

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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September 10, 2025

Start: 10:09 a.m.

Recess: 10:15 a.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Diana Ayala, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Alexa Avilés
Chris Banks
Tiffany Cabán
Lincoln Restler
Kevin C. Riley
Althea V. Stevens
Sandra Ung

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Julie Menin

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mic check, mic check,
3 mic check on the vote on General Welfare. Today's
4 date is September 10, 2025, recorded by Walter Lewis
5 in the Chambers.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, and
7 welcome to today's vote from the New York City
8 Committee on General Welfare.

9 At this point, I'd like to remind
10 everyone to please silence all electronic devices,
11 and at no point is anyone to approach the dais.

12 Chair, we are ready to begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: [GAVEL] Good morning,
14 everyone, and welcome to today's hearing. My name is
15 Diana Ayala, and I am the Deputy Speaker of the New
16 York City Council and the Chair of the General
17 Welfare Committee.

18 Today, our Committee will be voting on
19 several bills. Intro. 791, Intro. 1175, and Reso 362,

20 Intro. 791, sponsored by Council Member
21 Lincoln Restler, would require DSS to post on its
22 website data concerning vacant supportive housing
23 units.

24 Intro. 1175, sponsored by Council Member
25 Julie Menin, would require the Office to End Domestic

Violence and Gender-Based Violence to establish a program to provide income-eligible domestic violence survivors with both brief legal assistance and full legal representation throughout a divorce proceeding.

Finally, Resolution 362, sponsored by Council Member Erik Bottcher, calls on the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign 8.701/S998, the Social Worker Workforce Act. The act will repeal the requirement that social work graduates must pass an examination to receive an LMSW license, thus creating the mental health provider workforce in New York.

At this time, I'd like to acknowledge my Colleagues who are here today, Council Members Riley, Cabán, Avilés, Restler, and Ung, who's joining us online.

And I would also like to thank the Committee Staff who worked to prepare this hearing and vote, Aminta Killawan, Senior Legislative Counsel, who's back, yay; Penina Rosenberg, Senior Policy Analyst; Justin Campos, Policy Analyst; Elisabeth Childers-Garcia, Finance Analyst; Phariha Rahman, Finance Analyst; Julia Haramis, Unit Head.

And finally, my staff, Elsie Encarnacion, Chief-of-Staff.

Would any of the Council Members like to speak on their...

Okay, Council Member Menin.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Thank you so much, Chair. Today, I'm thrilled that after so many years, we will finally have a program to help domestic violence survivors get legal representation in divorce proceedings. In 2021, this Council passed legislation to create a pilot program for income-eligible domestic violence survivors in divorce proceedings. Unfortunately, the pilot program was never implemented, and today our City Council is righting that wrong. In June, we passed a New York City budget that included 2 million dollars so that a new right to counsel could be given to domestic violence survivors with divorce proceedings. My bill, Intro. 1175, will implement a permanent program to provide full legal representation and brief legal assistance for income-eligible domestic violence survivors in divorce proceedings in the city. It's estimated that this legislation will help up to 800 low-income survivors find the vital resources they

need to obtain an attorney and to be educated on their legal rights. Our women majority City Council is making sure New York City remains committed to helping DV survivors. And this is just a first step in helping people who may have limited English proficiency, be culturally isolated, or feel intimidated by the legal system. I encourage my Colleagues to vote in favor of this badly needed new right to counsel program for domestic violence victims.

And finally, I want to thank the Chair for allowing me to speak. And I want to thank drafter, Jessie Fung (phonetic) Policy Analyst Penina Rosenberg, and thank my team, Jonathan Szott and Brandon Jordan. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you.

I want to acknowledge that we've also been joined by Council Member Stevens and Council Member Banks.

And I want to thank you, Council Member Menin, for this legislation. I was very supportive of it initially, and I've shared this before. But when I was married many years ago and in a domestic violence situation, and before then the State did not

recognize dissolution of marriage for certain categories. You had to either have been abandoned for a year and be able to prove that you executed every option to get that husband back or that they were physically abusive, but then you had to show three different examples of how that person was abusive, and it had to have been relatively recently. So if you were separated because of that, then it didn't matter. And it took me many, many years to be able to dissolve that marriage because I couldn't afford it. So I know that the trauma of having to be forced into staying in a legal relationship with somebody that has really traumatized you is devastating, and so thank you for that because I think that this is going to help a lot of individuals reestablish their lives and be able to move on and put closure to that part of their story.

With that, I would now like to turn it over to the Clerk to do the roll call.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on General Welfare, 791-A, 1175-A, and Proposed Resolution 362-A.

Chair Ayala.

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Aye.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Restler.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Aye.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Riley.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Cabán.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Avilés.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Aye.

11 Congratulations to my Colleagues and thank you for
12 the legislation.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Ossé.

14 Stevens.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Ung.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
19 you. Banks.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BANKS: Aye, and
21 congratulations on the legislation.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: With a
23 vote of eight in the affirmative, zero in the
24 negative, and no abstentions, all items have been
25 adopted by the Committee.

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2 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: And with that, this
3 hearing is closed. [GAVEL]

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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 September 12, 2025