



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1125

Resolution in support of the peaceful and vibrant exercise of First Amendment rights being carried out by the "Occupy Wall Street" protesters and in support of their goal of ending economic inequality in the United States.

By Council Members Rodriguez, Williams, James, Mark-Viverito, Barron, Cabrera, Dickens, Dromm, Jackson, Koslowitz, Lander, Mendez, Rose, Vann and Palma

Whereas, September 17, 2011 marked the beginning of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement (OWS) at Zuccotti Park, also known as Liberty Plaza, located in the heart of New York City's financial district; and

Whereas, The "Occupy Wall Street" movement is fueled by disheartened New Yorkers and other citizens from all walks of life who have come together to present a growing demonstration of solidarity among those self-identified as "the 99%" who started the initial "Occupy Wall Street" by calling for a fair distribution of wealth; and

Whereas, OWS has demonstrated a commitment to the principles of non-violence as a means of protest; and

Whereas, The First Amendment to the United States Constitution protects the right to freedom of expression from government interference, including the rights to freedom of speech, press, assembly and to petition the government for a redress of grievances; and

Whereas, Over 70 related "Occupy" protests have taken root across the country, from large demonstrations in Boston and San Francisco, to dozens of smaller ones in other cities, as well as a large-scale "Occupy College" movement on college campuses across the United States; and

Whereas, Today, large corporations hold undue influence and power in our country; and

Whereas, Our economic system can only be described as broken when one considers that the United

States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported for October 2011 that there were 13.9 million unemployed persons in America, that more than 50 million Americans are forced to live without health insurance, and, even using our current poverty measure that is widely recognized to be inadequate and outdated, and using the American community survey five year data on housing costs from 2008, more than one in five American children are growing up poor in households that lack access to such basic survival needs as food, clothing, and shelter; and

Whereas, According to a recent report of the United States Census Bureau, "2010 American Community Survey", more than one in five New York City residents live below the federal poverty line; and

Whereas, The United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released a "CDC Health Disparities & Inequalities Report United States, 2011" which reveals that income inequality in the United States is the highest among any advanced industrialized nation, with wide-spread inequities in health outcomes by income, race, and gender; and

Whereas, This unfortunate reality is also supported by the Central Intelligence Agency World Fact Book in its presentation of Gini coefficients, a measure of economic inequality, for 145 different countries; and

Whereas, Research conducted by the Institute for Policy Studies indicates that the top one percent of Americans own half of the country's stocks, bonds and mutual funds; and

Whereas, According to the New York State Department of Labor, as of September 2011 the unemployment rate in New York City was 8.7 percent; and

Whereas, According to data released by the United Hospital Fund in 2008, nearly 1.5 million New York City children and adults are uninsured; and

Whereas, Measures should be undertaken within the Community Reinvestment Act that would at the very least address the key credit and financial services needs of small businesses in order to create much needed jobs and work with borrowers to restructure their delinquent or troubled home mortgage loans; and

Whereas, Americans must resolve the divisive economic and social realities facing our nation in a

peaceful way to avoid the further deterioration of our greatest asset, our human capital; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports the peaceful and vibrant exercise of First Amendment rights being carried out by "Occupy Wall Street" protesters and supports their goal of ending economic inequality in the United States.

RC
LS 2911, 2912, 2937 and 2941
11/21/11