

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

VOTE*

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Thursday, January 23, 2025
Start: 10:32 a.m.
Recess: 10:41 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: FARAH N. LOUIS, CHAIR

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Tiffany Cabán
Jennifer Gutiérrez
Kevin C. Riley
Inna Vernikov

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

A P P E A R A N C E S

Río Sofia,
Co-Executive Director of QUEER|ART

2 SERGEANT WOOD: Good morning, good morning, this
3 is a microphone check...

4 UNKNOWN: Can you hear me? Yeah...

5 SERGEANT WOOD: for the Committee on Women and
6 Gender Equity, located in the Council Chambers,
7 recorded by Ginelle Yearwood on January 23, 2025.

8

9 (PAUSE)

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Are we good? Thank you.
11 Shhhh... Keep it down, quiet, please. Thank you.

12 Good morning, and welcome to the New York City
13 Hybrid Hearing for the Committee on Women and Gender
14 Equity vote.

15 Please silence all electronic devices at this
16 time. At no time, please do not approach the dais. If
17 you have any questions, please raise your hand, and
18 we will kindly assist you.

19 Chair, we are ready to begin.

20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: (GAVEL SOUND) (GAVELING IN)

21 Good morning, my name is Farah Lewis, I'm the
22 chair of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity.
23 Today, I will... today, our committee will hold a
24 hearing and vote on Resolution 678, sponsored by my
25 colleague, Council Member Tiffan Cabán, designating

2 January 31 annually as Cecilia Gentili Day in the
3 City of New York to recognize her significant
4 contributions as an author, performer, policymaker,
5 and activist, who fought for the rights of
6 undocumented immigrants, sex workers, and LGBTQIA+
7 individuals.

8 Cecilia Gentili was a champion in the LGBTI and
9 wider New York City community, and this resolution is
10 greatly welcomed in this committee and the Council as
11 a whole.

12 I would like to acknowledge my colleagues who are
13 here today, Council Member Kevin Riley and Council
14 Member Cabán. I would also like to thank my - and
15 Council Member Vernikov - I would also like to thank
16 my own staff, Daniel Heredia, and Michaela
17 Blemur, as well as our committee staff; committee
18 counsel, Sahar Moazami, committee counsel, Rachel
19 Conte; Cristy Dwyer, Senior Legislative Policy
20 Analyst for their work on this hearing.

21 I would also now like to turn it over to Council
22 Member Cabán to provide opening remarks.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Thank you very, very much,
24 Chair... I yeah... I just... feeling a lot of
25 feelings this morning. I'm super, super proud today

2 to be passing a resolution, or to have it heard so
3 that later today it can be passed, a resolution that
4 honors the late, great Cecilia Gentili. She was a
5 fearless leader, a trans icon, an author, an actress,
6 a pioneering advocate for the dignity and freedom of
7 sex workers and so much more - like, I could go on.

8 She wasn't merely an ally in other liberation
9 fights. She was a coconspirator who put her body on
10 the line for anyone facing exploitation,
11 discrimination, or persecution.

12 And Cecilia was a very formative figure in my
13 life, a super special, impactful person. She held
14 such an important role in the social spaces and
15 community that I move through and since she's passed
16 away, there have been all of these opportunities to
17 meet lots of new people, and I've discovered that she
18 held the same kind of space and presence in their
19 lives and their communities, and that I find really,
20 really incredible and amazing.

21 Even though Cecilia is no longer with us, her
22 impact lives on and it's magnified by every person
23 who knew her. Her energy was infectious. She was
24 profoundly funny and sharp, brilliant. She was open
25 and honest about her struggles with substance use.

2 She said exactly what needed to be said every single
3 time, no matter where she was and no matter who you
4 were, and I really, really miss her.

5 So I want to close by saying, rise in power,
6 Cecilia, may your memory be a joyous, bawdy,
7 hilarious, visionary, fearless revolution, and may
8 our city's new Cecilia Gentili Day serve as a
9 testament to that revolution, and thank you.

10 Thank you, Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for that. I now open
12 the floor for public testimony.

