

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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April 4, 2017
Start: 10:54 a.m.
Recess: 11:06 a.m.

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

B E F O R E: RAFAEL L. ESPINAL, JR.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Vincent J. Gentile
Julissa Ferreras-Copeland
Karen Koslowitz
Rory I. Lancman

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

2 [sound check, pause] [background
3 comments] [gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Good morning. My
5 name is Rafael Espinal. I'm the Chair of the Consume
6 Affairs Committee. Today the committee will be
7 holding a vote on proposed Intro 746-A, a local law
8 to amend the Administrative Code of the city of New
9 York in relation to preventing the unauthorized
10 practices of immigration law. We are joined by my
11 colleagues in the committee Julissa Ferreras-Copeland
12 from Queens, Karen Koslowitz from Queens. We have
13 Danny Dromm, who's the main sponsor of this bill from
14 Queens as well. New York City is home to 3.1 million
15 immigrants, the largest immigrant population in the
16 nation. The growing numbers of immigrants, ever-
17 increasing complexities of immigration law and policy
18 as well as the large and growing backlog of the
19 immigration case says processing by authorities have
20 led to tremendous demand for assistance with
21 immigration related issues in New York City.
22 Unfortunately, shortages in affordable immigration
23 legal services as well as false advertising led many
24 immigrants to seek assistance from unauthorized and
25 sometimes unscrupulous individuals. Our immigration

2 service providers can assist individual with various
3 services such as translating forms, often secure
4 necessary original documents, and arranging for
5 fingerprints, photographs and medical exams. They
6 may not—they may not provide legal advice or
7 services. Unfortunately, many providers cross this
8 line frequently leading to devastating consequences
9 for the immigrant and their families. Additionally,
10 some ISPs overcharge clients or charge for services
11 they did not perform. These fraudulent actions put
12 vulnerable immigrants at high risk of deportation.
13 Some ISPs especially those serving Latin-American
14 communities use the term 'notarial', which often
15 misleads Spanish speaking immigrants to believe they
16 are lawyers and—authorized to provide immigration
17 legal—legal services. Existing state and local law
18 regulate this industry. Proposed Intro 746-A would
19 update local law to track the 2014 changes to state
20 law as well as expand protections to immigrant
21 consumers. Providers will be required to specify and
22 to contract their duties and limitations as well as
23 the customer's rights including providing a consumer
24 bill of rights that we produce by DCA. Additionally,
25 providers would have to post the required signage in

2 English and in the languages in which they provide or
3 offer to provide services. Providers will be
4 prohibited from offering and providing legal
5 services, and for making statements that lead a
6 customer to believe that the provider is an attorney
7 or immigration expert. The bill would also require
8 DCA to provide the Council with information regarding
9 complaints against providers as well as the
10 department's efforts to proactively investigate
11 providers and provide community education and
12 outreach. I now want to recognize the bill's
13 sponsor, Councilman Daniel Dromm for a comment on the
14 bill.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you very
16 much, Chair Espinal, and thank you for working so
17 closely with me on this for almost two years now to
18 get this passed, and I think it's very timely. Since
19 this bill was introduced in 2015, the situation has
20 gone from difficult to dire. Trump seems determined
21 to break Obama's record of deportations, but also to
22 scapegoat our immigrant families to distract from the
23 looting of this country by him and his ilk. Proposed
24 Intro 746-A represents a very tangible way the City
25 can affirm its commitment to remaining as sanctuary

2 city. Scammers are looking to prey upon the fears of
3 immigrants desperate for assistance navigating
4 complex immigration laws, a huge problem in my
5 district and throughout the city. This legislation
6 tightens requirements for immigrant service
7 providers, increase penalties for violators and
8 mandates coordination among relevant agencies.

9 Crafted with input from leading experts, Intro 746-A
10 puts New York City at the forefront of the fight for
11 justice for our immigrant communities. I want to
12 thank Consumer Affairs Committee Counsel Vacas
13 Reharik (sp?), Policy Analyst Israel Martinez and I
14 also want to give special thanks to Catalina Cruz now
15 Chief of Staff to Council Member Julissa Ferreras-
16 Copeland for working on this when she served this
17 Council to the Immigration Committee. Finally, I
18 extend my deep gratitude current Immigration
19 Committee Counsel Indiana Porta for making sure we
20 ended up with the strongest bill possible, and let me
21 also thank my Counsel Sebastian McGuire for always
22 pushing me on immigration issues, and really a strong
23 knowledge of immigration law. Thank you, Sebastian
24 for that. I encourage all my colleagues to vote for
25 this crucial legislation, which will have a huge

2 impact on our immigrant communities today. Thank you
3 very much.

4 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you
5 Councilman. Any further comments from the
6 colleagues? [background comments] The Chair
7 recommends a yes vote. Mr. Clerk, please call the
8 roll.

9 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk,
10 roll call vote Committee on Consumer Affairs.
11 Introduction 746-A. Chair Espinal.

12 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I vote aye.

13 CLERK: Ferreras-Copeland.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS-COPELAND:

15 Permission to explain my vote.

16 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Permission
17 accepted.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
19 you, Chair. I just wanted to thank Council Member
20 Dromm for his leadership on this very timely-
21 unfortunately timely piece of legislation and again
22 also to congratulate my Chief of Staff. As you
23 mentioned, had done a lot of work and for the Chair
24 to move this piece of legislation timely and
25 expeditiously, and I proudly vote aye for all of

2 those constituents that are living in fear currently
3 in our district. So I wanted to congratulate you and
4 thank you.

5 CLERK: Koslowitz.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: May I be
7 excused to explain my vote? [coughs] I just want to
8 say ditto to Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland
9 for what she has said. I agree with the same thing,
10 and congratulations to my colleague Danny Dromm for
11 this wonderful, terrific, well due legislation.

12 CLERK: Thank you. How do you vote?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I vote aye.

14 CLERK: By a vote of 3 in the
15 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstention, the
16 item has been adopted by the Committee. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: And we'll keep the
18 roll open for another 15 minutes. [pause]

19 CLERK: Continuation of roll call, the
20 Committee on Consumer Affairs. Council Member
21 Gentile.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I vote aye.

23 CLERK: Council Member Lancman.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Aye.

2 CLERK: The final vote on Introduction
3 746-A now stands at 5 in the affirmative, 0 in the
4 negative and no abstentions. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: So unanimous, this
6 bill passes unanimously with everyone in attendance.
7 With that said, this meeting 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 April 28, 2017