



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1597-2012, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1597

Resolution calling on the state and federal governments to amend their official forms and databases to accommodate multiracial identification in all instances where racial identification is required.

By Council Members Chin, Dromm, Ferreras, James, Koo, Lander, Mendez, Van Bramer, Williams, Wills and Rodriguez

Whereas, The 2000 United States Census (“Census”) was the first census to allow individuals to record their race using more than one category; that year, more than 2.4 percent of the population selected a multiracial identity; and

Whereas, By the 2010 Census, the number of people identifying as more than one race grew 32 percent, accounting for 9 million people nationwide; and

Whereas, Between the 2000 Census and the 2010 Census, individuals of two or more races grew at a faster rate than any group identifying with a single race; and

Whereas, According to the United States Census Bureau, approximately 2.2 percent of the population of New York State and 2.3 percent of the population of the United States identify as belonging to two or more races; and

Whereas, Additionally, a 2012 Pew Research report found that interracial marriages have increased significantly over the past three decades, accounting for 6.7 percent of new marriages in 1980 and 15 percent in 2010; and

Whereas, Despite a growing population of people who identify as being multiracial, forms at the federal and state levels do not always reflect the realities of these demographic trends; and

Whereas, The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s fingerprinting form, for example, is coded in such a

way that only one of five different demographic categories can be entered: Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Unknown, and White; and

Whereas, Employees in the United States Army and Air National Guard wishing to file a complaint alleging racial discrimination are similarly limited, able only to identify their race as Black, White, American Indian/Alaskan Native or Asian/Pacific Islander, with no indication that selecting more than one race is permitted; and

Whereas, At the state level, minority businesses applying for certification as Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises are only able to select one of the following categories: Black, Hispanic, Asian-Pacific, Asian-Indian Subcontinent and Native American; and

Whereas, It is unfair to ask people that belong to more than one racial demographic to choose only the race selections provided on government documents, essentially forcing them to misrepresent themselves; and

Whereas, Failure to include multiracial identifiers on state and federal forms can also have broader consequences, as it produces an inaccurate picture of the state's and the country's racial diversity; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the state and federal governments to amend their official forms and databases to accommodate multiracial identification in all instances where racial identification is required.