

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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December 15, 2015
Start: 11:31 a.m.
Recess: 12:00 p.m.

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

B E F O R E: YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Daniel R. Garodnick
James Vacca
Margaret S. Chin
Stephen T. Levin
Deborah L. Rose
James G. Van Bramer
David G. Greenfield
Costa G. Constantinides
Carlos Menchaca
I. Daneek Miller
Antonio Reynoso
Donovan J. Richards

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

2 [sound check, pause]

3 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [gavel] Good
4 morning. Welcome everyone to today's hearing of the
5 Transportation Committee. I'm Council Member Ydanis
6 Rodriguez, Chair of the Committee, and I'm joined by
7 my colleague Council Member Vacca, Chin, Richards,
8 Rose, Constantinides and Van Bramer. This morning we
9 will vote on two bills related to ending the horrible
10 crime of leaving the scene of a crash, otherwise know
11 as hit and run offenses. These two bill sponsored by
12 Council Member Van Bramer and myself will strengthen
13 civil penalty on all persons who flee the scene of a
14 crash without reporting as increased reporting
15 requirements for all hit and run crashes. On Intro
16 603, the highest penalties for repeat offenders can
17 reach up to \$20,000. Hit and run crashes are the
18 most outrageous because drivers literally leave
19 people to die without checking if they are okay or
20 calling an ambulance. This is unacceptable and we
21 will not tolerate it in New York City. Hit and run
22 is an epidemic that we are committed to eradicate.
23 Intro 603 will require the NYPD to report more
24 diligently when it comes to hit and run crashes. It
25 was revealed during our last hearing that nearly

2 40,000 hit and run crashes occurred in New York City
3 this year. We need to know more about who are
4 committing these crimes, and how the NYPD is
5 responding. Too many families are left devastated by
6 these tragic occurrences, and we must take action to
7 put an end to them. I also want to point out that we
8 are acting on the city--on the city level because of
9 inaction in Albany around hit and run offenses. The
10 drunker driver's loop hole continues to exist making
11 it more of an official for drunk drivers to leave a
12 scene of a crash than to stay and report it. This
13 city penalty are our way of showing how important the
14 City take this violation, and we greatly urge our
15 partners in government to follow suit.

16 I also want to acknowledge Ms. Urabia
17 Nelson who was the victim of a hit and run crash in
18 Queens on Sunday where she sacrificed her body to
19 save the life of her five-year-old niece. The driver
20 then flee the scene leaving Ms. Nelson bleeding on
21 the pavement. While I commend the work of the NYPD
22 in apprehending the suspected--the suspected driver
23 who was driving with a suspended license, these
24 crashes happen way too often. My thoughts and
25 prayers are with Ms. Nelson as she struggles to

2 recover in critical condition at Jamaica Hospital.
3 Before we begin, I would like to thank my committee
4 staff Counsel Kelly Taylor, Policy Analyst Jonathan
5 Messarano, Gafar Zaaloff, as well as my Chief of
6 Staff Carmen de la Rosa and my Deputy Chief of Staff
7 Rosa Murphy. I now offer Council Member Van Bramer
8 an opportunity to speak on Intro 603 and 604 as my
9 co-sponsor of this bill.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you,
11 very much [coughs] Mr. Chair and all of the members
12 of the committee. I am very proud to sponsor along
13 with the chair these two very important bills. As
14 you noted, at our hearing two weeks ago, it was
15 revealed that nearly 40,000 hit and run crashes have
16 occurred so far this year alone. I think that number
17 stunned and shocked all of us who were there. But
18 also, there are well over 4,000 instances this year
19 already alone where a car driven by a human being hit
20 another human being and left the scene of that crash.
21 Over 4,000 times a person was left to possibly die in
22 the street. This is a runaway epidemic in our city,
23 and we have to take a stand. That's why I'm proud to
24 be a part of the City Council and this Transportation
25 Committee, and sponsor these two bills. 603 will

2 establish the most significant civil penalties ever
3 for hit and run drivers, and repeat hit and run
4 driver. That's an incredibly important tool and
5 statement for us to say that this is an outrage that
6 cannot and must not continue. Intro 604 very
7 importantly requires the NYPD to enhance reporting of
8 hit and run crashes, building upon Local Law 5 of
9 2014, quarterly reports on serious hit and runs
10 investigated by the collision investigation squad. It
11 will now include information on how often the NYPD
12 issues a notice of violation for civil penalties.
13 These are incredibly important bills. We cannot
14 bring back Ovidio (sp?) O'Neal, who was killed just
15 this week in Corona on Northern Boulevard nor Luiz
16 Bravo who was 19 years old when he was struck and
17 killed in Woodside in my district. Nor can we bring
18 back Kumar Raganoff (sp?) or Karen Phares (sp?) who
19 were killed by hit and run drivers in Long Island
20 City last year alone. Those are just four names,
21 four families that are representative of so many more
22 needless tragedies. These are horrible crimes,
23 horrible crimes an as the chair said, much more must
24 be done on the state level. But I'm proud to be a
25 part of a City Council that is outraged at these

2 deaths, outraged at these heinous act of leaving the
3 scene of a crash, and proud to be a sponsor of these
4 two bills along with the Chair to make sure that we
5 all say with one collective voice, "No more." Thank
6 you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. When
8 we hear the TV early this morning that spoke about
9 the work that we do here, and why it is so important,
10 I want to stress again that passing this law not only
11 ensures greater accountability but also reminds
12 drivers that getting off freely is not an option.
13 Here in New York City we take hit and run crashes
14 extremely seriously, and for that reason I encourage
15 a yes vote on both bills. I know call the clerk to
16 call roll.

