



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to eliminate the fingerprinting fee for individuals seeking to volunteer in New York City public schools.

Sponsors: Albert Vann, Gale A. Brewer, Inez E. Dickens, Lewis A. Fidler, Letitia James, Brad S. Lander, Annabel Palma, Ydanis A. Rodriguez, Jumaane D. Williams

Indexes:

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Res. No. 42

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to eliminate the fingerprinting fee for individuals seeking to volunteer in New York City public schools.

By Council Members Vann, Brewer, Dickens, Fidler, James, Lander, Palma, Rodriguez and Williams

Whereas, The Obama Administration created the “United We Serve” initiative in the summer of 2009 as an ongoing effort to combat the effects of the recession by championing increased volunteerism within communities; and

Whereas, The Bloomberg Administration has made community service and volunteerism a major focus of its agenda, and aims to have 50,000 volunteers in the New York City area in the upcoming year through initiatives such as New York Cares; and

Whereas, The City of New York has encouraged volunteer participation in schools since 1956 to supplement teacher instruction in all subject areas; and

Whereas, The National Academies Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education

(CBASSE) states that college students who volunteer in public schools are more likely to enter the teaching profession and continue to serve young people; and

Whereas, Citizen Schools, a national program that allows adult volunteers to run after-school programs in various parts of the country, has shown that student performance is dramatically improved when enhanced by volunteers throughout the community; and

Whereas, National research conducted by California University at Los Angeles' Center for Mental Health in Schools concludes that having volunteers in schools eases the burden on staff, and improves the outcomes for students and their families; and

Whereas, On October 17, 1999, The New York Times reported that the participation of volunteers at public schools in New York City had become an integral part of the school system; and

Whereas, The goal of efforts such as NYC Service is to help encourage volunteer activity to address the City's most pressing needs; and

Whereas, There are many organizations around the City that generously organize volunteers to serve in local public schools; and

Whereas, The current DOE policy states that all volunteers who may be alone with children must be fingerprinted prior to beginning any work; and

Whereas, The cost of fingerprinting through the DOE can range from anywhere from \$115 to \$135 according to the DOE's website, creating a financial disincentive for prospective volunteers who wish to donate their time; and

Whereas, According to the DOE, a volunteer applicant may have their fingerprinting fee waived only if they are on full public assistance, or if their program/employer has contracted with DOE to assume the cost of fingerprinting; and

Whereas, In November 2009, The New York Times reported that increased class sizes in schools has forced school principals to hire "assistants" from within the parent community using school funds, and that the

Mayor's recent halting of this practice may lead many schools to request additional volunteers to fill the gap;
and

Whereas, New York City students will benefit from having more volunteers in the classroom and on school premises; and

Whereas, Volunteer participation in the City's public schools must be encouraged, for the benefit of New York City school children; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education to eliminate the fingerprinting fee for individuals seeking to volunteer in New York City public schools.

AES/AC
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3:00pm