTIFIED: Sit down please, sit down
6 please.

7 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Of 49 in the
8 affirmative, zero negative, and zero abstentions,
9 with the exception of Intro 1759-A, which was adopted
10 by a vote of 45 in the affirmative, 4 negative, and
11 zero abstentions. Intro 1762-A, which was adopted by
12 a vote of 44 affirmative, 5 negative, and zero
13 abstentions. Reso 1091, which was adopted by a vote
14 of 40 in the affirmative, 9 negative, and zero
15 abstentions. Intro 1742-A, which was adopted by a
16 vote of 46 in the affirmative, 3 negative, zero
17 abstentions. [TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE: The revised vote
18 for this item is 47 in the affirmative, 2 negative,
19 zero abstentions.] And LUs 513 through 516 with
20 accompanying resos, which was adopted by a vote of 36
21 in the affirmative, 13 negative, and zero
22 abstentions. LUs 518 and 519 with accompanying resos
23 which was adopted by a vote of 35 affirmative, 14
24 negative, and zero abstentions. LUs 520 through 526
25 with accompanying resos, which was adopted by a vote

2 of 36 in the affirmative, 13 negative, and zero
3 abstentions. The revised land use call up vote is 48
4 in the affirmative and 1 negative.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Council Member Levin
6 waives his time to speak. He thanked enough people
7 and I'm thanking everyone on his behalf. Madam
8 Majority Leader?

9 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Yes?

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Are we ready to
11 adjourn?

12 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Give me one
13 moment.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: OK.

15 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: We will now have
16 introduction and reading of bills.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: All bills have been
18 referred to committee as indicated on today's agenda.

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you. There
20 are no resolutions on today's agenda, so we will now
21 move into general discussion. Seeing that there are
22 no members that are listed on the general discussion,
23 we will now have Speaker Corey Johnson to close
24 today's meeting.

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Madam Majority Leader,
3 you did an outstanding job today...

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And I'm really grateful
6 for you chairing this meeting.

7 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: You did a wonderful job
9 [applause]. I'm proud of your leadership. The
10 Stated Meeting of October 17, 2019, is hereby
11 adjourned. [gavel]

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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 November 18, 2019