

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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June 25, 2020
Start: 9:41 AM
Recess: 9:50 AM

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 1)

B E F O R E: FERNANDO CABRERA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Ben Kallos
Alan N. Maisel
Bill Perkins
Keith Powers
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Kalman Yeger

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

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, and
3 welcome e to today's remoter New York City Council
4 hearing to the Committee on Governmental Operations.
5 At the sound, would all panelists please turn on
6 their video. Please place electronic devices on
7 vibrate or silent. Thank you for your cooperation.
8 We are ready to begin.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I am Council Member
10 Fernando Cabrera, Chair to the Committee of
11 Governmental Operations. I want to start off by
12 thanking the members of the committee joining us
13 today, Council Members Perkins, Maisel, Powers,
14 Majority Leader Cumbo, Council Member Menchaca,
15 Council Member Rodriguez, Council Member Yeger,
16 Council Member Holden, Council Member Kallos. Today
17 the committee will be voting on a Proposed
18 Introduction No. 195-A sponsored by Council Member
19 Laurie Cumbo, which will require the Mayor to
20 establish a taskforce to facilitate the safe
21 reopening of agency offices and the safe refunction
22 of agencies functions in response to the COVID-19
23 pandemic. On June 16, the Committee heard a preview
24 version of this bill. Since then, the bill has been
25 amended to require a task force other than a single

2 officer to oversee the return of the city's workforce
3 to their offices. This task force will consist of 5
4 to 20 individuals appointed by the mayor in
5 consultation with the Department of Health and Mental
6 Hygiene and Department of Citywide Administrative
7 Services, the task force will recommend policies and
8 protocols for agency office reopening and determine
9 which operations and functions each agency must
10 address as they make plans to reopen. The task force
11 will also be required to share information regarding
12 applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations
13 advisory guidelines for city agencies. In addition,
14 this legislation will require each city agency to
15 develop a plan for reopening each office safely. The
16 task force will be required to review each agency's
17 plan and proposed changes to promote compliance with
18 applicable laws, bylaws and recommendations. Once an
19 agency's reopening plan has been approved by the task
20 force, the agency will be required to publish its
21 plan online. The legislation also requires a regular
22 reporting by the task force to the Mayor and the
23 Speaker of the City Council on agency compliance.
24 I've said this before: We must take every precaution
25 as we begin planning a return to work and in-person.

2 Risk to human life cannot be take lightly. As we
3 plan a return even partial, we must take the advice
4 of public health experts into account. I want to
5 thank the Administration for their willingness to
6 come to the table with us on this bill, and to work
7 together on the final product. I thank our Majority
8 Leader Council Member Laurie Cumbo for her leadership
9 on this issue, and carrying this piece of
10 legislation. I want to thank our Committee staff:
11 E.J. Mary and Willy Forgione, Elizabeth Cronk,
12 Sebastian Bacchi for their work on this. I also want
13 to thank my own Legislative Director Claire
14 McLeveighn. I will now like to invite Majority
15 Leader Cumbo, sponsor of the proposed Intro-
16 Introduction No. 1950-A to give a statement.

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thanks to Chair
18 Cabrera, and I want to thank all those on the
19 Committee who are here this day. I really want to
20 also thank the individuals that came out to testify.
21 Your testimony really helped to shape and pull to
22 make it more inclusive to make it more robust and to
23 make it more what every worker in the city of New
24 York requires and has earned and saves to be. In
25 their safe country COVID 19 they are having a spike.

2 It's coming back, and it's so important that we in
3 the city of New York, that we care for our workforce
4 that we make sure that we don't have that wave of
5 COVID 19 and that's exactly what this legislation
6 does. It allows us the opportunity to (inaudible).
7 There are so many individuals that have many of the
8 conditions that predispose them to being vulnerable
9 to COVID 19, being sheltered in place for the last
10 three or four months who are very concerned about
11 returning back to work. So, it's critical that we
12 make sure that those individuals are—instead of going
13 back home to their families that have vulnerable
14 members of our community, it's critical that we have
15 this in place to make sure that they can come back
16 home after working for the City of New York. In
17 addition, I also want to add that this legislation
18 is—has been made stronger. We didn't want to have as
19 this legislation began just a single officer. So, I
20 am pleased that there will be an actual office with
21 paid staff that have experience, and that we are
22 going to take the reopening of the City of New York
23 into a centralized way so that we make sure that
24 there's a checks and balance system so that
25 everything form understanding how paid sick days is

2 going to function and operate to how we have a safe
3 work environment (bell) in terms of the spacing of
4 our desks, matts, TRE and so many others. So, I want
5 to thank you again, Chair Cabrera for what we are
6 doing today, and it's to ensure the safety of the of
7 all New York workforce, and I'm proud to work with
8 you on this bill. Thank you, and I apologize. I want
9 to thank my staff. I want to thank Tasha young my
10 Chief of Staff. I also want to thank Jason Hur, my
11 Legislative Director. I want to thank Alicia Mercedes
12 for working so hard in terms of the communications
13 aspect of this. They worked extremely hard on all of
14 this and I want to give a special shout-out to my
15 scheduler Jasmine Cuolo (sp?) because if not for her
16 I wouldn't be on this call today. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much
18 Majority Leader Cumbo. In light of the fact that we
19 see so many states where cases, COVID-19 cases are
20 spiking, this bill couldn't come at a better time,
21 and with that, I'd like to ask the clerk to call the
22 roll.

23 CLERK: Good morning. William Martin,
24 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on
25

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2 Governmental Operations, Introduction 1950-A. Chair
3 Cabrera.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I vote aye and
5 encourage all my colleagues to vote aye as well.

6 CLERK: Kallos.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Aye on all.

8 (musical sound)

9 CLERK: Maisel. You're muted Council
10 Member.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Yes.

12 CLERK: Thank you. Rodriguez.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

14 CLERK: Perkins.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Aye on all.

16 CLERK: Powers.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Aye.

18 CLERK: Yeger.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Chairman, may I be
20 excused to explain my vote?

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Absolutely.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you very

23 much. Good morning. (coughs) Excuse me. To be

24 sure, our city has suffered tremendously and I don't

25 think there's anybody in this committee or anybody in

2 this Council who doesn't have family, friends and
3 constituents, people we care about who have suffered
4 tremendously both in terms of life and in terms of
5 the economy. Today we're voting a bill to create a
6 task force. I want to be able to tell my neighbors
7 when they ask me what I did when I went to the
8 Council today, something different than that I showed
9 up to create a task force. Yet another task force.
10 Today we're showing up to do something that
11 government is fantastic at doing, creating task
12 forces, commissions, blue ribbon panels, groups of
13 people instead of just doing it. Just do the work.
14 the first version of the bill required the City
15 Restart Officer, and I congratulate the Majority
16 Leader for submitting that bill, and bringing it to-
17 to this committee because a single person responsible
18 for getting the job done is what makes sense, but
19 today we're being asked to vote a bill that requires
20 the creation of a task force, and I'm not comfortable
21 going back to my community and telling my neighbors
22 that I showed up at the Council today to create a
23 task force. With that, and with respect to all those
24 that worked on the bill, I vote no. Thank you, Mr.
25 Chairman.

2 CLERK: By a vote of 6 in the
3 affirmative, 1 in the negative and no abstentions,
4 the item has been adopted by the committee.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
6 and with that and with phone, that will close today's
7 meeting. (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 July 10, 2020