

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

----- X

August 3, 2023
Start: 9:59 a.m.
Recess: 10:11 a.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Eric Dinowitz, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Charles Barron
Gale A. Brewer
Oswald Feliz
Inna Vernikov

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Sound check on today's
3 Committee on Higher Education. Today's date is August
4 3, 2023. Location is the Committee Room, recorded by
5 Walter Lewis.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and
7 welcome to the Committee on Higher Education.

8 At this time, can everyone please silence
9 your cell phones? Thank you for your cooperation.

10 Chair, we are ready to begin.

11 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: [GAVEL] Good
12 morning. I'm Council Member Eric Dinowitz, Chair of
13 the Committee on Higher Education.

14 Today, the Committee will vote on
15 Proposed Resolution 237-A, a resolution calling on
16 the New York State Legislature to pass and the
17 Governor to sign the Fair College Admissions Act
18 which would prohibit legacy admission preferences at
19 undergraduate institutions in New York State. This
20 legislation was previously heard by the Committee on
21 Higher Education on June 30, 2022. This resolution,
22 which I introduced well before the recent Supreme
23 Court ruling that eviscerated affirmative action on
24 U.S. college campuses, now seeks to help level the
25 playing field in a different way for New York City's

2 first-generation college students and for many of our
3 lower-income students, students of color,
4 undocumented students, and students from immigrant
5 families.

6 The New York State legislation that this
7 resolution supports refocuses colleges on fighting
8 for educational, economic, and social equity for all
9 New Yorkers who seek access to college education. The
10 Fair College Admissions Act would actually prevent
11 colleges both from including a question on their own
12 application about where an applicant's parents went
13 to college and even from looking at the answer to
14 such a question on the Common App which is used by
15 over 1,000 colleges in the admission process. The Act
16 also includes a substantial financial penalty for
17 colleges that break the rules. Legacy admissions will
18 be in the news for some time to come as more and more
19 public and private colleges voluntarily agree to end
20 legacy preferences and as more and more elected
21 representatives join those forces. Now, after
22 receiving a complaint, the federal government has
23 launched a civil rights investigation into Harvard's
24 legacy admissions process. All of that signals that a
25 big change could be coming. It is indeed time for New

2 York State to pass the Fair College Admissions Act
3 and for the New York City Council to make clear our
4 support for it and for the future New York City
5 college students it champions.

6 I want to acknowledge the Council Members
7 who are present, Council Member Vernikov, Council
8 Member Feliz, and virtually joining us Council Member
9 Barron.

10 I would like to thank my Staff, we have a
11 number of them here today, as well as the Committee
12 Staff and others who worked on preparing this
13 resolution including Adam Staropoli, my Legislative
14 Director, Jenna Klaus, my Chief-of-Staff, Christina
15 Yellamaty, the Committee's Counsel, Regina Paul, the
16 Committee's Policy Analyst, Chloe Rivera, the
17 Committee's former Senior Policy Analyst, and Nia
18 Hyatt, the Committee's Senior Finance Analyst.

19 I think we are now ready for the vote.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good
21 morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call
22 vote Committee on Higher Education, Resolution 237-A.
23 Chair Dinowitz.

24 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Yes.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Feliz.

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

5

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Proudly vote yes.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Barron.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
6 you, sir. Vernikov.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Yes.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: With a
9 vote of four in the affirmative, zero in the
10 negative, and no abstentions, Resolution has been
11 adopted by the Committee.

12 The roll will be held open at request of
13 the Chair.

14 Continuation roll call Committee on
15 Higher Education, Proposed Resolution 237-A. Council
16 Member Brewer.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote aye. I just
18 want to point out though that as time goes on there
19 are a lot of people of color who are going to Harvard
20 and Yale and Columbia and Penn, etc., and they too
21 are legacies, and so I just want to point out that
22 when the newer generation comes along and finds out
23 that they're not legacies, I just want to make a
24 point. Thank you very much but I vote aye.

25

2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
3 you. Final vote now is five in the affirmative, zero
4 in the negative, and no abstentions. Mr. Chair, that
5 is a full Committee.

6 CHAIRPERSON DINOWITZ: Thank you, Council
7 Member Brewer. Thank you. This hearing is closed.

8 [GAVEL]

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

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 August 4, 2023