

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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November 10, 2021  
Start: 12:02 p.m.  
Recess: 12:10 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Stephen T. Levin  
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Vanessa L. Gibson  
Rafael Salamanca Jr.  
Barry Grodenchik  
Antonio Reynoso  
Darma V. Diaz  
Brad Lander

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

2 [background comments]

3 [gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon,  
5 everybody. Oh. Wait. Is it after? Good noon,  
6 everybody. Good noon. I'm Council member Steve  
7 Levin, Chair of the Council's Committee on General  
8 Welfare and I want to thank everybody for attending  
9 today's important vote. We will be voting on Intros  
10 1232-A and 1233-A. These are related to transfers  
11 for people in the shelter system. Transfers are a  
12 process that is fraught with anxiety and confusion  
13 for clients in the shelter system. I sponsored two  
14 bills that the Committee is voting on today which  
15 will shed light on the shelter transfer process and  
16 ensure that clients know their rights. The first  
17 bill, Proposed Intro 1232-A, requires the Department  
18 of Homeless Services will create a sign and other  
19 relevant materials that inform residents of homeless  
20 shelters of their rights related to shelter  
21 transfers, including the right to request a  
22 reasonable accommodation if they have a disabling  
23 condition, the right to request a transfer to a  
24 shelter closer to their child school, and the right  
25 to an agency conference and a fair hearing to

2 challenge the adequacy of the shelter placement.  
3 These are basic requests that we mean to ensure  
4 clients know they have the right to ask for. The  
5 process for such requests needs to be clear and  
6 easily accessible and this bill will ensure just  
7 that. Additionally, my office has continually heard  
8 of clients being told to pack up their stuff because  
9 they are leaving the shelter had any minute, no  
10 warning. No idea where they are going and no idea  
11 why they are being moved. The average length of stay  
12 in shelters has continued to grow in every category.  
13 Single adults stay in shelter for-- on average for  
14 476 days. Families with children staying in shelter  
15 for an average of 520 days. In adult families  
16 without children staying in shelter on average for a  
17 whopping 773 days. With client staying in shelter  
18 for such a long time, they establish relationships  
19 with others in the shelter, they find nearby  
20 resources, and their kids go to school nearby. We  
21 need to ensure that individuals and families are  
22 informed, no why they are being transferred, and  
23 where they are being transferred to and know that  
24 they have a right to have fair hearing and to  
25 challenge the adequacy of the shelter placement.

2 Proposed Intro 1233-A would require that DHS provide  
3 written notification to shelter residents at least 48  
4 hours prior to any nonemergency shelter transfer and  
5 no later than 48 hours after an emergency transfer  
6 and require that the client be informed of the  
7 process to appeal the transfer. The bill would also  
8 require information to be provided to individuals and  
9 families about how they can obtain important  
10 documents such as their case record. The legislation  
11 would also require DHS to submit an annual report on  
12 the number of the reason for transfers so we can  
13 learn how often clients are being subjected to this  
14 process. I believe that these two bills will help  
15 clarify the process and ensure that clients in  
16 shelter will know their rights to request a transfer  
17 that is best for them or appeal and decision when it  
18 does not work for them. I would like to especially  
19 thank all of the advocates and providers and clients  
20 who informed and helped shaped this legislation. I  
21 want to acknowledge Council member Diaz's  
22 predecessor, Raphael Espinal, who was the original  
23 sponsor of these two bills and I took them over when  
24 he left the Council and I want to acknowledge the  
25 staff of the General Welfare Committee, Aminta

2 Kilowan, senior counsel, Crystal Pan, senior policy  
3 analyst, Natalie Omari, policy analyst Julia Haramis,  
4 finance analyst. I'd also like to thank my chief of  
5 staff, Johnathan Gluche and my legislative directors,  
6 Elizabeth Adams and Nichole Hunt. And I want to also  
7 acknowledge the work that the Speaker did on this  
8 legislation and express my appreciation to  
9 Commissioner Steve Banks on negotiating this with us.  
10 Do any of my colleagues have any comments?

11 [background comments]

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes. Council  
13 member Diaz.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: I just want to--  
15 It's no secret that I come from the homeless services  
16 population. I just want to thank you for hosting  
17 this hearing today and to thank you. You don't know  
18 truly how impactful the decisions that are being made  
19 here today are on our families. This placement is  
20 real and to know you've gone from eviction to  
21 homeless shelter to then being evicted again because  
22 it is an eviction. When a case worker knocks on your  
23 door or security says you are moving, you're out of  
24 here and you have a couple of minutes to move your  
25 stuff, that's pretty impactful. It doesn't only

2 impact the adult, but it impacts the child. It's a  
3 lifechanging decision we are making here today. I  
4 just want to thank you on behalf of the thousands of  
5 families that are going to be impacted by this.  
6 Thank you. Mental health is big. Thank you very  
7 much.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you so much,  
9 Council member Diaz. Council member Grodenchik?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I want to add  
11 my voice to that of Councilwoman Diaz. I grew up in  
12 New York City public housing and I know that I have  
13 fought for years to get nine should stop moving  
14 people around as if they were furniture in somebody's  
15 economic means should not determine how they are  
16 treated. Everybody in the city should be treated  
17 with dignity and respect, especially by city  
18 government. So, I'm glad to support this legislation  
19 today and I thank you for bringing forward and I ask  
20 that I be put on these two bills, as well. Thank  
21 you, Mr. Chairman.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you so much,  
23 Council member Grodenchik. Do any other colleagues  
24 have anything they want to add? Seeing none, I will

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2 turn it over to William Martin, Committee Clerk, to  
3 call the vote.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. William  
5 Martin, Committee Clerk. Role call vote Committee on  
6 General Welfare. Proposed Introductions 1232-A and  
7 1233-A. items are coupled. Chair Levin?

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I vote aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Lander?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Gibson? Reynoso?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Aye on all.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Reynoso  
14 votes aye on all. Grodenchik?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Darma Diaz?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: A proud aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Gibson?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I vote aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of six in the  
21 affirmative, zero in the negative, and no  
22 abstentions, both items have been adopted by the  
23 committee. Vote clarification Council member Gibson?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I vote aye.

25



2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. Vote is  
3 still six in the affirmative, zero in the negative,  
4 and no abstentions.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I want to  
6 thank everybody for their votes and look forward to  
7 this going to the full Council. This hearing is  
8 adjourned.

9 [gavel]

10 [background comments]

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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 December 5, 2021