

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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October 26, 2016  
Start: 3:15 p.m.  
Recess: 3:45 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.  
16<sup>th</sup> Fl

B E F O R E: STEPHEN T. LEVIN  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Annabel Palma  
Fernando Cabrera  
Ruben Wills  
Vanessa L. Gibson  
Corey D. Johnson  
Ritchie J. Torres  
Barry S. Grodenchik  
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.

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

2 [sound check, pause] [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good morning or good  
4 afternoon, everybody. I'm Council Member Steve  
5 Levin, Chair of the Council's Committee on General  
6 Welfare, and today we are here to vote on a  
7 legislative package related to foster care in New  
8 York City. This includes the following resolution  
9 and seven bills that I am proud to sponsor with  
10 several of my colleagues. We are going to be voting  
11 today on Resolution number-- Oh, sorry, we've been  
12 joined by members of the committees, the committee  
13 Fernand Cabrera of the Bronx, Corey Johnson of  
14 Manhattan, Barry Grodenchik of Queens and we are also  
15 joined by one of the sponsors of the legislation  
16 Council Member Danny Dromm of Queens and the Chair of  
17 our Education Committee. I also want to welcome  
18 everybody that's here in attendance. We will be  
19 voting today on Resolution No. 1073, a resolution  
20 calling on the State of New York, the New York State  
21 Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign  
22 legislation that would increase the amount of housing  
23 subsidy from \$300 to \$600 per month, and extend the  
24 age of eligibility from 21 to 24 for youth who have  
25 aged out of foster care, and that is sponsored by

2 Council Member Rafael Salamanca of the Bronx.

3 Introduction 1187 sponsored by Council Member Danny

4 Dromm in relation to a report on obtaining government

5 issued identification for youth, and I'll be asking

6 Council Member Dromm to say some remarks on

7 Introduction 1187.

8 Introduction 1190, which I have sponsored

9 is in relation to a re-to a report on the educational

10 continuity of children in foster care. Introduction

11 1191 sponsored by myself and Council Member

12 Grodenchik is in relation to certain children who

13 have spent the greatest length of time in foster care

14 and ensuring that we have an accurate picture of what

15 goes into those children's cases, and what is leading

16 children staying in foster care for extended periods

17 of time. Introduction 1192 sponsored by myself and

18 Council Member Richards that will create a foster

19 care task force. We're very excited about that.

20 Introduction 1197 sponsored by the Public Advocate

21 Letitia James, Council Member Julissa Ferreras-

22 Copeland and myself in relation to information

23 collected and reported about youth in foster care.

24 Introduction 1199 sponsored by Council Member

25 Richards, Council Member Eugene and myself in

2 relation to foster care experience surveys, and  
3 finally Introduction 11-1205, Council-sponsored by  
4 Council Member Laurie Cumbo in relation to producing  
5 a report having ACS report on the high school  
6 graduation rates of youth in foster care. I'm proud  
7 to have sponsored three of the bills that we are  
8 voting on today especially legislation that would  
9 require the Administration for Children Service-  
10 Children's Services to create three concurrent five-  
11 year plans to address sys-systemic barriers to  
12 placing and youth who have spent at least two years  
13 in care with a permanent family.

14 Last year the Council, this Council  
15 posted- I'm sorry, those are consecutive five-year  
16 plans. Last year, the Council posted a Foster Care  
17 Shadow Day. I want to give special credit to the  
18 young man Donald fields who brought that idea to our  
19 attention, and worked with us to put that Foster Care  
20 Shadow Day together, and that brought together  
21 members of the Council's General Welfare and Youth  
22 Services Committee with young people who are in the  
23 foster care system, or who have recently aged out of  
24 the foster care system. For me and for many of my  
25 colleagues that experience left a lasting impression

2 on us, and that is to increase the dialogue here at  
3 the Council about how we can better serve the  
4 thousands of young people that spend time in foster  
5 care each year. To prepare for our first hearing on  
6 these bills, I hosted a follow-up meeting with many  
7 of the same youth that attended the Shadow Day. We  
8 had a robust conversation about their experiences in  
9 care, and they provided fantastic insight that helped  
10 shape some of the legislation that we are voting on  
11 today. I would like to thank all of the young people  
12 who shared their stories with us. Your input has  
13 been and will continue to be critical to improving  
14 the foster care system today, and for generations to  
15 come. In particular, I would like to thank my  
16 wonderful interns who have subsequently worked with  
17 us over the course of the summer and into the fall,  
18 Ivan Mendez and Anna Sanchez, as well as those young  
19 people who provided testimony at our hearing Julio  
20 Omedo, Brianna Hayes, Annie Keen, Sheldon Edwards and  
21 Frances DePalo. I would like to also thank the  
22 providers and advocates who generously contributed  
23 their time and expertise to ensure that the strength—  
24 to ensure the strength of these bills. In  
25 particular, I would like to thank Stephanie Gendell

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2 of the Citizens Committee for Children; Jessica  
3 Maxwell of the Children's Aid Society; Sarah Childs  
4 or the Rudnick (sic) Horowitz Foundation; and Jim  
5 Purcell of COFCCA. I look forward to continuing  
6 collaboration with all of those individuals as well  
7 as all the advocates that have participated  
8 throughout this process. Finally, I would like to  
9 thank our Council staff for their critical work on  
10 this legislation' counsel to the committee Andrea  
11 Vasquez; Policy Analyst Tonya Cyrus and Finance  
12 Analyst Brittany Morrissey as well as Unit Head  
13 Dohini Sompura. And I would like to thank my  
14 Legislative Director Julie Berro (sp?) who's here,  
15 Communications Director Edward Paulino and Chief of  
16 Staff Jonathan Boucher. The passage of this package  
17 will be a victory for thousands of New York City's  
18 children, and for youth for generations to come. So  
19 I urge my colleagues to vote yes on these important  
20 bills, and now I will ask my colleague Danny Dromm to  
21 say a few words on the legislation that he will be  
22 sponsoring today.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Okay, thank you,  
24 Chair Levin, for helping to advance this package of  
25 bills and in improving the lives of youth who are

