

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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December 7, 2017
Start: 2:07 p.m.
Recess: 2:26 p.m.

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

B E F O R E: STEPHEN T. LEVIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Annabel Palma
Fernando Cabrera
Vanessa L. Gibson
Corey D. Johnson
Ritchie J. Torres
Barry Grodenchik
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Adrienne Adams

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

2 [sound check, pause] [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon,
4 everybody. My name is Stephen Levin. I'm the Chair
5 of the Council's General Welfare Committee. First, I
6 would like to give a warm welcome to our newest
7 member of the General Welfare Committee, Council
8 Member Adrienne Adams from Queens. Welcome, welcome,
9 welcome, welcome, welcome. [applause] This morning
10 we're also joined by members of the committee:
11 Council Member Annabel Palma of the Bronx; Council
12 Member Barry Grodenchik of Queens; Council Member
13 Vanessa Gibson of the Bronx; myself from Brooklyn.
14 The only member of Brooklyn that's here. [laughter]
15 I will also be joined I believe by Council Member
16 Margaret Chin whose the lead sponsor of Intro 1062-A.
17 Today, the Council—the Committee will be voting on
18 1062-A sponsored by Council Member Margaret Chin in
19 relation to requiring a study on the feasibility of
20 providing language classes to certain children in the
21 foster care system. When we first heard this bill in
22 December of 2016, we heard testimony about a child
23 who was removed from parents who did not speak
24 English as their primary language, placed with a
25 foster family and that parent subsequently lost—or

2 that child subsequently lost her language skills,
3 rendering—rendering her unable to communicate with
4 her family. Council Member Chin has pushed this
5 issue in order to protect other children in foster
6 care from experiencing the same unfortunate loss and
7 I want to thank her for her focus on this very
8 important issue. Council Member—Council Member Chin
9 has moved ACS to make this a priority, and to come up
10 with a plan to address this serious problem. I am
11 going to ask Council Member Chin when she arrives to
12 make a statement about this legislation, and I am
13 asking [coughing] my colleagues to vote yes on this
14 very important bill, and I can ask William Martin,
15 the Clerk to the Committee to call the roll, and—and
16 then I believe Margaret—we'll keep the—we'll keep it
17 open for Council Member Chin to make a statement.

18 CLERK: Roll call vote Committee on
19 General Welfare, Introduction 1062-A, Chair Levin.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I vote aye.

21 CLERK: Palma.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Aye.

23 CLERK: Gibson.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I, too, want to
25 welcome our newest colleague Council Member Adams,

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2 and I want to congratulate Council Member Chin on a
3 very important piece of legislation, and I vote aye.

4 CLERK: Grodenchik.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: You know, Mr.
6 Chair, it's nice to not go last any more. So, just
7 for that, I'll vote aye. Thank you and welcome,
8 Adrienne.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you.

10 CLERK: Adams.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: I vote aye.

12 CLERK: by a vote of 5 in the
13 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
14 the item is adopted by the committee.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, we'll leave the
16 roll open as well. [background comments] Okay, and-
17 and I also want to thank General Welfare Committee
18 staff for working on this legislation: Andrea
19 Vasquez, Senior Counsel; Tonya Cyrus, Senior Policy
20 Analyst; Daniel Croup (sp?), Legislative Finance
21 Analyst-Financial Analyst; and Dohini Sompura,
22 Finance Unit Head. Okay we'll leave the-we'll leave
23 the roll open. [pause]

24 CLERK: Continuation roll call, the
25 Committee on General Welfare, Council Member Cabrera.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I vote aye.

3 CLERK: Council Member Salamanca.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I vote aye.

5 CLERK: The vote currently stands at 7 in

6 the affirmative. [pause] [background comments]

7 Council Member Torres.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I vote aye.

9 [background comments, pause]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay thank you.

11 [background comments, pause]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We're reopening the

13 hearing of the Committee of General Welfare.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Good afternoon.

15 Thank you, Chair Levin, and members of the General

16 Welfare Committee for holding a vote on Intro 1062-A,

17 which requires the Administration for Children's

18 Services to study its ability to provide language

19 access to children taken out of non-English speaking

20 households. When a child is put into the foster care

21 system, it can be traumatic for both the child and

22 his or her biological parents. This is particularly

23 difficult for immigrant families who do not speak

24 English, and do not understand the system. I cannot

25 begin to imagine what it's like for the child who has

2 been placed into a family with vastly different
3 cultures and speak another language. I initially
4 introduced Intro 1062 to ensure that non-English
5 speaking families will eventually be able to
6 communicate, and ultimately have the opportunity to
7 reunite with their children. Unfortunately, we
8 cannot do that because the city does not know how
9 many children from non-English speaking households
10 are in the foster care system. In addition to
11 requiring ACS to produce a feasibility study for
12 language classes, ACS is also required to initiative
13 a process to understand the universe of children from
14 non-English Speaking families within the city by
15 tracking a family's secondary language. With the
16 passage of this bill, we are taking a big step to
17 ensuring that language access will no longer be a
18 barrier to family reunification. Once again, I
19 wanted to thank Chair Levin for holding a vote on
20 this bill. I also want to thank our General Welfare
21 Counsel Andrea Vasquez, my Deputy Chief of staff,
22 Vincent Fang, and my former Deputy Chief of Staff
23 Shaw Monjal (sp?) for all their work on this
24 legislation, and I thank the committee for voting on
25 this.

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much
3 Council Member Chin and thank you for sponsoring this
4 very important legislation to ensure that families
5 affected or engaged with the ACS system have all the
6 protections that they deserve, and so I commend you
7 on this legislation. We're proud to be moving this
8 out of the Committee into the Full Council. Thank
9 you.

10 CLERK: The final vote, Committee on
11 General Welfare, Introduction 1062-A is now adopted
12 by a vote of 8 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative
13 and no abstentions.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much.
15 Congratulations Council Member Chin, and this hearing
16 is adjourned.

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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 December 21, 2010