



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1721

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to introduce and pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation which would allow a tax credit to property owners who install surveillance cameras on their property.

By Council Members Rose, Barron, Comrie, Dickens, Ferreras, Gentile, Gonzalez, James, Koo, Mark-Viverito, Mendez, Palma, Van Bramer, Vann, Williams, Rivera, King, Nelson, Vallone and Ulrich

Whereas, It has long been concluded that closed circuit television, or surveillance cameras, are a useful tool in crime management, and arguably crime prevention; and

Whereas, In 2011, the Urban Institute published a study, *Evaluating the Use of Public Surveillance Cameras for Crime Control and Prevention*, which examined the effectiveness of surveillance systems in Baltimore, Chicago, and Washington D.C., to deter potential criminal activity, alert police to dangerous situations, generate evidence to help identify suspects and witnesses, and foster the perception of safety; and

Whereas, When the City of Chicago installed 10,000 police-monitored surveillance cameras with flashing blue lights in apartment complexes in its high crime areas in 2003, the study found a decline of nearly 20% in overall crime one month following the installation of the cameras, and in the following year; and

Whereas, When the City of Baltimore installed 500 police-monitored surveillance cameras in its crime-laden downtown area in conspicuous locations, the City saw a 50% reduction in crime from the same time in the year before, and such declines continued until 2008, when the crime rate steadied at 30 crimes per year in that area; and

Whereas, Although Washington D.C. did not see a decline in their crime rates when they installed

surveillance cameras in 2006 following 14 killings in the first few days of July, the cameras did prove helpful in investigating and prosecuting the offenses that occurred; and

Whereas, Closer to home, in New York City, for almost a decade, state and local legislators have provided over \$200 million to the New York City Housing Authority and the Metropolitan Transit Authority for the installation of over 3,700 surveillance cameras to deter crime, aid in the investigation and prosecution of criminal activity, foster the perception of safety, and encourage people to use public spaces; and

Whereas, Further, in Boro Park, Brooklyn on July 12, 2011, one day after 8-year old Leiby Kletzky was reported missing, the suspect, who later admitted to abducting and killing Kletsy, was arrested after the New York City Police Department (“NYPD”) examined videos from surveillance cameras along Kletzky’s school route home, which showed Kletzky getting into the suspect’s car; and

Whereas, Surveillance cameras allowed the NYPD to identify the suspect, and determine Kletzky’s location in the hours that led to his death; and

Whereas, While cities and city agencies are able to fund the installation of surveillance cameras through grants and budget appropriations, many property owners are unable to install and maintain a surveillance system due to their high cost, which in many cases, can exceed \$1,000; and

Whereas, Surveillance cameras come in many different styles and host many different options, which all affect the cost of installing and maintaining the surveillance system; and

Whereas, Options that can affect the cost include the system’s ability to pan, tilt, zoom, run microphone and audio out jacks, and resist tampering; and

Whereas, Costs also vary depending on whether the surveillance systems will have Wi-Fi functionality to enable monitoring on a personal computer, whether the system will be used inside, outside or both, and whether the system will be used during the day, nighttime, or both; and

Whereas, In light of the high cost of the camera installation, in the wake of the Kletzky murder, New

York State legislators discussed plans to introduce a bill called “Leiby’s Initiative”, which would grant a \$500 property tax credit to New York City property owners who install and maintain surveillance cameras on their property; and

Whereas, In 2012, rather than a tax credit, New York State Assemblyman Dov Hikind created the Leiby Kletzky Security Initiative, a \$1 million grant funded by New York State Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos for the installation of 150 security cameras throughout the Midwood and Boro Park neighborhoods in Brooklyn; and

Whereas, All property owners throughout the City should benefit from the security and advantages that surveillance cameras provide; and

Whereas, Offering a property tax credit to assist property owners across the City in installing and maintaining surveillance systems will allow property owners to be proactive in protecting their property, as well as assist the NYPD in the resolution of crimes that occur on the owners’ property; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to introduce and pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation which would allow a tax credit to property owners who install surveillance cameras on their property.

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