17 CLERK: William Martin Committee Clerk.
18 Roll call vote Committee on Transportation,
19 Introduction 603-A and 604-A. Chair Rodriguez

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I vote aye and I
21 also would like to dedicate this vote--to this vote
22 to Joseph Rivera (sic) someone that also was a victim
23 of hit and run on Christmas a few years ago, a recent
24 college grad who unfortunately lost his life after an
25 irresponsible driver hit him. A few minutes after he

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2 put the car on truck--the car in fire to get rid of
3 the evidence. I vote aye.

4 CLERK: Vacca.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I vote aye on
6 both.

7 CLERK: Chin.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Aye on both.

9 CLERK: Levin.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye on both
11 and I want to congratulate Council Member Jimmy Van
12 Bramer on this significant piece of legislation.
13 Thank you.

14 CLERK: Rose.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye on--aye on
16 both, and congratulations on very timely legislation
17 that's long overdue. Thank you.

18 CLERK: Van Bramer.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I would like
20 to dedicate my vote to my Marta Puruncajas who is the
21 mother of Luis Bravo who was killed when he was 19 in
22 Woodside on Broadway. She has been an amazing
23 advocate, a voice, a conscience never, ever allowing
24 her son's death to be in vain. So for Marta, Luis
25 and all of those who have died, I proudly vote aye.

2 CLERK: Richards.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you,
4 Chairs, and congratulations to Council Member Van
5 Bramer and thank you Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez
6 for your leadership on transportation issues. I want
7 to dedicate this vote to Urabia Nelson who is my
8 constituent who was hit in Far Rockaway just this
9 past Sunday in a hit and run who sacrificed her body
10 for her--for her child she was with who is still in
11 critical condition. So this legislation is very
12 timely, and may the gentleman who did this be hit
13 with the stiffest fine and be prosecuted to the
14 fullest extent of the law for leaving the scene of
15 the--of the accident. So with that, I vote aye.

16 CLERK: Constantinides.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: I want to
18 congratulate both Council Member Van Bramer, the
19 Majority Leader and our Chair and Ydanis Rodriguez on
20 this important legislation. Earlier this year in
21 Astoria Park at 12:30 a.m. Badine Debazio (sp?) was
22 struck down by a hit and run driver adjacent to
23 Astoria Park in the crosswalk. These types of crimes
24 are heinous, as you've mentioned, and terrible. The
25 family never recovers. Our communities never

2 recover. So this step today of making these fines
3 much more stringent. As you mentioned, we need more-
4 -more help from Albany, but this action we're taking
5 today is meaningful for our community. So
6 congratulations to you both. I proudly vote aye on
7 both.

8 CLERK: By a vote of 8 in the
9 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
10 both items have been adopted. Council Member
11 Reynoso.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye.

13 CLERK: By a vote of 9 in the
14 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
15 both items have been adopted.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you and I
17 would like to thank the Families for Safe Street and
18 Transportation Alternatives for the great leadership
19 and for helping us also to be fighting for those
20 victims that they lost the loved one, and we will
21 leave the vote open after 12:00. (sic) [pause]

22 CLERK: Continuation of Roll Call
23 Committee on Transportation. Council Member
24 Greenfield.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye on all
3 and it's interesting to note that the clerk who was
4 missing from Land Use apparently was found here in
5 Transportation. It's nice to know--it's nice to know
6 who--where people rank. I guess Land Use isn't as
7 important to a clerk as Transportation is, but
8 regardless, I wish you happy holidays, a merry
9 Christmas and a happy new year and I vote aye on all.

10 CLERK: I was hoping you would recognize
11 me without the beard, but okay. [pause]

12 Continuation of roll call Committee on
13 Transportation. Council Member Menchaca?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I vote yes on
15 all. Thank you.

16 CLERK: The vote now currently stands at
17 11 in the affirmative. [pause] Continuation of roll
18 call, Committee on Transportation. Council Member
19 Miller.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I vote aye on
21 all.

22 CLERK: The current vote now stands at 12
23 in the affirmative. [background comments]

24 Continuation of roll call, the Committee on

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2 Transportation, Introduction 603-A and 604-A.

3 Council Member Garodnick.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I vote aye.

5 CLERK: The final vote in the Committee
6 on Transportation is now 13 in the affirmative, 0 in
7 the negative and no abstentions.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you very
9 much, and with that, this committee is adjourned.

10 [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 <INSERT TRANSCRIPTION DATE>