

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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July 28, 2020  
Start: 9:34 a.m.  
Recess: 9:57 a.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING

B E F O R E: Mark Levine, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Alicka Ampry-Samuel  
Inez D. Barron  
Andrew Cohen  
Mathieu Eugene  
Robert F. Holden  
Keith Powers

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2 SERGEANT BIONDO: Alright, Sergeants if you could  
3 please fill out your recordings.

4 SERGEANT HOPE: All recordings are good.

5 SERGEANT BIONDO: Thank you. Sergeant Sadowsky  
6 if you could please file your opening statement.

7 SERGEANT SADOWSKY: Good morning and welcome to  
8 today's Remote New York City Council vote on the  
9 Committee on Health.

10 At this time, would all panelists please turn on  
11 their video. To minimize disruption, please place  
12 electronic devices on vibrate or silent mode. We are  
13 ready to begin.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you Sergeant Sadowsky  
15 and welcome everyone. I'm Mark Levine Chair of the  
16 City Council's Committee on Health. I want to  
17 recognize that we are joined by fellow health  
18 committee members Alicka Ampry-Samuel, Andy Cohen,  
19 and Council Member Keith Powers.

20 Today, we will be taking up a package of bills  
21 related to heat including Proposed Introduction 1945-  
22 A in relation to annual reporting of heat  
23 vulnerability and heat related deaths, sponsored by  
24 Council Member Justin Brannan and Proposed  
25 Introduction 1960-A in relation to a comprehensive

1  
2 cooling and communication plan sponsored by Council  
3 Member Rafael Salamanca.

4       It feels particularly appropriate to be voting on  
5 these bills today during yet another heat wave that  
6 the city has experienced in recent weeks. The COVID-  
7 19 pandemic has exacerbated many existing  
8 inequalities and health problems in New York and heat  
9 related illnesses and deaths are no exception.

10       In fact, New Yorkers most impacted by heat  
11 related illnesses and deaths overlap with those  
12 impacted by COVID-19. According to the Department of  
13 Health and Mental hygiene, excessive heat in New York  
14 City has caused an annual average of 450 emergency  
15 department visits and 150 hospital admissions due to  
16 heat related illness. An annual average of 13 heat  
17 stroke deaths, which are the official heat cause  
18 deaths listed on death certificates.

19       In addition to directly causing deaths, heat can  
20 produce an excess of natural caused deaths or heat  
21 exacerbated deaths. This occurs when chronic  
22 conditions are exacerbated by heat and result in  
23 death but heat is not recognized as a contributing  
24 cause of death on the death certificate.

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2 DOHMH estimates an average of approximately 100  
3 heat exacerbated deaths per year associated with heat  
4 waves in New York City. We thank DOHMH for studying  
5 this issue and recognize the resources and more they  
6 have dedicated to heat illnesses and death. But  
7 there is also great concern that we're still  
8 undercounting indirect heat deaths in New York City,  
9 which some advocates and experts estimate to be  
10 hundreds more than is reported each year.

11 This package of legislation will require the city  
12 to more broadly and expansively track and report on  
13 heat related deaths and to create and publish an  
14 annual plan describing how they will inform residents  
15 of the dangers of heat exposure provide access to  
16 cooling and indicate how vulnerable populations can  
17 stay cool during heat related emergencies. With  
18 COVID-19 worsening all existing health and equity  
19 issues in the city and with climate change creating  
20 ever worsening health conditions, we must finally  
21 treat heat as the serious health risk that it is.

22 Thank you to the advocates who work so hard on  
23 this issue and thank you to the sponsor of these  
24 bills. Thank you of course to Speaker Johnson for  
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1  
2 bringing attention to this issue in his state of the  
3 city speech earlier this year.

4 I want to acknowledge that we have now been  
5 joined by fellow Health Committee Member Council  
6 Member Inez Barron and I believe that Council Member  
7 Kalman Yeger is still on the line with us and have I  
8 missed any other members?

9 Okay, at this time, I would like to ask our  
10 Committee Clerk to begin the roll call for the vote.

11 COUNCIL CLERK: Good morning. This is the  
12 Committee on Health, July 28, 2020 vote on the  
13 following items: Intro. 1945-A, Intro. 1960-A and  
14 Resolution Number 637-A. There are five members of  
15 the committee present, we will begin with Chair  
16 Levine.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I vote aye.

18 COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member Barron?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye, thank you.

20 COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member Cohen?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Aye.

22 COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member Ampry Samuel?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SAMUEL: I vote aye.

24 COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you. Council Member  
25 Powers?

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COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I vote aye.

