

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

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February 25, 2015
Start: 12:55 p.m.
Recess: 01:00 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:
ERIC A. ULRICH
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
ALAN N. MAISEL
ANDREW COHEN
FERNANDO CABRERA
PAUL A. VALLONE

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Good afternoon

everyone. I'm Council Member Eric Ulrich, Chair of the Council's Veterans Committee. Before we begin our hearing on the city's veterans treatment courts the committee will vote on three pieces of legislation that will significantly improve and reform upon the relationship between New York City's veterans and the city government that represents them. First we'll vote on two bills that will strengthen the Veteran's Advisory Board. Proposed Intro number 6-11A sponsored by Council Member Mathieu Eugene from Brooklyn and Intro 619-A which I have sponsored. We have heard veterans express their desire for more representative transparent and accountable veterans advisory board. And these bills will accomplish those goals. Proposed Intro number 6-11A would add two more members to the board to allow for wider representation and would provide for publically available email addresses for veterans to contact individual board members directly with their comments questions or concerns. Proposed Intro 6-19A would ensure that public meetings are held in

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2 all five boroughs in advance and that an advance
3 notice is given and that meetings are broadcast for
4 those unable to attend in person. It would also
5 require the board's annual report, include
6 recommendations for Mova [sp?] and the city council
7 if appropriate. These reforms mean that the voices
8 of veterans across the city would be more clearly
9 heard by their government. We'll also be voting on
10 Intro number 600 sponsored by Council Member Paul
11 Vallone of Queens which would provide better data
12 about how many veterans across the city apply for
13 and receive services to which they are eligible
14 based upon their military service. Before I urge my
15 colleagues to vote aye on all three pieces of
16 legislation and before we ask the clerk to call the
17 role I would ask Council Member Vallone and Eugene
18 if they would like to speak on their bills prior to
19 the vote. Council Member Vallone.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you Chair
21 Ulrich. It's a very proud day for me and especially
22 for my first bill as one of the new council members
23 to proudly say it's on behalf of the veterans. I
24 couldn't think of a better group forever know now
25 when my kids say dad what was your first bill was

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2 on behalf of our mighty mighty veterans. So I'm
3 very honored. And thank you for all the support
4 groups that have taught me along the way and the
5 first year and I thank, thank you Chair Ulrich,
6 Eric Bernstein, Lyle Frank, Laura Poppa, the staff
7 that wouldn't get this done. And simply put so many
8 times that veterans come before us and we are just
9 looking for the data on the actual services
10 received b our vets, how many vets have actually
11 applied for city services so that we can better
12 address the amount of veterans that still need
13 those services. So that's a real simple explanation
14 of our bill. So thank you Chair Ulrich.

15 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Thank you Council
16 Member Vallone. We're also going to hear from
17 Council Member Eugene prior to the vote.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very
19 much Mr. Chair. And let me take the opportunity to
20 thank you you know from the bottom of my heart for
21 your leadership on bringing those bill to vote you
22 know. So I want to congratulate you and
23 congratulate also Council Member Vallone. And I
24 want to say that you know this is a moral
25 obligation of the city as a country, as a society,

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2 to do everything that we can do to make sure that
3 we improve the quality of life of our veterans.
4 Those brave men and women who made the utmost
5 sacrifice for all of us and it, it makes sense.
6 This is a common sense of all three legislation, a
7 common sense legislation you know that's
8 demonstrate that we in the city council, we
9 appreciate... value, service, the utmost service of,
10 of, from the veterans. And trying to establish the
11 good relationship in the city and the veteran is
12 very very important. And getting the veteran
13 involved also is very important. Because they know
14 the issues of veterans. They have to be on the
15 table. When we have an... in any institution... veteran
16 we should have a veteran part of the system because
17 they have been there. They know the... and I think
18 our soul... see that... New York be... very important...
19 also to make sure we reach out to, to veteran all
20 over the city in the five boroughs. We got to go
21 through them. We got to make sure that we let them
22 know about the services... Again congratulation to my
23 colleagues and this is a very important you know
24 step. This is not enough but this is a good step
25 you know toward what we have to do. Thank you. And

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2 also I want to take the opportunity to thank all
3 the veterans who are here today and all the
4 advocate working hard on behalf of, to all of you
5 veterans thank you very much for your service.
6 Thank you. Thank you Mr. Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Thank you Council
8 Member Eugene was my predecessor did an excellent
9 job chairing this committee. And we're so pleased
10 to be passing your bill today. I also want to thank
11 the administration, the de Blasio administration,
12 the Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs,
13 Commissioner Doctor Laurie Sutton for their help in
14 crafting these bills and working and listening to
15 the advocates leading up to this day as well as
16 Eric Bernstein the Committee Council, Kevin Ryan
17 our Policy Analyst, John Russell our finance
18 Analyst, and of course Redmond Haskins for all of
19 their hard work and I urge all of my colleagues to
20 vote aye on all three bills and I'll ask the clerk
21 to call the roll.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: William Martin
23 committee Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on
24 Veterans. Chair Ulrich.

25 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Yes.

1 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Cohen.

2 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: [off mic] Council
3 Member Vallone and..

4 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Aye.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Maisel.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Vallone.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: By a vote of
10 four in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and
11 no abstentions all items have been adopted.

12 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: Thank you very
13 much. We will leave the role open for Council
14 Member Cabrera for one hour. And if he can get here
15 during the, at any point during the hearing on
16 Veterans Treatment Court we'll simply change the
17 tapes an allow him to vote in the affirmative. So
18 thank you very much. Thank you. Alright so just a
19 public service announcement before begin the 1:00
20 hearing. We're just waiting for the Sergeant of
21 Arms to switch the tapes to record the proceedings.
22 But Redmond just reminded me if any member of the
23 public from any group or any individual would like
24 to speak or participate today you have to fill out
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2 a slip from the back of the room with the Sergeant
3 at Arms. We only have several here and I imagine
4 that there is some more folks who might want to
5 speak. So you have to fill out one of these forms.
6 Also if you have cell phone, electronic device that
7 makes a lot of noise please put it on silent or
8 vibrate or turn it off, you don't need it when
9 you're here. Alright. And he will let me know when
10 we begin. Thank you. How are you sir? Yes sir. Of
11 course. How are you? Thank you.

12 UNKNOWN FEMALE: Chairman Ulrich while
13 we're waiting for the tape to be changed if I could
14 just thank you and the entire Committee on Veterans
15 as well as the staff members for your leadership
16 and for voting these important bills forward. Thank
17 you.

18 CHAIRPERSON ULRICH: We could turn the
19 tape on for that if you like. I, I'd like to get
20 that on the record actually. Are we ready sir in
21 the back? We're ready. Okay so let's..

22 [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 March 12, 2015