

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES
Of the
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

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July 12, 2016
Start: 10:29 a.m.
Recess: 10:53 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway- Committee Rm, 14th Fl.

B E F O R E:
LAURIE A. CUMBO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
BEN KALLOS
DARLENE MEALY
ELIZABETH S. CROWLEY
KAREN KOSLOWITZ

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

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Good morning. We are now calling this hearing to order. Good morning. I am Council Member Laurie Cumbo. This hearing of the Committee on Women's Issues is now called to order. I would like to thank you all for coming today. I'd also like to thank the members of the Committee on Women's Issues that are present; Council Member Ben Kallos and Council Member Karen Koslowitz. And I thank you for being here on this beautiful sunshiny summer day. I'd like to thank the staff on the Committee on Women's Issues; Counsel Anita Killowan [sp?] and Policy Analyst Joan Pavolni [sp?] for their work in preparing for today's hearing. I'd also like to thank Monica Abend, my Chief of Staff, for all of her work in making today possible. I want to commend my colleague Council Member Robert Cornegy as well as Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams for championing this issue and for putting forth legislation that would serve to reduce some of the barriers to breastfeeding that mothers in New York City face every day. I applaud them not only for their stewardship but also for being men and recognizing that this is an important and

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2 critical issue for families. I am a proud prime
3 sponsor and I'm happy to move this legislation to a
4 vote today. Today we'll be voting on proposed intro
5 1063-A, a local law to amend the administrative
6 code of the city of New York in relation to
7 requiring lactation rooms in certain locations
8 providing services to the public. The bill
9 sponsored by Council Member Robert Cornegy, myself,
10 and Council Member Corey Johnson would require that
11 every job center, SNAP center, and medical
12 assistance center of the Department of Social
13 Services Human Resources Administration as well as
14 every city owned borough office of the
15 administration for children services and the
16 Nicholas Scoppetta Children's Center and every
17 health center operated or maintained by the
18 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to make at
19 least one lactation room available upon request to
20 an individual utilizing onsite services.
21 Breastfeeding can be a cornerstone to children's
22 health, development, and nutrition. It also
23 benefits the maternal health as women who
24 breastfeed have decreased risk of breast and
25 ovarian cancer as well as some cardiovascular

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2 diseases. Despite the various benefits to
3 breastfeeding women all over the globe face many
4 barriers to breastfeeding. Statistics show that
5 while 77 percent of New York City moms try
6 breastfeeding numbers drop off dramatically by six
7 months. Only 38 percent are breastfeeding and only
8 five percent are doing so exclusively. Furthermore,
9 according to recent data from the New York City's
10 Department of Health women of color and women from
11 high poverty neighborhoods in New York City remain
12 less likely to breastfeed exclusively during only
13 the first five days after giving birth. Why?
14 Breastfeeding in public is undeniably stigmatized
15 and we heard so much from the advocates about the
16 reality of this. This unwarranted method of shaming
17 makes it essential for there to be safe comfortable
18 spaces where mothers can exercise their choice to
19 breastfeed their child. Proposed Intro number 1063A
20 would provide such spaces all over New York City
21 for mothers choose to breastfeed and do not feel
22 comfortable doing so in public. I'd now... at this
23 time I'd just like to thank all of you for being
24 here. I also want to recognize that this particular
25 legislation was not created to prevent women from

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2 breastfeeding in public but it is to provide safe
3 spaces. We certainly still encourage the stigmas
4 around breastfeeding in public. All women should be
5 able to have that freedom and that option without
6 the stigmas associated with it and I'm very proud
7 to support this particular legislation with all of
8 my colleagues and I am confident that this
9 legislation will inspire people not only in New
10 York state but all over the country and hopefully
11 the world. Many countries are far ahead of us in
12 this particular initiative. So I'm very pleased at
13 this particular time to recognize Council Member
14 Robert Cornegy who is the co-prime sponsor of this
15 particular legislation. He knows a great deal about
16 breastfeeding as he has six children. And I'm sure
17 those experiences have certainly prompted this
18 particular legislation. My only hope is that one
19 day I too will be able to use a lactation station.
20 So I'm now going to turn it over to my colleague
21 Council Member Robert Cornegy.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Good morning.
23 Thank you Madam Chair. Thank you for putting this
24 piece of legislation and being a co-prime sponsor
25 on it. I want to thank the borough president of

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2 Brooklyn for his... for his support of... of the bill.
3 I just think that it's time in the city that we
4 recognize the need and provide the space and
5 environment. We talk about healthy options and we
6 know that there's no greater or healthy option than
7 a mother's milk. So just being able to be
8 responsible for... on behalf of my wife and six
9 wonderful children this actually... this legislation
10 came out of the need as my wife as an executive who
11 was having difficulty either... either pumping or
12 expressing milk in closets and in bathrooms and in
13 executive facilities across the city of New York.
14 I... I promised her that if I had the opportunity and
15 I could partner with my colleagues I would do
16 something and provide a reasonable accommodation
17 for mothers who... who needed to have space. Now
18 while we understand that... that it is well within
19 the rights of women to breastfeed anywhere at any
20 time in the city just providing a safe clean space
21 in addition to that I think was important. So I
22 just want to thank all of my colleagues and
23 encourage everybody to vote yes on this bill. Thank
24 you Madam Chair.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. And we
3 will now roll call for a vote.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: William Martin,
5 Committee Clerk. Roll call vote; Committee on
6 Women's Issues, Introduction 1063A. Chair Cumbo.

7 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I am so proud of
8 Council Member Robert Cornegy as well as First Lady
9 Michelle Cornegy. And I'm just very proud of this
10 particular piece of legislation because it will
11 finally get us back to the basics of what breasts
12 are really for. And so this legislation is really
13 very important and I'm proud to vote aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Koslowitz.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I vote aye
16 and I'd like my name added to this piece of
17 legislation.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Kallos.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Proud to be a
20 sponsor and I proudly vote aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: By a vote of
22 three in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and
23 no abstentions item has been adopted.

24 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you. And
25 congratulations to Council Member Cornegy. I thank

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2 all of my colleagues for being here. And we are
3 going to leave the vote open for about another 10
4 minutes for additional members to arrive. And I
5 also want to thank at this time Brittany Morosi
6 [sp?] the Finance Analyst for the Committee and we
7 are continuing to make herstory [phonetic] every
8 single day in the New York City Council and I'm
9 proud to be a part of this body. We are now going
10 to leave the vote open for 20 minutes because we
11 want to make sure that every single member that is
12 part of this committee who wants to vote on this...
13 this his... herstorical [phonetic] legislation has an
14 opportunity to do so. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Continuation
16 roll call of Committee on Women's Issues,
17 Introduction 1063A. Council Member Mealy.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I vote aye on
19 all.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Council Member
21 Crowley.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I vote aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Final vote now
24 stands at five in the affirmative, zero in the
25 negative, and no abstentions.

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COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

[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. 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 July 14, 2016