

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

----- X

September 12, 2018

Start: 11:12 a.m.

Recess: 11:22 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: CARLOS MENCHACA  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

DANIEL DROMM  
MATHIEU EUGENE  
MARK GJONAJ  
ROBERT F. HOLDEN  
I. DANEEK MILLER  
KALMAN YEGER

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

2

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

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Gentlemen. Are we ready? Buenos dias. I am Carlos Menchaca, Chair of the New York City Council's Committee on Immigration. Today the Committee on Immigration will vote on the Pre-considered Resolution sponsored by Council Members Rosenthal, Rivera and myself. This Resolution calls on Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R. 6361 establishing a humane immigration enforcement system act which would abolish the U.S. immigration and customs enforcement agency known to us as ICE. Last week this committee, the Immigration Committee heard testimony from members of the public, academics and advocates as well as the mayoral administration who spoke to specific concerns and points where ICE as the enforcement agency that is barely 20 years old, has extended beyond it's mandate, acted in roguish ways, undermined it's public safety mission and hampered our city's efforts to serve our people, to serve our neighbors while inhibiting our use of tax payer dollars. The testimony pointed to a troubling history of mass deportations at the hands of ICE that fundamentally reflect a lack of accountability, a lack of checks

1  
2 and balances and ICE as a heavily politicized entity  
3 that has becomes the enforcement arm of an anti-  
4 immigrant agenda under the current federal  
5 administration. As a sanctuary city, New York City we  
6 have come a long way to providing protections for our  
7 immigrant neighbors passing laws that limit  
8 cooperation, city cooperation with detainer requests  
9 and restricting the use of city resources for civil  
10 immigration enforcement. As the only legislative  
11 Committee on Immigration body in this state and  
12 Congress, we have a responsibility to make a  
13 statement with regard to the out of control  
14 enforcement in our immigrant communities. That is why  
15 we are voting on this Resolution today, to support  
16 the congressional legislation house bill 6361. This  
17 bill would establish a commission to identify the  
18 necessary functions of the current ICE agency, make  
19 recommendations to Congress for a federal  
20 reorganization of those functions within existing  
21 entities and then terminate ICE after one year of  
22 enactment, that is the plan. One of the things that's  
23 important about this Resolution is that this  
24 Commission will take its time to really understand  
25 how we take all these things into consideration. We

1  
2 heard from the Mayor's administration and others  
3 about the different pieces within the department,  
4 some of them are working and some of them are not and  
5 that's why I'm so thankful that we are being  
6 thoughtful about this discussion and that we're not  
7 just using talking points and press and media  
8 opportunities in campaigns to move this forward, this  
9 is thoughtful and that is why I'm asking this  
10 Committee to consider voting in favor of a thoughtful  
11 next step process as we abolish ICE to bring a more  
12 humane system forward. I want to thank all of the  
13 staff who worked pulling this vote together and this  
14 larger discussion, the first of its kind in the  
15 entire country; my Senior Advisor Cesar Vargas, Chief  
16 of Staff Socheatta Meng, the Communications Director  
17 Tony Chiarito and the whole committee staff including  
18 Committee Council Harbani Ahaja, Committee Policy,  
19 Policy Analyst Elizabeth Kronk, Finance Analyst Jin  
20 Lee. The members who are here today, I want to... I  
21 want to thank them for being here; Council Member  
22 Holden from Queens, Yeger from Brooklyn, Dromm from  
23 Queens, Miller from Queens, Gjonaj from the Bronx and  
24 from Brooklyn, Eugene. Is there anyone from the  
25

1  
2 public who wants to testify? Okay, then we are ready  
3 to move to the roll call for the vote.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: William Martin,  
5 Committee Clerk, roll call vote, Committee on  
6 Immigration on Pre-considered Resolution, Chair  
7 Menchaca?

