

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES
Of the
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

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June 20, 2016
Start: 1:35 p.m.
Recess: 1:44 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:
LAURIE A. CUMBO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Darlene Mealy
Elizabeth S. Crowley
Karen Koslowitz
Ben Kallos
Julissa Ferreras-Copeland

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Good afternoon. I am Council Member Laurie Cumbo; this hearing of the Committee on Women's Issues is now called to order.

Today this committee will be voting on pieces of legislation that will promote equity for women of our city; particularly those most vulnerable. Today we are addressing an issue that is unjustifiably stigmatized in the public discourse. Menstruation -- that's right; I said it -- menstruation should not be considered taboo; it's a completely natural bodily function and should be treated as such. Menstrual products are not optional or luxury items; they are necessary.

Today New York City joins a growing global movement to improve access to menstrual products. I am proud to be the Chair of this committee as we vote on historic legislation that will ensure girls in schools, juvenile justice and foster care, as well as women in prisons and shelters are granted sufficient access to these necessities for free.

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2 Proposed Int. No. 1122-A, sponsored by
3 Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Council Members
4 Ferreras-Copeland and Rodriguez, would require that
5 the Department of Corrections provide feminine
6 hygiene products to inmates and to arrestees and
7 detainees in its custody for at least 48 hours.

8 Proposed Int. No. 1123-A, sponsored by
9 Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Council Members
10 Levin, Ferreras-Copeland and Rodriguez, would require
11 the provision of feminine hygiene products in certain
12 homeless shelters, foster care and juvenile justice
13 facilities.

14 And Proposed Int. No. 1123-A, sponsored
15 by Council Member Ferreras-Copeland, Speaker Melissa
16 Mark-Viverito and Council Member Rodriguez, would
17 require the provision of feminine hygiene products in
18 schools -- about time.

19 Finally, Proposed, Res. 1012-A, sponsored
20 by Council Members Rodriguez, Ferreras-Copeland,
21 Dickens and The Speaker, acknowledges the passage of
22 the New York State Legislature and calls on the
23 Governor to sign legislation that exempts feminine
24 hygiene products from state and local sales tax.

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2 I'd like to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-
3 Viverito and Council Member Ferreras-Copeland for
4 their steadfast leadership and collaboration on the
5 issue of access to feminine hygiene products for the
6 New York City women; this is incredible, it's
7 historic. I'd like to thank the members of the
8 Committee on Women's Issues that are present: Council
9 Member Kallos, Council Member Crowley, Council Member
10 Koslowitz, and we have Council Member Ferreras-
11 Copeland.

12 Finally, I'd like to thank the staff on
13 the committee of Women's Issues: Counsel Aminta
14 Kilawan and Policy Analyst Joan Povolny for their
15 work in preparing for today's hearing.

16 And I would just like to add; this is why
17 it's so important for women to be in leadership
18 positions on city, state and federal government,
19 because we know the issues, live the issues and
20 recognize the issues and this is certainly
21 historical.

22 Now I will turn the floor over to Council
23 Member Ferreras-Copeland.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS-COPELAND: Thank
25 you, Chair. I wanted to personally thank you for

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2 listening to this hearing; I know that we were in the
3 middle of our budget season when you held this
4 hearing and you held down the fort and made it
5 informative, educational and helped us make this
6 package of legislation stronger.

7 I wanted to make a brief statement on
8 Int. 1128, better known as the "Menstrual Equity
9 Package," co-sponsored by myself, Speaker Mark-
10 Viverito and Council Member Rodriguez.

11 This is a huge step forward in the
12 movement to guarantee access to menstrual hygiene
13 products. These are not luxury items; they are
14 necessary products and a signal that our bodies are
15 healthy; menstruating only says that a woman is
16 absolutely healthy.

17 Today we are voting on the strongest
18 legislative package across the nation when it comes
19 to menstrual hygiene. We do not think it is enough
20 to simply remove the tax from these items; we have to
21 go beyond. New York City will be the first
22 municipality to proactively guarantee access to
23 feminine hygiene products, proactively ensuring that
24 students, women in shelters and in jails do not
25 suffer from a lack of access to these products.

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2 Our pilot program has gone extremely
3 well. This vote on package is also the result of
4 effective and efficient government; what happens when
5 you get a group of women together to legislate; make
6 sure that we get things done quickly, swiftly.

7 Again; I know I acknowledged her when we
8 had our first hearing, but I wanted to acknowledge
9 Council Member Koslowitz, who had this vision many,
10 many years ago and to have her sit on this committee
11 and vote on this package of legislation is very
12 exciting, so thank you, Council Member.

13 I'd like to thank the key leaders in this
14 movement: Speaker Mark-Viverito; Assemblywoman
15 Rosenthal, who has pushed forward the Assembly Bill;
16 Congresswoman Grace Meng, who has been incredibly
17 powerful in the federal government, and yourself,
18 Council Member Cumbo and all the members of the
19 Women's Caucus. Thank you so much.

20 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Thank you.

21 [pause]

22 And we will now do the roll call.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Committee Clerk Matthew
24 DeStefano, Committee on Women's Issues, roll call on

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2 Int. Nos. 1122-A, 1123-A, 1128-A, and Res. 1012-A.
3 Chair Cumbo.

4 CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I proudly vote aye
5 and today is a historic, a "herstoric" day for women
6 all over the world; this is an opportunity for us to
7 be our full and whole selves and we no longer have to
8 hide very critical elements to ourselves and refer to
9 them as "the change" or "[inaudible] flow" and now we
10 can be our full selves. I proudly vote aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Crowley.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I proudly vote
13 aye. I strongly support this package of legislation;
14 I wanna thank the leaders of the City Council; I
15 wanna thank Chair Laurie Cumbo for having this
16 hearing and supporting this legislation, Council
17 Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland for introducing the
18 legislation and Council Member Karen Koslowitz for
19 pushing forth this legislation decades ago; I wanna
20 thank you Speaker, as well as Councilwoman Grace
21 Meng, Assemblywoman Rosenthal, who also were very
22 strong and powerful leaders on this, and again, I too
23 agree; it's a "herstoric" moment in the City Council
24 and I couldn't be prouder to vote yes on all these
25 bills. Thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Koslowitz.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Be excused to explain my vote. It's all I can say is wow; it took 18 years, 18 years to come to this point and I wanna thank Chair Cumbo and Julissa Ferreras-Copeland for this wonderful, wonderful legislation that will help so many people who need it. Thank you... women... women.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: And you vote how?

[laughter]

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I vote absolutely aye.

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: Wonderful.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Kallos.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this legislation; I'm proud to vote aye on behalf of myself, the women in my life and the women in my district; the women in this city and hopefully soon the women in our nation. Thank you for your leadership, Chair Cumbo and Julissa Ferreras-Copeland for your sponsorship.

COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 4 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions, the items have been adopted.

[pause]

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COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

CHAIRPERSON CUMBO: I wanna again thank everyone; we have made "herstory" today and we are certainly going to be a better city and I'm sure we're going to inspire a nation, so this is what happens when dynamic women leadership come together and all of our he for she and we thank you so much. This meeting is now adjourned. Thank you.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date July 7, 2016