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COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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March 2, 2023
Start: 10:14 a.m.
Recess: 10:28 a.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Diana Ayala, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Tiffany Caban
- Crystal Hudson
- Linda Lee
- Chi A. Osse
- Lincoln Restler
- Kevin C. Riley
- Althea V. Stevens
- Sandra Ung
- Nantasha M. Williams

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Erik Bottcher

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning. This is a
3 microphone check for the Committee on General
4 Welfare. Today's date is March 2, 2023. Located in
5 the Chambers. Recording done by Pedro Lugo.

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

9 Please silent all electronic devices.

10 Chair, we are ready to begin.

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

16 Today, our Committee will be voting on
17 two bills. The first bill, Proposed Intro 522-A
18 sponsored by Council Member Erik Bottcher. Proposed
19 Intro 522-A would require mental health professionals
20 to be available in each families-with-children
21 shelter to provide on-site or telehealth mental
22 health services. Homeless, in and of itself, is a
23 traumatic experience. When these issues go
24 unaddressed, families find it even more challenging
25 to exit homelessness and move into permanent housing.

2 Our shelter system must provide adequate wraparound
3 services to set up New Yorkers up for success,
4 including mental health services.

5 The second bill we are voting on,
6 Proposed Intro 436-A is sponsored by Council Member
7 Stevens who is on her way and would create a Juvenile
8 Justice Advisory Board to advise and provide
9 recommendations to the Mayor, the Council, and the
10 Administration for Children Services on issues
11 related to juvenile justice. Greater oversight and
12 input is needed to ensure proper safety and care of
13 children living in juvenile detention systems. We
14 know that this board exists and that Intro 436 will
15 make its work even more effective. I want to thank
16 the advocates and individuals with lived experience
17 that informed and helped us to shape this
18 legislation.

19 At this time, I'd like to acknowledge my
20 Colleagues who are here with us today, Council Member
21 Riley, Hudson, Lee, Osse, Restler, Ung, and Williams,
22 and we've been joined by Council Member Bottcher.

23 I'd also like to thank our Committee
24 Staff who worked to prepare this hearing, Aminta
25 Kilawan, Senior Legislative Counsel, David Romero,

2 Legislative Counsel, Cristy Dwyer, Senior Legislative
3 Policy Analyst, Julia Harmis, Principal Finance
4 Analyst, Rose Martinez, Assistant Deputy Director,
5 Nicholas Montalbano, Senior Data Scientist, and
6 finally my staff, Elsie Encarnacion and Malek Al-
7 Shammery, Director of Communications and our Chief-
8 of-Staff.

9 I would like to now turn it over to the
10 Sponsors of the bills for remarks on their
11 legislation. With that, we will call on Council
12 Member Bottcher.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you so
14 much, Chair Ayala. I've been in government for like
15 14 years, and I'm so incredibly proud to be part of
16 this Body and to be here today passing my third piece
17 of legislation which is going to have an incredibly
18 profound effect on the lives of thousands and
19 thousands of New Yorkers because Intro 522 is going
20 to mental healthcare in every family shelter in New
21 York City, and that's over 13,000 families who slept
22 in shelters last night, over 22,000 children who
23 right now have very little access to mental health
24 services, and we're really solving for a couple of
25 problems here. One is that as a society we have

2 devalued mental healthcare, and our government treats
3 mental healthcare like something optional, like
4 something superfluous, like something extra, and
5 we've all seen during this pandemic what happens when
6 we neglect mental healthcare. The effects are
7 devastating. Also, in our country, we have a two-
8 tiered healthcare system. We have healthcare for
9 people of means, the insured, and then we have a
10 healthcare system for everyone else, and that is
11 particularly true for mental healthcare. I'm someone
12 who benefited from mental healthcare as a young
13 person. I wouldn't be here today if I hadn't received
14 that care. That is not true for most New Yorkers,
15 especially families in our shelter system so Intro
16 522 that we're passing today would ensure that people
17 living in our shelter systems, families have access
18 to on-site mental healthcare, either through a
19 physical healthcare professional or counselor or via
20 telehealth. We're exploring new technology to make
21 sure that these services are in there so I really
22 want to thank you, Deputy Speaker Ayala, for your co-
23 Sponsorship of this legislation, I want to thank
24 Linda Lee, the Chair of the Mental Health Committee,
25 and I want to thank the Speaker and all the Staff who

2 worked on this. I also want to thank Christine Quinn
3 from WIN, the largest family shelter provider for
4 families with children because it was just about a
5 year ago when I attended a panel discussion hosted by
6 WIN where this problem was identified, and we met, we
7 drafted this legislation in response to the concerns
8 that we heard from providers on the ground so this is
9 an example of how the process is supposed to work,
10 co-governance with the providers who are providing
11 these services out in the community. Thank you so
12 much to the Committee and to everyone who made today
13 possible.

14 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Council
15 Member Bottcher. Council Member Stevens is not here.
16 She should be on her way so we will leave the vote
17 open.

18 With that, thank you all, and I would
19 like to now turn it over to the Clerk to do the roll
20 call for the vote.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good
22 morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call
23 vote Committee on General Welfare. Items are coupled.
24 Chair Ayala.

25 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Riley.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Aye.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Hudson.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Aye.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Lee.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Aye.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Osse.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: Aye.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Restler.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Aye and congrats

12 to Council Members Bottcher and Stevens on great

13 bills. Thank you to the Chair of the Committee.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Ung.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Williams.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I vote aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote

19 of eight in the affirmative, zero in the negative,

20 and no abstentions, both items have been adopted by

21 the Committee, and the roll will be held open by

22 request of the Chair.

23 Continuation roll call the Committee on

24 General Welfare on Proposed Introductions 436-A and

25 522-A. Council Member Caban.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABAN: I vote aye.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: The vote
4 is now nine in the affirmative.

5 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: We will now hear from
6 Council Member Stevens.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: When I worked
8 with youth, many of them felt that their voice didn't
9 matter or the candidates didn't care about them.
10 Today I'm here to tell young people that all the
11 voices matter and you do have an elected official
12 that fights to make sure your voice is heard.

13 Intro 436 to create a Juvenile Justice
14 Advisory Board is to ensure justice-involved youth
15 and families have a seat at the table when decisions
16 are being made. Although we need to continue to do
17 the work to ensure that young people do not reach the
18 juvenile justice system, for those who do we need to
19 ensure that the lead the discussion around reform
20 interventions (INAUDIBLE) the system. I am
21 enthusiastic that we are moving in the direction to
22 ensure that young people, their families, and those
23 advocating for them to have a seat at the table and
24 can provide feedback and suggestions based on their
25 lived experience.

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2 With that, I vote aye.

3 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: THANK YOU.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
5 you. Final vote now on Committee on General Welfare.
6 Both items have been adopted by the Committee 10 in
7 the affirmative, zero in the negative, and no
8 abstentions. Madam Chair, that is a full Committee.

9 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you and
10 congratulations to Council Members Stevens and
11 Bottcher.

12 With that, this vote 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 March 9, 2023