

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT

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September 28, 2023  
Start: 10:47 a.m.  
Recess: 11:11 a.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Joann Ariola, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David M. Carr  
Carmen N. De La Rosa  
James F. Gennaro  
Robert F. Holden  
Ari Kagan  
Kevin C. Riley  
Lynn C. Schulman

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Gale A. Brewer

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone  
3 test for the vote for Fire and Emergency Management.  
4 Today's date is September 28, 2023. We're located in  
5 the Council Chambers. Recording done by Rocco Mesiti.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning. Welcome  
7 to the Committee on Fire and Emergency Management.

8 At this time, we ask if you could please  
9 place phones on vibrate or silent mode. Thank you.

10 Chair, we are ready to begin.

11 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Good morning. My name  
12 is Joann Ariola, and I am the Chair of the Fire and  
13 Emergency Management Committee.

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15 Today, we're voting on Preconsidered  
16 Introduction number T20234047 that will be introduced  
17 by Council Member Gale Brewer at today's Stated  
18 Meeting of which I am a prime co-sponsor along with  
19 my fellow Committee Members, Council Members Holden,  
20 Yeger, Schulman, Carr, and Kagan. This bill would  
21 create a one-time exception to the maximum age  
22 requirement for membership in the Fire Department for  
23 certain persons during the next promotional exam  
24 period.

2           Before moving forward, I would like to  
3 acknowledge the Members of the Fire and Emergency  
4 Management Committee who are here today. Council  
5 Members Riley, Schulman, Kagan, Carr, Holden, and, of  
6 course, Council Member Gennaro who is joining us via  
7 Zoom. I would also like to thank Council Member  
8 Brewer for joining us today to make a statement on  
9 her bill.

10           Before I turn the microphone over to  
11 Council Member Brewer for her statement, I would like  
12 to make brief remarks on the legislation. During our  
13 past hearings on the topic of New York City's  
14 promotional exam, we received testimony from many  
15 hard-working EMTs and paramedics who delivered  
16 passionate testimonials describing their immense  
17 desire to become New York City firefighters but had  
18 been unfairly disqualified due to administrative  
19 delays during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their testimony  
20 was both inspiring and humbling and once again showed  
21 how vital they are to the safety and well-being of  
22 all New Yorkers. Today, by passing this bill, we  
23 correct what has been an injustice to hard-working  
24 EMS personnel who seek to take the promotional exam  
25 to become New York City firefighters. We are at the

2 very least giving them a fair opportunity to serve  
3 our city in that capacity.

4 I want to thank Committee Staff, Josh  
5 Kingsley and William Hongach for their very hard work  
6 on this legislation, Deputy Director of the City  
7 Council's Government Affairs, Rachel Cordero for  
8 spearheading this issue as well as the  
9 Administration's work in partnership.

10 I will now pass the microphone over to  
11 Council Member Brewer for her opening remarks.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very  
13 much, Council Member Ariola, and I also want to thank  
14 the many, as our Chair just did, individuals who  
15 testified at her hearing. They were incredibly  
16 articulate, both father and son in one situation, and  
17 just the dynamic way in which they have approached  
18 this issue just shows the strength of their  
19 participation as EMTs and hopefully firefighters so  
20 I'm really honored to be participating as a sponsor  
21 of this legislation with the amazing Chair of the  
22 Fire Committee and the other co-sponsors to create,  
23 as you heard, a one-time waiver from existing age  
24 requirements for becoming an FDNY firefighter. This  
25 is for EMS workers who would have otherwise been able

2 to take the promotional exam had it been given at its  
3 usual frequency but for delays due to the COVID-19  
4 pandemic. We all know that the firefighters and the  
5 EMS workers are some of the bravest and most  
6 dedicated public servants in our city, and I said  
7 earlier the articulateness and the presence that they  
8 demonstrated at the hearing is an example. Obviously,  
9 in their professional lives, they put their lives on  
10 the line every day to protect all of us and, during  
11 COVID, they continued to be on the frontline,  
12 sacrificing their health and the health of their  
13 loved ones to keep doing the job. We owe them a debt  
14 of gratitude and we owe them this exam. This  
15 legislation is a way to show our appreciation for  
16 their service and to give these heroes a fair chance  
17 to compete for promotions in the Fire Department.  
18 They have the skills from EMS and they have the  
19 experience from EMS to be successful firefighters,  
20 and they should not be barred from taking the  
21 promotional exam, I think around 300 people or more,  
22 simply because they are over the current maximum age  
23 and COVID prevented the City from administering the  
24 exam in 2020. I recognize that this one-time  
25 exemption will not cover everyone who wants to take

2 the exam, although I want to thank the Chair and the  
3 Speaker's Office and the Administration for working  
4 out some of the details so more than were originally  
5 thought to take it can take it, and I'm confident  
6 that we have maximized an opportunity that is  
7 consistent with the applicable law. This is so much  
8 the right thing to do.

9           Again, thank you, Chair Ariola, all the  
10 Committee Staff that you mentioned, and certainly  
11 Cynthia Hornig from my office. This is a really  
12 important day today. Thank you.

13           CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you. I now ask  
14 the Clerk to call the roll of the Committee so that  
15 we may vote on this very important legislation.

16           COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good  
17 morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call  
18 vote Committee on Fire and Emergency Management on  
19 Preconsidered Introduction. Chair Ariola.

20           CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I vote aye proudly.

21           COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Holden.

22           COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I vote aye.

23           COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Yeger.

24 Riley.

25           COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: I vote aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Gennaro.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: I vote aye, and I  
4 wish to be added as a co-sponsor, Madam Chair.

5 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you, Council  
6 Member.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: Did that come  
8 through, Bill? Did you hear that?

9 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I heard you, heard  
10 you loud and clear.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: Okay.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank  
13 you, Council Member. Feliz. De La Rosa. Schulman.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Carr.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: With congratulations  
17 to Council Member Brewer, Chair Ariola, and all the  
18 advocates, I vote aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Kagan.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Congratulations.  
21 Great work, Chair of the Committee, Council Member  
22 Ariola, and, of course, Council Member Brewer. Thank  
23 you for your great work. Aye.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: With a  
25 vote of seven in the affirmative, zero in the

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2 negative, and no abstentions, item has been adopted  
3 by the Committee.

4 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you all for  
5 being present, and we're going to leave the vote open  
6 right now. We do have some Members still coming in.  
7 Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:  
9 Continuation roll call Committee on Fire,  
10 Preconsidered Introduction. Council Member De La  
11 Rosa.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Aye.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Final  
14 vote now is eight in the affirmative, zero in the  
15 negative, and no abstentions.

16 Council Member De La Rosa to close.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Hearing  
18 adjourned.

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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 September 29, 2023