

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 14, 2021
Start: 10:40 a. m.
Recess: 11:00 a. m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: Hon. Fernando Cabrera, Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Darma V. Diaz
Stephen T. Levin
Ben Kallos
Alan N. Maisel,
Bill Perkins
Keith Powers
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Kalman Yeger

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo
Helen Rosenthal
Oswald Feliz
Deborah Rose

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

A P P E A R A N C E S

[N/A]

2 SERGEANT MARTINEZ: Cloud recording is underway.

3 SERGEANT LEONARDO: Good morning, and welcome to
4 today's remote New York City Council hearing for the
5 Committee on Governmental Operations.

6 At this time we ask that council members and
7 staff turn on their video for verification purposes.

8 To minimize disruptions, please place all cell
9 phones and electronic devices to vibrate or silent.

10 We thank you for your cooperation.

11 Chair, we are ready to begin.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much. I am
13 Council Member Fernando Cabrera, Chair of The
14 Committee on Governmental Operations.

15 I want to start off by thanking the members of
16 the committee who have joined us today: Council
17 Members, myself, Kallos, Powers, Darma Diaz,
18 Rosenthal, Yeger, and Council Member... That's what
19 I have right now.

20 So, today, uh, the committee will be voting on
21 three... We will be voting on three pieces of
22 legislation.

23 The first is Proposed Introduction Number 66-A,
24 sponsored by Majority Leader Cumbo.

1 This bill will require The Mayor to establish a
2
3 new office for Neighborhood Safety and The Prevention
4 of Gun Violence.

5 This office would address gun violence in a
6 holistic manner. Among other things, it will
7 administer the city's Crisis Management System, which
8 uses a Cure Violence approach to stop neighborhood
9 violence at its source.

10 Launched in 2014, this CMS grew out of a proposal
11 from the Council's Task Force to Combat Gun Violence.
12 As I mentioned before, I have the distinct privilege
13 of serving as the co-Chair of the task force on site
14 with now... Uh, and former, uh, Council Member and
15 now Public Advocate Jumaane Williams; close together,
16 we worked on that task force, and we're very proud of
17 the work that the Cure Violence Programs are doing
18 nowadays. And, I'm proud to be voting on legislation
19 today that will enshrine The Crisis Management System
20 in our city's charter.

21 So, congratulations, uh, to my colleague,
22 Majority Leader Cumbo.

23 The second bill on our agenda is Proposed
24 Introduction Number 2117-A, sponsored by Council
25 Member Powers.

1 This bill would require all executive orders
2
3 issued by The Mayor to be published online within one
4 business day of execution. As the city continues to
5 adopt new policies to respond to the evolving public
6 health crisis, this bill will ensure that New Yorkers
7 have access to newly issued executive orders as soon
8 as possible.

9 So, congratulations, Council Member Powers on
10 this tremendous, uh, transparency bill.

11 The third and final bill we're voting on today is
12 Proposed Introduction Number 2438-A, sponsored by
13 Council Member Rosenthal.

14 For every election held in New York City, The
15 Campaign Finance Board publishes a Voter Guide to
16 inform New Yorkers about the candidates and proposals
17 on the ballot.

18 This bill will implement a number of changes to
19 ensure that The Voter Guide reaches as many New
20 Yorkers as possible. Specifically, the bill will
21 require The Voter Guide to be published in six
22 additional languages, meaning it will be available to
23 each of the top 11 languages spoken throughout the
24 city. In addition, the bill will require the online
25 version of The Voter Guide to include a video

2 statement from each candidate, and will require each
3 video to include captioning in 11 languages and
4 translation in American Sign Language.

5 Finally, the bill will require The Voter Guide to
6 be made available in a format that is accessible to
7 New Yorkers with print and vision disabilities.

8 So, Council Member Rosenthal, I see you,
9 congratulations on this wonderful bill, uh, that is
10 going to help so many of our voters. And, so, my hat
11 is off to you.

12 And, so, with that, again, I'd like to thank
13 Majority Leader Cumbo, Council Member Powers, and
14 Council Member Rosenthal for their leadership on
15 these bills.

16 And, I want to thank our committee staff, CJ
17 Murray and Sebastian Bacchi for their work on this
18 hearing.

19 And, finally, I want to thank my own Legislator
20 Director, Clark Peña, for his assistance.

21 And, today will be the last time of me chairing
22 this committee. Yes, before we headed the last
23 hearing, but this is going to be the last vote. So,
24 I salute every sergeant, every staff, all of the
25 council members who've been a part of this committee.

2 You've been amazing. It's been a pleasure, uh, to
3 work with you. We accomplished so much through this
4 committee. So, thank you for being you, and thank
5 you for your leadership.

