

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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October 11, 2016
Start: 10:47 a.m.
Recess: 11:10 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E:
STEPHEN T. LEVIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Annabel Palma
Fernando Cabrera
Ruben Wills
Vanessa L. Gibson
Corey D. Johnson
Ritchie J. Torres
Barry S. Grodenchik
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Daniel Dromm
Costa G. Constantinides
I. Daneek Miller

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

[sound check]

[background comments]

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good morning

everybody. I'm Council Member Steve Levin, Chair of the Committee on General Welfare. Today the Committee will be voting on Proposed Introduction No. 552-A, a local law to amend the New York City Charter in relation to the collection of data regarding sexual orientation and gender identity, sponsored by Council Member Daniel Dromm.

I want to acknowledge my colleagues who are here this morning to vote on Proposed Int. 552-A -- Ritchie Torres of the Bronx, Annabel Palma of the Bronx, Vanessa Gibson of the Bronx, Council Member Danny Dromm, who's not a voting member of the Committee, but the sponsor of the legislation -- who will speak on that in a moment, and Ruben Wills of Queens.

Proposed Int. 552-A would require a variety of City agencies, including the three social services agencies this committee oversees, provide a voluntary demographic survey to all service recipients which includes questions about sexual

1 orientation and gender identity. The bill also
2 requires existing forms that can be amended by the
3 City to eventually add these questions. This will
4 bill allow the City to have a better idea of the
5 populations it serves on a program by program basis
6 and therefore will allow those agencies to examine
7 the services they provide and better tailor those
8 services to its LGBTQ client. This bill aligns with
9 the ongoing work and goals of this committee -- to
10 continue to improve the social services provided to
11 resident so the city.

12
13 I wanna thank the sponsor of this
14 legislation, Council Member Daniel Dromm, for his
15 relentless work on getting this legislation to this
16 point. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this
17 important piece of legislation and now Council Member
18 Danny Dromm will share a few words on the bill.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you very
20 much Chair Levin and also thank you, Committee
21 Counsel Andrea Vazquez for your hard work on this
22 bill. I'd also like to thank Rachel Cordero and
23 Laura Popa for all the work that they did and also
24 Sebastian Maguire, who is my counsel for my district
25

1 office, and my Legislative Director -- thank you for
2 your work on this bill.

3
4 In order to determine how well the City
5 is serving our diverse populations, we need to ask
6 whom precisely the City is serving; this is a
7 critical question for policymakers and funders alike
8 and without data, communities are left without a
9 critical advocacy tool. This legislation is part of
10 a package of bills that will require the updating of
11 demographic forms at agencies serving New Yorkers.

12 In particular, Int. 552-A will require
13 that forms collect data on sexual orientation and
14 gender identify. This means that for the first time
15 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and
16 questioning New Yorkers will be able to see
17 themselves reflected in City-collected demographic
18 data. Significantly, this bill has a valuable
19 training component to ensure that staff interacting
20 with individuals filling out forms will do so in a
21 sensitive and informed way. Finally, the bill
22 encourages the analysis of collected data to enhance
23 the design, delivery and development of City
24 services.

1
2 As a 25-year veteran schoolteacher, and
3 someone who came out in a very public way, during the
4 Children of the Rainbow curriculum debate, I am very
5 happy that we are able to ensure the inclusion of the
6 Department of Education in this legislation. The DOE
7 will be tremendously helped in this effort to combat
8 homophobia and transphobia and strengthen its
9 programming for LGBT students and their families.
10 With the passage of Int. 552-A, New York City's LGBT
11 community will be able to say now we count -- how
12 appropriate that we are doing this today on National
13 Coming Out Day. I encourage members of the Committee
14 to vote in the affirmative. Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
16 Council Member Dromm. I'll now ask Clerk of the
17 Council, William Martin, to call the vote.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
19 Committee Clerk, roll call vote, Committee on General
20 Welfare, Int. 552-A. Chair Levin.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I vote aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Palma. Wills.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Congratulations to
24 Danny Dromm. I vote aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Gibson.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Congratulations
3 Council Member Dromm for your leadership. I vote
4 aye.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK: Torres.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: [background
7 comments]. I vote aye.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 5 in the
9 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
10 the item has been adopted by the Committee.

11 [pause]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We'll leave the roll
13 open for another 10 minutes or so and I wanna offer
14 my congratulations as well, Council Member Dromm, on
15 this important piece of legislation. And we'll be
16 leaving the roll call open.

17 [pause]

18 [background comments]

19 [pause]

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation roll call,
21 the Committee on General Welfare, Introduction 552-A.
22 Council Member Johnson.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I'd like to just
24 quickly explain... I'd like to quickly explain my vote.
25 I wanna thank Council Member Dromm for taking an

1 enormous amount of time working on this issue; I
2 think that, you know, in many of our schools and as
3 Chair of the Education Committee and as a former
4 teacher, he understands this better than anyone else,
5 but LGBT students can be deemed invisible or not
6 wanting to be counted by the City or by the
7 particular school that they are currently enrolled
8 in, and getting as much data as possible to
9 understand how big the population is for LGBT
10 students, being able to self-identify is great. I
11 don't way this in a critical way of him, but I think
12 that the original bill was great and I know that he
13 compromised to be responsive to some of the City
14 agencies that had some comments; I was more
15 comfortable with that original bill in getting more
16 information that we could receive from schools, but
17 ultimately I'm glad we're passing this bill; it's a
18 big step forward; I know he spent an enormous amount
19 of time on this and I wanna congratulate him on
20 passing it today. I wanna thank Chair Steve Levin
21 for scheduling this vote and I proudly vote aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vote now currently
23 stands at 6 in the affirmative.

24 [pause]
25

[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, at 11:09 I just
wanna make note that Council Member Rafael Salamanca
is on a tour of North Roosevelt [sic] Island with the
Speaker and Council Member Mark Levine, so he's
unable to make it today. And at 11:10 we are going
to close out this hearing. Again, I wanna
congratulate Council Member Danny Dromm on this very
important piece of legislation; I understand it was a
long process of negotiation, but this is a landmark
bill and you should be very proud, [background
comment] -- congratulations.

This hearing is adjourned.

[gavel]

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 October 24, 2016