

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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February 25, 2021

Start: 11:04 AM

Recess: 11:14 AM

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 1)

B E F O R E: CHAIR MARGARET CHIN

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Diana Ayala
Ruben Diaz, Sr.
Paul Vallone
Mathieu Eugene
Mark Treyger
Chaim Deutsch

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

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3 TECHNICIAN: Sergeant Polite, you can begin
4 recording.

5 SERGEANT POLITE: Thank you. Good morning and
6 welcome to the remote hearing on Aging. Will
7 Council Members and staff please turn on your video
8 at this time. Thank you. To minimize disruptions
9 please place all cell phones and electronics to
10 vibrate. Chair, we are ready to begin. (pause)

11 CHAIR CHIN: Good morning. I'm Council Member
12 Margaret Chin, Chair of the Committee on Aging, and
13 I would like to welcome you to today's vote on a
14 very important piece of legislation. Today we will
15 be voting on Proposed Intro No. 2225-A sponsored by
16 Council Member Mark Treyger. This legislation
17 requires the City to establish a COVID 19
18 vaccination plan for homebound seniors. Over our
19 last three hearings the Committee has heard a lot
20 of testimony about how Covid 19 is impacting out
21 seniors. We know and have talked at length about
22 how seniors are most vulnerable to the health
23 effects of the virus. We also know and have talked
24 about how the pandemic is increasing the things
25 seniors are already at higher risk for such as

2 social isolation, mental health issue, age related
3 physical elements, and fragility and poverty. The
4 COVID 19 Pandemic has been difficult on everyone,
5 but we must remember that it has been particularly
6 difficult for our seniors. That is why as the city
7 rolls out the COVID 19 vaccination we must make
8 sure all of our seniors are able to access vaccine
9 and they are all getting vaccinated. Overall, 1.3
10 million older New Yorkers are eligible for the
11 COVID 19 vaccine. As of yesterday afternoon,
12 however, only a little over 217,000 adults 65 and
13 older have received at least one dose of the
14 vaccine. This is only 16.7% of the eligible senior
15 population. This is a very low number, and it
16 means that hundreds of thousands of older New
17 Yorkers. are still at risk for COVID 19. We have
18 so much more to work left to do. Furthermore, one
19 of our most under-served senior groups is our
20 homebound seniors. These older adults cannot leave
21 their home for a variety of reasons. They often
22 require caretakers and often have multiple health
23 conditions that make them even more at risk for
24 COVID 19. While much of our senior population can
25 go to vaccine sites to receive their vaccination,

2 our homebound seniors do not have this option. As
3 we continue to vaccinate across the city we cannot
4 forget about this population. Because of this, I
5 wholeheartedly support Council Member Mark
6 Treyger's legislation Proposed Intro 2225-A, which
7 would require the Department of Health and Mental
8 Hygiene or another entity designated by the Mayor
9 to create a COVID 19 vaccination plan for our
10 homebound seniors. We must do better to get all of
11 our seniors vaccinated, and that includes bringing
12 vaccines to those who cannot access them at normal
13 vaccination sites. This legislation is the first
14 step to ensuring that same access for our homebound
15 seniors. I now would like to invite Council Member
16 Treyger to speak on this bill. Thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you Chair China,
18 and I want to publicly thank you for always being a
19 champion for our seniors even prior to the pandemic
20 and certainly during this pandemic your leadership
21 has been exemplary, and I particularly thank you
22 and your staff for the speed and the expedited of
23 this bill. It just...you were very helpful Chair to
24 have it put on for a hearing where were heard
25 strong support for the need for a homebound senior

2 plan, and it really speaks to your leadership of
3 prioritization to get this done. So, I thank you
4 Chair. I want to thank the entire committee on the
5 vote today on Intro 2225 to require the
6 Commissioner of the Department of Health and Mental
7 Hygiene to establish a plan to vaccinate homebound
8 seniors. That plan would be posted on the
9 department's website, and provided to the Council.
10 The Commissioner of Health and Mental Hygiene would
11 also be required to report to the Council on
12 implementation of the plan every two months after
13 the plan is issued. This bill would take effect
14 immediately after it becomes law and will mandate
15 the a plan is issued within 30 days. According to
16 DFFTA there are more than one million seniors
17 residing in the city. The City has vaccinated over
18 one and a half million New Yorkers so far
19 prioritizing healthcare workers, essential workers,
20 and older adults 65 and over, and yet for months
21 the City Administration did not have a
22 comprehensive plan to vaccinate homebound seniors,
23 one of the most vulnerable populations in our city.
24 Here we are facing a global pandemic with tens of
25 thousands of New Yorkers who have lost their lives

