



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 112

Resolution urging the New York City Department of Correction to increase staffing levels in adolescent facilities at Rikers Island.

By Council Members Gonzalez, Brewer, Dromm, Vann and Rodriguez

Whereas, The Department of Correction (“DOC”) categorizes an adolescent as an individual between the ages of 16 and 18; and

Whereas, DOC has jurisdiction over New York City’s incarcerated adolescent population and mainly houses the male adolescent population in its Robert N. Davoren Center and the female adolescent population at the Rose M. Singer Center, which are both located on Rikers Island; and

Whereas, The adolescent population includes: defendants awaiting trial, persons convicted of a crime and sentenced to one year or less, parole and probation violators, and persons sentenced to more than one year who are awaiting transfer to the New York state prison system; and

Whereas, According to research conducted by the MacArthur Foundation’s Research Network on Adolescent Development, incarcerating youth in adult facilities increases adolescents’ likelihood of recidivating; and

Whereas, Reports show that youth have the highest suicide rates of all inmates in jails and have much higher rates of victimization - including rape - than adult inmates; and

Whereas, Sufficient supervision must be given to incarcerated adolescents by DOC staff in order to help protect this vulnerable population; and

Whereas, Currently, DOC has a staff-to-adolescent ratio of 25-to-1 in most facilities housing adolescents; and

Whereas, Advocates report that the current staff-to-adolescent ratio is inadequate to provide the safety and proper monitoring needed by incarcerated adolescents; and

Whereas, This inadequacy is evident in the current rate of violence among the incarcerated adolescent population at Rikers Island; and

Whereas, New York City's Department of Juvenile Justice's current staff-to-juvenile ratio in secure detention facilities is 8-to-1 during the daytime hours and 12-to-1 during nighttime hours; and

Whereas, DOC's current staff-to-adolescent ratio should reflect similar ratios in order to provide better safety for incarcerated youth; and

Whereas, Increasing the number of staff to serve the adolescent population would assist in decreasing the number of violent incidents within adolescent facilities at Rikers Island and provide a safer environment for incarcerated youth; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the New York City Department of Correction to increase staffing levels in adolescent facilities at Rikers Island.

WJH
LS # 57
2/25/10