2 experiencing or have experienced foster care. I also  
3 want to acknowledge the work of committee counsel  
4 Andrea Vasquez and also that of Sebastian McGuire my  
5 counsel. Finally, thanks to the ever vigilant  
6 advocates whose analysis of the data precipitated the  
7 drafting of Intro 1187-A. In 2014, the Council  
8 passed and the Mayor signed into law what would  
9 become Local Law 48. Our intention was to have a  
10 clear picture of ACS' efforts to help youth preparing  
11 to leave foster care specifically around obtaining  
12 government issued identification. The law requires  
13 reporting on the number of youth in foster care age  
14 17 or older who have obtained ID. However, the law  
15 does not require reporting on the overall number of  
16 youth in foster care age 17 or older making it  
17 impossible to compare the numbers and get a sense of  
18 the percentage of youth who were successfully  
19 obtaining ID. Intro 1187-A will add the overall  
20 number to give necessary context to the data.  
21 Obtaining ID is a— is a significant part of preparing  
22 youth for adulthood, and now the IDNYC program makes  
23 this easier than every. HRA, the administering  
24 agency listened to the voices of the youth, the  
25 advocates in my office, and as a result, the IDNYC



2 rules have provisions that facilitate the issuance of  
3 cards to youth age 14 and over. There is no excuse  
4 for these youth not to obtain or preferably more  
5 forms of government issued identification to  
6 determine how many youth have only one form of ID.  
7 Intro 1187-A specifies that the report should  
8 separate out this particular category. And finally,  
9 to facilitate the analysis of the data across time,  
10 this bill requires that the reports remain on ACS'  
11 website permanently. I encourage all members of the  
12 committee to vote for Intro 1187-A and the entire  
13 package. Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much  
15 Council Member Dromm. Before we call the roll on  
16 this vote, I want to acknowledge Brittany Morrissey  
17 who is here as our Finance Analyst. She's worked  
18 with this committee for two years now, and she's done  
19 a fabulous job, and we really commend her and thank  
20 you for her service to the New York City Council.  
21 She's going to be moving over to the Department for  
22 the Aging, and so we—we're very excited for her to—  
23 and—and moving to the next chapter of her career, and  
24 we thank her for her service to the New York City  
25 Council and to this committee very much. Thank you,

2 Brittany. [applause] And do any of my colleagues—?  
3 We've also been joined by Council Member Vanessa  
4 Gibson of the Bronx. Do any of my colleagues have  
5 anything that they want to say on these bills? Okay,  
6 hearing none, I will ask the—William Martin to call  
7 the roll on—on these seven intros and one resolution.

8 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk,  
9 roll call vote Committee on General Welfare. Chair  
10 Levin.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I vote aye on all.

12 CLERK: Cabrera.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Aye.

14 CLERK: Gibson.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Aye

16 CLERK: Johnson.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Permission to  
18 say something. Yes, so I—I want to congratulate all  
19 of my colleagues who have put forth these bills  
20 today, and I want to thank the chair for his  
21 dedication to looking at issues that affect young  
22 people in our foster system. I was really proud that  
23 in this past year's budget we were able to work  
24 together to get You've Got to Believe, which does  
25 amazing work for foster youth, a significant amount

2 of new funding from the City Council, and so many of  
3 the young people that we've talked to over these last  
4 many months whether it was at Shadow Day or whether  
5 it was in the context of these bills or getting  
6 additional funding [coughs] the stories that we hear  
7 are heartbreaking in some regards, but also  
8 incredibly inspirational to see the resilience of  
9 these young people who so badly just want to have a  
10 forever loving home, and to be able to continue with  
11 their lives and following their passions as every  
12 young person does. And for so many of them they've  
13 had the most difficult of circumstances. So, the—the  
14 bills that we're voting on today I think are just a  
15 small step in the direction that this city needs to  
16 take to continue to support these young people who  
17 really are the future of New York City. So I proudly  
18 vote aye on all.

19 CLERK: Grodenchik.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [off mic]

21 Aye on all.

22 CLERK: Salamanca.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Aye on all.

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2 CLERK: By a vote of 6 in the  
3 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,  
4 all items have been adopted.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, we're going to  
6 leave the roll open, and I want to thank my  
7 colleagues and--and following up on what you said,  
8 Council Member Johnson. You know, this is a--we're  
9 doing everything we can here at the New York City  
10 Council to improve the experience that far too many  
11 young people have in the foster care system, and it  
12 is an immense challenge to a young person that is--  
13 finds their self going from family to family and  
14 experiencing 10 or more families throughout your stay  
15 in foster care, an experience that could last years  
16 and years and years. You know, that's a challenge  
17 that many of us--beyond what many of us could even  
18 contemplate, and we as a city owe it to these young  
19 people to give them every fighting opportunity to  
20 achieve success in their lives, and there's always  
21 more that we could be doing, and this is but one step  
22 in a--in a long journey. So I want to thank my  
23 colleagues for being here today to vote on this  
24 legislation. [pause]

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2 CLERK: Continuation roll call, the  
3 Committee on General Welfare. Council Member Palma.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: I vote aye.

5 CLERK: The final vote now Committee on  
6 General Welfare, the vote stands a 7 in the  
7 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions.

8 [pause]

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The hearing is  
10 adjourned. The hearing is adjourned. [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 November 15, 2016