2 and who is again the forgotten group of people, the
3 very group of people who need help the most. We
4 are still in this public health crisis and to be
5 able to get across the finish line it's critical
6 that we address the cumbersome and confusing
7 process to sign up and register for a COVID 19
8 vaccination. We also need to account for multi-
9 lingual residents and provide hopefully confident
10 outreach to those communities. We have community
11 based organizations that are ready and willing to
12 partner with the City's Health Department to
13 provide additional sites that easily accessible for
14 folks and to provide that connection to help bring
15 the services to the people directly, and we have
16 the technology and ability to transport the vaccine
17 to those who are homebound. Before we receive our
18 next package of vaccines we need to prioritize the
19 homebound senior community and act with a sense of
20 urgency to vaccinate this high risk population.

21 Intro 2225 will hold the City Administration
22 accountable to codify a plan for vaccination
23 seniors, and it should be focused on equity and
24 utilizing resources the city already has access to,
25 and on a personal note and Chair Chin also

2 represents a district that was also hard hit by
3 Super Storm Sandy. This is very personal for us.
4 Many of the same folks are talking about folks that
5 were left behind in Sandy recovery, too without
6 power for weeks and no support and food and
7 medicine could reach them, and we always said no we
8 can never allow this to happen again that they
9 would never be forgotten again, and here we are.
10 You know, whenever the Mayor announced the Yankee
11 Stadium would be opened up for a vaccine site or
12 City Field, that's very nice, but what's the plan
13 for folks who can't get there through no fault of
14 their own? I represent a very, you know, high need
15 senior population in my district, people that are
16 our veterans, our teachers, our nurses, our retired
17 bus drivers and school staff and hospital staff,
18 people who have raised our communities, our
19 families and we owe it to them to prioritize them
20 to make sure that no senior, no family is left
21 behind. So, Chair, this personal and I know it's
22 personal for you, too, and I just can't thank you
23 enough for the speed and the prioritization of this
24 legislation, and I ask my colleagues respectfully
25 to please support this bill. Let's get the plan to

2 help the homebound seniors, and I thank you. Chair
3 again for your leadership and for your time today.

4 CHAIR CHIN: Thank you Council Member Treyger for
5 your advocacy and your passion on this issue, and I
6 know that we had like three hearings, and we also
7 had Council Member Holden who was at the hearing
8 who wasn't for this and the city said they have a
9 plan, but what plan, and they tried to like say we
10 don't need this legislation because we already have
11 a plan. No, you don't. What is the plan? I
12 haven't seen it. So, I think this is really timely
13 and I also want to thank our Speaker, the Speaker's
14 office for really helping to push us along, and the
15 Committee staff. We have been joined by Council
16 Member Ayala, Council Member Vallone, Council
17 Member Diaz Senior, Council Member Powers, Council
18 Member Perkins, Council Member Eugene and Council
19 Member Deutsch. So, I ask my colleagues to vote in
20 support of this important legislation. So, can we
21 ask the Clerk to call the vote. Thank you.

22 WILLIAM MARTIN: So, good morning. William
23 Martin Committee Clerk roll call vote Committee
24 (bell) on aging. Proposed Introduction No. 2225-A,
25 Chair Chin.

2 CHAIR CHIN: I vote aye.

3 WILLIAM MARTIN: Eugene.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I vote aye.

5 WILLIAM MARTIN: (bell) Deutsch.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: (INAUDIBLE) Did you
7 hear that? Aye.

8 WILLIAM MARTIN: Yeah, thank you. Treyger.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I vote aye.

10 WILLIAM MARTIN: Vallone.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I vote aye and
12 congratulations.

13 WILLIAM MARTIN: Ayala.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I vote aye.

15 WILLIAM MARTIN: Ruben Diaz.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RUBEN DIAZ: I vote aye.

17 WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank you. By a vote of 7 in
18 the affirmative, zero in the negative and no
19 abstentions, the item has been adopted by the
20 committee. Thank you.

21 MALE SPEAKER: This ends the vote.

22 CHAIR CHIN: Thank you. Do we need to keep the
23 vote open? No? Okay, so thank you everyone and
24 congratulations Council Member Treyger. Let's get
25 this done and get our seniors back to meeting.

1 COMMITTEE ON AGING

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2 Thank you. Thank you everyone, and the hearing is
3 now adjourned. (gavel)

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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 March 8, 2020