

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 29, 2020
Start: 9:38 A.M.
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HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING

B E F O R E: STEPHEN T. LEVIN, CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS: VANESSA L. GIBSON
BARRY S. GRODENCHIK
ROBERT F. HOLDEN
BRAD S. LANDER
ANTONIO REYNOSO
RAFAEL SALAMANCA, JR.
RITCHIE J. TORRES
MARK TREYGER

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

2 SARGEANT HOPE: PC recording started.

3 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: Thank you.

4 SARGEANT AT ARMS: Recording started.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: Thank you.

6 SARGEANT AT ARMS 2: Backup is good.

7 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: Thank you and
8 Sargeant Hope if you could start with your opening.

9 SARGEANT HOPE: Thank you. Good morning,
10 welcome to today's New York City Council's virtual
11 vote on General Welfare. At this time, would all
12 panelists please turn on your videos. Thank you. To
13 minimize disruption, please place all electronic
14 devices to vibrate or silent mode. Chair, we are
15 ready to begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: Thank you
17 Sargeant. Good morning everybody uhm and welcome to
18 this vote on the City Council's Committee on General
19 Welfare. Today, the Committee will be voting on two
20 bills concerning the City's Rental Assistance Program
21 and income discrimination. Proposed Intro 1339-A
22 sponsored by Council Member Diana Ayala would provide
23 written to those potentially eligible for City Rental
24 Assistance Programs and inform them of their rights
25 and resources available related to source of income

2 discrimination. Proposed Intro 2080-A which I am
3 sponsoring would allow online access to rental
4 assistance program status so that client's can know
5 where their case stands rather than navigating
6 through the bureaucracy of having to call HRA. The
7 Bills we are voting on today will make the process of
8 obtaining rental assistance more user friendly and
9 ensure that clients know their rights. Rental
10 assistance vouchers are the primary tools that we
11 have in the City to ensure that people are able to
12 move out of shelter and in to housing. Vouchers can
13 also assist New Yorkers at risk of losing their
14 housing and voiding eviction and entry into shelter.
15 However, the confusing bureaucracy of securing
16 government benefits as well as voucher holders not
17 knowing theirs rights when landlords illegally deny
18 them housing based on source of income discrimination
19 are barriers to securing housing. I believe this is a
20 legislation included in today's vote will make
21 strides to promote equity in housing by removing some
22 of the barriers to keeping people from destroying or
23 maintaining their apartments. Also these Bills will
24 bring us a step closer to passing Intro 146 which
25 would raise the voucher levels to fair market rent as

2 set by the HUD standard so that individuals and
3 families are able to quickly exit the shelter system
4 into housing or avoid entry into the system
5 altogether and I want to thank all the co-sponsors of
6 Intro 146 as well. I want to thank all the advocates
7 and members of the public and those with lived
8 experience who have testified in favor of these Bills
9 that we are voting on today and at this time I would
10 like to turn it over to my colleague Council Member
11 Diana Ayala for a statement on her Bill, proposed
12 Intro 1339-A and before I turn it over to my
13 colleague I would just like to thank my staff,
14 Jonathan Buchae, Chief of Staff, Elizabeth Adams,
15 Legislative Director and Committee Staff, Emita
16 Kilawan (SP?) Senior Council, Crystal Pawn Senior
17 Policy Analyst, Natalie Omari Policy Analyst and
18 Frank Cerno Finance Analyst. Council Member Ayala.

19 DIANA AYALA: Good morning everyone. I
20 just want to than Chair Levin and uhm I'm really
21 excited to be passing this Bill today. It actually,
22 you know it was drafted a little while ago and you
23 know Intro 1339 is very simple, and yet I am hoping
24 that it will be really impactful. It is a bill that
25 will ensure that when a voucher, a City voucher

2 recipient is handed that voucher that they are also
3 handed literature and educated on what their rights
4 are in terms of income discrimination.

5 Unfortunately, and I'm sure this is not unique to my
6 office we see a lot of apartment seekers that come
7 here and say I've had this voucher for months. I've
8 been looking and looking and I keep getting turned
9 down because no one accepts it and then we have to
10 sit and explain you know that, they, you know they
11 have in fact been misled by landlords that you are
12 just plain ol' discriminating against them and so I'm
13 hoping that this bill with help empower voucher
14 holders and really turn the tines against you know
15 against these landlords who have been really
16 capitalizing off of the fact that most people are
17 just not knowledgeable on what the law is regarding
18 income discrimination. So, I want to thank the
19 Chair and I want to thank the staff for helping us
20 draft this bill and you know all of the advocates who
21 have reached out and participated to some degree. I
22 am really excited about it and I really you know hope
23 to be back next year and kind of weigh in and see how
24 effective this has been. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: Thank you so
3 much Council Member Ayala and thank you for this
4 legislation. Uhm and with that I will turn it over
5 to uhm, to the vote. Should turn it over to William
6 Martin, Legislative Clerk.

7 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Yes sir,
8 thank you. And good morning William Martin, Committee
9 Clerk, roll call vote Committee on General Welfare.
10 Introductions 1339-A and 2080-A, both items are
11 coupled. Chair Levin?

12 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: I vote aye on
13 all.

14 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Gibson?

15 VANESSA GIBSON: Sorry good morning
16 everyone, congratulations Chair Levin and Council
17 Member Ayala on really good bills on today's agenda,
18 I vote aye on all. Thank you.

19 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank
20 you. Excuse me. Council Member Lander?

21 BRAD LANDER: I vote aye.

22 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK:
23 Grodenchik?

24 BARRY GRODENCHIK: Aye.

25 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Holden?

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2 ROBERT HOLDEN: I vote aye.

3 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK:

4 Salamanca?

5 RAFAEL SALAMANCA: I vote aye.

6 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank

7 you. Council Member Torres?

8 RITCHIE TORRES: I vote aye.

9 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank

10 you. By a vote of seven in the affirmative, zero in

11 the negative and no abstentions both items have been

12 adopted by the committee.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: Thank you

14 sir. Okay, uhm, I want to thank all of my colleagues

15 for their vote today and all staff that has worked on

16 this as well and with that, this hearing is

17 adjourned.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Council Member, I

19 want to see if Council Member Torres can go ahead.

20 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: I'm sorry, we

21 are still waiting for Council Member Torres.

22 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: We got

23 Council Member Torres.

24 VANESSA GIBSON: Yeah, Council Member

25 Torres voted.

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2 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Yeah, I
3 meant Council Member Treyger I'm sorry.

4 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: Oh yes,
5 Council Member Treyger. I'll stay here but my
6 colleagues who have already voted to go and do
7 whatever other business they are looking to do. Thank
8 you all.

9 VANESSA GIBSON: Can Sam Lander please
10 stay uhm in the Zoom call.

11 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: Bye everybody
12 see you later.

13 VANESSA GIBSON: Uhm, Billy.

14 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Yes
15 ma'am.

16 VANESSA GIBSON: We have Council Member
17 Treyger.

18 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Go ahead
19 Council Member Treyger.

20 MARK TREYGER: I vote.

21 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK:
22 Introduction 1339-A and 2080-A.

23 MARK TREYGER: I vote aye.

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2 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank
3 you sir. The vote is now 8 in the affirmative, zero
4 in the negative and no abstentions.

5 CHAIRPERSON STEPHEN LEVIN: Wonderful, so
6 uhm seeing no other votes, this hearing is adjourned.
7 Thank you all.

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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 NOVEMBER 17, 2020