

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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OCTOBER 11, 2016  
Start: 11:14 a.m.  
Recess: 11:22 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Ritchie J. Torres  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Rosie Mendez  
James G. Van Bramer  
Vanessa L. Gibson  
Donovan J. Richards  
Laurie A. Cumbo  
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.

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

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2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Thank you. Before I  
3 begin, I want to announce that our phenomenal  
4 Committee Counsel just had a baby. Faisa Malik  
5 [sp?], a baby boy, so congratulations to Faisa.  
6 She's not here, so.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: [off mic  
8 comments] Oh, no, my bad. Sorry, I get excited.

9 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Good morning  
10 everyone. My name is Ritchie Torres, and I Chair the  
11 Committee on Public Housing. I'm proud to be joined  
12 by Council Member Donovan Richards, Council Member  
13 Vanessa Gibson, Council Member Laurie Cumbo, as well  
14 as a few others, Council Member Jumaane Williams,  
15 Council Member Helen Rosenthal, and Council Member  
16 Ruben Wills. We are here today to conduct a vote on  
17 Resolution Number 1231 sponsored by Council Member  
18 Williams and myself which calls on HUD to exclude New  
19 York City and other cities with a housing vacancy  
20 rate below five percent from their Proposed Small  
21 Area Fair Market Rent Rule. The Committee heard this  
22 Resolution last week. Currently, HUD sets one Fair  
23 Market rent which is used to calculate Section 8  
24 subsidies for a large geographic area. Under HUD's  
25 proposed rule, HUD would no longer subsume New York

1 City in a large geographic area, but would instead  
2 segment New York City into small geographic areas  
3 based on zip codes which would have their own Fair  
4 Market rent. Under the proposed rule, in order to  
5 encourage mobility into higher opportunity  
6 neighborhoods, tenants in wealthier zip codes will  
7 have higher Section 8 subsidies and tenants in poorer  
8 zip codes will have lower Section 8 subsidies. It is  
9 important to note that if the proposed rule moves  
10 forward, HUD would provide no new resources for the  
11 Section 8 program. HUD expects Section 8  
12 administrators to redistribute existing resources  
13 from those tenants living in poorer zip codes to  
14 those living in wealthier zip codes, effectively  
15 punishing low-income New Yorker's for living in low-  
16 income neighborhoods. Due to this redistribution,  
17 the proposed rule could impose a crushing rent burden  
18 of up to 403 dollars a month on over 50,000  
19 households, including elderly and disabled  
20 households. While HUD's attempt at deconcentrating  
21 poverty is as laudable a public policy endeavor as  
22 any the Federal Government has ever undertaken, Small  
23 Area Fair Market Rents won't have the desired effect  
24 in New York City. In New York City, Small Area Fair  
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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

Market Rents might actually have the effect of moving families deeper into poverty. While there are many objections to the proposal, many of which were expressed by Section 8 administrators in New York City, including NYCHA and HPD, and advocates at the hearing on this issue last week, the gist of such objections is that the proposed rule just won't work in New York City. With that, I'd like to please ask the Clerk to call the role.

COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,

Committee Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on Public Housing, Resolution 1231. Chair Torres?

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Richards?

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Just want to thank Council Member Torres for his leadership in this particular area which is of great importance to my public housing residence in the Rockaways, and I think that this proposal does not and will not work for New York City for the poorest amongst us, and I'm happy to be a part of this resolution. Thank you for your leadership. I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Gibson?

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Permission to briefly explain my vote? Thank you so much Chair Torres. When we had this hearing about this last week, I think you alluded to it that it's not always a time when you can HPD, the Housing Authority and many others on the same page, but if there is ever an issue that is so grave in terms of having an impact on many of our voucher holders, it is this, and sadly it has a disproportionate impact on our borough, the borough of the Bronx. Seventy percent of my voucher holders would be affected by this. It's going to be devastating, and I am committed along with many others to doing whatever we can to make sure that New York can be exempted. So, I thank you for your leadership and certainly your passion, because behind all these numbers, the people and the families that are impacted by this are very important to all of us, not just in the Bronx, but in all the boroughs that are affected. So, I'm very proud to vote aye, and certainly look to you to continue to be a loud champion as we fight this issue until the very end. I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Cumbo?

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I echo the sentiments of Council Member Gibson, and I proudly vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: By vote of 4 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstention, Resolution has been adopted.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Thank you. With that said, this hearing is adjourned.

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah, we'll leave the vote open.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation roll call, the Committee on Public Housing, Resolution 1231. Council Member Mendez?

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Vote now currently stands at 5 in the affirmative. Council Member Van Bramer?

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote now, Committee on Public Housing Resolution 1231. Final vote is now 6 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: This hearing is  
adjourned.

[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 OCTOBER 24, 2016