

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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June 6, 2024
Start: 10:08 a.m.
Recess: 10:16 a.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Alexa Avilés, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Erik D. Bottcher
Gale A. Brewer
Carmen N. De La Rosa
Shahana Hanif
Rita C. Joseph
Shekar Krishnan

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, and
3 welcome to the New York City Council vote of the
4 Committee on Immigration.

5 At this time, can everybody please
6 silence your cell phones.

7 Chair, we are ready to begin.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [GAVEL] Good morning.
9 This meeting is being called to order. Good morning,
10 everyone. I am Council Member Alexa Avilés, Chair of
11 the Committee on Immigration, and I'd like to begin
12 by thanking the Committee Colleagues who have joined
13 us here today, Council Members Brewer, Joseph, Hanif,
14 and Council Member De La Rosa.

15 At today's hearing, the Committee will be
16 voting on two Proposed Local Laws and one Resolution,
17 all sponsored by Council Member Carlina Rivera.
18 Proposed Introductions 84-A and 85-A in relation to
19 workforce and the health surveys of migrants,
20 including recent arrivals and asylum seekers and to
21 repeal such amendments upon the expiration thereof,
22 and Proposed Resolution 340-B, calling on the United
23 States Citizenship and Immigration Services to
24 eliminate filing fees for humanitarian benefit
25 applications and subsequent employment authorization

2 applications and calling on Congress and the
3 President to move significant funding to USCIS to
4 cover the funding lost by eliminating filing fees.
5 These bills were previously heard during the hearing
6 with the Committee on Hospitals on April 16, 2024.

7 At the heart of this Committee's
8 legislative and oversight work is a demand for data
9 on the needs of immigrant newcomers residing in our
10 city. We all know that it is impossible to make
11 policy and conduct oversight without data, and
12 knowing the needs of New York City residents helps
13 policy makers and elected officials tailor the City's
14 programming and service delivery. That is why the
15 Committee on Immigration is voting on Proposed
16 Introductions 84-A and 85-A, which would respectively
17 require the Administration to develop and implement
18 workforce and health surveys of migrants, including
19 those who have recently arrived in New York City and
20 those seeking asylum. These bills would also require
21 the Administration to recommend policies and
22 investments to support the well-being and success of
23 immigrant newcomers. Proposed Introduction 84-A will
24 equip City agencies and the Council with a full
25 picture of the abilities of newly arrived migrant

2 community members and the impediments they face in
3 accessing jobs, workforce training, and other
4 economic opportunities and potential solutions that
5 would bolster their economic security and upward
6 mobility.

7 Similarly, Proposed Introduction 85-A
8 will provide City agencies and the Council with a
9 comprehensive view of the needs of immigrant
10 newcomers related to healthcare and long-term care to
11 the impediments migrants face in addressing their
12 health-related needs and potential solutions that
13 would bolster their physical and mental health.

14 As the Chair of the Committee on
15 Immigration, I thank Council Member Rivera for
16 putting forward this legislation, and I look forward
17 to working with the Administration on a long-term,
18 forward-thinking approach to welcoming immigrant
19 newcomers to our neighborhoods and communities.

20 Finally, the Committee on Immigration
21 will also be voting on Proposed Resolution 340-B.
22 Even as the Committee on Immigration seeks ways for
23 the City to do better in welcoming newly arrived
24 immigrant community members, the Council has been
25 clear that the federal government must play a leading

2 role in making it possible for immigrants to build
3 full lives in our cities and provide for their
4 families. Rather than requiring immigrant newcomers
5 to pay exorbitant application fees when many of them
6 are already struggling to make ends meet, the federal
7 government should meaningfully resource USCIS and re-
8 assert its commitment to humanitarian forms of
9 immigration relief and protection. I look forward to
10 issuing this clarion call alongside my Council
11 Colleagues, and again, thank Council Member Rivera
12 for her leadership on these issues.

13 I will say impromptu that I'm deeply
14 disappointed in the federal administration and their
15 ban on the pursuit of asylum, which is an
16 international and U.S. agreement to be able to
17 receive people fleeing persecution and violence in
18 their countries, and I hope there will be a change in
19 policy.

20 I would also like to thank, finally, all
21 the community, all the Committee Staff for their work
22 on these bills, including Nicole Cata, Rebecca
23 Barrilla, Florentine Kabore, Nia Hyatt, and lastly,
24 of course, my incredible staff, Edward Cerna,
25 Christina Bottego, Amarachi Ngadi, and Emmet Teran,

2 and everyone for working in the background to make
3 this hearing run smoothly.

4 Thank you again for Council Member Rivera
5 and all her legislation, and I will turn it over to
6 the clerk to call the roll.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
8 you. Good morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk.
9 Roll call vote, Committee on Immigration, Proposed
10 Introductions 84-A and 85-A, and Proposed Resolution
11 340-B. All items are coupled. Chair Avilés.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I vote aye.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Council
14 Member Bottcher.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
17 you. Brewer.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: De La
20 Rosa.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Hanif.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Aye.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Joseph.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Krishnan.
3 With a vote of six in the affirmative, zero in the
4 negative, and no abstentions, all items have been
5 adopted by the committee, and the roll will be held
6 open at request of the Chair.

7 Thank you.

8 Council Member Krishnan.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Aye on all.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
11 you. Final vote is now seven in the affirmative, zero
12 in the negative, and no abstentions.

13 Madam Chair, that is a full Committee.

14 Council Member Avilés to close.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [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 July 4, 2024