

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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February 14, 2017
Start: 10:23 a.m.
Recess: 10:59 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,
14th Fl.

B E F O R E:

BEN KALLOS
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David G. Greenfield
Mark Levine
Carlos Menchaca
Antonio Reynoso
Ritchie J. Torres
Joseph c. Borelli

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

Seonae Byeon
Public Housing Organizer
CAAHV

2 [sound check]

3 [pause]

4 [gavel]

5 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Good morning and
6 welcome to this hearing of the Committee on
7 Governmental Operations. I am Ben Kallos, Chair of
8 the Governmental Operations Committee; as always, you
9 can tweet me @BenKallos.

10 I would like to acknowledge members of
11 the Committee who are present; as always, Joe Borelli
12 was the first one here, followed by Carlos Menchaca
13 and Antonio Reynoso, and paging the other members who
14 are... [background comment] uh, a change of events;
15 gold star to Carlos Menchaca who got here before Joe
16 Borelli and we are also joined by Ritchie Torres for
17 a great showing from the Progressive Caucus, as
18 always.

19 Today we will be holding a vote on
20 Proposed Introduction 1181-A in relation to improving
21 access to city services for limited English
22 proficiency individuals. This bill is sponsored by
23 Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and co-sponsored by me.
24 The Committee held a first hearing on this bill on
25 November 17, 2016 where we heard valuable testimony

2 from many, many, many, many advocates and I'm pleased
3 to say that their testimony has led us to
4 strengthening the bill with amendments reflecting
5 their suggestions.

6 Proposed Introduction 1181-A would codify
7 the existing Executive Order on language access but
8 also expand it significantly. Under this bill,
9 agencies would not be required to provide language
10 access services for ten languages citywide. These
11 services would include translation of documents, the
12 provision of interpreter services and posting of
13 multilingual signage about such services. The bill
14 would also require each agency to develop and
15 implement a Language Access Implementation Plan
16 describing how they will provide such language
17 services.

18 Additionally, the bill requires outreach
19 to language communities that are not generally
20 covered by agency language policies to determine what
21 agency services they might use if services were
22 provided in their language to better guide agencies
23 in serving their population.

24 Finally, the bill includes extensive
25 reporting and monitoring requirements, including a

1 requirement for a system to track complaints.
2
3 Ensuring access to services for all of our residents
4 is vital for our city. Proud to be a co-sponsor of
5 the bill and we'll be moving through our Committee
6 legislation that will have such positive impact to so
7 many New Yorkers.

8 I want to thank the Speaker for advancing
9 this legislation, my colleagues on the Committee for
10 their support, as well as Committee staff, Committee
11 Counsel and Analyst Brad Reid and Finance Unit Head
12 and Analyst John Russell for all of their work on
13 this bill. And just a reminder; we need analysts on
14 this Committee, so if you know anyone, please send
15 them our way.

16 Finally, I would like to thank, again,
17 the advocates who testified before this Committee; I
18 want you to know that you had my support and your
19 voices were heard. Give me one moment.

20 [pause]

21 [background comments]

22 So we have one person who's testifying,
23 however, we're going to open the rolls for two
24 members who have to be in more than one place at one
25

2 time; specifically, Carlos Menchaca and Ritchie
3 Torres. If the Clerk can please call those two.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Committee Clerk Matthew
5 Distefano, Committee on Governmental Operations.
6 Council Member Menchaca.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I vote aye and
8 I do want to say that this bill that we're hearing
9 today is going to give real access to our immigrant
10 community and I am really excited to get this back
11 onto the Stated for a full vote.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Torres.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I too vote aye.

14 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you. I'd like
15 to now call Seonae Byeon. If you could grab a seat
16 at that table; press the microphone; there's a button
17 on it that will light up and you can begin whenever
18 you wish, and we thank you for coming out on behalf
19 of CAAAV. [background comments] Yes. And make sure
20 to press the button. Is it lit up?

21 SEONAE BYEON: Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Perfect.

23 SEONAE BYEON: Thank you so much having
24 me. My name is Seonae Byeon, Public Housing
25 Organizer at CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities on

1
2 behalf of hundreds of our members that are low-income
3 immigrants living in Chinatown and Queensbridge
4 NYCHA. We support the amendment to the City Charter
5 that would require City agencies to create a language
6 access plan and practice so that LEP communities,
7 mostly immigrants, can benefit from the services just
8 like everyone else is getting.

9 So the reason we feel so strongly about
10 this issue is that information is key to democracy
11 and if people are not given the information, then it
12 makes it difficult for them to play their part in
13 democracy.

14 In the political climate we have now of
15 plans and raids [sic] against immigrants, it is even
16 more important that LEP individuals who are mostly
17 immigrants be able to access services that can help
18 them sustain healthy and stable communities.

19 Alright, I would like to testify one
20 thing; I was helping a Korean tenant in NYCHA
21 Queensbridge; he didn't get heating last year during
22 the entire winter; it was because of his limited
23 English proficiency and City agencies; not City
24 agencies, but NYCHA agencies didn't want to help them
25 efficiently, so I claim that this is a really

1 important bill and I feel, as an immigrant, as an
2 English second language, this bill is really
3 important for me and for our community. Thank you so
4 much.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you very much
7 for your testimony. Does anyone have any quick
8 questions? Seeing none. Thank you and we will now
9 instruct the Committee Clerk to please complete the
10 roll.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation of roll
12 call vote on Intro 1181-A. Chair Kallos.

13 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Proudly vote aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Reynoso.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Borelli.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 5 in the
19 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
20 the item has been adopted.

21 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: As is our practice,
22 we will keep the vote open until... until 10:45 for
23 remaining Committee members to take their vote, at
24 which point my Committee Counsel will close the
25 hearing. Thank you.

2 [pause]

3 COMMITTEE CLERK: Committee on
4 Governmental Operations, continuation of roll call
5 vote for Intro 1181-A. Council Member Greenfield.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I vote aye.
7 I'd like to thank Chair Ben Kallos for his
8 leadership, Counsel Brad Reid and John Russell, the
9 Finance Unit Head, for their outstanding service to
10 our wonderful city and I appreciate the fine work
11 that all of you do. Have a wonderful day.

12 [pause]

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Committee on
14 Governmental Operations, continuation of roll call
15 vote for Intro 1181-A. Council Member Levine.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Aye.

17 [background comments]

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: The final vote: 7 in
19 the affirmative, 0 in the negative; no abstentions.
20 Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And with that, we're
22 adjourned.

23 [gavel]

24

25

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 March 2, 2017