13 Before we begin, I remind members of the public
14 that this is a formal government proceeding and that
15 decorum shall be observed at all times. As such,
16 members of the public shall remain silent at all
17 times.

18 The witness table is reserved for people who wish
19 to testify. No video recording or photography is
20 allowed from the witness table.

21 Further, members of the public may not present
22 audio or video recordings as testimony, but may
23 submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant
24 at Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

2 If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please
3 fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms
4 and wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will
5 have two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic on
6 Council Member Cabán's bill.

7 If you have a written statement or additional
8 testimony you wish to submit for the record, please
9 provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at
10 Arms. You may also email written testimony to
11 Testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours after the
12 close of this hearing. Audio and video recordings
13 will not be accepted.

14 I now call the first panel, Río Sofia.

15 (PAUSE)

16 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You may begin.

17 RÍO SOFIA: Thank you, Chair, and good morning,
18 City Council.

19 My name is Río Sofia, I am a Co-Executive
20 Director at Queer Art, where Cecilia Gentili was
21 proudly a board member, and I'm also proud to call
22 myself, Cecilia Gentili's daughter - Not her only
23 daughter, one of hundreds and hundreds of people who
24 her... whose lives were made possible by her work.

2 I met Cecilia at Apicha Clinic, where she grew
3 Apicha from a program that served 27 trans people in
4 the city to over 500. And, yeah, Cecilia has done so,
5 so much for the city. She was a co-founder of Decrim
6 NY where she fought tirelessly for the
7 decriminalization of sex work, and also was a
8 formative person who in the repeal of the "Walking
9 While Trans" ban. She, at when she was working at
10 GMHC, she, uhm, was instrumental in passing GENDA
11 (Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act) to ensure
12 legal protections for trans people.

13 She also founded the COIN Clinic (Cecilia's
14 Occupational Inclusion Network), which is one of the
15 only clinics in the country, if not the only clinic
16 in the country, that primarily serves sex workers,
17 and make sure that they have the health care that
18 they need.

19 And, you know, I think that as we gather here for
20 this incredible day to celebrate and make sure that
21 we're always celebrating Cecilia's birthday in New
22 York, I, you know, I want to think about how for
23 Cecilia - she received so many awards in her life, so
24 many that she just kept them in a cardboard box in
25 her closet. And, she, at one point, she was like, if

2 there aren't material things that come with these
3 accolades, these recognitions, I don't want them.

4 So I want us to remember every January 31st that
5 what Cecilia was fighting for was not about
6 recognition, it was about trans liberation,
7 liberation for immigrants, for sex workers, and I
8 want us to carry forth that legacy.

9 And so I want to thank everyone (TIMER CHIMES)
10 who worked really hard on this, congratulations.

11 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Thank you to all
12 who came today to share your thoughts and
13 experiences.

14 If there is anyone in the Chamber who wishes to
15 speak, but has not yet had the opportunity to do so,
16 please raise your hand and fill out an appearance
17 card with the Sergeant at Arms at the back of the
18 room.

19 Seeing no hands in the Chamber, we will now shift
20 to Zoom testimony. Thank you.

21 Seeing no one else, I would like to note that
22 written testimony, which will be reviewed in full by
23 committee staff, will be submitted to the record up
24 to 72 hours after the close of this hearing, which
25 you can email to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

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2 We will now conclude public testimony, and I want
3 to thank everyone who has come out to share their
4 experience with us today.

5 I will now ask the Clerk to call the roll.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning, William Martin,
7 Committee Clerk, roll call vote for the Committee on
8 Women and Gender Equity, Resolution 678.

9 Chair Louis?

10 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Aye on all, congratulations,
11 Council Member Cabán.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Riley?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Cabán?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CABÁN: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Gutiérrez?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: (PARENTAL)

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Vernikov?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: No.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: With a vote of 3 in the
21 affirmative, 1 in the negative, and no abstentions
22 the resolution has been adopted by the Committee.

23 (PAUSE)

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CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, this hearing is now
closed.

(GAVEL SOUND) (GAVELING OUT)

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 January 25, 2025