

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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June 27, 2017  
Start: 10:33 a.m.  
Recess: 10:40 a.m.

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

B E F O R E:  
COREY D. JOHNSON  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Rosie Mendez  
Mathieu Eugene  
Peter A. Koo  
James Vacca  
James G. Van Bramer  
Inez D. Barron  
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.  
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.  
Stephen T. Levin

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

[sound check]

[pause]

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Good morning

everyone. I'm Council Member Corey Johnson, Chair of the New York City Council's Committee on Health.

Welcome to today's hearing on Resolution No. 1433, sponsored by my friend, Council Member Steve Levin, a resolution in support of state legislation to include the coverage of in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment in the New York State insurance law.

Unfortunately, fertility issues are fairly common with about 12% of women aged 15-44 years old in the United States; they have difficulty getting pregnant and carrying a pregnancy to term, yet New York State insurance law excludes coverage for in vitro fertilization treatments. IVF is an incredible medical resource that should not be exclusively available to those who can afford the \$15,000 price tag. Deciding to grow your family should be an exciting time, not a time to clean out your savings account. Resolution No. 1433 calls on New York State to join eight states that already required IVF health insurance coverage by law.

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2 I want to thank Council Member Levin for  
3 his leadership in introducing this resolution and  
4 turn it over to him for a statement.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
6 much, Chair Johnson. I want to thank you and I want  
7 to thank Council Member Koo, Council Member Mendez;  
8 Council Member Van Bramer, who's here. I want to  
9 thank you very much for bringing this resolution to  
10 the Committee and calling on the New York State  
11 Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign Assembly  
12 Bill 528, sponsored by Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal.  
13 The bill would amend the New York State insurance law  
14 to expand health coverage to include in vitro  
15 fertilization.

16 As you said, becoming a parent is a  
17 joyous occasion; I was lucky to become a parent this  
18 year, but for many the pathway for becoming a parent  
19 is marked by loss, frustration and high medical  
20 bills. Fifteen percent of heterosexual and same-sex  
21 couples seek out and use IVF, but treatment can be  
22 time-consuming and very expensive. Just one cycle of  
23 IVF can cost between \$12-17,000; not including the  
24 cost of related hormonal medications a woman may also  
25 need to take, and many couples must go through

1 multiple cycles of treatment. However, according to  
2 a 2015 survey, only 19% of large employers cover IVF  
3 and even companies that do sometimes have outdated  
4 insurance policies that fail to cover same-sex  
5 couples. Unfortunately, there is strong disparity in  
6 the use of fertilization assistance, limiting the  
7 number of women who require and can access this  
8 necessary medical treatment. Eight states, including  
9 California and Illinois, currently require coverage  
10 of IVF and it's time that New York State join them in  
11 leading the way for healthy families.  
12

13 And so I'd like to thank Speaker Melissa  
14 Mark-Viverito and Ramon Martinez, as well as our  
15 drafter, Emily Rooney, my former Legislative  
16 Director, Julie Bero for their work on this  
17 resolution.

18 Just on a personal note, my wife and I  
19 went through in vitro fertilization and we were  
20 fortunate enough to have Emblem Insurance, which is  
21 the City employee insurance, and we also had SMMP,  
22 which is major medical for management in New York  
23 City and we were able to get coverage, and if it  
24 wasn't for that coverage, there's no way we would've  
25 been able to afford to have the coverage that

1 ultimately led to our daughter being born, Frances.  
2 And so it's my strong belief that everybody that  
3 wants to have a family should have the opportunity to  
4 have a family and people facing fertility issues is  
5 something that we don't often talk about and there's  
6 not enough information out there in the mainstream  
7 and so we need to make sure that we have good  
8 information out there and that we mandate that  
9 insurance companies here in New York State, we join  
10 with eight other states in the United States to  
11 mandate coverage to make sure that every family that  
12 wants to grow has the opportunity to do so. So thank  
13 you very much.

14  
15 CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Thank you, Steve,  
16 and this should not be a partisan issue; this is  
17 about families, so. Any comments from any of my  
18 colleagues that are here today?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I wish to be added  
20 to the resolution.

21 CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Great. Council  
22 Member Mendez would like to be added to the  
23 resolution as well and Council Member Koo would like  
24 to be added to the resolution as well.

25

1  
2 So there are no advocates to testify here  
3 today. The Legislature is come back into special  
4 session sometime this week; I'm not sure they're  
5 taking this bill up, but it's still important for us  
6 to be on the record; whether they take it up this  
7 year or next year it's important for us to pass this  
8 resolution today; we just have to make sure they see  
9 that we passed it, so we'll do that. With that, I am  
10 going to now adjourn this hearing.

11 [gavel]

12 [background comments]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: He didn't  
14 announce... did you announce I was here?

15 [background comments]

16 CHAIRPERSON JOHNSON: Council Member  
17 Vacca came in late **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I did not; I was  
19 here early; you came in late, not me.

20 [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 July 27, 2017