

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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December 14, 2021
Start: 12:36 p.m.
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HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: Mark Levine
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Alicka Ampry-Samuel
Inez Barron
Brooks-Powers
Darma Diaz
Mathieu Eugene
Oswald Feliz
Robert Holden
Keith Powers

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

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: PC recording up.

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Cloud is up. Good

4 morning, everyone, and welcome to today's remote New
5 York City Council vote of the Committee on Health.

6 At this time, would all panelists please turn on your
7 videos? To minimize disruptions, please place all
8 electronic devices to vibrate or silent mode. Thank
9 you for your cooperation. Chair, we are ready to
10 begin.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you,
12 sergeants. I am Mark Levine, Chair of the City
13 Council's Health Committee. I am pleased that we are
14 joined by fellow Council members and committee
15 members. Council member Diaz, Council member Powers,
16 Council member Holden, Council member Ampry-Samuel,
17 Council member Barron, Council member Brooks-Powers,
18 and-- forgive me if I have missed. I think Council
19 member Yeger may be on and if I've missed any of you,
20 I will acknowledge you momentarily. We are hearing
21 today-- actually voting today-- on an important
22 piece of legislation: Intro 1326-B which I'm proud to
23 sponsor which required added sugar notifications in
24 chain restaurants. We will also vote on Reso 638,
25 sponsored by Council member Dr. Mathieu Eugene who is

2 also here with us which calls on the New York State
3 Department of Health to create standalone, self-
4 contained isolation centers or units for the
5 treatment of patients with infectious disease due to
6 epidemic, including highly contagious and airborne
7 diseases. And I'm happy that Council member Eugene
8 will be sharing a few words on his Resolution
9 momentarily. First, Intro 1326-B would require that
10 the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene issue a
11 rule designating an icon to be placed in a clear and
12 conspicuous manner on menus or menu boards adjacent
13 to the listed prepackaged foods and prepackaged food
14 items on display that exceed a specified level of
15 added sugars, including but not limited to 100% or
16 more of the daily value for added sugars. Such a
17 rule would also provide a factual warning statement
18 about high added sugar intake which can have serious
19 health consequences including diabetes and obesity.
20 It's estimated that more than 100 million Americans
21 have diabetes or prediabetes, including an estimated
22 987,000 New Yorkers. Diabetes disproportionately
23 impacted New Yorkers based on their economic, racial,
24 and ethnic backgrounds with black, Hispanic, and
25 Asian New Yorkers being twice as likely as white New

2 Yorkers to have diabetes as of 2013. Diabetes
3 disproportionately affects high poverty communities
4 in New York City where the neighborhoods with the
5 highest prevalence were Fordham, Bronx Park, East New
6 York, Williamsburg, Bushwick, Northeast Bronx, and
7 the South Bronx. According to DOHMH, more than half
8 of adult New Yorkers are overweight: 34% were obese:
9 22%, while almost half woeful elementary school
10 students and Headstart students are currently at an
11 unhealthy weight. As we continue to witness the
12 health impacts of COVID 19, we must do what we can to
13 help our communities become healthier which requires
14 centering equity. We must do more to improve the
15 long term health of our communities, especially those
16 marginalized and disproportionally impacted by
17 inaccessibility to healthy food options. Intro
18 1326-B helps address some of these concerns by
19 clearly labeling foods that can be harmful to one's
20 health. Prepared food is a growing and problematic
21 part of her diet, particularly among children, making
22 up approximately 25% of the child's daily calories on
23 average. Consumption of restaurant food has been
24 linked with increased caloric intake, poor nutrition,
25 and higher risk for being overweight and obese. By

2 requiring chain restaurants, specifically those with
3 15 or more stores, to posted icon on our next to a
4 prepackaged food item on display or next to a
5 prepackaged food item listed on the menu or menu
6 board and to post a warning statement at the point of
7 purchase, we can make the health content of one's
8 options more apparent. The heart of this bill is
9 consumer empowerment and I'm proud of this
10 legislation and confident that it will successfully
11 provide a clear path for individuals to make more
12 informed choices. I want to thank my colleagues from
13 the Health Committee, again, for being here. We've
14 also been joined by Council member Feliz and I also
15 want to also thank the incredible staff of the Health
16 Committee: Counsel Harbani Ahuja and Sara Liss,
17 policy analyst Anne Balkan, and finance analyst
18 Lauren Hunt for their work on this legislation.
19 Thank you, again. And, now, going to pass it to
20 Council member Mathieu Eugene for remarks on his
21 Reso. Please, Dr. Eugene.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very
23 much, Mr. Chair. Thank you so very much. Thank you
24 also for your leadership on behalf of all New Yorkers
25 and thank you to my colleagues on the Health

