CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

            Of the

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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                    December 7, 2017
                    Start: 10:34 a.m.
                    Recess: 10:40 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway – Committee Rm.
                 16th Fl

B E F O R E: JAMES VACCA
                 Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Annabel Palma
                 David G. Greenfield
                 Barry S. Grodenchik
                 Joseph C. Borelli

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

2   [sound check, pause]   [background

3   comments]

4   CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Good morning

5   everyone. My name is James Vacca, and I'm Chair of

6   the New York City Council Committee on Technology,

7   and I'd like to welcome everyone here today for our

8   vote. I'd like to indicate we've been joined by my

9   colleagues Council Member Annabel Palma, Joe Borelli,

10 and Barry Grodenchik. We're here to vote on Intro

11 1696-A, which I have proposed. The legislation will

12 establish a task force that examines city agencies'

13 usage of automated decision systems namely algorithms

14 and predicative analytics. This legislation requires

15 the Mayor or his designee to convene this task force

16 and for the task force to issue a public report,

17 which will include specific recommendations on city

18 agencies can be transparent and accountable when they

19 deploy automated systems to make or assist in making

20 decision-making rules, policies or actions that

21 impact the public. Increasingly, these tools are

22 deployed throughout city agencies to evaluate

23 communities, and individuals and to make

24 determinations about services and penalties. While

25 they can provide immense benefits, algorithmic tools

2 are not without issue. They seem to offer

3 objectivity, but we must be cognizant of the fact

4 that algorithms are simply a way of encoding

5 assumptions, that they're designed to be biased, and

6 that the very data they process can be flawed. Yet,

7 despite their importance to government operations and

8 their potential problems algorithmic tools have

9 remained hidden from the public view. The task for

10 established from this legislation will begin to

11 addresses these issues. It will examine and report

12 on ways to make information about these systems

13 publicly available and understandable. It will

14 develop mechanisms to determine if automated decision

15 systems disproportionately impact individuals based

16 on protected classes, and recommend procedures to

17 address instances in which a person is harmed by such

18 systems. There are a number of potential ways to

19 ensure algorithmic accountability and to my knowledge

20 we are the first city and the first legislative body

21 of any size in this country to take this issue on.

22 I'm confident this task force will make

23 recommendations that lead to greater accountability

24 and transparency, and as with so many other things,

25 I'm hoping New York can set an example for cities

2 around the world. Before getting the—getting to the

3 vote, I want to thank Committee Counsel Malika

4 Jubali; Policy Analyst Patrick Mulvihill, and my

5 Legislative Director Zach Hecht for all their hard

6 work on this. Without them, it would not have been

7 possible. Of course, I want to thank the Speaker and

8 her office as well. Now, without further to do, I'd

9 like to call the vote. I call on our Committee Clerk

10 to do so. I urge all members to vote aye.

11   CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk,

12 roll call vote, Committee on Technology, Introduction

13 1696-A, Chair Vacca.

14   CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I vote aye.

15   CLERK: Palma.

16   COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Aye.

17   CLERK: Grodenchik.

18   COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

19   CLERK: Borelli.

20   COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Aye.

21   CLERK: By a vote of 4 in the

22 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,

23 the item is adopted by the committee.

24   CHAIRPERSON VACCA: It is approved and we

25 have one additional member. So, I will leave the

roll open for 30 minutes. This committee is in

recess until that point. [gavel] Thank you. [pause]

CLERK: Continuation of roll—roll call,

Committee on Technology. Council Member Greenfield.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye.

CLERK: The final vote on Introduction

1696-A is now 5 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative

and no abstentions. [pause] [end of audio]

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 24, 2017 _____