

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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October 30, 2017  
Start: 1:56 p.m.  
Recess: 2:29 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,  
14th Fl.

B E F O R E:  
CARLOS MENCHACA  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Mathieu Eugene  
Daniel Dromm  
Peter A. Koo  
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.

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

Maya Gurung  
TPS Recipient from Nepal

[sound check]

[pause]

COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Buenos dias a todos. I am Carlos Menchaca -- no, I'm not; I'm Councilman Rafael Espinal; not the chair of the New York City Council's Committee on Immigration, but I am a member of the Committee. I would like to thank you all for being here. I would also like to recognize the members of all three committees and additional Council Members joining us; we have Council Member Mathieu Eugene from Brooklyn and we have Council Member Peter Koo from Queens.

Addressing the needs of immigrant New Yorkers has never been more critical; that is why today the Committee on Immigration will vote on a package of bills that clearly establish that New York City will not be part of the federal deportation machine.

I would also like to take note that the Committee on Education will be voting on a bill that ensures parents have accurate information about the DOE's policies regarding student record confidentiality and requests for assistance from non-local law enforcement, including ICE.

1  
2           Additionally, the Committee on Public  
3 Safety voted on a bill that creates a new local  
4 alternative for the state's disorderly conduct charge  
5 that carries a lower maximum sentence. This gives  
6 law enforcement judges and prosecutors a tool to  
7 ensure that the punishment matches the crime and  
8 reduces the risk that a low-level offense triggers  
9 collateral consequences, including those related to  
10 immigration benefits.

11           And now back to the two bills in our  
12 committee. As you know, the City has limited the  
13 circumstances under which the NYPD and the Department  
14 of Corrections may cooperate with immigration  
15 authorities on immigration enforcement since 2011.  
16 Intro 1558-A, sponsored by The Speaker and Ferreras-  
17 Copeland, would expand on that work by limiting the  
18 Department of Probation's cooperation with  
19 immigration authorities in the same way as the  
20 Department of Corrections. Additionally,  
21 Intro 1568-A, sponsored by myself, Councilman  
22 Espinal, Councilman Corey Johnson and Speaker Melissa  
23 Mark-Viverito prohibits the use of City resources for  
24 the purpose of immigration enforcement to the fullest  
25 extent permitted by the law. Further, the bill

1  
2 prohibits law enforcement from entering into formal  
3 partnerships with ICE, established by 287 agreements.  
4 The City already cooperates with ICE on its own terms  
5 through detainer laws; any broader or formal  
6 arrangement would erode public trust in law  
7 enforcement and city agencies; it also wastes local  
8 taxpayer dollars.

9           The President's irresponsible rhetoric  
10 and discriminatory policies are an affront to all New  
11 Yorkers and do not fall in line with our core values  
12 like inclusion, respect for personal privacy,  
13 compassion, and the rule of law. New York City finds  
14 strength in diversity, innovation, inclusion,  
15 justice, and fairness; that is how we've overcome the  
16 odds in the past and that's how we will keep moving  
17 forward. [background comments] Okay; with that  
18 said, I would like to call the roll.

19           COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,  
20 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on  
21 Immigration, Introductions 1558-A, 1568-A, and  
22 Resolution 1638. Council Member Espinal.

23           COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: I vote aye.

24           COMMITTEE CLERK: Eugene.

25           COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Koo.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote aye and I also would like to request to add my name to the sponsors.

COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 3 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions; all items have been adopted by the Committee.

[background comments]

COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: We'll leave the vote open for another 30 minutes. Thank you.

[background comments]

We have one person who would like to testify on these bills, Maya Gurung [sp?], TPS recipient from Nepal. Welcome. Have a seat. Just hit the... hit the little red button on the microphone when you're ready to speak and state your name for the record.

MAYA GURUNG: Maya Gurung. Good afternoon Chairman Espinal and Committee members. My name is Maya Gurung and I am also a temporary protected recipient; I am also a case coordinator at Adhikaar, a worker center and community center based in Woodside, Queens that serves the Nepali-speaking community. We are here today to express our

1  
2 resounding support for Resolution 1638, calling upon  
3 the Homeland Security Secretary to extend TPS for all  
4 current TPS-designated countries.

5           On April 25, 2015, my family in Nepal and  
6 hundreds of thousands of others were directly  
7 impacted by the devastating earthquake. Everyone in  
8 my family was in shock; my uncles' homes were broken  
9 and the entire country was in chaos. My family urged  
10 me against going back, saying it was more helpful for  
11 me to remain here in the States to support their and  
12 Nepal's recovery. I am one of the 8,950 recipients.

