

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 12, 2024
Start: 11:03 a.m.
Recess: 12:09 p.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Joann Ariola, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Carmen N. De La Rosa
Oswald Feliz
James F. Gennaro
Kevin C. Riley
Lynn C. Schulman
Kalman Yeger
Susan Zhuang
Pierina Sanchez

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to
3 the New York City Council of the Committee on Fire
4 and Emergency Management. At this time, could
5 everybody please silence your cell phones? Chair, we
6 are ready to begin.

7 [GAVEL]

8 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Good morning, and thank you
9 all for being here today. I'm Councilmember Joann
10 Ariola, chair of the Fire and Emergency Management
11 Committee, and I would like to acknowledge members
12 who are currently present here in the-- in the
13 chamber, Councilmember Sanchez, Riley, Schulman, De
14 La Rosa, and Feliz.

15 Today, the Committee will be voting in proposed--
16 on proposed Introduction number 89A, sponsored by
17 Councilmember Sanchez. This legislation would
18 require the administration to provide Councilmembers
19 with notice following the occurrence of certain
20 serious fires in their district. This notification
21 will enable to the Councilmember to better serve
22 their constituents following serious fires, and
23 assisting coordinating the delivery of service and
24 resources to New Yorkers who have had these fires
25 impact their lives.

2 I will now invite our bill sponsor, Councilmember
3 Sanchez, to speak on her bill.

4 COUNCILMEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so much, Chair
5 Ariola. Good morning, everyone. Displacement
6 following a fire or structural problem in your
7 building is one of the most disruptive experiences a
8 family can have. Imagine: Running for your life,
9 barely remembering to grab your shoes, probably
10 insufficient clothing, and certainly not your wallet,
11 or identifying information, only to stand or sit on a
12 sidewalk for hours, looking up, not being sure what
13 comes next. Well, this can happen approximately
14 2,000 times per year across our city. In New York
15 City, we thankfully have some processes designed to
16 help New Yorkers through these destabilizing times;
17 gratitude to our first responders who risk their
18 lives to pull us out of fires and emergency
19 conditions; the American Red Cross, who has a
20 contract with HPD, visits fire and other emergency
21 sites to help residents with emergency shelters and
22 provisions in certain circumstances; and our
23 agencies, from Emergency Management to Buildings, to
24 Housing Preservation, and Fire Department again, who
25 each have different roles to ensure our buildings are

2 safe and that there is some degree of interagency
3 coordination.

4 Yet for all that New Yorkers have, we can and we
5 must do better. On dozens of occasions in my three
6 years in office, and I know this is true for my
7 colleagues as well, I have visited fire sites,
8 discovering issues, such as buildings or HPD not
9 issue a vacate order where they should have, ARC not
10 being notified (The American Red Cross), and
11 residents being left in limbo.

12 And the displacement can be long-lasting. In the
13 first four months of fiscal year 2024, the average
14 length of stay for single adults in emergency housing
15 shelters was 592 days, for adult families 464 days,
16 and for families with children was 337 days.

17 So I am thankful for this Committee-- thank you,
18 Chair Ariola, for moving Intro 89 forward, because
19 Intro 89 would provide Councilmembers and other key
20 public officials with notifications when fires occur
21 in their district, setting up important stakeholders
22 with good information right at the striking of an
23 emergency. This is important, because the bill is
24 creating infrastructure to stabilize New Yorkers and
25 their families after a fire event. It is creating

2 another failsafe in our systems to protect New
3 Yorkers. This is personal for me, as my own family
4 was displaced by a fire when I was just 3 years old,
5 left with nowhere to go, and no one to turn to except
6 to look up at the flames of what had been our home.

7 Thanks for taking this step with me. Chair
8 Ariola, and Committee, and I urge all of my
9 colleagues to vote aye.

10 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you so much. I will
11 now yield the microphone to the Clerk for a vote.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning. William Martin,
13 Committee Clerk. Roll call vote, Committee on Fire
14 and Emergency Management, proposed Intro 89A.

15 Chair Ariola?

16 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Aye, and congratulations.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Yeger?

18 Riley?

19 COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Gennaro?

21 Feliz?

22 COUNCILMEMBER FELIZ: Aye. Congraultaions.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: De La Rosa?

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2 COUNCILMEMBER DE LA ROSA: Aye. Congratulations,
3 Councilmember Sanchez, and this is such an important
4 piece of legislation. I am proud to support it.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK: Schulman?

6 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Aye. And thank you.
7 This is important legislation, because a lot of times
8 we don't get notified of these fires.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Zhuang?

10 By a vote of 5 in the affirmative, zero in the
11 negative, and no abstentions, the proposed
12 Introduction 89A has been adopted by the Committee,
13 and the vote will be held open at the request of the
14 Chair.

15 [26.45 MINUTES' SILENCE]

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation of roll call,
17 Committee on Fire and Emergency Management, Proposed
18 Introduction 89A. Councilmember Zhuang?

19 COUNCILMEMBER ZHUANG: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. The vote is
21 currently 6 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative,
22 and no abstention, and is still held open at the
23 request of the Chair.

24 [12.45 MINUTES' SILENCE]

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation of roll call,
3 Committee on Fire and Emergency Management, Proposed
4 Introduction 89A. Councilmember Gennaro?

5 COUNCILMEMBER GENNARO: I vote aye.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: The final vote is currently 7
7 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative, and no
8 abstentions.

9 Councilmember Gennaro to close.

10 COUNCILMEMBER GENNARO: This vote and this
11 hearing is now adjourned.

12 [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 September 18, 2024