



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 61

Resolution calling upon the appropriate committee of the Council to conduct an oversight hearing on the incidence of babies born with low birth weights and smaller skulls to African-American and Dominican women who reside either in Upper Manhattan or the South Bronx, as a result of exposure to air pollutants and pesticides, including those used in schools and public housing in New York City.

By Council Members Perkins, Martinez, Jackson, Barron, Clarke, Fidler, Foster, Gerson, Lopez, Quinn, Sanders, Sears, Stewart, Vann, Brewer and James

Whereas, In 1998, researchers at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health began a study, which is ongoing, entitled "*Effects of Transplacental Exposure to Environmental Pollutants on Birth Outcomes in a Multi-Ethnic Population*", which follows children from before birth until their fifth birthday and possibly beyond; and

Whereas, In a paper discussing the Columbia University study, published in the February 2003 issue of the Journal of Environmental Health Perspectives (the "Columbia University study"), it was documented that researchers at Columbia University found that inner city, minority populations are high-risk groups for adverse birth outcomes and also are more likely to be exposed to environmental contaminants, including environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and pesticides; and

Whereas, The Columbia University study found that African-American women exposed to high levels of everyday pollutants in automobile exhaust, cigarette smoke and incinerators in the third trimester of pregnancy tended to have smaller babies with smaller than average skulls; and

Whereas, The Columbia University study further found that African-American babies in Upper Manhattan and the South Bronx who were exposed to high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, originating from vehicle emissions, tobacco smoke, the use of fossil fuels for residential heating and emissions

from power plants that use fossil fuel, had both reduced birth weight and skull circumference; and

Whereas, The Columbia University study also noted that African-American and Dominican babies in Upper Manhattan and the South Bronx had lower birth weights when the pesticide chlorpyrifos, a chemical commonly used in schools and public housing in New York City, was found in their blood; and

Whereas, Dr. Frederica Perera, Director of the Columbia University's Center for Children's Environmental Health, said the study's findings were particularly troubling because low birth weight and smaller skulls have been found to correspond with poor health and mental problems later in life; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the appropriate committee of the Council to conduct an oversight hearing on the occurrence of babies born with low birth weights and smaller skulls to African-American and Dominican women who reside either in Upper Manhattan or the South Bronx, as a result of exposure to air pollutants and pesticides, including those used in schools and public housing in New York City.