

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 15/11
 in favor in opposition

Date: Mar 17th

Name: Matt Smith (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 225 East 4th St

I represent: MUSE

Address: 225 East 4th St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Miguel (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 21 Smith St

I represent: DCID

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Robert Rapp (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 245-32 61st Ave

I represent: 2 Ave now known as United Spinal Association

Address: 245-32 61st Ave Douglaston NY 11362-2018

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀



Testimony to the City Council Committees on Transportation, Public Safety, Sanitation & Solid Waste Management in Support of T2011-2476, "A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring snow removal from bus shelters"

03/09/11

My name is Edith Prentiss; I am President of the 504 Democratic Club, Vice President for Legislative Affairs of Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York (DIA), Co-chair of the Taxis For All Campaign (TFAC), a member of the Manhattan Borough President's Disability Task Force, the Steering Committee of the Disability Network of New York City (DNNYC) and a member of the Transit Riders Council of the Permanent Citizen Advisory Committee to the MTA. I would like to thank the Committees and especially the three Chairs, Council Members Jimmy Vacca, Peter Vallone Jr and Leticia James for the opportunity to address you on this very important topic.

Snow and ice are major problems for most if not all members of the disability community no matter what their disability and most New Yorkers. Snow that is not removed from within and around bus stops and shelter has a significant impact on everyone but can be a complete barrier for people with disabilities. The failure to adequately remove snow from sidewalks, pedestrian ramps (curb cuts) and street contributed to a horrific winter for many members of the disability community. This winter many wheelchair users were stuck in their houses unable to get to work, shop, medical appointments and participate in the social and political life of our community.

While my super meticulously cleared our ramp, steps, sidewalk and pedestrian ramp (curb cut) when I finally ventured outside about all I could do was sit in my wheelchair admiring the precision with which snow plows "accidentally" dropped snow into and on the pedestrian ramp. As quickly as snow was removed it returned. Without knowing the condition of other ramps in the neighborhood, I was reluctant to venture off my block. Many pedestrian ramps were only cleared as people slogged through the snow. Therefore they were not the requisite 36 inches and with subsequent snow falls the cleaner width waxed and waned but never were wide enough for a wheelchair, walker or rollator.

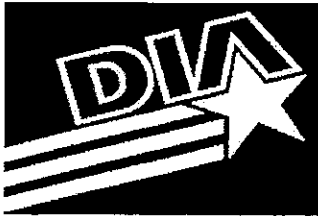
Given the City's propensity not to have pedestrian ramps in the same location, it was very difficult to figure where the ramp was beneath the snow and ice and therefore many wheelchairs users stayed home or wheeled on the street. When fresh snow was plowed, underneath icebergs remained as a result of the lengthy time alternate parking was suspended. When cars finally were moved, curbs were blocked with rutted ice!

The responsibility for snow removal is broad and broadly ignored by most parties, well maybe not in the Mayor and the Sanitation Commissioner's neighborhoods! While removing the snow from in and around the bus shelter is important so is removing the snow from in front of the bus shelter which seemed to be where Sanitation deposited snow. Unlike most New Yorkers I have the phone number of my Sanitation garage and therefore am able to call to request a particular location be cleared. We are told to call 311 but if they are not accepting snow complaints how are we supposed to contact them to request a pedestrian ramp or a bus stop be cleared?

It is often difficult to ascertain who is responsible to remove the snow from a particular type of location. For years we were told pedestrian ramps and the area around bus stops were the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. Now, it seems it is the City's. While Cemusa is responsible for bus shelters e saw City day laborers clearing the snow. A quest of great importance in the disability community is empty lots, closed stores etc. If the owner fails to clear the snow, why doesn't the City charge then the owner? I'm not asking for a snow conference but would love a simple web page/pamphlet explaining who is responsible and who to contact when they fail to do so. How about signage with contact of the responsible party, just like on construction jobs, on vacant lots and closed businesses?

While Cemusa is responsible from removing snow within and around bus shelters, it seems the frequency of snow this winter was beyond their capacity. But I don't remember them doing any better the winter of 2009, do you?

I would like to thank the Council and the Committees for the opportunity to testify on this topic of great importance to NYC's disability community.



DISABLED IN ACTION OF METROPOLITAN NEW YORK
POST OFFICE BOX 30954, PORT AUTHORITY STATION
NEW YORK, NY 10011-0109 TEL/FAX 718-261-3737

FOR THE RECORD www.disabledinaction.org

Testimony of Jean Ryan regarding the amendment requiring snow removal from bus shelters.

I am unable to attend this hearing on short notice. I have a conflict.

As people with disabilities who are mobility impaired, my colleagues and I were hugely impacted by this winter's snowstorms. We were unnecessarily impacted by the lack of city services that kept us prisoners in our homes from the end of December through all of January and part of February. Why, you might ask? We could not get off our blocks. The outer boroughs were like the frozen tundra.

