

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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October 19, 2023  
Start: 9:24 a.m.  
Recess: 9:30 a.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Lynn C. Schulman, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Charles Barron  
Crystal Hudson  
Mercedes Narcisse  
Julie Menin  
Marjorie Velázquez

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Selvena N. Brooks-Powers

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Today is October 19,  
3 2023. Committee on Health, being recorded by Keith  
4 Polite.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and  
6 welcome to the New York City Council vote of the  
7 Committee on Health.

8 At this time, can everybody please  
9 silence your cell phones?

10 At this time, no one is to approach the  
11 dais. I repeat, no one is to approach the dais.

12 Chair, we are ready to begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: [GAVEL] Good  
14 morning and welcome to this hearing of the City  
15 Council's Committee on Health.

16 Today, the Committee will vote on  
17 Proposed Introduction 1119-A sponsored by Council  
18 Member Brooks-Powers.

19 I would also like to thank the Members of  
20 the Committee who are present, Council Members  
21 Barron, Menin, Velázquez, Hudson.

22 Intro. 1119-A would require the  
23 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to report  
24 annually on drowning deaths that occur in the city. I

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2 would like to invite Council Member Brooks-Powers to  
3 make a statement on her bill.

4 First, I want to recognize Council Member  
5 Narcisse.

6 Go ahead Council Member Brooks-Powers.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,  
8 Chair.

9 Today, I am proud to sponsor Introduction  
10 1119, which seeks to address a public health issue  
11 affecting every community in the city, drownings.  
12 Drowning is the number one killer of young children  
13 nationwide, and data from the CDC shows that children  
14 of color are especially vulnerable to drowning. This  
15 legislation will require DOHMH to report annually and  
16 publicly on drownings in the city. The report will  
17 include the location of each drowning, the  
18 demographics of the victim, and additional  
19 information about the circumstances of the incident.  
20 This specific reporting will empower policymakers and  
21 advocates to develop more effective programs and  
22 policies to address drownings. I note too that this  
23 legislation is part of our efforts to improve water  
24 safety and take a more equitable approach to aquatics  
25 in New York City. New Yorkers of color were excluded

2 from many public pools in the 20th century, and the  
3 specter of this segregation lingers still. One out of  
4 three black students can't swim while only 1 out of  
5 10 white students cannot. 18 Council Districts still  
6 lack Department of Parks and Recreation pools, mostly  
7 in communities of color.

8 I thank my Colleagues for their  
9 partnership, Chair Schulman for her leadership of  
10 this Committee, and the Speaker for her steadfast  
11 commitment to swim equity. We will continue to work  
12 to ensure every New Yorker is empowered to swim in  
13 the City's waters, not only to enjoy them but to  
14 protect themselves from danger. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: Thank you, Council  
16 Member Brooks-Powers.

17 Clerk, we're ready to begin the vote.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good  
19 morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call  
20 vote Committee on Health. Proposed Introduction 1119-  
21 A. Chair Schulman.

22 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: Aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Yeger.  
24 Feliz. Barron.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I'd like to  
3 explain my vote. I don't want people to think, years  
4 ago, a reporter, I think it was Jimmy Breslin who  
5 said that the reason why black people can't swim is  
6 because we don't have buoyancy so I don't want  
7 anybody to think that that's the racist notion of why  
8 we may be drowning more. We don't have enough  
9 programs to teach our children how to swim, and I  
10 don't want anybody to have any racist notion that we  
11 lack buoyancy which one of the reporters in this  
12 town. On that, I say aye and good bill and sign me  
13 onto it.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:

15 Absolutely, thank you. Hudson. Menin.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Aye and  
17 congratulations.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Council  
19 Member Hudson.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank  
22 you. Narcisse.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: I want to say  
24 congratulations and I'm in agreement with Council  
25 Member Charles Barron. We need to teach our kids how

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2 to swim, and we need to have the opportunity. It's a  
3 great bill. Congratulations, and my name should have  
4 been right there on top of it because I love the  
5 idea. Thank you so much.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:

7 Velázquez.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Agreeing with  
9 the sentiments of Council Member Narcisse and Barron.  
10 As someone who learned how to swim at the age of 30,  
11 I totally agree so thank you very much. Congrats,  
12 Council Member Brooks-Powers, on this great bill.  
13 Aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank  
15 you. Ariola.

16 With a vote of six in the affirmative,  
17 zero in the negative, and no abstentions, item has  
18 been adopted by the Committee.

19 CHAIRPERSON SCHULMAN: Congratulations  
20 Council Member Brooks-Powers and this is an amazing  
21 bill.

22 With that, I conclude this hearing.

23 [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 October 26, 2023