

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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November 2, 2011
Start: 1:23 p.m.
Recess: 1:33 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
DANIEL DROMM
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Charles Barron,
Mathieu Eugene
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Jumaane D. Williams

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. We're
3 ready to start. Good afternoon. My name is
4 Daniel Dromm and I'm the chair of the Immigration
5 Committee. Today the Committee on Immigration
6 will vote on proposed Introductory Bill No. 656-A,
7 a local law to amend to Administrative Code of the
8 City of New York in relation to persons not to be
9 detained. I would like to thank Council Member
10 Melissa Mark-Viverito, the lead sponsor of this
11 very important piece of legislation and Speaker
12 Quinn for her continued interest in and
13 longstanding dedication to immigrant New Yorkers.
14 Before going any further, I'd like to now
15 recognize my colleagues who have joined us today.
16 To my left, Council Member Charles Barron from
17 Brooklyn--thank you. And to my right, Council
18 Member Mathieu Eugene from Brooklyn and Council
19 Member Jumaane Williams from Brooklyn. I guess
20 Brooklyn is in the house today.

21 [background conversation]

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: We have learned
23 from two hearings--the first in November 2010 and
24 the second that took place last month--as well as
25 from various articles and meetings with advocacy

1 organizations that the Department of Corrections'
2 current involvement with Immigrations and Customs
3 Enforcement under the Criminal Alien Program, the
4 purpose of which is to detain and remove criminal
5 non-citizens, has in fact resulted in the
6 detention and removal of individuals who have not
7 been convicted of a crime--individuals who are
8 still presumed innocent, individuals who have been
9 wrongly convicted of a crime and even victims of
10 crimes. Additionally this working relationship
11 between the Department of Corrections and
12 Immigration and Customs Enforcement has resulted
13 in deportation of thousands of immigrant New
14 Yorkers--the separation of families, the removal
15 of individuals who are breadwinners and primary
16 caretakers of their families and major
17 contributors in our community and fear within
18 immigrant communities of local law enforcement.
19 The purpose of proposed Introductory Bill No. 656-
20 A is to ensure that the Department of Corrections'
21 cooperation with ICE is solely for the detention
22 and removal of criminals. If enacted, this bill
23 would limit the Department of Corrections'
24 cooperation with ICE by creating a category of
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2 persons not to be detained, and would require the
3 Department of Corrections to complete an annual
4 report of the actions taken on immigrants in its
5 custody to be posted on its website. With that,
6 I'd like to give Council Member Mark-Viverito, the
7 lead sponsor of proposed Intro 656-A, the
8 opportunity to speak. Council Member?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

10 Thank you, Chair Dromm. I really could not be
11 happier to be here today for the Committee vote on
12 Intro 656, the bill I have sponsored that will
13 limit the collaboration between the Department of
14 Corrections and Immigration Enforcement agents.
15 Tomorrow we will make history by being the first
16 large city to pass this type of legislation. This
17 is truly a pivotal moment for New York's immigrant
18 communities and our city as a whole as we send a
19 strong message that we will no longer be complicit
20 in this country's broken immigration enforcement
21 system. Over the past year and a half, we took
22 great care to craft a piece of legislation that
23 will balance the safety of our communities with
24 the need to reform the way in which ICE agents
25 have unfettered access to New Yorkers that find

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2 themselves at Riker's. I want to thank Speaker
3 Quinn, who has shown extraordinary leadership on
4 this issue and of course, all of the advocates,
5 especially Make the Road New York, the Cardozo Law
6 School for their steadfast commitment, strong
7 support and hard work on this matter. I want to
8 thank particularly also our chair, Council Member
9 Danny Dromm, and all of the staff, especially Alex
10 - - , Rob Newman [phonetic], Jolene Beckford
11 [phonetic] and Jennifer Montalvo [phonetic].
12 Finally, I do also want to thank the Bloomberg
13 Administration, who truly came around in offering
14 their support and being willing to consider
15 additional changes to the bill that have helped to
16 ensure that it will fulfill its intent. Clearly
17 their support is important because that sends a
18 very strong message from New York City and this
19 municipality about how--what level of involvement
20 we want to have with this broken immigration
21 system. I want to thank everyone that's involved.
22 Clearly, there's a lot of work ahead of us; not
23 everything is complete with this bill, but - - a
24 long long way and I really want to thank everyone
25 that made it possible today. Thank you, Chair.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you,
3 Council Member Mark-Viverito. And now I'd like to
4 give an opportunity for Council Member Eugene to
5 make some remarks.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you
7 very much, Mr. Chair. I just want to take the
8 opportunity to thank you for your leadership and
9 also Council Member Mark-Viverito for introducing
10 and being a very strong advocate for immigrants.
11 I think this is a very important bill and this is
12 a milestone for all of us who are fighting for
13 immigrant rights, and I want to congratulate also-
14 -to commend all the advocacy groups and all those
15 who have been working to make this possible
16 because it is very important. If you think a
17 little bit about the contribution of immigrants to
18 New York City, to this country, and those people
19 who have been part of the fabric of the city and
20 for most of them, they came to the United States
21 very young. After living in the United States for
22 25-30 years, those people they don't belong back
23 home; they belong to the United States. Also they
24 have families; they have children. Deporting
25 people like that we have broken families,

