

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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January 29, 2014
Start: 2:11 p.m.
Recess: 2:26 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,
16th Fl.

B E F O R E:
COREY JOHNSON
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Maria del Carmen Arroyo
Rosie Mendez
Mathieu Eugene
Jimmy Van Bramer
Peter Koo
Inez Barron
Robert Cornegy
Rafael Espinal
Vincent Gentile

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COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Chair of the Council's Health Committee. Before I give an overview of today's vote, I would like to introduce my fellow members of the Health Committee. We are joined by Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo, my predecessor, who was a dedicated chair of the Health Committee for four years and did an excellent job in this role. I know that I have big shoes to fill coming after Council Member... yes, well, thank you. Returning to the committee are Council Members Rosie Mendez, Council Member Mathieu Eugene and Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer. I'd like to also welcome to the Committee Council Members Peter Koo, Inez Barron, Robert Corney and Rafael Espinal. This is a stellar team and I am excited to be serving with all of you on this committee. The Health Committee is one of the busiest committees in the council and we have a lot of important work to do and we're going to hit the ground running, so stay tuned and I look forward to collaborating with all of you on the issues that matter to all the folks on this committee.

Today, the committee will vote to file the Mayor's veto and vote to repass Introduction

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2 Number 933-A, which would establish and animal
3 abuse registry, prohibit people convicted of animal
4 abuse crimes from owning or residing with an animal
5 and establish criminal penalties for failing to
6 comply with the law. This bill was sponsored by
7 former Council Member Peter Vallone, Jr. and will
8 ensure that animals do not end up in the hands of
9 those likely to mistreat them. This will be the
10 third hearing on Intro Number 933-A. The first
11 hearing on this bill was held on June 7th of 2013.
12 The committee heard and received testimony from the
13 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Animal
14 Care and Control, representatives from the Brooklyn
15 District Attorney's Office, the ASPCA and other
16 animal advocates and stakeholders. The bill was
17 subsequently amended and unanimously adopted by the
18 council in December of 2013. The question before
19 the committee today is shall Intro Number 933-A be
20 repassed notwithstanding the objections of the
21 Mayor? The bill has been discussed at length by
22 this committee and it was overwhelmingly passed by
23 the full council in December. Today, I recommend
24 to the committee that we file the Mayor's veto and
25 repass this legislation. I would like to thank all

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2 of the advocates who worked with the council over
3 the course of these hearings to improve this bill.
4 Before the sponsor of this legislation speaks, I
5 would like to thank committee staff Jeff Campagna,
6 the legislative counsel that drafted this
7 legislation. Thank you, Jeff. Daniel Hafitz,
8 [phonetic] who is the committee counsel. Thank
9 you, Dan and Crystal Pawn [phonetic], the policy
10 analyst for the Health Committee, as well as
11 Krilion Francisco [phonetic], who is the finance
12 analyst. Thank you all for your hard work on this
13 in preparing for today's hearing, and with that, I
14 would like to turn it over to turn it over to
15 Council Member Gentile to make a statement on this
16 override.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you, Mr.
18 Chairman and congratulations on your chairmanship.

19 CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Thank you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I'm certainly
21 looking to working with you. This bill, as you
22 mentioned, was a bill that both Peter Vallone and I
23 worked on and we had separate bills that were
24 combined into this one bill on animal abuse
25 registry, so the law, if passed, would effectively

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2 create a registry listing anyone who has been
3 convicted of an animal abuse or cruelty and all
4 persons on the registry would be prohibited from
5 owning or possessing or having any intentional
6 contact with an animal. The registry will be made
7 available in electronic form on a need-to-know
8 basis to all law enforcement agencies, DAs, Humane
9 Societies, Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty
10 to Animals, dog or cat protective associations,
11 Animal Control officers, pet shops and animal
12 shelters and this bill now comes just at the time
13 that the NYPD and the ASPCA have announced a joint
14 partnership that expands their alliance and the
15 protection and prevention of cruelty to New York
16 City animals because NYPD will be taking the lead
17 in prosecuting and moving forward on those types of
18 crimes. So there are a lot of reasons that I think
19 we should be concerned for this because we know
20 from story after story that abusers repeat their
21 violent crimes against helpless animals and often
22 have a proclivity to become violent towards people
23 as well. So this is a way that those who are
24 convicted of these crimes will be prohibited from,
25 at least as best we can do, prohibited from

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2 recommitting a crime or hurting another animal. So
3 you know, society is judged based on how it treats
4 its most vulnerable. I think this is a great leap
5 in the right direction, so I would ask all those
6 here to vote for the override. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Thank you,
8 Council Member Gentile and again, thank you to
9 former Council Member Peter Vallone, Jr. Are there
10 any questions from the committee; from members of
11 the committee on this bill or override? Council
12 Member Mendez?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you,
14 Chair Johnson, for indulging me just a little bit.
15 Peter Vallone, when he spoke about this when we
16 passed it back in December, I just wanted to
17 reiterate the story he put forward when he thanked
18 everyone for voting for the bill. At that time, a
19 blind man fell into the subway tracks with his dog
20 and that dog was getting ready to be retired and
21 could've been put up for adoption and could've been
22 adopted by an abuser. This bill would stop that in
23 the future and that dog was reunited with the
24 owner. People gave gifts and he was able to keep
25 it as his permanent pet, but I wanted to thank

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Peter, who is no longer with us, for all the work and Vinnie for all the work they've done on this bill and just to reiterate that story for my colleagues who weren't here last December so that you know what Peter said and I hope everyone does vote to do the override. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Yes, Council Member Cornegy.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: So I just wanted to take a second to say how thrilled I am to be working with you on this committee. You know I, from Brooklyn, serve a community that is disproportionately affected by hospital closures and I want to on the record say that immediately upon you receiving this chairmanship you reached out to find out what was going on in that and so I really look forward to this body and you as chairman.

CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: [off mic] Thank you very much. Any other council members who would like to speak on the issue before us today? Council Member Barron?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. I also want to say I look forward to working on the

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2 committee under your chairmanship and with all of
3 the members that are here, especially the veterans
4 who have a lot to share and express concerns as has
5 been presented by my council member... by my
6 colleague, Council Member Cornegy, in terms of the
7 threat of closures in the hospitals in Brooklyn and
8 what I see it as is the unspoken continuation and
9 implementation of the Berger Plan. That's how I
10 see it and that's what's happening and that's
11 what's being born out in the actions. So I look
12 forward to this committee being active in that
13 regard and in terms of the bill that we'll be
14 voting on, I'm in favor of the bill. I just do
15 have a concern that those persons who are shown not
16 to be guilty are in no way penalized and we need to
17 make sure that the agency that will be implementing
18 this law will make sure that those persons will not
19 be unduly criticized when they have not been
20 convicted. I think there's an error there, but we
21 need to make sure that does not happen.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: I agree with you.
23 Do you want to speak on that or... we're okay?
24 Okay.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: You...

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2 CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Vinnie.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: The
4 registration's required upon conviction and should
5 that conviction be overturned, then that person's
6 name I would imagine the Department of Probation or
7 whoever does the sentencing or once the
8 conviction's overturned would be responsible and
9 that'll happen in the rule making to take that
10 person's name off the registry.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Great. Thank you
12 very much. Before we vote to file the Mayor's
13 veto, I just wanted to echo both Council Member
14 Cornegy and Council Member Barron's concerns. You
15 know, my district was hit hard with the closure of
16 Saint Vincent's Hospital you know, 160-year old
17 institution on the Lower West Side of Manhattan.
18 There is a press conference and rally at 3:30 today
19 outside of LICH being held by local elected
20 officials and I know that many of the folks on this
21 committee have been deeply involved in Interfaith
22 and LICH and other hospitals across the city that
23 have been facing the threat of closure, and I look
24 forward to working on that issue with all of you
25 immediately, so thank you for speaking up on that

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today. And now I want to ask the committee, shall the committee vote to file the Mayor's veto and shall the committee vote to repass the Introduction? And now we will call the roll.

COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on Health. Council Member Johnson.

CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Yes.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Arroyo.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: A moment to first congratulate our chair. I look forward to working with you. There is a great deal of work that has to be done. We are blessed with some incredible staff, who do phenomenal work behind the scenes to make us all look and sound really smart, but also a body of advocates in the community that are relentless in their pursuit to make sure that we're paying attention, so the work is much. Take vitamins. [laughter] But I think you're surrounded by a very good support system and you will be very successful and I hope to be part of that body of support that you will get and I vote aye.

CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Thank you, council member.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Mendez.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: If I may, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Of course.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Ditto on everything she said, Council Member Arroyo, and I vote aye.

CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Eugene.

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: May I explain my vote for one second? Thank you very much. I just want to congratulate Chair Johnson. Congratulations and I want to also... the sentiment of my colleagues, the Committee on Health is a very, very, very important one and as a medical doctor myself by training, this is a committee I consider it very highly and I think that we are going to work together because there is a lot to do, especially, as Council Member Barron said, you know, this is the implementation of the Berger Commission... the Berger Commission. It doesn't make sense that we are closing hospitals in New York and as a matter of fact, we are supposed to reinforce and need more resources for the hospital

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2 because I remember after Sandy, in the aftermath of
3 Sandy, I went to visit some hospitals and what I
4 saw it was shocking. I was shocked to see that
5 because when I went to the emergency rooms and I
6 saw so many patients close to each other and the
7 nurses and the doctors you know couldn't even
8 circulate freely, so just imagine if we get another
9 tragedy you know, in New York City, we would be in
10 trouble so that means I think that we, in this
11 committee, we will have to come together and be
12 creative and advocate very strongly you know, for
13 the all the hospitals in Brooklyn because it is the
14 responsibility of the government to provide high
15 quality of health care to everybody, especially
16 preventive medicine because if we don't talk
17 preventing when we're sick, the government is going
18 to be in trouble because when people are healthy
19 they are able to work to sustain and maintain their
20 family and also to pay taxes and if they are not
21 healthy to work, we in the government will have to
22 take care of them and it's going to be lose-lose
23 situation. Congratulations again, Mr. Chair and I
24 vote yes.

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2 CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Thank you,
3 Council Member.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Koo. Van Bramer.

5 [crosstalk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: And also I want to
7 take a moment to explain my vote. First, I want to
8 congratulate the chairman and I look forward to
9 working with you and the staff. We hope to make
10 this committee one of the most productive
11 committees in the council and we want to make sure
12 we make New York City one of the most healthy
13 cities in the nation and in the world you know, so
14 congratulations. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Thank you, council
16 member.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Van Bramer.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: First,
19 congratulations to our new Chairman, Corey Johnson,
20 who I've known for a long time and I look forward
21 to his leadership and also a great thanks to our
22 outgoing chairwoman, Maria del Carmen Arroyo for
23 everything that she has done for our city as well.
24 So with that I vote aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Barron.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Cornegy.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Espinal.

COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Congrats,
Chairman Corey Johnson and I look forward to
continuing working with you and I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of nine in
the affirmative, zero in the negative and no
abstentions, Items has been adopted.

CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Thank you all.
Before we adjourn, I again just want to say thank
you to Maria del Carmen Arroyo, who met with me
yesterday and has been so generous and gracious and
I look forward to working with her and learning
from her, so thank you. [applause]

[gavel]

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. 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.



Date: 01/30/2014