

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, STATE &  
FEDERAL LEGISLATION 1  
CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL  
OPERATIONS, STATE &  
FEDERAL LEGISLATION

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Thursday, January 23, 2025  
Start: 12:04 p.m.  
Recess: 12:19 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Hon. Lincoln Restler, Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer  
David M. Carr  
James F. Gennaro  
Jennifer Gutiérrez  
Shahana K. Hanif  
Vickie Paladino  
Lynn C. Schulman  
Inna Vernikov

Other Council Members Attending: Dinowitz

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, STATE &  
FEDERAL LEGISLATION

A P P E A R A N C E S  
**(NONE)**

1 COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, STATE &  
2 FEDERAL LEGISLATION

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3 SERGEANT MORENO: This is a microphone check of  
4 the Committee on Governmental Operations, State &  
5 Federal Legislation, recorded by James Moreno on  
6 occurring 01-23-2025 in the Committee Room.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon, good afternoon,  
8 welcome to the New York City Council vote on the  
9 Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal  
10 Legislation.

11 At this time please silence all electronics and  
12 do not approach the dais.

13 Chair, you may begin.

14 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: (GAVEL SOUND) (GAVELING IN)

15 Good morning, My name is Lincoln Restler, and I  
16 have the privilege of serving as the chair of the  
17 Committee on Governmental Operations, State, and  
18 Federal Legislation.

19 I'd like to start off by thanking those of my  
20 colleagues who have joined today's vote, Inna  
21 Vernikov, Vickie Paladino, David Carr of the finest  
22 borough in New York City, Brooklyn, Council Member  
23 Gale Brewer, and not a member of this committee, but  
24 a gentleman passing a great bill today, Eric  
25 Dinowitz. And on Zoom and on the phone, we have

1 Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez, who is with her  
2 gorgeous new baby, Council Member Shahana Hanif, and  
3 Council Member Jim Gennaro.  
4

5 Today, we'll be voting on my bill, Intro 77-A,  
6 which would enhance the restrictions on post  
7 employment lobbying activities for certain public  
8 servants, and Intro 587-A, sponsored by Council  
9 Member Eric Dinowitz, which would require 311 to  
10 conduct customer satisfaction surveys.

11 Over the last decade, we've seen an explosion in  
12 lobbying. In 2023, lobbyists were paid over a \$131  
13 million to lobby City officials. That is about double  
14 what they brought in just a decade ago.

15 Governing doesn't happen in a vacuum. We all rely  
16 on external stakeholders for policy expertise and  
17 technical information, but we must ensure that there  
18 is real transparency, accountability, and integrity  
19 in our government, and that certain special interests  
20 do not have an outsized influence.

21 Unfortunately, our lobbying laws have failed to  
22 restrict the most powerful people in the Mayor's  
23 Office from capitalizing on their public service for  
24 personal gain.  
25

1  
2 The Mayor's former chief of staff, Frank Carone,  
3 was involved in the hiring of senior agency officials  
4 and making key policy decisions in the Adams'  
5 Administration. He freely, freely admitted that he  
6 was building a future lobbying practice and signing  
7 up clients while still working across the hall in the  
8 Mayor's Office right here in city government.

9 But when he left city government at the end of  
10 2022, he was legally permitted to lobby 99%, 99% of  
11 City workers the very next day.

12 The single restriction he faced was lobbying  
13 people who work in the office of the mayor, but every  
14 other mayoral agency, Parks, Sanitation, Housing,  
15 City Planning, the vast majority of City employees  
16 were fair game to Frank Carone.

17 I find this legalized corruption to be both  
18 disturbing and shocking. We are slamming the  
19 revolving door shut today. We need to ensure that  
20 public officials are committed to the public good,  
21 not enriching themselves or their clients.

22 Intro 77-A will repair our broken lobbying laws  
23 and ensure that the most senior officials at City  
24 Hall, and certain agency heads, are not able to lobby  
25

1 anyone in city government for two years after they  
2 leave office.  
3

4 We greatly appreciated the feedback that  
5 advocates and experts at our hearing, uh, the  
6 advocates and experts provided at our hearing in  
7 April, which helped us target the most problematic  
8 issues while ensuring good governance and efficient  
9 administration of the law.