6 And, so, with that, uh, I believe Council Member
7 Rosenthal, would you like to give a statement on your
8 bill?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much,
10 Chair Cabrera, congratulations for a term well-spent
11 with oversight on Government Operations.
12 Congratulations to you on that. And... (Cross-Talk)

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: as you say, you're
15 right, congratulations to all of the sergeants and
16 the staff who make these hearings possible.
17 Switching over to Zoom is a hell of a task, and they
18 did... have been doing an amazing job.

19 And, I just want to, uh, expound a little bit on
20 your description of the bill. I really appreciate
21 your support to expand access to voting for people
22 with disabilities, to increase access to six more of
23 the highest spoken languages in the city, and for
24 video purposes to include ASL now, uh, as one of the

1 languages, that will be required in each of the
2 videos.

3
4 So, uhm, I do want to mention two things: One, is
5 that we've made a very exciting incentive for
6 participants to provide video. And, keep in mind,
7 the video is critical for those who, uhm, are
8 visually impaired. And, so, uh, the incentive now is
9 that the last, the remaining five percent of Campaign
10 Finance Board's allocation will be withheld, uh, if
11 somebody does not participate.

12 But, I want to acknowledge and thank Council
13 Member Yeger in particular for raising the concern
14 about those who cannot do their video for some reason
15 or another, all of which, uhm, are totally
16 understandable, that, uh, a waiver can be granted to
17 those candidates, uhm, by the Campaign Finance Board.
18 So, one simply applies for that waiver and then, uh,
19 it will be granted and, uhm, their five percent will
20 be given... The remaining five percent will given to
21 that.

22 So, the incentive, I think, will be very
23 meaningful for the hundreds and thousands of New
24 Yorkers who will get more access to information and,
25 uh, increased likelihood of them voting.

2 I want to thank the advocates so much for
3 educating all of us on not just the importance of
4 this legislation, but to make sure that we get the
5 language right to include access for as many New
6 Yorkers as possible -- including English language
7 learners.

8 Uhm, so, this is very exciting, and I want to
9 thank you, Council Member Cabrera, for your
10 encouragement. Thanks to the staff, uhm, CJ Murray,
11 and also thank... And, Jeff Baker... And, also
12 thank the... And, Rachel Cordero... And, also
13 thank, uh, the staff at Campaign Finance Board who
14 were really excited about this legislation, who had
15 piloted The Video Voter Guide for the last two years,
16 uh, to great success.

17 Uhm, so, thank you to The City, and to you
18 Council Member Cabrera, we're going to be increasing
19 access to information for so many voters, and
20 hopefully getting better turnout for those with
21 disabilities.

22 So, thank you very much; I encourage my
23 colleagues to vote yes on this bill.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Well, thank you so much.
25 And, again, thank you for your leadership. Uh, this

2 is going to be a bill, uh, that is really going to
3 have an impact in our constituents, in our voters.
4 And, thank you for, uh, making the bill stronger, uh,
5 through the contribution of the suggestions made by
6 our colleague, uh, Council Member Yeger. And, also,
7 I want to recognize we've been joined by Council
8 Member Levin, and Council Member Rodriguez, two other
9 very valuable members of this committee that I want
10 to thank... (Cross-Talk)

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Chair?

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: And, uh... (Cross-Talk)

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Chair, can I just...

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: jump in with one quick
16 thank you?

17 I would be remiss if I did not thank The Mayor's
18 Office of People with Disabilities under the
19 leadership of Victor Calise, who, uhm, has been an
20 extraordinary advocate for those with disabilities.

21 And, of course, to Edward Freedman, who was an
22 intern in my office, and has, uh, has sparked so many
23 of these, uh, pieces of legislation for those with
24 disabilities. And, good luck to him. He's now at
25 Yale, and I know he's going to come back to the city

2 as an amazing lawyer/advocate. And, I wish him well
3 in his future endeavors. But, he's been just
4 invaluable in all of this work.

5 Thank you, Chair. Sorry to interrupt.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Oh, fantastic, fantastic.

7 And, let me just, uh, just add one thing here,
8 because for... for many years, and you mentioned
9 both of them CJ Murray and Sebastian Bacchi, have
10 done tremendous work in this committee. Uh, they are
11 truly a pleasure to work with. They're just so
12 sharp, so smart, uhm, and they help us make these
13 bills what they are. And, so my hat's off to both
14 them, and to my Legislator Director, Clark Peña.

15 And, so, with that, I know everyone is eager to
16 vote now, and I so I want to thank all of my
17 colleagues again.

18 And, I would now like to turn it over to the
19 clerk, uh, to call the roll.

20 LEGISLATIVE CLERK: Thank you, and good morning.
21 This is The Committee on Governmental Operations roll
22 call vote on Intros 66-A, 2117-A, and 2438-A.

23 We'll start with Chair Cabrera?

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: For very last time in the
25 committee, I vote aye on all.

