

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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October 30, 2017  
Start: 12:42 p.m.  
Recess: 12:46 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.  
14<sup>th</sup> 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] [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Good afternoon. My  
4 name is Rafael Espinal. I'm the Chair of the  
5 Consumer Affairs Committee. Today, the Committee  
6 will be holding a vote on Proposed Intro Bill No.  
7 1652-A, a Local Law to amend the Administrative Code  
8 of city of New York in relation to repealing the  
9 city's Cabaret Licensing Law while retaining several  
10 security measures that would be required in certain  
11 night life establishments. Today's vote on Intro  
12 1632-A represents a continuation of this committee's  
13 efforts to improve the regulation of the nightlife  
14 industry. Many of us can agree that the city's  
15 Cabaret Law is outdated and unresponsive to the ever-  
16 changing trends in the industry. From its inception  
17 in 1926, the Cabaret Law has been used to target  
18 particular establishments and has been enforced  
19 unevenly at times in a manner that was prejudiced.  
20 It is time we right this historical wrong by removing  
21 New York City's inappropriate arbitrarily enforced  
22 dancing license. On August 24<sup>th</sup>, we passed Intro  
23 Bill No. 1688, a Local Law to amend the New York City  
24 Charter in relation to establishing an Office of  
25 Nightlife and a Nightlife Advisory Board. In 1688-

2 Intro 1688 represents an important first step towards  
3 reform. I hope that with the establishment of the  
4 Office of Nightlife and a Nightlife Advisory Board we  
5 can begin the task of updating many more of our laws  
6 and regulations in order to restore and enhance the  
7 city's nighttime economy. We want to think  
8 progressively about new ideas to plan our city so  
9 that nightlife goers, artists, local residents, and  
10 government can all communicate and live in harmony.  
11 By appealing the Cabaret License, we are moving  
12 towards decriminalizing dancing in New York City. No  
13 longer will businesses need a license to allow  
14 dancing and they will not have to live in fear of the  
15 Cabaret Law being arbitrarily used against them. We  
16 acknowledge that this issue goes beyond the license,  
17 and that reforms to zoning laws are also necessary,  
18 but I am confident of the changes we are implementing  
19 today are moved in the right direction. I look  
20 forward to working with the Administration and the  
21 Nightlife Advisory Board to ensure that these next  
22 steps are taken. Proposed Intro 1652-A repeals the  
23 licensing requirements under the Cabaret Law, but  
24 establishments previously required to obtain a  
25 Cabaret License will still need to be required to

2 install and maintain security cameras, and if they  
3 employ security guards to ensure such security guards  
4 are licensed pursuant to state law and to maintain a  
5 roster of such security guards. The repeal also does  
6 not affect laws requiring compliance with other  
7 safety measures including fire, building, electrical  
8 and safety codes. Current questions about the  
9 viability of the city's nightlife are hampering New  
10 York City's cultural reputation and has erased a lot  
11 of our city's history by closing beloved venues  
12 especially during the Giuliani Administration. If  
13 the city does not take steps to repeal or  
14 significantly modernize the Cabaret Laws, we risk  
15 crippling New York City's cultural and artistic  
16 development and overburdening these businesses with  
17 unnecessary red tape. I am proud to champion this  
18 historic bill, which will right an almost century-  
19 will right an almost century old wrong, and take this  
20 progressive action to support culture in our city.  
21 Before I call the roll, I really want to give a big  
22 thank you to all of the advocates that have been part  
23 of this large effort, most notably New York City  
24 Artists Coalition or the Dance Liberation Network,  
25 the Dance Parade and many, many more who have joined

2 us in the groundswell movement and grassroots support  
3 of this repeal. I also want to thank my committee  
4 staff who has had to deal with me for the past few  
5 months, and making this happen. Thank you Val Keith,  
6 thank you Izzy, thank you Rachel Cordero, thank you  
7 Rob Newman. With that said, I recommend a yes vote.  
8 Mr. Clerk, can you please call the roll.

9 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk,  
10 roll call vote Committee on Consumer Affairs.  
11 Introduction 1652-A. Chair Espinal.

12 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I vote aye.

13 CLERK: Koslowitz.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I vote aye.

15 CLERK: Lancman.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Aye.

17 CLERK: By a vote of 3 in the  
18 affirmative, 0—excuse me. Council Member Gentile.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I vote aye.

20 CLERK: By a vote of 4 in the  
21 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,  
22 the item has been adopted by the committee.

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you all and  
24 thank you for your supports, and I look forward to  
25 voting this out of the Stated Meeting tomorrow at

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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2 1:30. With that said, this meeting is adjourned.

3 [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, 2017