

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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October 10, 2012
Start: 1:15 p.m.
Recess: 1:22 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
ANNABEL PALMA
Chairpersons

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Maria del Carmen Arroyo
Gale A. Brewer
Helen D. Foster
Brad S. Lander
Stephen T. Levin
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
James G. Van Bramer
Ruben Wills

CHAIRPERSON PALMA: Good afternoon everyone, and thank you for being here. I am joined by my colleagues in government Council Member Helen Diane Foster from the Bronx, Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo from the Bronx, Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez from Manhattan, Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer from Queens and myself, Annabel Palma, chair of the General Welfare Committee. We are here today to vote on three bills, whose goal is to help youth and young adults apply for public assistance. The first of the three bills is proposed Intro 648-A. This bill will require HRA and DYCD [phonetic] to publish information on their websites relating to the process for young adults age 16 through 20 applying for or receiving public assistance. The second bill, proposed Intro 649-A, would require HRA to clarify the process for serving youth and young adults age 16 through 24 receiving public assistance, and the final bill, proposed Intro 657-A, will require HRA to collect and report data related to access of individuals age 16 through 24 to public assistance. These three pieces of legislation came out of a General Welfare

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2 Committee oversight hearing held in June 2011. At
3 that hearing, we examined the barriers that youth
4 and young adults face in accessing public
5 assistance. As well, we learned about challenges
6 that exist in the application process, such as
7 long wait times at HRA job centers, HRA's failure
8 to provide complete or accurate information about
9 eligibility or to adequately assess the individual
10 needs of applicants in some cases. These
11 challenges affect anyone applying for public
12 assistance regardless of age; however, we heard
13 from advocates that youth and young adults face a
14 unique set of challenges and when applying for
15 public assistance, there is a need to create
16 legislation that would improve not only their
17 ability to access this assistance, but also to be
18 aware of their rights to obtain education,
19 training or employment. Today we are here to vote
20 on this legislation, which would ensure that HRA
21 will take the special needs of youth and young
22 adult applicants into account. For example,
23 anyone has the right to apply for public
24 assistance regardless of age, but unfortunately
25 some staff seems to be unaware of this policy.

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2 The Committee has heard repeatedly that HRA
3 sometimes turns youth and young adult applicants
4 away simply because of their age. Additionally
5 federal and state laws clearly recognize the
6 importance of education for young people who
7 receive public assistance; however, the committee
8 has heard reports that HRA often does not connect
9 youth to the educational services they need or
10 want. Since HRA does not track data by age, we do
11 not know how many youth and young adults are
12 negatively affected by these practices or how many
13 of them are able to navigate the system. The
14 legislation being considered today at today's
15 hearing seeks to create a system that is most
16 successful in ensuring youth and young adults
17 understand their rights, including the right to
18 participate in educational or training programs in
19 order to satisfy their work requirements. The
20 legislation will require the answers to frequently
21 asked questions by youth and young adults to be
22 available on HRA's and DYDC's website, so that
23 youth and young adults are aware of their rights
24 when they visit and HRA job center to apply for
25 benefits. Also the legislation will require HRA

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2 to clarify the process it has in place for
3 connecting young people to educational and
4 employment opportunities and making staff aware of
5 these policies. Lastly, since HRA does not
6 currently track data by age, the legislation will
7 require HRA to collect and publically report data
8 related to youth in order to provide the Council
9 and interested members of the public with a better
10 understanding of the needs of youth and young
11 adults applying for public assistance. We look
12 forward to continuing to work with HRA to ensure
13 that our city is offering an effective safety net
14 to those who need it most including youth and
15 young adults applying for this critical
16 assistance. I will now open the hearing, and ask
17 Billy, our clerk, to call the roll, but before he
18 calls the roll I want to acknowledge that the
19 prime sponsor of this bill, Council Member Gale
20 Brewer and actually it was under her leadership
21 last June that the hearing was able to take place.
22 I was unable to attend to hearing because I was on
23 bed rest, so I want to thank her for her
24 leadership on Intro 648-A, and for doing the
25 oversight hearing. And we also have been joined

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2 by Council Member Brad Lander from Brooklyn. I
3 really want to thank the Committee members for
4 being here, and getting this meeting started on
5 time. Call the roll? Oh, and I'm sorry—and Steve
6 Levin from Brooklyn has also joined us.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
8 committee clerk. Roll call vote, Committee on
9 General Welfare. Council Member Palma?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: I vote aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Brewer?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I certainly
13 vote aye. I want to thank Council Member Palma.
14 I want to indicate that this is an example when a
15 hearing and a report—two wonderful organizations
16 that brought the issue to light having discussed
17 it with young people, done a huge amount of
18 research academic and practice and were able to
19 come up with some solutions that I hope address
20 the problem, but it's a good example of how the
21 public can contribute to legislation that
22 legislation hopefully will assist the support
23 needed for these young people. This is a group of
24 young people who I know extremely well having had
25 a lot of foster care kids myself and seeing the

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2 challenges that all young people in this age group
3 face. I also want to thank the staff. I know my
4 legislation goes through the 21, but the other
5 legislative mandates go through the H24 and that
6 was a challenge for the administration. I want to
7 thank the staff for figuring out how to craft
8 legislation that really is meaningful. I vote aye
9 and thank you, Chair.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Foster?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FOSTER: Aye on all.

12 Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Arroyo?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: [no audible
15 response]

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rodriguez?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Lander?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Aye [off
20 mic].

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Levin?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Van Bramer?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of

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2 eight in the affirmative, zero in the negative, no
3 abstentions, all items have been adopted.

4 Members, please sign the Committee reports. Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON PALMA: Thank you again
7 for being present at the Committee and I will now
8 close this hearing.. I will keep the hearing open
9 for five minutes, but I really thank everyone who
10 was here on time.

11 [long pause]

12 CHAIRPERSON PALMA: We have been
13 joined by Council Member Wills.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation roll
15 call, Committee on General Welfare. Council
16 Member Wills?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote in the
19 Committee on General Welfare now stands at nine in
20 the affirmative, zero in the negative and no
21 abstentions.

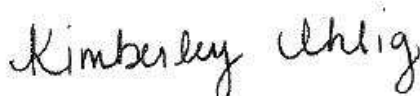
22 CHAIRPERSON PALMA: The meeting is
23 adjourned.

24 [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 10/24/12