COUNCIL CLERK: Chair Levine, we have a vote of five in the affirmative, zero in the negative and zero abstentions. The items are adopted.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you and I believe we have Council Member Eugene expected momentarily. So, if it's okay, I'll ask the Sergeant's if we can keep the vote open for a few minutes.

And thanks to all our fellow members who joined us today. You are relieved of duty for the moment.

COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Good job Mark.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you Andy, thank you Mr. Chair. You are up next.

COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I think so, yes.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you Sergeant. I'm told that both Council Members Eugene and Holden are having some technical issues now logging in and so while staff works with them, we'll just hold the vote open for a few more minutes. Thank you.

JOHANNA CASTRO: Clerk, we have Council Member Holden.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Welcome Council Member Holden.

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2 COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you. Council Member  
3 Holden, are you prepared to vote on today's items?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yes.

5 COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you. May we have your vote  
6 please.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I vote aye.

8 COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you. Chair Levine

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Sorry about that, I had  
10 Zoom issues relogging, thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: No problem at all.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay, bye bye.

13 COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you Council Member Holden.  
14 Chair Levine, the revised vote is six in the  
15 affirmative, zero in the negative and zero  
16 abstentions.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you and are we  
18 expecting Council Member Eugene momentarily? Great,  
19 so we will hold it open for a few more minutes.

20 JOHANNA CASTRO: That is what I am being told.  
21 Just give me one second while I confirm.

22 SERGEANT BIONDO: Just a reminder for those just  
23 joining us, we are still in session with the  
24 Committee on Health vote.

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2 JOHANNA CASTRO: Chair, Council Member Eugene  
3 should be calling in shortly.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, thank you Johanna.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Very good, I'm in.  
6 Hello. I'm in, yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, welcome Council Member  
8 Eugene.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you so much. I'm  
10 sorry to cause this trouble but finally I got in.  
11 Thank you so much to all of you. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Not a problem, we're happy  
13 to have you. Are you ready to vote Council Member  
14 Eugene?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Yes, I am.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, so, we'll ask our  
17 Committee Clerk to please register your vote.

18 COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you Chair Levine. Council  
19 Member Eugene, how do you vote?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Before I vote, let me  
21 take the opportunity to thank all of the wonderful  
22 people who work hard to make this vote possible.

23 This is a wonderful and very important legislation  
24 related to even what we are going through now

25 [INAUDIBLE 20:16] that put everything upside down in



1 society, education, school, families, and I want to  
2 thank the Chair, Chair Levine for his patience and  
3 for his leadership. Also, thank you Speaker Johnson  
4 and also [INAUDIBLE 20:34] and all of you who have  
5 worked hard to make this possible and we know that  
6 what we are facing now is a crisis that we have never  
7 seen in our generation but there are so many that  
8 have lost their life and so many pain and suffering.  
9 All of this is because we were not ready. New York  
10 City was not ready. The country was not ready. It  
11 takes time to be ready. This legislation that we in  
12 the City Council we're asking, we're asking the  
13 federal government to do everything possible. To  
14 make sure that we are ready for the next week  
15 [INAUDIBLE 21:18] because this one, the first one but  
16 it is not going to be the last one. We have to be  
17 ready by creating the commission, gather information,  
18 people, and experts in this area. [INAUDIBLE 21:31]  
19 the behavior of those viruses. But we all know  
20 coronavirus 19 is the start of this family of  
21 viruses, like SARs virus in 2002. This virus in 2002  
22 and 2012. So, that means that coronavirus 19 is a  
23 mutated virus from the same family. That came back  
24 stronger and more powerful.  
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2 It is time now that we try to overcome this  
3 tragedy, we have to come together, all branches of  
4 government. I'm so thankful that the City Council  
5 can take this step to let everybody know that we have  
6 to work together to be ready because the next one, we  
7 don't know when it's going to come back. But we will  
8 be able to save life. We will be able to protect our  
9 structure, our school, our churches, or synagogues.  
10 You know, I am so pleased and thank you very much to  
11 all of you and I want to also thank Jess for his work  
12 to make this happen and with this Mr. Chair, I vote  
13 aye.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you Council Member  
15 Eugene and that makes it a unanimous vote. Oh, I  
16 guess I will let the Sergeant give us the official  
17 count. Excuse me Committee Clerk.

18 COUNCIL CLERK: That's correct Chair Levine, the  
19 vote is seven in the affirmative, zero in the  
20 negative and zero abstentions.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, with that, we will  
22 conclude this hearing of the Health Committee.  
23 Thanks to all who participated.  
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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 August 6, 2020