8 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Proudly aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Eugene?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Dromm?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Permission to  
13 explain my vote? Thank you very much, I'm going to  
14 proudly vote yes on this Resolution because I view  
15 that ICE has simply become a deportation machine  
16 which is being used for the wrong reasons and I agree  
17 with all of the whereas(s) in the Resolution but  
18 particularly wanted to highlight just two of them;  
19 whereas ICE under the direction of President Trump  
20 has demonstrated an inability to fulfill its duties  
21 without violating due process, human rights,  
22 transparency, public accountability or an adherence  
23 to domestic and international law and whereas the  
24 United States of America does not need an opaque and  
25 rouge agency operating in our communities

1  
2 dehumanizing our neighbors and acting without  
3 consequence, I am very proud today to support this  
4 legislation. When we heard testimony from many people  
5 involved in the immigrant community, I was very proud  
6 to hear Monsignor Sullivan come in and speak about  
7 how ICE has be... been used to tear apart families  
8 which I see happening in my community on a weekly  
9 basis. I hear stories of families being torn apart,  
10 it is heartbreaking and that is why I'm, I'm very,  
11 very much supporting this Resolution. Thank you Chair  
12 for your leadership on this issue and I'm very proud  
13 to be able to support this today, thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Miller?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I vote aye.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Gjonaj?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Permission to  
19 explain my vote?

20 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Permission  
21 granted.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I would be more  
23 than happy and willing to be a part of any  
24 discussions on immigration reform but abolishing  
25 immigration services without coming up with the

1  
2 proper agencies in advance is not something that I  
3 can support so I vote no.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Holden?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Permission to  
6 explain my vote? Coming on the heels of 9/11, 17  
7 years ago we were attacked because city, state and,  
8 and federal government officials didn't communicate,  
9 Homeland Security and ICE were created to  
10 communicate, to, to share information, the vast  
11 majority of people that are detained by ICE are  
12 criminals, 74 percent, that's a fact. So, again we're  
13 throwing the baby out with the bathwater, this is ill  
14 conceived, abolish ICE is, is a movement but replace  
15 it with what. So, I'm voting no and I, I still think  
16 that these resolutions are just grant standing. Thank  
17 you.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Yeger?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Mr. Chairman may I  
20 be excused to explain my vote? Thank you. I, I have  
21 spoken in this chamber about my disappointment with  
22 immigration policies from the current administration,  
23 the family separation policy, I voted in favor of our  
24 Resolution calling for that to be made illegal and I  
25 support wise immigration policy, I am the son of an



1  
2 immigrant, the grandson of immigrants and I'm very  
3 grateful to a country which welcomed my family with  
4 open arms as I've mentioned before in this committee  
5 and the floor of council. This particular resolution  
6 asks for the congress or... urges the congress to enact  
7 or to pass H.R. 6361, in my estimation respectfully  
8 H.R. 6361 is not the best solution, it establishes a  
9 commission and that's true and a commission should be  
10 established to create... to, to explore the better  
11 methods for immigration policy and immigration  
12 enforcement in this country but what it also does is  
13 that without regard to whatever the commission says  
14 and the recommendations made to congress being  
15 enacted, accepted or not ICE terminates one year  
16 after enactment, that's the language in the bill. So,  
17 essentially whatever the commission does; if it does  
18 nothing, if it meets twice, if it meets not at all,  
19 ICE ends with nothing in its place and I don't think  
20 that I can sit here and say that it makes sense to,  
21 to impose a solution on the United States that we  
22 don't have an immigration enforcement body of some  
23 sort to keep the dangerous people out of the United  
24 States and to find those who are dangerous and send  
25 them out. Now I agree with many of the advocates who

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

1  
2 have indicated in the past that we have people who  
3 are not dangerous, who are being sucked into the  
4 immigration system but as my colleague, Councilman  
5 Gjonaj indicated and Councilman Holden indicated we  
6 have to have something and Councilman Holden was, was  
7 very poignant in his point that ICE... most of the  
8 people that ICE stops and, and brings into their  
9 system and ultimately deals with 74 percent of them  
10 are actually criminals and if you break that apart  
11 and say well you know is it a criminal, somebody who  
12 drive... drove without a license or is it a criminal  
13 who committed a murder, obviously we need a system  
14 that makes sure that we're going after those who are  
15 actually dangerous to the United States but again and  
16 as I said before, without a solution in place I can't  
17 vote for this so I vote no with respect to the  
18 sponsors of the resolution and Mr. Chairman for your  
19 work on this issue. Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: By a vote in the  
21 affirmative, three in the negative and no  
22 abstentions, the item has been adopted by the  
23 committee.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENCHACA: Thank you for the  
25 roll call and I want to thank all of the members of

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

this committee for coming here today, for engaging in  
the, the purest form of democracy which is to tell  
your story, to talk about your vision and I am really  
thankful that the bill... or the Resolution in front of  
us has passed and will be voted on at the stated.  
Thank you so much for your time and we'll see you  
next time.

[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

September 18, 2018