13           At Adhikaar, we provided our services to  
14 around 2,000 people for TPS in 2015 and 2016. We  
15 organized TPS clinics with different legal service  
16 providers in New York City and supported people from  
17 all around the country with their questions.

18           TPS has given thousands of individuals  
19 and their families a sense of security regarding  
20 their immigration status and work permits helping  
21 people contribute to the U.S. economy and income to  
22 support family back in Nepal. Many now also have  
23 driver's licenses, bank accounts, and health  
24 insurance; all important aspects of building a  
25 stable, productive life. College graduates have been

1  
2 able to get jobs to support the U.S. and Nepal's  
3 economy. TPS recipients are taxpaying families whose  
4 homes and lives are now rooted here in the U.S.

5           When the decision for Haiti and Sudan  
6 were announced, I was scared for myself and all the  
7 people with TPS. In this current climate, where  
8 immigrants are under attack, our future seems like a  
9 mere political game [bell] for people in Washington.  
10 Nepal is still struggling with recovery from the  
11 earthquake which struck during the recovery from  
12 civil war.

13           The City of New York is no stranger to  
14 long bouts [sic] of recovery; yesterday was the five-  
15 year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy and many  
16 families here are still in the process of recovering,  
17 and now, after the massive floods in Southern Nepal,  
18 more people are facing life-threatening conditions;  
19 going back to Nepal is simply not an option. My life  
20 is here; I have lived in the United States for over  
21 six years and my home is here in Adhikaar; my  
22 community is her in New York. Every day I and  
23 thousands like me worry about whether we will be able  
24 to stay and what will become of our families if we  
25 are displaced and forced back to Nepal. The

1  
2 uncertainty is a terribly precarious and unstable way  
3 of life. Due to recent natural and political  
4 disasters, we need Nepal to be redesignated for TPS;  
5 we hope the New York City Council will support  
6 immigrant families by passing Resolution 1638. We  
7 would offer two suggestions to the resolution: 1. an  
8 amendment to the whereas clause on Nepal that  
9 includes the recovery from the ten-year civil war and  
10 the recent mass flood in **[inaudible]**, and 2. a  
11 pathway to citizenship for TPS recipients whose homes  
12 and lives are grounded here in the U.S.

13 Thank you for your consideration of our  
14 suggestions to Resolution 1638 and for your support.  
15 Thank you.

16 [clapping]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you so  
18 much for sharing your testimony and highlighting the  
19 importance of passing this resolution. Thank you so  
20 much.

21 MAYA GURUNG: Thank you.

22 [clapping]

23 [pause]

24 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation roll call,  
25 the Committee on Immigration. Council Member Dromm.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: I vote aye and  
3 apologize for -- I was over at the other side in City  
4 Hall being chair of the Education Committee having a  
5 hearing, so thank you very much for holding this over  
6 for me; I appreciate it. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: The vote now currently  
8 stands at 4 in the affirmative.

9 [pause]

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continue roll call,  
11 Committee on Immigration. Council Member Menchaca.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I vote aye on all  
13 these bills and want to say thank you for everyone  
14 who gave testimony today who's here to witness  
15 something that the Council continues to do in  
16 building the sanctuary city that we are; everything  
17 from our TPS resolution that will continue to extend  
18 Temporary Protected Status designations for Salvador,  
19 Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan,  
20 South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, to continue to provide  
21 this kind of relief to our bills that are gonna offer  
22 a real opportunity for building trust with our  
23 communities by not using City resources to enforce  
24 immigration. These are creative ways that are  
25 forcing us to react in a time when the federal

1  
2 government continues to do what they are doing,  
3 contrary to the values of New York City and its  
4 people, and so I wanna make sure that I say thank you  
5 for everyone who came, including Adhikaar, who's here  
6 in full force; we wanna make sure that you know that  
7 your voices are gonna be lifted every time we bring  
8 the Committee together for legislation like this, and  
9 then to recommend an affirmative vote for these bills  
10 and resolution tomorrow in the City Council.

11 So I wanna say thank you and I vote aye  
12 on all these pieces of legislation. Thank you so  
13 much. [background comment] And then... [clapping] and  
14 we're gonna do a final vote count.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote in Committee  
16 on Immigration; all items have been adopted by a vote  
17 of 5 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no  
18 abstentions.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: I like the sound  
20 of that. Okay. Thank you so much and let's keep  
21 moving forward. Thank you. This meeting and this  
22 public hearing is now adjourned.

23 [gavel]

24

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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 16, 2017