

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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OCTOBER 29, 2020
Start: 10:06 A.M.
Recess: 10:14 A.M.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING

B E F O R E: MATHIEU EUGENE, CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS: INEZ D. BARRON
DANIEL DROMM
BRAD S. LANDER
BILL PERKINS

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

2 SPEAKER COREY JOHNSON: Good morning
3 everybody, and at this time will Sargeants please
4 start their recording?

5 SARGEANT AT ARMS: PC recording started.

6 SPEAKER COREY JOHNSON: Thank you.

7 SARGEANT HANNA: Recording started.

8 SPEAKER COREY JOHNSON: Thank you.

9 SARGEANT AT ARMS 2: Backup is rolling.

10 SPEAKER COREY JOHNSON: Thank you and at
11 this time will Sargeant Hanna please start with our
12 opening?

13 SARGEANT HANNA: Good morning everyone
14 and welcome to today's remote New York City Council
15 Hearing, the votes on Civil and Human Rights. At
16 this time, would all panelists please turn on their
17 videos? Once again if all panelists can turn on
18 their videos. To minimize background noise, turn
19 cellphones on vibrate or silent. Uhm, thank you for
20 your cooperation. We are ready to begin.

21 SPEAKER COREY JOHNSON: Chairman, you can
22 start.

23 CHAIRPERSON MATHIEU EUGENE: Alright
24 thank you very much. (gavel pounding) Good morning,
25 my name is Mathieu Eugene and I am the Chair of the

2 Civil and Human Rights Committee. Thank you for
3 joining our virtual vote today on Proposed
4 Introduction 2082-A sponsored by Council Member
5 Powers. Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge
6 my colleagues on the committee who have joined us. I
7 think Council Member Dromm is here, Council Member
8 Perkins, any other Council Member here?

9 SARGEANT HANNA: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON MATHIEU EUGENE: Can you
11 please mention the name for me?

12 SARGEANT HANNA: Council Member Barron is
13 here.

14 CHAIRPERSON MATHIEU EUGENE: Thank you so
15 much Council Member Barron. Is Lander here?

16 BRAD LANDER: I'm here Mr. Chair, yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON MATHIEU EUGENE: Thank you so
18 much, okay, alright.

19 BRAD LANDER: Trying to give subliminal
20 messages.

21 CHAIRPERSON MATHIEU EUGENE: Okay, in
22 response to reports about discrimination against
23 Section 8 voucher holders, in 2008 the Council
24 enacted a local law adding "lawful source of income"
25 to the New York City Human Rights Law (NYCHRL) as a

protected class for prospective tenants, making it illegal to refuse to rent an apartment because someone has a housing assistance voucher. The law prohibited landlords and real estate brokers with a building of six or more units from refusing to rent to current or prospective tenants who use any form of government assistance to pay their rent. Despite a prohibition against SOI discrimination it continues to exist as barrier to permanent housing. In response to continued discrimination, the New York City Commission on Human Rights formed a specialized SOI discrimination unit in 2018. The SOI unit has been instrumental in combatting discrimination against those who apply for housing using rental assistance vouchers. The unit investigates and, if applicable, prosecutes real estate brokers and landlords in New York City who refuse to rent to tenants based on their lawful source of income. Between 2018 and 2019, the unit has investigated and resolved over 350 cases of SOI discrimination. CCHR's SOI discrimination unit also filed 176 cases of source of income-based discrimination against landlords and brokers in New York City. However, as we heard at this Committee's 2018 Budget hearing, SOI

1 discrimination remains rampant in this City. In
2 2019, after consistent organizing efforts from
3 stakeholders and advocates, the State took action to
4 ban SOI discrimination statewide by amending the
5 State Human Rights Law. As opposed to the City SOI
6 law, the State SOI law covers all buildings and
7 units, except for rental units in two-family homes
8 occupied by the owner; rentals and rooming houses
9 occupied by the owner; rental of all rooms to person
10 of same sex; and certain senior housing. The NYCHRL
11 is more limited in scope, because it does not cover
12 properties with fewer than six units. Intro 2082-A
13 seeks to expand the scope in effort to have more New
14 Yorkers facing this type of discrimination. The bill
15 also clarifies the definition of "lawful source of
16 income" to be more inclusive of other types of lawful
17 income that low-income New Yorkers may have access
18 to. It is of utmost importance to us and New York
19 City that we strength the City's Human Rights Law to
20 the greatest extent possible when it comes to
21 discrimination in housing. While the City's laws
22 currently contain some of the strongest and most
23 comprehensive protections, including prohibiting
24 discrimination in housing based on a generous list of
25

2 protected classes, there is always, always more to be
3 done. I would like to thank Committee Staff, Balgees
4 Mihirig, senior counsel to the Committee, Wiam
5 Diouri, Policy Analyst and Nevin Singh, Finance
6 Analyst. I would like also to thank my staff,
7 Melissa Wilson. Now, I would like to turn it over to
8 my colleague, Council Member Powers for some remarks.

9 BILL PERKINS: You said that it is Intro
10 2082-A.

11 SARGEANT HANNA: Sorry, Chair Eugene,
12 Council Member Powers won't be joining us for
13 remarks. You can, you can call the vote.

14 CHAIRPERSON MATHIEU EUGENE: I'm sorry?

15 SARGEANT HANNA: You can call the vote,
16 Council Member Powers is not joining us for remarks.

17 CHAIRPERSON MATHIEU EUGENE: Oh, okay,
18 thank you so, very much, thank you very much. Thank
19 you so much. Now, I will call the vote, Mr. Clerk
20 will you please call the roll please?

21 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Good
22 morning, William Martin, Committee Clerk, roll call
23 vote Committee on Civil and Human Rights,
24 Introduction 2082-A. Chair Eugene?

25 CHAIRPERSON MATHIEU EUGENE: I vote aye.

2 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Barron?

3 INEZ BARRON: Uhm, thank I vote aye and
4 asked to be added to the list of responses. Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MATHEIU EUGENE: Sure.

7 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Dromm?

8 DANIEL DROMM: Aye.

9 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Lander?

10 BRAD LANDER: I vote aye.

11 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK:

12 Perkins?

13 BILL PERKINS: Aye.

14 WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank

15 you, thank you sir. By a vote of five in the
16 affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions
17 introduction has been adopted by the Committee.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MATHIEU EUGENE: Thank you
20 very much to all my colleagues and to the wonderful
21 staff of the City Council and with this, the meeting
22 is adjourned. Thank you.

23 SARGEANT HANNA: Okay Chair.

24

25

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 15, 2020