

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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November 14, 2017
Start: 10:47 a.m.
Recess: 10:53 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:

BEN KALLOS
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David G. Greenfield
Mark Levine
Carlos Menchaca
Antonio Reynoso
Ritchie J. Torres
Joseph C. Borelli

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

2 [sound check]

3 [pause]

4 [gavel]

5 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Good morning and
6 welcome to this hearing of the Committee on
7 Governmental Operations. I am Council Member Ben
8 Kallos, chair of the Committee. As always, you can
9 tweet me @BenKallos.

10 Today we are holding a second hearing and
11 vote on Proposed Introduction 508-A that I have
12 authored in relation to online voter registration.

13 Right now in the State of New York there
14 is no universal online voter registration. New York
15 State Department of Motor Vehicles operates the voter
16 registration website, but users are required to have
17 a driver's license or state-issued non-driver I.D.
18 Particularly for a city like New York City where so
19 many of our residents rely on mass transit rather
20 than cars, too many eligible voters are excluded from
21 being able to register or update their registration
22 online. There needs to be a universal online voter
23 registration portal and we're creating one today.

24 Proposed Introduction 508-A will require
25 the Campaign Finance Board to create and operate a

2 secure website and mobile app that would allow any
3 individuals qualified to vote in the City of New York
4 to confidentially submit the information collected on
5 a voter registration form. This is in keeping with
6 the Campaign Finance Board's requirement under the
7 Charter through the Voter Assistance Advisory
8 Committee to "facilitate voter registration and
9 voting by all residents of New York City who are
10 eligible to vote." The information collected would
11 include the applicant's signature, which is required
12 to be of quality and likeness comparable to a
13 signature written with ink, which may include use
14 with permission of the signature already on file. In
15 addition, you could sign with a stylus and digital
16 stylus. If you've been to the DMV recently, there is
17 no paper at the DMV; you sign electronically for a
18 license. Additionally, this is the similar case in
19 most modern parts of society.

20 All the notices and information contained
21 on or accompanying a printed voter registration form
22 would be viewable by the applicant, along with
23 additional information on timeframes and deadlines.

24 Upon receipt, the Campaign Finance Board
25 will be required to transmit this information to the

2 New York City Board of Elections through a method
3 consistent with New York State Election Law.

4 The bill would also require development
5 of an application program interface (API) to allow
6 approved third party programs to transmit voter
7 registration information to the Campaign Finance
8 Board so that voter registration can be as widely
9 available as possible.

10 And so in keeping, the idea would be, if
11 you had an app like let's say Uber or Seamless that
12 most New Yorkers have -- more people use those than
13 perhaps are registered to vote in our city -- and if
14 all of those folks registered to vote, we would see
15 more and I am guessing at the number of users for
16 those, but it seems like everyone uses them.

17 Agencies covered by the Agency Based
18 Voter Registration law would also be required to link
19 to the website and mobile application.

20 Finally, the bill requires reporting on
21 its implementation.

22 I want to take a moment to thank New York
23 State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, or as
24 Samantha Bee calls him -- Schneider Man! -- and his
25 staff for their advocacy and expertise on this issue.

2 I would also like to thank the New York
3 City Campaign Finance Board for embracing the concept
4 of this bill and working with us to make it a
5 reality.

6 I also want to thank the Committee's
7 Counsel, Brad Reid, Policy Analyst Elizabeth Kronk,
8 Finance Analyst Zach Harris, and my Legislative
9 Director, Paul Westrick for all their work on this
10 bill.

11 I also want to thank the Drupal
12 Development community as well as those behind the
13 Webforms Module; I used both pieces of software to
14 build a working test in a couple of hours that I
15 hereby gift to the Campaign Finance Board and City of
16 New York, because it's free and open-source software.

17 Last but not least, I'd like to thank my
18 colleagues on the Committee for their advocacy.
19 First person here today was Council Member Joe
20 Borelli, followed by Ritchie Torres, followed by
21 David Greenfield; followed by Antonio Reynoso. I
22 will now ask the clerk to call the roll.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
24 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on
25

2 Governmental Operations, Introduction 508-A. Chair
3 Kallos.

4 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Proudly vote aye.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK: Greenfield.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD:

7 Congratulations, Chair Kallos on an innovative
8 commonsense piece of legislation. I vote aye as
9 well.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Reynoso.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Borelli.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: As a former

14 member of the Voter Assistance and Advisory

15 Committee, I take full credit for this bill and I

16 vote aye.

17 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you for your

18 service on the Voter Advisory Commission and we hope

19 that the republican commission from Staten Island

20 will take a similar position.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Torres.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I vote aye.

23 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: By a vote of 5 in

24 the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no

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COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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abstentions, the item has been adopted by the
Committee. Thank you.

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Hereby adjourn this
meeting of the Committee on Governmental Operations.

[gavel]

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 17, 2017