



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Res. No. 45

Resolution calling for the condemnation of Barneys New York and their prejudiced security policies.

By Council Members Cabrera, Mendez and Rose

Whereas, Racial profiling is a term used to describe actions that rely on race, ethnicity, or national origin rather than the behavior of an individual or particularized information to identify one as being, or having been, engaged in criminal activity; and

Whereas, While racial profiling has been the subject of considerable scrutiny in the context of the traffic police and pedestrian stops, racial profiling in the consumer context has received far less attention, notwithstanding its prevalence; and

Whereas, In October 2013, alleged racial profiling by New York City’s department stores became headline news when Trayon Christian, a 19-year-old college freshman from Corona, New York filed lawsuits against both Barneys New York (“Barneys”) and the New York Police Department (“NYPD”); and

Whereas, According to news reports, Mr. Christian alleges that he walked into Barneys department store

on Madison Avenue in New York City in April 2013 to purchase a \$350 belt; and

Whereas, Mr. Christian also alleges he provided the sales clerk a debit card and identification to pay for the belt; and

Whereas, Mr. Christian further asserts that during the process of running the debit card, the clerk called the police claiming the debit card was a fraud; and

Whereas, Having completed the transaction successfully, Mr. Christian left the store, and was approached by detectives and taken to the 19th police precinct for questioning and only released two hours later, after police confirmed that his debit card was legitimate; and

Whereas, Since the publicity of Mr. Christian's lawsuit, others have come forward recounting similar experiences at Barneys and other department stores in New York City; and

Whereas, In the days following this event, civil rights activist Reverend Al Sharpton met with Barneys Chief Executive Office Mark Lee as well as other community leaders to discuss the alleged racial profiling at Barneys; and

Whereas, Mr. Lee asserted that his employees were not involved in racial profiling, did not question Mr. Christian, and did not call the NYPD; and

Whereas, Mr. Lee reportedly apologized for Mr. Christian's treatment and expressed zero tolerance for any form of discrimination at Barneys; and

Whereas, Notwithstanding Mr. Lee's comments, it is evident that at the very least, Barneys has failed to shield its customers from racial profiling; and

Whereas, We as a city, as individuals, as elected officials, must do everything within our collective power to ensure that Barneys and retailers, large and small, are prevented from racial profiling; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls for the condemnation of Barneys New York and their prejudiced security policies.

WJH
2/18/14
LS 5183