10 To ensure the success of this law and all of our  
11 ethics laws, we also need to strengthen our oversight  
12 agencies. Since Eric Adams took office, OMB has not  
13 authorized the Conflicts Of Interest Board to fill  
14 any vacancies, resulting in a 16% loss in COIB staff,  
15 including two critical attorneys' roles.

16 It is imperative that we restore full funding to  
17 COIB so they can carry out the essential work of  
18 enforcing our conflicts of interest laws.

19 This bill is about protecting the integrity of  
20 our city government. New Yorkers deserve to know that  
21 our public servants are delivering for them, not  
22 special interests.

23 I'd like to thank our committee counsel, Jayasri  
24 Ganapathy and Erica Cohen, for their hard work on  
25 this. I'd especially like to thank David Seitzer,

1 from Legislative Division, for his expert guidance in  
2 the drafting of this bill as well, as well as Jeff  
3 Baker, Jeremy John, and, of course, our Speaker,  
4 Adrienne Adams.  
5

6 Most of all, I'd like to thank my chief of staff,  
7 Molly Haley, who cares about ethical government more  
8 than anyone I know, and her brilliance really guided  
9 us through every step of the way on this bill, which  
10 was a multi-year process.

11 Lastly, I'll just take a point of privilege to  
12 say I'm currently on paternity leave, but I wanted to  
13 come in today because this bill is so important to  
14 me, and I think so important to how government should  
15 work in restoring the confidence of New Yorkers in  
16 our local government.

17 I want to just thank my parents for being home  
18 with my wife today and my baby Elliot, and I want to  
19 thank my fabulous staff for just holding it down and  
20 doing such a great job in my office while I'm out on  
21 paternity leave. I really, really appreciate it. I'm  
22 lucky to have such a great team, especially Molly.

23 I would now like to turn it over to Eric Dinowitz  
24 for his remarks on his bill, which is a really great  
25 bill. I hear from constituents almost every single

1  
2 day who are infuriated that they put in a complaint  
3 to 311, it gets closed out, and nothing happened.

4 This bill will do, I think, really help us, uh,  
5 shift greater accountability to city agencies to make  
6 sure that they're following up on the things that our  
7 constituents complain about.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: That's right, thank you,  
9 Chair Restler, new father. I don't think there's a  
10 job harder in the world for a guy than being a dad.  
11 This job's nothing in comparison. And so,  
12 congratulations.

13 And thank you for your kind words about the bill,  
14 uh, Introduction number 587-A. And it's true, I think  
15 every one of our constituents who calls us said - I  
16 called 311 about a pothole; I called 311, I want a  
17 tree planted; there's garbage on the sidewalk; an  
18 illegally parked car; there's a homeless person on  
19 the sidewalk. Two seconds later, they look at their  
20 app, and it's closed.

21 And these everyday - everyday New Yorkers, have  
22 no recourse, and 311 is the vehicle through which we  
23 access our city services. And we have to ensure that  
24 that system is responsive and takes feedback directly  
25 from everyday New Yorkers. And that's what this bill



1 does. It requires a 311, to conduct... 311 to  
2  
3 conduct customer satisfaction surveys after each case  
4 is resolved and to publish monthly reports detailing  
5 the corresponding survey data. This is both  
6 quantitative and qualitative data.

7 Uh, 311 is overdue for reform, and this bill is  
8 gonna bring a basic and necessary update so that New  
9 Yorkers can properly voice their feedback, uh, in  
10 the current system.

11 As was mentioned far too often, these 311 cases  
12 are closed without agencies resolving, uh, the survey  
13 request, and we know, we get the calls to our office  
14 all the time that the issue was closed, but it wasn't  
15 resolved. And they're telling us, but this bill will  
16 require that survey and require them to publish that  
17 data.

