

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 27, 2010

Start: 10:25am

Recess: 10:45am

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
ANNABEL PALMA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo
Council Member Gale A. Brewer
Council Member Helen D. Foster
Council Member Stephen T. Levin
Council Member Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Council Member James G. Van Bramer

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

N/A

CHAIRPERSON PALMA: Good morning.

My name is Council Member Annabel Palma, Chair of the General Welfare Committee. Today the General Welfare Committee will be voting on Resolution Number 0477 which calls on the State Legislature to override the Governor, Governor Paterson's veto of A. 2565 and S. 2664, both of which were passed in the Assembly and the Senate, respectively. If enacted, this legislation will provide that person's living with clinical, symptomatic HIV/AIDS who are receiving shelter assistance or emergency shelter allowance shall not be required to pay more than 30 percent of their household monthly income towards shelter costs, including rent and utilities. HASA is one of the most comprehensive government programs in the country for the HIV and AIDS population. HASA provides an array of specialized services to thousands of New Yorkers, such as intensive case management, helping applying for benefits, like food stamps and Medicaid, and rental assistance. However, it is clear that more needs to be done. According to New York City's Department of Health, HIV/AIDS remains a severe health crisis in New York City.

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2 We have seen an upward trend in homelessness among
3 people living with HIV and AIDS over the past
4 three years. The number of HASA clients in
5 commercial SROs, which is a form of emergency
6 housing has increased with approximately 17
7 percent from August 2007 to June 2010. We must do
8 everything we can to ensure that people living
9 with HIV and AIDS stay healthy and housed. The
10 State Legislation that was passed by both houses
11 of the State Legislature supports this goal.
12 Unfortunately, this legislation was recently
13 vetoed by Governor Paterson. Resolution Number
14 0477 that will be, that we will vote on today,
15 supports an override of Governor Paterson's veto,
16 so that this vital legislation can be enacted.
17 The State legislation would cap HASA clients' rent
18 contribution at 30 percent, bringing it in line
19 with other programs like Section VIII and public
20 housing. A key component of HASA it is its rental
21 assistance program, which provides assistance at
22 various levels. However, because of current state
23 budget rules, HASA clients who have income such as
24 SSI or SSD, veteran's benefits or earned income
25 routinely find themselves paying well over half of

1
2 their income toward rent. Many are left with only
3 \$11 per day to live on. Over 10,000 people are
4 currently in this situation. These people are
5 often forced to choose between paying for
6 medication, food or shelter. They are also at
7 greater risk for falling behind on their rent or
8 being evicted. HASA clients are under severe
9 health constraints and these type of stressors can
10 negatively impact their health. A growing body of
11 research suggests that people who have stable
12 housing are one, less likely to use drugs and less
13 likely to engage in high risk sexual activities;
14 and two, more likely to adhere to medical regimens
15 and more likely to receive proper healthcare. The
16 Paterson and Bloomberg Administrations are
17 concerned that a rent cap would cost the City and
18 State approximately \$35 million. However,
19 alternative analysis suggests that this
20 legislation will actually result in reduced costs
21 of certain services. For instance, providing
22 stable housing decreases the need for future
23 costly emergency room visits and hospital
24 stations, HRA would avoid paying rent arrears for
25 clients, and fewer people will need to be housed

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2 in costly emergency SROs. Both A. 2565 and S.
3 2664 were passed in the Assembly and the State
4 Senate this year, by wide margins. As set forth
5 in Resolution Number 0477, we call upon the State
6 Legislature to override Governor Paterson's
7 unfortunate veto of this legislation that will
8 provide financial relief to over 10,000 HASA
9 clients who are severely burned by high rents and
10 utility costs. The City Council's passage of
11 Resolution Number 0477 will be important, an
12 important step toward making this economic relief
13 a reality for the HASA clients throughout the
14 City. And I want to thank my colleagues who
15 joined and signed on to the Reso yesterday. As I
16 stated yesterday, this Council and my colleagues
17 here know the importance of what it means to be
18 able to have these rent caps for the HIV/AIDS
19 population, and I want to also thank you for your
20 quick turnaround in making sure that you were here
21 today, so we'll be able to vote on this
22 Resolution, I know you were eager yesterday to
23 vote it out of committee. So, with that, I will
24 ask the Clerk to call the roll.

25 CLERK: Kevin Pin, Committee Clerk,

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2 roll call on the Committee on General Welfare.
3 Councilwoman Palma.

4 CHAIRPERSON PALMA: I vote aye.

5 CLERK: Brewer.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Aye.

7 CLERK: Foster.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FOSTER: Aye.

9 CLERK: Rodriguez.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

11 CLERK: Van Bramer.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

13 [pause]

14 CLERK: By a vote of five in the
15 affirmative, zero in the negative, and no
16 abstentions, this item has been adopted. Members
17 please sign the Committee report.

18 CHAIRPERSON PALMA: Thank you, and
19 I'm going to hold the roll open for another 15
20 minutes, there's still members that are trying to
21 get to the Committee to be able to vote.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you,
23 Annabel.

24 [pause]

25 MALE VOICE: Take two. [laughter]

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2

CLERK: Levin.

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye.

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[pause]

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CLERK: Arroyo.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Aye.

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[pause]

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CLERK: Final vote for the

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Committee on General Welfare, seven affirmative,

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zero in the negative and no abstentions.

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CHAIRPERSON PALMA: That's a good

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thing, and now we adjourn the Committee on General

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Welfare.

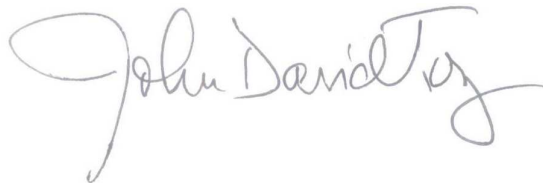
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[gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, JOHN DAVID TONG 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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John David Tong". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature_____

Date October 27, 2010