The pedestrian ramp closest to my house did not thaw enough for an Access-A-Ride ramp to be put down on it until Monday, February 14th, Valentine's Day! Getting to the bus was out of the question. Who knows if the bus shelters and bus stops were shoveled? We could not even get to them in the first place! Something has to be done about that problem. We called our politicians, our Sanitation garages, 311, our community boards, and the public advocate, and only a few pedestrian ramps were shoveled out, but only once, I think. Mine was not shoveled out. We went nowhere. We missed meetings, doctor appointments, family gatherings, we could not get out to run errands or do anything. When homeowners did shovel sidewalks, they shoveled a narrow path that our wheelchairs could not navigate, so it was like not shoveling to us. Often, because pedestrian ramps are at different angles, the curb was shoveled but not the ramp, even by the City.

I thought that Cemusa was already responsible for maintaining their bus stops. I saw a discussion about this in the newspaper. The timeliness of their doing this was an issue. I take the express bus sometimes and other wheelchair users also take express buses. Wheelchair users cannot get on the express buses from the shelters. We usually have to get on or off the bus further away than 3 feet from a shelter (if there is a shelter) because of where the lift is placed. Some city buses have rear loading lifts. They are way more than 3 feet away from a bus shelter. What about those spaces? Won't they be shoveled, too? This amendment should also cover them.

All bus stops should be shoveled out, not just bus stops with shelters, especially as more and more people with disabilities are being forced to take the bus instead of Access-A-Ride because they have conditional eligibility. Forty-two percent of AAR riders have some kind of conditional eligibility.

I hope you will reconsider this amendment and the impact it could have on people with disabilities and broaden it.

Respectfully yours,

Jean Ryan, VP for Public Affairs, Disabled In Action of Metropolitan NY

Pansies007@gmail.com

718-745-6705 home

917-658-0760

Testimony in Support of Proposed Intro Requiring
Snow Removal from Bus Shelters

I'm Marvin Wasserman, Executive Director of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled.

I wish to commend Council Member Sara M. Gonzalez for her bill to require snow removal from bus shelters.

Persons with disabilities and senior citizens rely on bus transportation to a far greater extent than the general population, particularly when there is snow on the ground. Without removal of snow from curbs, curb cuts and bus shelters, many in our community are prevented from leaving their homes to go to work, shop, visit their friends and participate in the life of the community for as long as a week or more after a snow storm.

I use the B-57 bus to go to work every day from my home in Carroll Gardens to Downtown Brooklyn. I access it at Smith and Ninth Streets, by the "F" and "G" elevated subway station, which is the highest station in the system. I can see for myself that many residents of my community with mobility impairments, both young and old, rely upon this bus on a daily basis as an alternative to using the subway. If bus stops are not cleared of snow, these individuals may have no other alternative to maintaining their daily routines.

I urge the Council to pass this vitally-needed piece of legislation.



27 Smith Street, 2nd Floor
Brooklyn, New York 11201-5111
718-998-3000 VOICE
718-998-7406 TTY
718-998-3743 FAX
www.bcid.org

Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled

New York City Council

March 9, 2011

Committee Room 14th floor

250 Broadway New York, New York

A joint hearing of the Transportation, Sanitation and Public Safety Committees

Thank you for the opportunity to present the opinions of the board, staff and participants of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID). BCID is a consumer based not for profit organization controlled and operated by people with disabilities. Our mission is to provide the tools, services and necessary assistance to remove barriers within the community which prevent people with disabilities from fully assimilating.

I am here today to share my personal experience as a result of the first snowstorm in 2010. I was held hostage by the city's slow response to not only plowing the streets but also the city's officials who did not hold

people responsible for properly shoveling the bus shelters, curb cuts and in most cases they cleared just enough of walking space for able bodied persons. They do not clear enough space so that people with disabilities can gain access to the buses etc.

Because of lack of immediate response from city officials and the Sanitation Department I was stuck in my Manhattan apartment for one week. As you can see I am a wheelchair bound individual who happens to have a job, in order to be paid I had to use a week of my vacation time because I could not get off my block, even after the plows came through. Why? The answer is simple, NO CURB CUTS WERE CLEARED. NO ACCESS FOR PERSONS WHO FIND THEMSELVES SITTING IN WHEELCHAIRS OR OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH A DISABILITY. Access-A-Ride vehicles could not even get access to sidewalks to deploy their lifts. Thank goodness I have a personal care assistant who was able to come in some of the days that I was stuck in my home. She had to go to my local supermarket pick up groceries, since I was unable to do so for myself.

New York City residents who own their homes are responsible for shoveling their sidewalks two hours after a snowfall, or are fined. Can someone explain to me who is responsible for shoveling our city curb cuts, and how long after the snow fall has ended should this be done? Who finds city officials when this is not done? Even after the city streets and bus shelters are plowed why do I see plow drivers pushing snow back onto curb cuts, home owners are not allowed to throw their sidewalk snow into the streets, then why are sanitation drivers allowed to push back where homeowners have cleaned? These are questions that need to be answered, and I do hope that because of this joint hearing today that some of these will get answered, and hope that we learned a good lesson because of this year's snowfall so that the same mistakes will not be made in the future.

Thanks to all of you for allowing me this opportunity.