

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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OCTOBER 21, 2021
Start: 10:58 A.M.
Recess: 11:03 A.M.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: CHAIR MARK LEVINE

COUNCIL MEMBERS: MARK LEVINE
RAFAEL SALAMANCA
DARMA DIAZ
SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS
ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL
ROBERT HOLDEN
INEZ BARRON
MATHIEU EUGENE
KEITH POWERS

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

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3 CHAIR MARK LEVINE: Okay folks, we're
4 going to start the Health Committee hearing. Good
5 morning, everyone. I am Mark Levine, Chair of the
6 City Council's Health Committee. Welcome to our
7 hearing this morning. I am pleased that we are
8 joined by fellow Health Committee members, Council
9 Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel, Council Member Brooks,
10 Council Member Dr. Eugene, Council Member Holden, and
11 also Council Member Keith Power, I believe is a
12 member of our committee. Did I miss any other
13 committee members? I think we got it. Oh, Council
14 Member Diaz as well hiding in the back. Well, if
15 we're going to make this quick, if I could just have
16 a little bit of quiet in the chamber, please. Today,
17 we're going to be holding an important vote on
18 Proposed Intro 2373-A by Council Member Rafael
19 Salamanca which amends the Administrative code of the
20 city of New York in relation to amending a transcript
21 of a record of death caused by COVID-19. The Bill
22 would require that the Department of Health and
23 Mental Hygiene to wave any fee for applicants
24 requesting to amend a death certificate to list the
25 cause of death as COVID-19 or health complications

2 caused by COVID-19. Ordinarily, under the city's
3 health code, DOHMH charges a non-refundable \$40
4 processing fee to correct most death certificates.
5 Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a
6 backlog as funeral homes, hospitals and at the city's
7 Office of the Chief Medical Examiner which has
8 resulted in some death certificates needing to be
9 changed to include COVID-19 as the cause of death,
10 and this has ended up imposing yet another burden on
11 people's suffering in this pandemic. Folks, who in
12 many cases, need the cause of death accurately listed
13 on their loved one's death certificate to get FEMA
14 assistance for burial and other purposes. So, I want
15 to thank Council Member Salamanca for leading and
16 pushing this Bill forward, and I want to thank the
17 staff of the health committee for helping to make
18 this possible. Counsels Harbani Ahuja and Sara Liss;
19 Policy Analyst, Ann Balkin; and Finance Analyst
20 Lauren Hunt for their work in preparing this
21 legislation. I would now like to cue our colleague,
22 Council Member Salamanca for a few remarks on his
23 Bill, please.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Thank
25 you, Mr. Chair, and I want to thank the Health

2 Committee. Like thousands and thousands of New
3 Yorkers in April of 2020, I lost my dad to COVID-19,
4 and when I received his death certificate, I realized
5 that under reason for death, it was natural causes.
6 I really didn't pay any mind to it until the Federal
7 Government, FEMA has an assistance where individuals
8 can apply to get some reimbursement for funeral
9 experiences, and I was getting calls from
10 constituents who were dealing with the same issue
11 where their death certificate just said natural
12 causes, and so, as a result, FEMA was just not
13 approving their application. So, I think that this
14 go a real long way when I looked into fixing my dad,
15 correcting my dad's death certificate, there was a
16 \$40 fee. You know, I am blessed that I am able to
17 afford it, but there are hundreds and hundreds of New
18 Yorkers which a \$40 fee is a burden on them, and many
19 of them may forego fixing their family member's death
20 certificate just because they don't have the \$40.
21 So, I really want to thank the Health Committee
22 Counsel and you, Mr. Chair for helping me push this
23 Bill through.

24 CHAIR MARK LEVINE: Thank you, Council
25 Member Salamanca, and we grieve with your loss, and

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2 admire how you've turned it into something positive
3 for our city, so thank you, sir, and now I'd like to
4 cue the Committee Clerk to call the vote.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:

6 Matthew DiStefano, Committee Clerk, Committee on
7 Health, roll call vote on Proposed Intro 2373-A.
8 Chair Levine.

9 CHAIR MARK LEVINE: I vote I.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:

11 Eugene.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MATHIEU EUGENE: I vote I.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:

14 Barron.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER INEZ BARRON: A very

16 important Bill, and I vote I.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:

18 Ampry-Samuel.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL: I

20 vote I.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:

22 Holden.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROBERT HOLDEN: I vote I.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:

25 Powers.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KEITH POWERS: I.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: All
4 right, Council Member Powers votes I. Darma Diaz.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DARMA DIAZ: I vote I.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:
7 Council Member Darma Diaz votes I. Brooks-Powers.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS: I
9 vote I.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DESTEFANO: By a
11 vote of eight in the affirmative, zero in the negative,
12 and no abstentions, the items have been adopted.

13 CHAIR MARK LEVINE: Thank you,
14 congratulations, Council Member Salamanca, and this
15 will conclude our hearing. Thank you so much.

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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 October 29, 2021