2 Committee for all your support on this very important
3 legislation. I'm proud to sponsor Resolution 638,
4 filed under the New York State Department of Health
5 to create standalone self-contained medical centers
6 only for the treatment of patients with infectious
7 disease due to epidemic including highly contagious
8 and airborne disease. As a medical doctor and as a
9 public servant, I have been concerned for many years
10 about the greater danger that public health
11 emergencies such as COVID-19 will be to our general
12 populations, especially in our high population
13 density like New York City. I saw the issues that
14 the lack of hospital capacity [inaudible 00:06:15]
15 and as we all are aware, this same situation made it
16 incredibly difficult for our medical professionals to
17 provide the proper care for patients with COVID-19 in
18 safe environments and, ultimately, community
19 [inaudible 00:06:34] for us that we must learn from
20 so that we do not repeat the tragedy that unfolded
21 last year. I want the great city of New York to be
22 more prepared for the next wave of contagious disease
23 and as we have seen with COVID-19, viruses can
24 mutate. They have the ability to cause sickness and
25 illness despite the best preventative measure on the

2 part of the general population. If we can contain a
3 disease at its outset, we are much more likely to
4 prevent an outbreak and the domino effect that these
5 past issues have had on the city and all [inaudible
6 00:07:26]. Everything was shut down during COVID-19
7 and we will be feeling the financial applications for
8 many years to come. This is an area where I am
9 confident that we can improve our ability to respond
10 and protect the community and it is one where we much
11 act on with a greater sense of urgency. As public
12 servants, it is our moral obligation and
13 responsibility to do everything that we can do to
14 save life. And I believe that having stand alone
15 medical centers or units will put our city in a much
16 better position to end and control the next public
17 health crisis. This legislation will never
18 [inaudible 00:08:25] of our city. It will ease the
19 burden of that the public health crisis has on our
20 healthcare workers and all those who are involved in
21 keeping the city running when there is a public
22 health emergency. This legislation will save lives
23 and will prepare our city for a more prosperous
24 future [inaudible 00:08:50] of infectious disease. I
25 want to thank Speaker Johnson and also Jason Goldman,

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2 Jeff Baker, and all of the wonderful staff of the
3 City Council and all my colleagues for their support.
4 And, again, Mr. Chair, thank you so very much for
5 your leadership and your advocacy on behalf of the
6 city of New York. Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you, Council
8 member Eugene. We now have every member of the
9 Health Committee present. Thank you for that,
10 everyone. We're going to ask now the committee clerk
11 to call the roll call for the vote.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. Good and
13 good afternoon. This is a roll call vote on the
14 Committee on Health. Intro 1326-B and Resolution
15 0638. Chair Levine?

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I vote aye.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Eugene?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I vote aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Barron?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. I vote
21 aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Ampry-
23 Samuel?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: I vote
25 aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Holden?

3 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I vote aye.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Powers?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Quick permission to
6 explain my vote?

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Of course. Please.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. For
9 starters, I want to say I'm voting aye on all
10 including the bill on the labeling nutrition bill and
11 I think it is a good bill and also I think we,
12 hopefully in the next Council even can go further
13 with it. There are places where I think we can do
14 more. But, beyond that, I just want to commend our
15 future Borough President and are Chair Levine for
16 being just an absolute rock star Health Committee
17 Chair over the last four years. There's not a
18 committee that he has done a great job and, during
19 the pandemic, there's been no public servant public
20 elected official that I know that has done more for
21 New Yorkers to be able to communicate and articulate
22 what is happening at any particular moment and be the
23 voice of reason. So, I want to commend him. This is
24 not a farewell. The guys got a pretty good job next
25 year, but, either way, I wanted to say my thanks to

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2 him for being a great Chair and certainly for all the
3 work you should over the last four years.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: My goodness. That
5 was the best explanation of a vote I think I've ever
6 heard. Thank you so much, Council member Powers, for
7 your words.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Absolutely.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: It really means a
10 lot. Grateful for your partnership, as well. Thank
11 you.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Darma
13 Diaz?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Yes.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Brooks-
16 Powers?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Feliz?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Aye on all.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. Chair
21 Levine, by a vote of nine in the affirmative, zero in
22 the negative, and no abstentions, both items were
23 adopted.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you so much.

3 We have a full voting so we will close the committee
4 hearing. Thank you so much.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you, Mr.
6 Chair. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Bye-bye now.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you, Chair Levine.

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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 January 28, 2022