

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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September 4, 2008
Start: 10:15am
Recess: N/A

HELD AT: Committee Room
City Hall

B E F O R E:
MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Helen D. Foster
Kendall Stewart
Vincent J. Gentile
James Vacca
Mathieu Eugene
Anthony Como
Annabel Palma
Simcha Felder
Tony Avella
Darlene Mealy

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Testing one,
3 two. Testing, one, two. This is a test for the
4 Committee on Aging. Today's date is September
5 4th, 2008. The meeting is being recorded by
6 Yvette Molina.

7 [Break in Audio]

8 CHAIRPERSON DEL CARMEN ARROYO:
9 Thank you, Sergeant. Good morning. I believe
10 we're going to be here all of maybe five minutes
11 if we all behave and do what we're came lhere to
12 do. Good morning. I'm Maria del Carmen Arroyo,
13 chair of the Committee on Aging.

14 [Break in Audio]

15 CHAIRPERSON DEL CARMEN ARROYO: Or
16 we can dance. Today we're voting on proposed
17 Intro 737-2008A, whose sponsor is my partner,
18 Jimmy Vacca, who chairs the subcommittee on Senior
19 Centers. And I want to thank Jimmy for his
20 foresight and his work on this bill, and all 35
21 members who have signed on in support, and
22 encourage everyone else who hasn't to do so.
23 Proposed Intro 737-A takes a significant step
24 forward in addressing elder abuse, which is
25 unfortunately an issue which doesn't receive as

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2 much attention as it should. Elder abuse takes
3 many forms, including physical, mental, sexual
4 abuse, financial exploitation as well as neglect
5 and abandonment. Somewhere between one and two
6 million Americans aged 65 and older have been
7 abused, and unfortunately usually by someone whom
8 they depend on for care and protection. This
9 Intro would offer more resources to those who find
10 themselves in abusive situations and help senior
11 service providers gain greater understanding in
12 identifying the symptoms of elder abuse and
13 helping those who have been abused. Specifically
14 it would require the Department for the Aging to
15 train senior service providers in detection and
16 reporting of elder abuse as well as offer more
17 mandated training in the counseling of elder abuse
18 victims. The bill would also mandate that
19 Department for the Aging require senior centers to
20 hold at least two elder abuse educational sessions
21 per year, in which senior center members and
22 participants would be instructed on how to receive
23 counseling and aid for instances of elder abuse as
24 well as how to detect and report instances of
25 abuse. At the first hearing on this bill back in

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2 June, all who came to testify, including the
3 Department for the Aging, spoke in favor of this
4 bill and I echo their sentiments. I strongly
5 recommend that the Committee vote in favor of this
6 legislation. And now I'd like to turn it over to
7 bill's primary sponsor, Councilmember Vacca, for a
8 statement.

9 JAMES VACCA: Thank you, Chair
10 Arroyo. I introduced this bill because I felt
11 that senior citizen centers could play a pivotal
12 role in making sure that we address elder abuse.
13 So many of our seniors go to senior centers. 20
14 percent of our seniors in the City of New York
15 visit senior centers every year. However, our
16 senior centers serve as a point of reference.
17 They serve as an outreach mechanism, and they're
18 there to make sure that people know their rights
19 and people start to understand how they can
20 outreach to others who may be isolated at home or
21 who may not go to a senior center. So this bill
22 attempts to start a serious discussion in this
23 city about elder abuse. It's something that many
24 seniors don't recognize and it's something that
25 many don't talk about. They think it can never

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2 happen to them. And too often elder abuse is a
3 senior being victimized by a family member,
4 something that's unspeakable. And it becomes even
5 more unspeakable when the senior does not want to
6 admit or recognize that a family member could
7 possibly do something like that to them. Elder
8 abuse is just not hitting a senior, it's just not
9 physical abuse; it's also mental abuse, it's
10 financial abuse, it's psychological abuse, it's
11 neglect; it's abandonment. And with many seniors
12 being cared for by family members who often have a
13 variety of their own social issues and problems,
14 we face seniors without services. We face seniors
15 who feel even more isolated and more victimized.
16 The senior center can make a contribution. First
17 I suggest, and the law requires, that we start
18 training our senior center employees. Anyone who
19 has contact with a senior citizen has to
20 recognize, not just the bruise, but recognize the
21 change in attitude, recognize whatever indications
22 become evident, of seniors possibly not having
23 money where before they did, seniors who are in a
24 state of confusion. So I want to train senior
25 center employees; and three times a year this bill

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2 would require such training from DFTA for all
3 senior center employees who have contact with the
4 elderly. And secondly, this bill then requires
5 that once the senior center employees are trained,
6 they then have to give workshops in the senior
7 centers to the membership of the senior center;
8 and that those members will now gain from the
9 knowledge that the staff members have acquired,
10 and hopefully those members can go out to their
11 friends, to their churches, to their other clubs
12 with this information. They can help be eyes and
13 ears when it comes to attacking elder abuse. This
14 is a problem that is more prevalent than you would
15 think. Unfortunately it becomes more and more
16 prevalent, especially during poor economic times;
17 so rather than having situations where the elderly
18 are preyed on, this bill starts to try to turn
19 this around and I urge the council to vote yes. I
20 think this bill is a very good start; a very good
21 attempt by this council to recognize a problem
22 that many may not speak about, but we know exists
23 in this city every day. And I thank the many
24 members who have co-sponsored the bill. I thank
25 the administration and DFTA for their cooperation,

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and the speaker's office as well.

CHAIRPERSON DEL CARMEN ARROYO:

Thank you, Jimmy. I'd like to acknowledge that we are going by not only committee members, but other members of the council. Committee Members present are Councilmember Foster from the Bronx, Councilmember Stewart from Brooklyn, Councilmember Gentile from Brooklyn, Councilmember Eugene from Brooklyn, and our newest member, Councilmember Como from Queens. Welcome, and I hope you will add something - - on the Committee. Also present, Council members Palma, Felder, Avella and I saw Councilmember Mealy walk in. Good morning. Thank you all for being here. And now I urge a yes vote and ask the Counsel to call the role.

MALE VOICE: Intro 737-A,

Councilmember Arroyo?

CHAIRPERSON DEL CARMEN ARROYO:

Aye.

MALE VOICE: Foster.

HELEN D. FOSTER: Aye.

MALE VOICE: Stewart.

KENDALL STEWART: Aye.

MALE VOICE: Gentile.

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VINCENT J. GENTILE: Aye.

MALE VOICE: Vacca.

JAMES VACCA: Aye.

MALE VOICE: Eugene.

MATHIEU EUGENE: Aye. Please add my name to the bill. Thank you very much.

MALE VOICE: Como.

ANTHONY COMO: Aye.

MALE VOICE: By a vote of seven in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions, item is adopted. Members, please sign the committee report. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DEL CARMEN ARROYO:

We're going to hold the vote open. There's a lot of activity going back and forth. We'll sign the committee report as soon as it comes back.

MALE VOICE 2: It's closed.

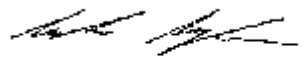
MALE VOICE: The Aging Committee Meeting is now closed.

MALE VOICE 3: The Aging Committee is now closed.

MALE VOICE 4: The Aging Committee is now closed. Let's see who--

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Erika Swyler, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Signature_____

Date _____September 11, 2008_____