18 Agency oversight is critical to our role here at  
19 the city council. These monthly reports detailing  
20 customer satisfaction will illustrate how agencies  
21 have been responding to 311 requests. And with this  
22 information, we, at the Council, will gain more  
23 insight into where agencies' need to be held  
24 accountable, and give us more tools to actually hold  
25 the agencies accountable to make sure they are being

1 responsive to the needs of everyday New Yorkers,  
2 because that's what we want in government. We want a  
3 government that is responsive to the needs of the  
4 people we represent. And this bill is a step forward  
5 in that because it's a step forward in fixing a 311  
6 system desperately in need of change.  
7

8 The city council is obligated to respond to New  
9 Yorkers' needs, and an improved 311 system would  
10 support that endeavor.

11 And Chair Restler, I want to thank you for your  
12 leadership on the Committee, and, of course, for  
13 being here as a new father, thank you.

14 And, of course, to my staff, Adam Staropoli, to  
15 Jenna Klaus, and all the committee staff, for their  
16 work on this bill. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you so much, Chair  
18 Dinowitz.

19 I would like to just thank, especially the  
20 members of the committee who have cosponsored our  
21 legislation, especially Gale Brewer, who has just  
22 been a real champion of good governance in New York  
23 for a very long time. So, thank you, Gale. With  
24 that... Oh, and Council Member Shahana Hanif and  
25

1 Council Member Gutiérrez for their co-sponsorship as  
2 well and their championing of good governance.

3  
4 With that, I would like to ask the Clerk to call  
5 the roll, and if I may ask Council Member Gutiérrez  
6 to be able to vote first.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Sure. Good afternoon, William  
8 Martin, roll call vote Committee on Governmental  
9 Operations, State & Federal Legislation. Both items  
10 are coupled.

11 Council Member Gutiérrez?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: (BACKGROUND NOISE) (NO  
13 AUDIBLE RESPONSE)

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Can we do that one more  
15 time, Jen?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: (BACKGROUND NOISE)  
17 (INAUDIBLE)

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Now we can hear you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Congrats! (INAUDIBLE)

20 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you. Can we an aye...  
21 or could be get a vote, though, too?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: I vote aye.

23 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Yeah, there we go. Jen, we  
24 love you, we'll talk to you later.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Good lord...

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1 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE CLERK: (INAUDIBLE) thank you.

3 Chair Restler?

4 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Aye.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Gennaro?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: Aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

8 Council Member Brewer?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote aye. Are we voting  
10 the 311 also? Okay. I like the idea, but I do worry  
11 that the material for the staff may be a little  
12 intense. And I have to say, from my experience, 311  
13 closes some cases, but not all cases. And we actually  
14 have a really good relationship with them, and I find  
15 them extremely responsive. I just want to put that on  
16 the record, thank you.

17 Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Hanif?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

21 Council Member Schulman?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: (NO AUDIBLE RESPONSE)

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Carr?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: No on Intro 77-A and aye on  
3 587-A.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

5 Council Member Vernikov?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Aye on all, except no on  
7 77-A, thank you.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Paladino?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: No on 77-A, and five on,  
10 uh... Uh, yes on 587-A.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

12 Following results, Proposed Introduction Number  
13 77-A has been adopted by the Committee with 5 in the  
14 affirmative, 3 in the negative, and no abstentions.  
15 And Proposed Introduction Number 587-A, has been  
16 adopted the Committee with 8 in the affirmative, 0 in  
17 the negative, and no abstentions.

18 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you, all.

19 With that, we will adjourn, and I look forward to  
20 seeing you all at Stated shortly.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We are keeping it open for...

22 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Oh, sorry, we're gonna keep  
23 it open for Lynn, I'm kidding, we're not adjourning.  
24 Lynn is on her way, I forgot about that. We are going  
25 to keep the roll call vote open, thank you, sorry.

(PAUSE)

COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation roll call, for the  
Committee on Governmental Operations on Proposed  
Introduction Number 77-A and 587-A, Council Member  
Schulman?

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

One second... Final vote is now... Both items  
have been adopted by the Committee with Introduction  
77-A, 6 in the affirmative, 3 in the negative, and no  
abstentions; and 587-A, is 9 in the affirmative, 0 in  
the negative, and no abstentions.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Okay, uh, that concludes  
the hearing of the Government Operations Committee.

(GAVEL SOUND) (GAVELING OUT)

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 January 25, 2025