

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS

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October 7, 2021  
Start: 11:47 a.m.  
Recess: 11:53 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Ben Kallos  
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Helen Rosenthal  
Bill Perkins  
Mark Gjonaj  
James F. Gennaro  
Inez Barron

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

2 [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Good morning and  
4 welcome to this hearing of New York City Council  
5 Committee on Contracts. My name is Ben Kallos and I  
6 am Chair of this Committee. For those of you who are  
7 watching remotely, please feel free to participate in  
8 this hearing by tweeting me @BenKallos. Before we  
9 dive in, I'd like to recognize our fellow committee  
10 members. We are joined by Council member Jim  
11 Gennaro, Mark Gjonaj, and former Contracts Committee  
12 chair Helen Rosenthal. We will be joined by Council  
13 member Inez Barron. Today we will-- And she just  
14 walked into the door. Today, we will be voting on  
15 Introduction 1995-A, sponsored by Council member  
16 Diana Ayala, and Introduction 2006-A, sponsored by  
17 Council member Moya, both geared towards improving  
18 working conditions for the city's hardworking  
19 nonprofit shelter security guards.

20 The first bill is Introduction 1995-A  
21 which seeks to improve the training requirements for  
22 security guards employed and working at homeless  
23 shelters. Specifically, this bill would require all  
24 contracted shelter operators to ensure that all  
25 security guards working at Department of Homeless

2 Services shelters receive at least 40 hours of  
3 training after they are hired, including 10 hours of  
4 shelter-specific training, as well as an eight hour  
5 annual refresher course.

6           The second bill we are voting on today  
7 also related to security guards working in homeless  
8 shelters. Introduction 2006-A would require entities  
9 operating shelter pursuant to contracts with the city  
10 to pay these security guards working a prevailing  
11 wage. Each year, the city contracts with human  
12 service providers to deliver a range of essential  
13 social services including elder, foster, and after  
14 school care, mental health counseling, shelter and  
15 housing programs, and food assistance to about 3  
16 million New Yorkers and, yet, these workers face  
17 their own financial hardship. As a result, workers  
18 that are employed by human service providers earn  
19 comparably low salaries. In fact, in New York State,  
20 the pay rate for nonprofit human service workers is  
21 so low that many rely on public benefits and, in  
22 2016, 60 percent of those working in the sector were  
23 utilizing or had a family member utilizing at least  
24 one public assistance benefit such as Medicaid or  
25 food stamps. Not food stamps. Supplemental

2 Assistance Nutrition Program. SNAP. This is  
3 particularly troubling as a majority of these workers  
4 are women and a large proportion are women of color.  
5 The situation is similar for security and fire guards  
6 who work at the city's network of homeless shelters  
7 run by contracted nonprofit organizations. Reporting  
8 suggests that employees of nonprofit-run homeless  
9 shelters face difficulties securing housing due to  
10 low salaries offered. According to the New York  
11 Times, quote, many employees of New York's shelters  
12 are, themselves, in precarious economic situations  
13 taking on multiple jobs working overtime and  
14 struggling to find their own home-- We actually  
15 worked with the New York Times on that investigative  
16 reporting in my office. Security guards at  
17 nonprofit-run shelters typically earn just over the  
18 minimum wage while those employed directly by the  
19 city earn about 18 dollars and 45 cents an hour-- or  
20 7000 to 8000 dollars extra per year. Furthermore,  
21 workers at nonprofit-run sites are provided with the  
22 degree of benefits afforded to those employed  
23 directly by the city and often do not have or cannot  
24 afford medical insurance or other benefits. The  
25 security and fire guards who work at shelters,

2 whether employed directly by government or by a  
3 nonprofit human services provider can encounter a  
4 range of incidents-- some of which are violent and  
5 often interact with clients who face mental health  
6 issues. However, the security guard training  
7 mandated by the state does include any special  
8 education training or other provisions for security  
9 guards working in these specific settings. The  
10 training for fire guards, meanwhile, focuses purely  
11 on fire safety. While some security or fire guards  
12 employed directly by the city may undergo additional  
13 training such as sexual harassment and de-escalation  
14 training, those employed by a nonprofit human  
15 services provider may not. Furthermore, security  
16 guards employed by nonprofits report that they have  
17 to pay for their own training, unlike their peers in  
18 city-run sites.

19           Before we do begin on the vote, I'd like  
20 to take a moment to thank Contracts Committee staff.  
21 Legislative counsel, Alex Polanov, policy analyst,  
22 Lia Scrupiak [sp?], and finance unit head, John  
23 Russel, for their hard work putting this hearing  
24 together. I'd like to now also take a moment to  
25 thank finance analyst, Frank Sarno, for his service

2 to the committee over the past year. Frank is moving  
3 on, literally, to another state for other  
4 opportunities. We wish him well. I would like to  
5 now turn it over to Council member Moya to make a  
6 statement on his legislation.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MOYA: Thank you so much,  
8 Chair. Thank you for the opportunity and thank you  
9 to the Committee members, as well. Having had the  
10 opportunity to share with this committee how our  
11 city's homeless shelter workers continue to make  
12 sacrifices for countless New Yorkers, especially  
13 throughout this pandemic, and we have had an  
14 opportunity to fight for these workers who stood up  
15 for those that needed it the most. New York City  
16 cannot be the capital of the world if our own don't  
17 have an economic capital-- if our own are struggling  
18 to make ends meet. My bill, Intro 2006, as part of  
19 the Safety in Our Shelters Act, to establish  
20 prevailing wage for shelter security guards and fire  
21 guards, is one way we move forwards towards creating  
22 an equitable standard of life that everyone deserves  
23 and should have no matter where you come from, where  
24 you live, or where you work. I want to applaud 32 BJ  
25 for their countless and tireless dedication and

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2 leadership and, of course, I want to thank my  
3 colleagues who have signed on to this bill and for  
4 joining me in voting to pass this bill, Intro 2006.  
5 Thank you, Chair, for the time.

6 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Thank you very much  
7 for your leadership on this legislation and fighting  
8 for workers here, there, and everywhere. I now ask  
9 the committee clerk to call the role.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,  
11 Committee clerk. Role call vote. Committee on  
12 Contracts. Proposed Introduction 1995-A and proposed  
13 Introduction 2006-A. Items are coupled. Chair  
14 Kallos?

15 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Barron?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rosenthal?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I vote aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Gjonaj?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Gennaro?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: I vote aye and

24 I'm proud to be a sponsor on both of these items

25 and-- yeah. I vote aye.



2 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of five in the  
3 affirmative, zero in the negative, and no  
4 abstentions, both items have been adopted by the  
5 committee.

6 CHAIRPERSON KALLOS: I hereby adjourn  
7 this hearing of the Contracts Committee in time for  
8 the next hearing at 12 o'clock.

9 [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           <INSERT TRANSCRIPTION DATE>