

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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May 31, 2012

Start: 10:55 a.m.

Recess: 11:03 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E: MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Inez E. Dickens  
Mathieu Eugene  
Julissa Ferreras  
Helen D. Foster  
Rosie Mendez  
Joel Rivera  
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.  
Albert Vann  
Deborah L. Rose  
James G. Van Bramer

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2 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Good morning,  
3 everyone. My name is Maria del Carmen Arroyo,  
4 chair of the Committee on Health, and we are here  
5 today, and the Committee will be voting on pre-  
6 considered resolution sponsored by Council Member  
7 Gale Brewer--who we will hear from in a minute--  
8 which calls upon the United States Congress to  
9 pass and the President to reauthorize an  
10 adequately funded Farm Bill that creates a strong  
11 and health food system. In New York City, more  
12 than 1/5 of the population lives at or below the  
13 city poverty line. The 2012 reauthorization of  
14 the Farm Bill provides critical opportunity to  
15 address hunger and improve food access, positively  
16 impact the economy and protect the environment.  
17 One program authorized by the Farm Bill is the  
18 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
19 otherwise known as SNAP and commonly known as food  
20 stamps, which is a critical safety net for more  
21 than 1.8 million New Yorkers. SNAP also provides  
22 benefits to the local economy for every \$1 in  
23 benefits generates \$1.80 in local economy  
24 activity. The Senate has proposed cutting funding  
25 for SNAP by almost \$4.5 billion; whereas, the

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2 House proposal suggests reducing SNAP funding by  
3 \$160 billion. Unfortunately many individuals  
4 enrolled in SNAP have their benefits run out  
5 before the end of this month, forcing them to rely  
6 on emergency food programs that are already at  
7 capacity. Although the Senate proposed increasing  
8 funding for emergency food programs, the amount  
9 proposed is insufficient to make up the drastic  
10 cut imposed in the last year. This pre-considered  
11 reso would call on the federal government to  
12 adequately fund both SNAP and the emergency food  
13 program. In addition the pre-considered reso  
14 seeks to ensure that other noteworthy programs,  
15 including community food projects, competitive  
16 grant programs, senior farmers market, nutrition  
17 programs, healthy food financing initiative are  
18 protected and calls on the federal government to  
19 expand the use of wireless electronic benefit  
20 transfers, processing in farmer's markets and  
21 community supported agricultural programs. We are  
22 also concerned with programs that directly help  
23 farmers such as the farmers' market promotion  
24 program, value added producer grants and the  
25 beginning farmer and rancher development program.

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2 The impact of these programs in the production of  
3 good jobs, good food, that's what we're looking  
4 for. Council Member Brewer?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: First of  
6 all, thank you very much, Council Member Arroyo  
7 and we're following up on the good works done by  
8 Speaker Quinn to promote healthy food in the city  
9 of New York. The Chair of this Committee, Council  
10 Member Arroyo, listed all the issues. I think  
11 that it is a bill that is incredibly robust in  
12 trying to solve some of our hunger and access to  
13 healthy, local food, environmental protection and  
14 to build the local economy as you indicated, and  
15 certainly, we should not have any cut to food  
16 stamps whatsoever. I think this resolution as you  
17 suggest urges the federal support for all of these  
18 important programs and this bill--that we want a  
19 bill that would support a robust food system in  
20 New York City and across the United States and  
21 particularly the ability to work with our upstate  
22 farmers and our local consumers and address those  
23 who have a challenging food situation. Thank you  
24 very much, and I appreciate those who are here  
25 will support this resolution. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: I want to acknowledge the Committee members who are here: Council Member Rivera from the Bronx, Council Member Foster from the Bronx, Council Member Vallone is here, Council Member Vann, Council Member Dickens, Council Member Mendez, Council Member Eugene, Council Member Ferreras, Council Member Rose, and I know that Council Member Van Bramer is on his way up. I recommend a yes vote. Clerk, if you can call the roll.

COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk from Queens. Council Member Arroyo?

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Rivera?

COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Foster?

COUNCIL MEMBER FOSTER: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Vallone?

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: The clerk is from Astoria, Queens for the record. I'm going to abstain not because it may not be a good bill; I just have not had the chance to familiarize myself completely with the federal Farm Bill, and

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2 without knowing everything that's in it I don't  
3 feel qualified to take a position on this, so I'm  
4 going to abstain.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vann?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Yes.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Dickens?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Mendez?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: - - on this  
11 bill, I want to say that I'm not pleased, but I  
12 will represent any Queens and Kings who are in my  
13 district and I vote aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Eugene?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I vote aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ferreras?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS:  
18 Congratulations to Gale, and I vote aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rose?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of nine  
22 in the affirmative, zero in the negative and one  
23 abstention, item has been adopted. Members,  
24 please sign the Committee Report.

25 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: And we will

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2 hold the vote open for a few minutes for Council  
3 Member Van Bramer and we expect that he will close  
4 out the hearing.

5 [long pause]

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member  
7 Van Bramer?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote in the  
10 Committee on Health now stands at ten in the  
11 affirmative, zero in the negative and one  
12 abstention.

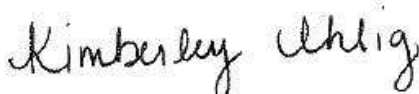
13 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Hearing  
14 adjourned.

15 [gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_ 6/21/12 \_\_\_\_\_