



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 655

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to reintroduce and pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation in relation to establishing a task force to study and report on the potential implementation of blockchain technology in state record keeping, information storage, and service delivery.

By Council Members Williams, Menin and Gutiérrez

Whereas, A blockchain is an encoded digital ledger comprised of data records collected in a chain, that cannot be changed or deleted by a single actor and instead is verified and managed using automation and shared governance protocols; and

Whereas, Blockchain technology could simplify the management of trusted information, making it easier for government agencies to access and use critical public-sector data while maintaining the security of this information; and

Whereas, West Virginia utilized a blockchain-based voting system during its 2018 midterm elections, enabling military members and eligible overseas citizens to securely submit absentee ballots through a blockchain-enabled mobile app, which saw 144 voters across 31 countries successfully participate in the November election; and

Whereas, in 2020 the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets agreed to a 5-year deal for a blockchain-based app and web portal which securely manages hemp registration, licensing, and crop tracking to document where, when, and to whom a plant and its derivative products move; and

Whereas, Chief Technology Officer for New York City, Matthew Fraser, testified on February 15, 2023 at the New York City Council’s Committee on Technology hearing on “Cryptocurrency and Blockchain Technology in New York City” that the New York City Office of Technology and Innovation (“OTI”) has

already started taking proactive steps in relation to blockchain technology, including exploring potential municipal use cases and recruiting blockchain policy advisors; and

Whereas, Despite the potential benefits, local technology advocacy groups have raised concerns around the legitimacy, security, and necessity of blockchain technology; and

Whereas, New York City is home to some of the largest public-sector data repositories in the state, containing critical information on housing, healthcare, law enforcement, and financial records, and could benefit from state research on enhanced methods for data security, transparency, and efficiency in record keeping; and

Whereas, Further research is necessary to determine the potential benefits and risks of adopting blockchain technology for municipal use, and the timeliness of this research is of utmost importance given OTI's proactive approach to blockchain technology; and

Whereas, A.2566, introduced by Assembly Member Clyde Vanel, and companion bill S.5564, introduced by State Senator Leroy Comrie, seek to establish a task force to study and report on the potential implementation of blockchain technology in state record keeping, information storage, and service delivery; and

Whereas, The report published by the task force established by A.2566/S.5564 would provide this needed research by presenting insights into the opportunities and risks associated with using blockchain technology, a comparison of various blockchain technologies, and examples of how other cities and organizations are leveraging blockchain for record keeping, information storage, or service delivery; and

Whereas, The findings and recommendations from the proposed state task force could help guide New York City's own blockchain policies and programs, supporting OTI's proactive approach to exploring and potentially implementing blockchain solutions for secure data management and transparency in municipal operations or exposing potential issues that come with the adoption of the technology; and

Whereas, A.2566/S.5564 has not been reintroduced since the 2023-2024 State legislative session; now,

therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to reintroduce and pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation in relation to establishing a task force to study and report on the potential implementation of blockchain technology in state record keeping, information storage, and service delivery.

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