

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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June 7, 2023
Start: 10:10 a.m.
Recess: 10:14 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 14TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Diana Ayala, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Sandra Ung

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a sound check
3 for the Committee on General Welfare. Today's date is
4 June 7, 2023. Being recorded by Danny Huang
5 (phonetic) on the 14th Floor Hearing Room.

6 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Good morning,
7 everyone, [GAVEL] and welcome to today's hearing. My
8 name is Diana Ayala, and I am the Deputy Speaker of
9 the New York City Council and the Chair of the
10 General Welfare Committee.

11 Today, our Committee will be hearing
12 Proposed Intro. 561A sponsored by Council Members
13 Hudson and Rivera. The bill will authorize the City
14 to establish or fund one or more pilot programs to
15 provide direct cash to certain eligible low-income
16 individuals. Poverty in New York City is well above
17 the national average. We know how difficult it is to
18 make ends meet in New York City. Even before the
19 pandemic, half of our City's population lived below
20 the poverty line. The economic pressures of the
21 pandemic could have pushed New Yorkers even further
22 into poverty, but, thankfully, government at every
23 level stepped up to strengthen the safety net,
24 preventing disasters from occurring for many
25 individuals and families. That pandemic support,

2 which was intended to be temporary, is quickly coming
3 to an end. What we saw with the pandemic are our
4 policies including expansion to unemployment
5 insurance, SNAP, and the Child Tax Credit, is that
6 anti-poverty tools do work. It is with this in mind
7 that we are hearing Intro. 561A which would support
8 New Yorkers by authorizing the City to establish a
9 pilot program for the provision of unconditional
10 direct cash payments. I was looking forward to
11 hearing from the Administration and the advocates
12 today, but the Administration has informed us that
13 they were not able to send anyone to come in and
14 testify today, and we have been joined by Council
15 Member Ung.

16 With that, I guess I'll just share
17 there's no one testifying online either, but I would
18 like to thank my Colleagues for introducing this
19 legislation. I think that it is important
20 legislation, and I think it's something that's worth
21 taking a look at to explore ways of implementing
22 something like this. The poverty rate in my District
23 I know has been really low for a very long time. As a
24 matter of fact, I represent the South Bronx which has
25 been known to be the poorest Congressional District,

2 and that was very evident during the pandemic where
3 we saw lines and lines of family members waiting for
4 three and four hours in a line to receive a box of
5 food just to be able to have something to feed their
6 families with and so programs like this cannot be
7 understated. I think that any support that we are
8 able to lend families to allow them to make ends meet
9 alleviates stress, alleviates burdens on a person's
10 mental health, and I am fully supportive of that.

11 With that, seeing as how there is no one
12 here to testify, this hearing is closed. Thank you.

13 [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 June 13, 2023