



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 118

By Council Members Avella, DeBlasio, Fidler, Monserrate and Weprin; also Council Members Addabbo, Quinn, Stewart and Sanders

A Local Law to amend the New York City charter, in relation to the provision of ambulance service.

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Declaration of Legislative Findings and Intent. For many years, the City has supplemented its Emergency Medical Service (“EMS”) ambulance tours with ambulance tours provided by voluntary hospitals. However, emergency medical technicians (“EMTs”) and paramedics who work on voluntary hospital ambulances are not required to complete the same level of training that the City requires of its EMTs and paramedics and they are not required to undergo the same extensive background check as those employed by the City. Furthermore, a report issued in 2001 by the New York City Comptroller’s Office concluded that voluntary hospital ambulances that participate in the 911 system often engage in “patient steering,” which is passing up a closer hospital to take patients to their home hospital in cases where they are required to transport the patient to the nearest hospital. This practice can increase the time it takes for a patient to receive needed medical attention and is against New York State rules.

The Council finds that it is the City’s responsibility to provide the best Emergency Medical Service possible. Any decision to reduce the number of ambulance tours provided by City EMS ambulances, staffed by City EMTs and paramedics, has the potential to negatively impact on the level of health care provided to the City’s residents, workforce, and visitors. Therefore, the Council finds that such a decision should not be arrived at unilaterally by the Mayor or implemented by the Fire Department on its own initiative. This legislation requires a majority vote of the Council, the City’s sole legislative body, to reduce the number of City EMS

ambulance tours. In so doing, this legislation ensures that elected officials who represent areas directly affected by any proposed cuts in City EMS ambulance tours have a voice in such a decision.

§ 2. Chapter 19 of the New York City charter is hereby amended by adding a new section 495 to read as follows:

§ 495. **Reductions in Emergency Medical Service ambulance tours.** Any planned reduction by the department or the mayor in the number of ambulance tours conducted by the city's emergency medical service and staffed by emergency medical technicians and paramedics employed by the city shall require a majority vote of the city council prior to implementation.

§ 3. This local law shall become effective immediately after it shall be approved by the voters of the city at the next general election held after its enactment.