2 LEGISLATIVE CLERK: Thank you.

3 And, Council Member Rodriguez?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: I vote aye.

5 And, thank you, Chairman, for your leadership,
6 not only on this bill supporting, you know, Council
7 Member Helen Rosenthal, but also what you did with
8 these couple of years in this committee have been
9 amazing, and especially, voting The Municipal Voting
10 Rights, that put us all, and put you, as the Chairman
11 of this committee, you know, in the position where we
12 are definitely writing a new chapter for advancing
13 not only immigrants but democracy in our society.

14 With that, I vote aye.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Gracias, mi hermano.

16 LEGISLATIVE CLERK: Thank you.

17 Council Member Levin?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye.

19 LEGISLATIVE CLERK: Council Member Kallos?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Permission to explain my
21 vote?

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Absolutely.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Uh, Chair Fernando
24 Cabrera, I want to thank you for your leadership of
25 The Governmental Operations Committee. It's a big

1 committee. It's a tough committee. The work we've
2 been able to get done over the past four years was
3 not stuff that we're able to get done.

4 Uh, you know how much I care about Full Public
5 Matching, and, uh, working with you as The Chair of
6 the Committee, uh, we were able to get through the
7 Charter Revision Commission, where we put it up for a
8 vote, uh, for a 75 percent match, which won with more
9 than 80 percent of the votes.

10 Uh, after the Charter Revision, we were able to
11 pass Local Law 1 of 2019 that applied the Public
12 Match to the Public Advocate's Race and every special
13 election since then.

14 And, then working through with you, and through
15 this committee, we were able to pass a Full Public
16 Match at 89.89 percent, and we've seen everything
17 start to change.

18 Uh, it doesn't mean that those special interests
19 don't still have power, but who can run is no longer
20 dictated; it is something that anyone can do. And,
21 with these changes ushered in by this committee,
22 we've seen a City Council that beat 21 and 21 to get
23 to more than 26 women, a majority a people of color
24 that's more reflective of our City.

1
2 And, so, this committee has an incredible amount,
3 uh, to be proud of. And, you've done an amazing job
4 as Chair.

5 And, I think the only thing that I'm slightly
6 sad about that we weren't able to get done together,
7 is, uh, Chair Cabrera, I know you believe in allowing
8 people to get on the ballot by paying a modest fee,
9 uh, I had proposed legislation about just if you make
10 the Public Matching threshold, you should get on, but
11 either way, I want to thank you for, during this
12 pandemic, at a time when people were sending people
13 out to get COVID, at the height of the pandemic, to
14 get on the ballot, uhm, you were somebody who was
15 willing to go against the grain -- go against the
16 party infrastructure -- and just try to make it
17 easier for anybody to get on the ballot and run.

18 So, you have a lot to be proud of. This
19 committee has a lot to be proud of. The Council has
20 a lot to be proud of.

21 And, I vote aye on all.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much, and I
23 appreciate your partnership.

24 LEGISLATIVE CLERK: Council Member Maisel?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Yes.

2 LEGISLATIVE CLERK: Council Member Powers?

3 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Permission to explain my
4 vote?

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Absolutely.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Uh, I am voting aye on
7 all.

8 But, I just want to commend Chair Cabrera, who
9 has been a, just a fantastic Chair of this committee.
10 And, uh, I aspire at times to be as willing to let
11 some of your colleagues be, uh, able to have the
12 space and time to ask questions. You've always been
13 very collegial, and you've been a good a good Chair
14 in the sense of being able to let us, uh, be part of
15 leading this committee as well. And, I've always
16 really admired that about the way you run the
17 committee, and, uh, I wish I did a better job of
18 that, but, uh, I have something to aim for in the
19 second term.

20 So, I just want to say, very, very much, thank
21 you for the way you've, uhm, treated us as committee
22 members, and the way that you have, uh, run this
23 committee.

24 And, I imagine this is both a sad and a proud
25 moment for you as leading your last committee. But,

2 I just want to let you know that we're all proud of
3 the way you've ran it, and very... It has been a
4 really incredible experience. And, I've always
5 enjoyed serving with Kalman Yeger, uh, on the [LOST
6 CONNECTION] [INAUDIBLE 00:15:27] an experience
7 [INAUDIBLE 0:15:28] life with my friend and colleague
8 who fights hard for the issues he believes in.

9 So, thank you. Thanks to you. Thanks to
10 everyone on this committee for making an enjoyable
11 experience for the last four years.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you for your kind
13 words, they really touch my heart. I appreciate it.

14 LEGISLATIVE CLERK: Council Member Yeger?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Thank you.

16 Uhm, Mr. Chairman, May I be excused to explain my
17 vote?

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Absolutely.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: As briefly as I can, uhm, I
20 think I... I guess we've gotten to the point in this
21 vote, uhm, and this meeting of this committee, where
22 everything's been said, but not everybody's said it.
23 So, I'll do my part.

