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COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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December 21, 2022
Start: 10:56 a.m.
Recess: 11:02 a.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Sandra Ung, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
Shahana K. Hanif
Lincoln Restler
Lynn C. Schulman
Diana Ayala

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SADOWSKY: This is a
3 microphone check. Today's date is December 21, 2022,
4 on the Committee on Governmental Operations located
5 in the Committee Room, recorded by Steven Sadowsky.

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

9 At this time, please silence all
10 electronic devices. Chair Ung, we are ready to begin.

11 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Good morning. I'm City
12 Council Member Sandra Ung, Chair of the Committee of
13 Governmental Operations. I would like to welcome my
14 Colleagues who have joined us today, Council Member
15 Hanif, Council Member Brewer, and Council Member
16 Ayala.

17 At today's hearing, the Committee will be
18 voting on a package of bills that are designed to
19 provide critical language access for our immigrant
20 neighbors and small business community. New York is a
21 city of immigrants. It's also one of the most
22 linguistically diverse cities in the world. New
23 Yorkers speak over 200 different languages, and
24 nearly half of all city residents speak a language
25 other than English at home. Roughly 25 percent of all

2 New Yorkers are considered limited English
3 proficient. These limited English proficient New
4 Yorkers are an integral part of the city and its
5 economy. Immigrant New Yorkers, 50 percent of whom
6 have limited English proficiency, own half of New
7 York City's businesses. They should not receive
8 second-rate service simply because they speak another
9 language. They deserve the same level of access to
10 government resources and information as their
11 English-speaking neighbors.

12 In 2017, the City passed Local Law 30,
13 which requires certain city agencies to provide
14 language access service in the 10 designated citywide
15 languages, but even with this landmark law, gaps
16 remain. The three bills being voted on today by the
17 Committee will help further improve language access
18 for New Yorkers with limited English proficiency.

19 The first bill, Intro 382 sponsored by
20 City Council Member Gale Brewer, requires each
21 settlement offer sent by the Department of Consumer
22 and Worker Protection and the Department of Health
23 and Mental Hygiene to be accompanied by a
24 multilingual notice that informs the recipient that
25 they're receiving a settlement offer because they're

2 being charged with a violation of the law and also
3 directs the recipient via a QR code or a similar
4 mechanism to a portion of the agency's website with
5 plain language information about the recipient's
6 options for responding to the settlement offer. Both
7 the notice and the online information will need to be
8 translated into each of the designated citywide
9 languages.

10 The second bill, Intro 697 which I am
11 happy to say is one I introduced, will expand upon
12 Local Law 30 by requiring agencies to provide
13 services in additional languages as necessary to
14 respond to emergencies in which a large number of
15 people who do not speak one of the designated
16 citywide languages arriving in the city and seeking
17 city services.

18 The third bill, Intro 700 sponsored by
19 Council Member Julie Won, would expand upon Local Law
20 30 and require each covered agency to translate those
21 documents most commonly distributed to the public
22 that relates to the compliance of local laws and
23 rules.

24 With that, I want to thank C.J. Murray
25 and Erica Cohen from the central staff for their work

2 on these bills as well as my Chief-of-Staff Alexander
3 Hart for his assistance.

4 Now, I'd like to turn it over to Council
5 Member Brewer, sponsor of Intro 382, to give a
6 statement on her bill.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
8 much, Madam Chair, and it was interesting to me that
9 when we were listening to the two days of Committee
10 on the Whole here at City Hall language came up, and
11 it was interesting to me that people in the non-
12 profit sector, because we're always told call the
13 Language Line, they say it's backed up and they
14 weren't able to access it so thanks to you and others
15 and certainly this particular legislation, 382, we're
16 very clear that language has to be on the ground and
17 has to be much more accessible than just the Language
18 Line. The reason I suggested and I'm delighted that
19 it's on the agenda today, 382, is because it's more
20 nuanced. This will be for those that are,
21 unfortunately, getting some kind of a summons from
22 the City, and so many of our small businesses are run
23 and owned by people who speak a different language
24 and they don't know what they're getting and they
25 don't pay it and then they're in more trouble so

2 plain language information about the recipient's
3 options for responding to the settlement offer as an
4 example in a language that can be understood. That's
5 incredibly important. I just want to say I started
6 working on language issues, I think it was the first
7 bill every passed in 2002, maybe there were earlier
8 ones, with then Council Member John Liu. That law,
9 Local Law 73, mandated services in language
10 appropriate for the non-profit sector and for those
11 working in the human services sector, and that was an
12 example of just the beginning and now we have many
13 more challenges in terms of language and even more
14 importance for having this kind of legislation.

15 Thank you very much, and we know many
16 people in New York speak another language, which is
17 an asset, and we should be building on that. Thank
18 you very much.

19 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Thank you, Council
20 Member. I will now turn it over to the Clerk to call
21 the roll.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good
23 morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call
24 vote Committee on Governmental Operations. Items are
25 coupled. Chair Ung.

2 CHAIRPERSON UNG: Aye on all.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Brewer.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Aye on all.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Hanif.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Aye on all.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Restler.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Aye on all and
9 congratulations to the sponsors.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Schulman.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Aye on all, and

12 I just want to say that language access is
13 particularly in the healthcare area and, as Chair of
14 the Health Committee, this is so very important so
15 aye on all. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
17 you. By a vote of five in the affirmative, zero in
18 the negative, and no abstentions, all items are
19 adopted by the Committee. Madam Chair, that is a full
20 Committee.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date December 27, 2022