

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND
BUILDINGS

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September 12, 2024
Start: 10:34 a.m.
Recess: 10:39 a.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM, CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Pierina Ana Sanchez, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shaun Abreu
Alexa Avilés
Eric Dinowitz
Crystal Hudson
Lincoln Restler

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

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, and welcome to
3 today's New York City Council Committee Hearing for
4 the Committee on Housing and Buildings. At this
5 time, please silence all cell phones and electronic
6 devices to minimize disruption throughout the
7 hearing. Thank you for your cooperation Chair, we
8 are ready to begin.

9 [GAVEL]

10 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Sergeant. Good
11 morning. I'm Councilmember Pierina Sanchez, Chair of
12 the Committee on Housing and Buildings, joined today
13 by my colleagues, Councilmember Hudson, Councilmember
14 Carr, Councilmember Avilés, Councilmember Restler,
15 Councilmember Dinowitz, and Councilmember Shaun
16 Abreu.

17 Today, we are voting on proposed Intro number 6A
18 in relation to tenant education and outreach on
19 residential vacate orders due to damaged caused by
20 fires by Councilmember Avilés.

21 Displacement following a fire or structural
22 problem in your home is one of the most disruptive
23 experiences a family can have. Imagine: Running for
24 your life, barely remembering to grab your shoes,
25 probably insufficient clothing, and certainly not

2 your wallet, or identifying information, only to
3 stand or sit on a sidewalk for hours, looking up, not
4 being sure what is next. This happens in our city
5 about 2,000 times per year. In New York City, we
6 thankfully have some processes designed to help New
7 Yorkers through these destabilizing times; gratitude,
8 of course, to our first responders who risk their
9 lives to pull us out of fires and emergency
10 conditions; the American Red Cross, who has a
11 contract with the housing-- Department of Housing
12 Preservation and Development, they visit fires and
13 other emergency sites to help residents with
14 emergency shelters and provisions in certain
15 circumstances; and our agencies, from Emergency
16 Management to The Department of Buildings, Housing
17 Preservation, and Fire again, who each play different
18 roles to ensure our buildings are safe and that there
19 is some degree of interagency coordination.

20 Yet for all that we have in New York City, we can
21 and we must do better. On dozens of occasions in my
22 own three years in office, I have visited fire sites
23 and I know my colleagues have as well, discovering
24 myriad issues, buildings that the Department of
25 Buildings or HPD did not issue a vacate order when

2 they were supposed to, ARC was not notified and
3 residents were left in limbo.

4 And the displacement can be and often are long-
5 lasting. In the first four months of fiscal year
6 2024, the average length of stay for single adults in
7 emergency housing shelters was 592 days (almost 2
8 years), the average length of stay for adult families
9 was 464 days, and the average length of stay for
10 families with children was 337 days.

11 Today, we are voting on proposed Intro number 6A,
12 sponsored by Councilmember Avilés, which would
13 require HPD in consultation with DOB and FDNY to
14 develop procedures to ensure that occupants of
15 multiple dwellings are informed of the processes for
16 the issuance of residential vacate orders following
17 fires, and provide those residents with resources on
18 how to cope.

19 I am happy to work with my colleague in passing
20 this important legislation, and urge all of my
21 colleagues to vote Aye today along with my bill that
22 is being heard in the Fire Committee, Intro 89, which
23 will also increase the access to information about
24 fires so that more individuals, more New Yorkers can
25 have support following this destabilizing event.

2 Together, these bills are part of a joint effort to
3 make information more accessible to The Council and
4 to the public when there is a fire.

5 I will now call on Councilmember Avilés to speak
6 on her legislation.

7 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Good morning, Thank you so
8 much Chair Sanchez, and thank you to my colleagues
9 for all their work on this bill. And I just want to
10 say-- thank the residents, and the important of
11 providing accessible information during emergency
12 moments for our residents is so critical in language-
13 accessible ways. Unfortunately, we do have a lot of
14 work to do to make sure that there is also
15 accountability. We have seen so many fires were
16 landlords have kind of not done-- not kept their end
17 of the bargain. This will help city agencies make
18 sure they are very explicit with the rights for
19 tenants, and give resources to tenants around where
20 they can access resources.

21 So, I want to thank everyone, including HPD staff
22 who has been working on this, and I look forward to--
23 Am I voting now? Not yet. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Thank you so much,
25 Councilmember Avilés, and congratulations.

1 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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2 And with that, I will now ask the clerk to call
3 the roll.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning, William Martin,
5 Committee Clerk. Roll call vote, Committee on
6 Housing and Buildings, Proposed Introduction 6A.

7 Chair Sanchez?

8 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: Proudly, Aye.
9 Congratulations.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Dinowitz?

11 COUNCILMEMBER DINOWITZ: Aye. Congratulations.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Feliz?

13 Abreu?

14 COUNCILMEMBER ABREU: I vote aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: Avilés?

16 COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Aye. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Hudson?

18 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Aye, and congratulations,
19 Councilmember Avilés.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Restler?

21 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Aye, and I also want to
22 congratulate Councilmember Avilés on another great
23 bill. It's like every day that we're doing another
24 great Alexa bill.

25

2 COMMITTEE CLERK: With a vote of 6 in the
3 affirmative, 0 in the negative, and no abstentions,
4 the item has been adopted by the committee.

5 CHAIRPERSON SANCHEZ: I'd like to thank of all my
6 colleagues for attending today's hearing, and members
7 of the public. And with that, this vote is closed.

8 [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 September 18, 2024