



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0404-2002, **Version:** *

Res. No. 404

Resolution calling upon the appropriate committee of the Council of the City of New York to hold oversight hearings to examine New York City's procedures for collecting fines.

By Council Members Reed, Addabbo, Barron, Fidler, Lopez, Monserrate, Nelson, Perkins, Quinn, Recchia, Rivera, Sanders, Seabrook, Sears, Stewart and Brewer

Whereas, As a result of the weakened economy and the economic effects of September 11th, New York City was forced to close a \$5 billion budget gap for fiscal year 2003; and

Whereas, The city is projecting deficits of \$3.7 billion in fiscal year 2004 and \$4.2 billion in fiscal year 2005; and

Whereas, It is extremely crucial to search for revenue that could pay for vital services for New York City residents which will allow people to continue living in New York City and therefore continue their contributions to our economy; and

Whereas, It is also critical to enforce laws that are in place to ensure the safety and quality of life of all New Yorkers; and

Whereas, A recent audit conducted by the New York City Comptroller contends that the Department of Finance has failed to collect approximately \$634 million in outstanding fines levied by the Environmental Control Board from the beginning of fiscal year 1997 to the end of fiscal year 2001; and

Whereas, According to this audit, by changing its collection efforts, the Department of Finance could collect \$26.2 million of this \$634 million instead of the mere \$1.9 million collected in fines in fiscal year 2001 and the \$8 million from the beginning of fiscal year 1997 to the end of fiscal year 2001; and

Whereas, Over the last three fiscal years (1999, 2000 and 2001), the Department of Consumer Affairs has issued violations of approximately \$19 million while collecting only \$6 million of this total; and

Whereas, With changes in its collection methods, the Department of Consumer Affairs estimates that it could collect approximately 50% of the uncollected fine amounts; and

Whereas, Other agencies that issue violations, including the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, have reported difficulties in collecting the fines they have levied; and

Whereas, The large amount of fines that go uncollected each year demonstrates that the city is not properly enforcing laws that are meant to protect its residents; and

Whereas, It is time for the City Council to examine and rethink the City's procedures for collecting fines; and

Whereas, This examination process should be geared toward clarifying the process of how fines for all types of violations are collected and by whom and arriving at a plan to overhaul the City's fine collection process to ensure that the city efficiently collects its outstanding fines; and

Whereas, Every measure to find additional revenue in New York City should be investigated in this period of challenging budgets; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the appropriate committee of the Council of the City of New York should hold oversight hearings to examine New York City's procedures for collecting fines.

LS#827

7/17/02- DS