

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH, DISABILITIES
AND ADDICTION

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October 16, 2019
Start: 1:14 p.m.
Recess: 1:18 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.
16th Floor

B E F O R E:
DIANA AYALA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Alicka Ampry-Samuel
Fernando Cabrera
Robert Holden
James Van Bramer

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

2 Mike check.

3 CHAIR AYALA: [gavel]Good afternoon,
4 everyone. We're going to call this hearing to order.
5 Good afternoon. My name is Diana Ayala and I am the
6 Chair of the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities
7 and Addiction. Today we are holding a vote on a bill
8 that is an essential piece of the puzzle in getting
9 people who don't need to be locked up out of Rikers
10 Island. Proposed Introduction 1590A a local law in
11 relation to requiring correctional health services to
12 report information to the attorney of record for
13 individuals in the custody of the Department of
14 Corrections who are diagnosed with a serious mental
15 illness. Unfortunately, even as the City's jail
16 population continues to decrease, the percentage of
17 individuals who are in Rikers and are diagnosed with
18 serious mental illness is going up. Locking up
19 people who are sick is wrong and it doesn't dissolve
20 anything. Despite the excellent work of the medical
21 staff at Correction Health Services, it's hard to
22 image a worse place to maintain stability and mental
23 wellness than Rikers Island. While it is true that a
24 lot of people come into jail because they lack access
25 to medication, housing and social support necessary

2 to cope with serious mental illness, it is absolutely
3 unnecessary to keep them there for as long as we do.
4 People with SMI on average stay in jail for much
5 longer than everyone else. We need to find a better
6 solution. We need to find a way to connect people to
7 community support rather than keeping them behind
8 bars but that can't happen without the cooperation of
9 the courts that put people in Rikers in the first
10 place and have the power to get them help in settings
11 where they can learn and function on their own in
12 society and get the community support that will keep
13 them healthy. This legislation is simple. It
14 requires Correctional Health Services to tell defense
15 lawyers about their client's medical needs, their
16 symptoms and their progress. That way when people
17 get better and are able to manage their daily
18 routines without being detained, their attorneys can
19 find treatment and housing alternatives and advocate
20 to the Judges and the VA's for their release. The
21 truth is that we also need major reinvestments in our
22 healthcare system going forward, but this bill is a
23 crucial step in getting people who shouldn't be in
24 jail into the community-based treatment and now we
25 will do rollcall.

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2 CLERK: William Martin, Committee clerk,
3 rollcall vote Committee on Mental Health,
4 Disabilities and Addiction, Introduction 1590A, Chair
5 Ayala?

6 CHAIR AYALA: Yes.

7 CLERK: Cabrera?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Aye.

9 CLERK: Van Bramer?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

11 CLERK: Ampry-Samuel?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Aye.

13 CLERK: By a vote in 4 in the
14 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstention,
15 item has been adopted by the Committee.

16 CHAIR AYALA: This meeting has been
17 adjourned. Oh, are we gonna hold it? Oh, we're
18 gonna hold it open. That's all right. Thank you.

19 CLERK: Continuation rollcall, Committee
20 on Mental Health, Introduction 1590A, Council Member
21 Holden?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Aye.

23 CLERK: Final vote is 5 in the
24 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions.

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3 CHAIR AYALA: And this hearing is now
4 adjourned. Thank you. [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 October 22, 2019