



## Legislation Text

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Res. No. 944

Resolution calling upon the federal government to reinstate appropriate funds to support the Police Athletic League (PAL) Summer Playstreet program.

By Council Members Vallone, Jackson, Avella, Comrie, Gentile, Katz, Liu, Lopez, Monserrate, Nelson, Quinn, Sanders, Seabrook, Sears, Serrano, Stewart, Weprin and Espada

Whereas, As the summer is a critical time in the development of children and young adults who may become vulnerable to negative activities as a result of idleness, boredom and lack of positive influence, a summer of learning and excitement in a supervised and organized setting is a possible deterrent for youth committing crimes and other forms of mischief; and

Whereas, Since its inception in 1914, the Police Athletic League (PAL) has been offering Summer Playstreet programs, in over 150 neighborhoods, providing support and opportunities to 65,000 children of areas where there are little or no other organized activities; and

Whereas, 17 full-time youth centers operate five to six days a week to supply young adults with a variety of educational, recreational and cultural programs and 71 part-time centers operate from October through May; and

Whereas, Summer Day Camps operate at full-time centers and include field trips to points of educational, cultural and historical significance, ABC (Adventure Based Counseling), Children's Theatre, Incarceration Prevention, Therapeutic Horseback Riding (for physically and emotionally challenged "youngsters" to allow them to overcome the limitations of their disabilities and develop new skills and gain self-confidence), TAG (Together Against Graffiti) and Youthlink (substance abuse intervention for high risk teenagers) in addition to other educational and athletic programs offered during the year; and

Whereas, 1/3 of the current Playstreets are actual streets throughout New York City that are blocked off to traffic in order to give children safe and supervised places to play, 1/3 of the PAL play sites are in parks and the other 1/3 are operated within schools and playgrounds; and

Whereas, As indicated by PAL, these "streets are blocked off to traffic, portable equipment is brought in, games are painted on the streets, and a core staff of two supplemented by specialists in music, dance, arts and crafts, provide a seven week, five day per week, full program of recreation, excitement and learning"; and

Whereas, If possible, the local precincts assign an officer on a daily basis or provide regular attention through its youth services officers and community relations patrolmen; and

Whereas, The program allows positive interaction between the police department and residents and is a brilliant means of improving and promoting police-community relations; and

Whereas, This program also allows parental involvement in forms of judging contests, helping make refreshments for special events and volunteering in other ways; and

Whereas, Recent cuts in the federal government Drug Elimination monies have caused the funding for these summer play sites in housing developments to be reduced from 60 sites to 40 and pose as a threat to the proper execution and effectiveness of this program; and

Whereas, A bill introduced in the House of Representatives titled "Public Housing and Drug Elimination Program Reauthorization Act of 2003", H.R. 1981, provides funding for these important after-school activities for youths "for the purpose of discouraging, reducing, or eliminating drug use or violent crime by youths" as "eligible activities" under the Housing and Drug Elimination Program; and

Whereas, As New York County District Attorney Robert Morgenthau indicated at a recent hearing of the Public Safety Committee, a reduction in summer playsites in housing developments in New York City would be detrimental to the youth of this city, and it is therefore imperative that these funds be restored; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the federal government to reinstate appropriate funds to support the Police Athletic League (PAL) Summer Playstreet program.