

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE SYSTEM

----- X

March 26, 2019
Start: 10:14 a.m.
Recess: 10:18 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: RORY I. LANCMAN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Andrew Cohen
Alan N. Maisel
Deborah L. Rose
Eric A. Ulrich

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

2 [background comments] [gavel]

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please. [gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON LANCMAN: Good morning. This
5 meeting of the Committee on the Justice System is
6 called to order. We are here this morning with
7 Council Member Alan Maisel and Council Member Andy
8 Cohen, and we are considering Resolution No. 641 by
9 the Public Advocate, Jumaane Williams. The
10 Resolution 641 calls on the State Division of
11 Criminal Justice Services, the Office of Court
12 Administration and the New York City's District
13 Attorneys to expunge records of all city misdemeanor
14 Marijuana convictions. As we anticipate that the
15 State Legislature will legalize recreational
16 Marijuana this year taking care of those with
17 previous misdemeanor convictions will be a crucial
18 step in moving past an era of over-criminalization
19 and over-policing of primarily communities of color.
20 A conviction even one for a misdemeanor can wreck
21 havoc on a person's life and derail their future. I
22 am so pleased that some of our District Attorneys are
23 already taking steps on their own. For example, the
24 District Attorneys in both Brooklyn and Manhattan
25 have dismissed open warrants for Marijuana

2 possession, and in Brooklyn a D.A. Eric Gonzalez has
3 gone even further establishing a program to vacate
4 prior convictions that could reach as many of—as many
5 as 20,000 eligible Brooklynites if they're able to
6 get the word out to everyone who can apply. So, all
7 of you who are here today, and particularly my
8 colleagues from Brooklyn and those of you who might
9 be watching at home please let people in Brooklyn
10 know that there an opportunity to have the prior
11 convictions vacated and they should reach out to the
12 Brooklyn District Attorney's Office. With that, I
13 would as the clerk to call the roll, and vote on
14 Resolution 641 and for what it's worth, the Chair
15 recommends a yes vote.

16 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk.

17 Roll call vote Committee on the Justice System.

18 Chair Lancman.

19 CHAIRPERSON LANCMAN: Yes.

20 CLERK: Cohen.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Permission to
22 explain my vote.

23 CHAIRPERSON LANCMAN: Yes, sir.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Just very briefly,
25 the Chair knows that I was a Law Secretary in—in the

2 Court system for many years, and my judge would
3 because he was acting supremely after the criminal
4 arraignments periodically, and I cannot tell you how
5 formative it was the impact it made on me watching,
6 you know, person after person coming up and, you
7 know, being released to ACD or whatever or just for
8 time served, spending 24 to the system for smoking a
9 joint like on their curb, they're sitting, you know,
10 sitting in a parked car. It was really a, you know,
11 it felt (a) you know, the—like a colossal waste of
12 time, but also the impact that it had on people's
13 lives. So, I think this is a good day. I hope the
14 State Legislature takes our advice. I'm sure they're
15 waiting for our resolution, but I proudly vote aye.

16 CLERK: Maisel.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: [off mic] I vote
18 aye.

19 CLERK: By a vote of 3 in the affirmative,
20 0 in the negative and no abstentions, the resolution
21 has been adopted by the Committee.

22 CHAIRPERSON LANCMAN: Thank you all very
23 much, and this meeting is adjourned. [background
24 comments]

1 COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE SYSTEM

6

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please, quiet
3 please. [background comments/pause] [gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON LANCMAN: Good morning, we
5 are opening up the vote on Resolution 641 of the
6 Committee on the Justice System and if the Clerk
7 would call the roll for Council Member Rose.

8 CLERK: Continuation of roll call, Council
9 Member Rose.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I vote aye.

11 CLERK: By a vote of 4 in the affirmative,
12 0 in the negative, and no abstentions, the resolution
13 has been adopted.

14 CHAIRPERSON LANCMAN: That adjourns this
15 vote, and if we can keep the roll open for whatever
16 the maximum time permitted, I would appreciate it.
17 [gavel]

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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 April 26, 2019