

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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August 26, 2021
Start: 12:47 p.m.
Recess: 12:59 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Stephen Levin
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Vanessa L. Gibson
Rafael Salamanca Jr.
Barry Grodenchik
Antonio Reynoso
Darma V. Diaz
Brad Lander

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

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Good
3 morning. Or good afternoon. Welcome, everybody, to
4 this hearing on the Council's Committee on General
5 Welfare. Today, the Committee will vote on two
6 pieces of legislation regarding accommodating pets
7 and shelter run by the Department of Homeless
8 Services. And one on delivering a survivor centered
9 response to the complaints of sexual assault or
10 harassment made by client or staff of a DSS or DHS
11 provider. Two of the bills before the committee
12 today, proposed Intros 1483 A and 1484 A and to
13 reduce barriers to shelter by better accommodating
14 those experiencing homelessness who have pets. And I
15 am proud to sponsor both of these bills. In
16 particular, I want to give to staff members in my
17 office accolades for passing this legislation and for
18 advocating for it: Deidre Cheatham, especially, and,
19 in addition to Deidre I would like to thank Elizabeth
20 Adams, my legislative director. DHS run shelters
21 don't currently accept pets, despite successful
22 models from around the country that facilitate co-
23 sheltering with animals. The experience of
24 homelessness is traumatic and challenging enough and

2 the prospect of partying with a pet should not be a
3 contributing factor to such hardship.

4 The third bill the committee is voting on
5 today's proposed Intro 2284 A, sponsored by Council
6 member Helen Rosenthal. This bill will require DSS
7 and DHS to provide resources for contracted client
8 service providers to deliver a survivor centered
9 response in addressing gender-based harassment and
10 sexual assault and it is my hope that the legislation
11 we are hearing today will help to put in place better
12 protections for staff and clients in the future and
13 to better maintain the integrity of social service
14 delivery in the city. I want to thank you very much
15 the advocates and impacted individuals who brought
16 attention to these issues and helped shape this
17 legislation. At this time, I would like to call on
18 Council member Rosenthal to say a few words about her
19 legislation.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you very
21 much, Chair Levin. Congratulations on your two
22 bills, the-- I hear about these issues all the time
23 in particular in domestic violence shelters were
24 women and their children come in and they really need
25 to come in with their pets. So, I really appreciate

2 your two pieces of legislation. My bill, which is
3 Intro 2284 A, requires the Department of Social
4 Services to develop a survivor centric response to
5 anyone who calls or emails or in any way contacts
6 their agency about being sexually harassed or
7 sexually assaulted. The reason we are doing this
8 bill is because when Victor Rivera, as it was
9 reported in the New York Times, who ran the Bronx
10 Perinatal Housing Network, sexually assaulted,
11 sexually harassed his own staff, as well as clients,
12 those people, when they called the city seeking help,
13 they were told to go to the Department of
14 Investigations or they were told to go to their Board
15 of Directors. There was no survivor centric response
16 given to the survivors who made the phone call. So,
17 what this bill does is places front and foremost the
18 need to have a survivor centered trauma response for
19 those who are really calling for help for themselves
20 when they reach out to the city about being sexually
21 harassed or sexually assaulted. Very proud of this
22 bill and I appreciate Aminta Kilowan from the city
23 Council legislative staff who did a great job working
24 on this bill, as well as my legislative director,
25 Marai Schukla [sp?], And my communications director,

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2 Sarah Kreen, my Chief of Staff, Cindy Cardinal. Of
3 course, gratitude to the Speaker's office and a
4 Speaker Cory Johnson. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you so much,
6 Council member Rosenthal. And congratulations on
7 your legislation. It is very important legislation
8 today. And with that, I will call on Billy Martin,
9 committee clerk, to call the roll.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
11 committee clerk. Roll call vote Committee on General
12 Welfare Introductions. 1483 A, 1484 A, and 2284 A.
13 All items are coupled. Chair Levin?

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I vote aye on all.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: Reynoso?

16 UNIDENTIFIED: Si?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye on
18 all.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Grodenchik?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Salamanca?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Permission to
23 explain my vote? First, I want to congratulate all
24 the sponsors on this bill, especially you, Helen.
25 This is a great piece of legislation and I'm asking

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2 that I just be added to 2284 A, 1484 A, and 1483 A.

3 And with that, I vote aye on all.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Darma Diaz?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: I vote aye.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of five in the
7 affirmative, zero in the negative, and no
8 abstentions, all items have been adopted by the
9 committee.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. The hearing
11 on General Welfare is adjourned.

12 [gavel]

13 [background comments]

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: This is a continuation
15 roll call on the Committee on General Welfare. This
16 is William Martin, Committee clerk, on Introductions
17 1483 A, 1484 A, and 2284 A. Council member Gibson?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I vote aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Gibson
20 votes aye.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I vote aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you, Council
23 member. The vote is now six in the affirmative, zero
24 in the negative, and no abstentions.

25

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 August 31, 2021