

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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October 7, 2013
Start: 1:32 p.m.
Recess: 1:39 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,
14th Fl.

B E F O R E:

MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Inez E. Dickens
Mathieu Eugene
Rosie Mendez
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.
Albert Vann
Deborah L. Rose
James G. Van Bramer

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Good afternoon

everyone, my name is Maria Del Carmen Arroyo; I chair the Committee on Health and today the Health Committee will vote on a package of five bills dealing with restaurant inspections.

I wanna thank my fellow sponsors of these bills and our Speaker, Christine Quinn, for her leadership and her commitment to making sure that we get through this process as quickly as possible.

My co-sponsors, Council Member Gentile, Council Member Koo, Council Member Reyna and Council Member Van Bramer and I introduced five bills and by now we're all familiar with the letter grading system introduced by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, DOHMH, to assist the public in making decisions about where to dine, improve restaurant compliance with health and sanitary regulations and reduce foodborne illnesses attributable to restaurants.

However, since the inception of the system it has been marred with inconsistencies across inspections, adversarial relationships with the Department and restaurants and unduly burdensome

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2 increases in fines across the City for all
3 restaurants.

4 On September 23rd the Committee held a
5 hearing on the five pieces of legislation and we will
6 vote on them today to address some of the issues
7 raised since the implementation of the system and the
8 process that the Council undertook for over a year to
9 try to get us to where we are today.

10 Under Council Member Gentile's
11 legislation the Department of Health and Mental
12 Hygiene would be required to develop an inspection
13 code of conduct pamphlet that inspectors will
14 distribute to all restaurant owners and operators
15 prior to the beginning of an initial inspection.

16 Council Member Koo's bill would create an
17 advisory board to ensure ongoing and systematic
18 review of the restaurant inspection program.

19 Council Member Reyna's legislation would
20 increase and improve the reporting of restaurant
21 inspection data and Council Member Van Bramer's bill
22 would give restaurant owners and operators the
23 opportunity to request a consultative and ungraded
24 inspection for educational purposes only.

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2 And finally, the bill that I sponsored
3 calls for the establishment of an ombuds office to
4 receive and address comments, complaints and
5 compliments, because there are many compliments
6 associated with this process.

7 These reforms will provide much needed
8 relief for restaurant owners across the City and will
9 go a long way to ensuring our letter grading system
10 is reasonable, fair and most importantly,
11 predictable.

12 I wanna thank the staff, Dan Hafetz, to
13 my right, Krista Gopon [phonetic], who is in the
14 background, as usual, and Krilly [phonetic] and
15 Francisco, who are the staff assigned to the
16 Committee. Other staff did an incredible amount of
17 work associated with this legislation and I'm gonna
18 massacre their names, so please forgive me for doing
19 so; Shannon Manago [phonetic], Tim Matusuf
20 [phonetic]... is he here... are they here? Take a bow,
21 guys... David Seitzer [phonetic] and Jennifer Montalgo,
22 [phonetic] all of whom worked tirelessly behind the
23 scenes to get us to where we're at today; I'm very
24 happy that we are here to vote on these bills; I
25 think that our restaurant industry across the City

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2 are gonna be very pleased with the work that has been
3 put into the pieces of legislation and before I call
4 the clerk to get the vote I wanna give an opportunity
5 to any of the sponsors who are here to make a
6 statement, Council Member Van Bramer; would you? No.
7 Okay.

8 And before we vote I wanna acknowledge
9 members of the Committee who are here, Council Member
10 Mendez, Council Member Vann, Vallone, Van Bramer,
11 Eugene and Rose and Council Member Dickens and I
12 strongly urge a yes vote on all the pieces **00:07:20**
13 say aye on all.

14 Clerk. Okay, you're done. I mean,
15 you're on.

16 WILLIAM MARTIN: William Martin,
17 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on Health.
18 Council Member Arroyo.

19 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Aye on all.

20 WILLIAM MARTIN: Vallone.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Aye.

22 WILLIAM MARTIN: Vann.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Aye.

24 WILLIAM MARTIN: Dickens.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Aye.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Mendez.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Eugene.

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Aye on all.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Rose.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye on all.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Van Bramer.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye on all.

WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote of 8 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative, no abstentions, all items have been adopted, members, please sign Committee Reports. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay, with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[gavel]

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 _____ October 19, 2013 _____