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2 traumatizing the children. This is not beneficial
3 for New York City. And by trying to prevent that
4 to happen, I think it is a win-win situation. I
5 commend all of those who have been part of that
6 and this is a big milestone. We have to continue
7 to fight and to make sure that immigrants are
8 respected and they are treated with dignity.
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you,
11 Councilman Williams?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank
13 you, Mr. Chair. Congratulations to the Chair and
14 a big congratulations to Melissa Mark-Viverito. I
15 think this is a fantastic bill. It's an amazing
16 bill that we're getting through here. It is
17 historic as you mentioned. Even more
18 congratulations for getting the administration to
19 be agreeing with it--that's a feat in and of
20 itself. I'm hoping--I imagine this is going to go
21 through pretty easily. Both my parents are from
22 the Caribbean. I'm a first generation Brooklynite
23 [phonetic] from immigrant parents. The vast
24 majority of my district is also immigrants--just
25 like a good portion of New York City. This does

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2 hit very, very close to home. I'm hoping we can
3 also build on this and close some of the things
4 that I think are missing, such as making sure that
5 people arrested for marijuana use and very small
6 things that are being abused don't still catch
7 people in the places that we haven't closed up,
8 but congratulations.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you,
10 Council Member Williams. And now Council Member
11 Barron.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you
13 very much. I just wanted to say that this
14 legislation hopefully will have greater impact on
15 the whole question of immigration even nationally.
16 When immigrants were European, no question, there
17 was discrimination against Italians, Irish,
18 Germans, but they basically made it through
19 because of the complexion of their skin. White
20 immigrants had a way of making it up the ladder in
21 spite of the discrimination, but when immigration
22 because African and Caribbean and Latino and
23 Asian, all of a sudden, we want to build walls; we
24 want to criminalize instead of making them
25 citizens. Immigrants contribute tremendously to

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2 the economic base of this country and this city in
3 particular to the intellectual and cultural base
4 of this city and this legislation is providing
5 some leadership in the direction to bring greater
6 respect to immigrants and see them not as illegal
7 aliens like some people from another plant, but
8 from undocumented individuals and sometimes
9 residents who are not having citizenship yet, and
10 they should be getting the respect that everybody
11 else gets because of the great contributions.
12 This bill heads in that direction, and so I
13 enthusiastically support it.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you,
15 Council Member Barron, and I want to say that we
16 have also received written testimony from
17 Manhattan Borough President, Scott Stringer, which
18 will be put into the record as well. If there are
19 any comments from the audience, we'll take them
20 now. Seeing none, we'll go to the vote.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
22 Committee Clerk. Roll call vote in the Committee
23 on Immigration Introduction 656-A. Council Member
24 Dromm?

25 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Barron?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Eugene?

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Williams?

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: An

enthusiastic aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of

four in the affirmative, zero in the negative and
no abstentions, item is adopted. Members, please
sign the Committee Report. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Okay. Thank

you very much. This meeting is adjourned.

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: So we're going

to reopen the meeting and leave it open for about
15 minutes more so that any council member who is
absent can have the opportunity to vote. Thank
you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member

Rodriguez?

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: The final vote in

the Committee on Immigration is now five in the

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affirmative, zero in the negative and no

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abstentions.

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CHAIRPERSON DROMM: This meeting is

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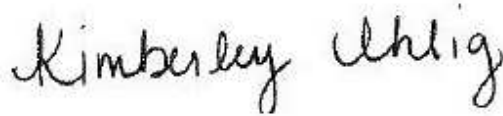
adjourned.

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[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Signature _____

Date _____11/16/11_____