



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 385

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to provide school principals with the discretion to declare primary days as staff development days, specifically if they believe election operations will significantly disrupt a regular school day.

By Council Members Levine, Constantinides, Johnson, Mendez, Koslowitz, Cohen, Rodriguez and Rosenthal

Whereas, Primary and general elections are held in polling sites throughout New York City, with a vast majority held in school buildings; and

Whereas, Currently, schools close on election day but not during the primaries; and

Whereas, Primary voting therefore occurs with students in the school building; and

Whereas, Although a single police officer is present at polling sites as required by election law, the officer's primary concern is to oversee voting rather than student safety; and

Whereas, Throughout the school year there are security measures in place for entering school buildings including requiring visitors to sign in and show identification; and

Whereas, Primary day, however, allows strangers to enter the school building without such measures despite the presence of students; and

Whereas, According to a March 2014 DNAinfo New York article, a recent primary election in New York City left some parents and community leaders outraged after observing voters wander the halls and using student bathrooms; and

Whereas, In light of recent occurrences involving horrific attacks on students in various schools in our nation, security measures are being re-evaluated and strengthened in many jurisdictions; and

Whereas, Allowing students to be at school while elections occur seems to undermine the very nature of

such increased security measures; and

Whereas, While civic engagement is a cornerstone of our democracy, it shouldn't come at the expense of student safety; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education to provide school principals with the discretion to declare primary days as staff development days, specifically if they believe election operations will significantly disrupt a regular school day.

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