24 Uh, you've been an incredible Chair. Uh, the...
25 Just the way you've run the meetings, the way you've

1 run our hearings, uh, the way you've had just a huge
2 amount of respect for opinions, which, uh, differed
3 from your own, uh, to the exclusion, unfortunately,
4 of a lot of members of this council, you've really,
5 uh, listened to those who you don't agree with, uh,
6 and given them as, I think, uh, Council Member Powers
7 said, the space to have that conversation, uh, and to
8 do it in public, and to make the record clear.

9
10 And, I'm also going to avail myself of that
11 today a little bit. Uhm, in explaining my vote, I
12 will vote aye on all, uh, but very briefly on
13 Introduction 2438, I just want to explain, uh,
14 because I assume that this vote one day, uhm, my
15 hesitation on it, will one day become truth.

16 Uhm, The Campaign Finance Board is very famous
17 for taking our laws, uh, statutes that this council
18 has passed, that previous councils have passed, and
19 bastardizing them for their own purposes. And, uh,
20 whenever I see a statute passed by this council, by
21 any council, that, uh, includes phrases like, "By
22 rule of the board," or "To the satisfaction of the
23 board," uhm, leaving pretty much our intent up to
24 their whim and desire, when I know, based on
25 experience, how untruthful, uhm, deceitful they are,

1 uhm, not simply, uh, by practice, but almost in
2 policy. I mean, it's very clear. I've watched the
3 last few weeks, they've run around the city lying
4 about our bills. Uh, they're just not truthful.
5 Uhm, and they do it with class and with dignity and
6 with grace, but they're liars. And, so, when I see a
7 bill like this that gives them, uh, almost an
8 unfettered ability to deny a candidate public funds
9 based on whether or not to their satisfaction, uhm,
10 compliance with a particular statute has been met,
11 uh, it concerns me a little bit.

12 On the other hand, I balance that against that,
13 uh, if their satisfaction is not met, the taxpayers
14 will perhaps save five percent on that particular
15 candidate's spending, and maybe that's a good thing
16 in balance, uhm, I don't know.

17 But, I think that we will be back one day
18 talking about the ways that The Campaign Finance
19 Board has hurt candidates, uh, using this rule to
20 beat them over the head.

21 And, I will again say it for the record, that I
22 am incredibly disappointed that The Campaign Finance
23 Board insists, in advance, uhm that scripts of video
24 statements be provided to them subject to their
25

1 vetting, subject to their editing, subject to the
2 discretion of what they think a candidate can say.

3
4 Candidates should be able to say whatever he or
5 she believes to his or her voters without any editing
6 whatsoever, without, uhm, without any censorship
7 whatsoever by a government body. And, as long as The
8 CFB reserves for itself the right to do that, I
9 remain very concerned about the stick by which they
10 beat candidates around the city.

11 And, I agree with Councilman Kallos, uhm, that I
12 think that the experiment of The Campaign Finance
13 System has proven itself, in this current session
14 that we're in, uhm, and in the new session that's
15 about to start in January 1st, look at the city, and
16 look who was able to win elections, uh, because the
17 taxpayers chipped in a little bit to help out. It's
18 a good system. The Campaign Finance Board doesn't do
19 it very well.

20 And, so, I will be voting aye on all, but I
21 wanted to state that for the record, so that when
22 this all happens, we can pull up the transcript, and
23 I can do one of my favorite I told you sos.

24 Thank you very much Mr. Chair. Again, uh, your
25 leadership of this committee has been incredible.

2 And, I'm very, very grateful, not just for your
3 leadership here, but for your friendship for the last
4 four years, uh, and even earlier than that.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much, my
7 friend.

8 LEGISLATIVE CLERK: Council Member Darma Diaz?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DARMA DIAZ: Yes, and thank you...
10 Thank you for your leadership, uhm, although, we've
11 spent a small amount of time together, it was
12 definitely a pleasure to have you to my left at the
13 chamber.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Muchas gracias.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DARMA DIAZ: [SPEAKING IN SPANISH]

17 LEGISLATIVE CLERK: Chair Cabrera, by a vote of 8
18 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative, and 0
19 abstentions, all items on today's agenda are adopted.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Well, thank you, everyone.
21 Congratulations to all the sponsors of the bill.
22 And, I salute again all my colleagues, uh, who are
23 serving this committee. You're amazing. You are
24 tremendous leaders that have brought about change,

2 and systematic change, comprehensive change. And,
3 you have led with your hearts.

4 Thank you. Thank you for you for your
5 friendship, it is something that I will never, ever
6 forget. It's been truly a joy serving with you, and
7 I'm getting emotional.

8 Thank you everyone.

9 And, with that, uh, we close today's meeting.

10 God bless you all.

11 [GAVEL]

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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 February 3, 2022