

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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Wednesday, October 23, 2024
Start: 11:11 A. M.
Recess: 11:20 A. M.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Hon. Carlina Rivera, Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David M. Carr
Shahana K. Hanif
Kamillah M. Hanks
Crystal Hudson
Farah N. Louis
Chi A. Ossé
Sandra Ung
Nantasha M. Williams

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Brooks-Powers

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

A P P E A R A N C E S

NONE

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COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS
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COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
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2 SERGEANT MORENO: This is a microphone check for
3 the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
4 International Intergroup Relations, recorded by James
5 Moreno in the Chambers on October 23, 2024.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, and welcome to
7 the New York City Council hybrid vote on the
8 Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
9 International Intergroup Relations. Please silence
10 all electronic devices at this time.

11 Chair, we are ready to begin.

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: (Gaveling in)

13 Good morning, I am Council Member Carlina
14 Rivera, Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs,
15 Libraries, And International Intergroup Relations.

16 Today, the Committee will both hear and vote on
17 four resolutions:

18 Resolution Number 193, sponsored by Council
19 Member Nantasha Williams, Youth Empowerment Month
20 annually in the City of New York to recognize,
21 appreciate, and celebrate the successes of young
22 people and their contributions to school and
23 community life.

24 Resolution Number 508, also sponsored by Council
25 Member Williams, which would designate October 10th

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2 annually as Casey Benjamin Day in the city of New
3 York and celebrate the genius of his music and his
4 unique contributions to a variety of music genres.

5 Resolution number 518, sponsored by Council
6 Member Selvena Brooks-Powers, our majority whip,
7 which would declare October as Jamaican Heritage
8 Month in New York City.

9 And a Preconsidered Resolution, sponsored by
10 Council Members Crystal Hudson and Tiffany Cabán,
11 which would celebrate the New York Liberty's winning
12 of the 2024 Women's National Basketball Association
13 championship and declaring October 20th as New York
14 Liberty Day annually in the City of New York. That's
15 exciting.

16 Now I would like to ask Council Member Williams
17 to provide remarks on her resolutions.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you so much,
19 Chair, and, yes, congrats to the Liberty team,
20 amazing.

21 Uh, good morning, Chair, and esteemed colleagues,
22 I'm honored to be here today as we consider two
23 resolutions that are deeply meaningful, both for our
24 city and for our communities that we represent.

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2 The first Resolution, 193, designates October as
3 Youth Empowerment Month. This resolution will provide
4 an annual opportunity to recognize, appreciate, and
5 celebrate the many contributions that our young
6 people make to our schools, communities, and our city
7 at large.

8 Youth empowerment is about more than simply
9 recognizing the achievements of our young people.
10 It's about giving them the tools, the platforms, and
11 then encouragement they need to thrive.

12 I want to especially thank my constituent,
13 Lynette Townsley (phonetic), who has been running the
14 NAACP Youth Division for a while, for her remarkable
15 leadership in organizing community support for this
16 resolution. Lynette is a tireless advocate for youth
17 empowerment, and her dedication has helped bring this
18 recognition to the forefront.

19 As we establish Youth Empowerment Month, it is
20 our hope that this celebration will become a vibrant
21 citywide initiative. Imagine a month filled with
22 college fairs, art installations, days of community
23 service, documentary screenings, and performances all
24 designed to showcase the incredible talents and
25 contributions of our youth.

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2 Next, I'd like to turn my attention to Resolution
3 508, which will establish Casey Benjamin Day in New
4 York City.

5 Casey Benjamin was a talented artist who grew up
6 in South Jamaica, Queens, and his impact on the world
7 of music was profound. He was a multi-
8 instrumentalist, a saxophonist, vocalist,
9 keyboardist, producer, and songwriter who became a
10 key member of the Grammy winning Robert Glasper
11 Experiment. But beyond his musical accomplishments,
12 Casey was a beacon of creativity, resilience, and
13 inspiration for so many. He picked up the saxophone
14 at just eight years old and honed his craft at
15 LaGuardia High School, a school that has fostered
16 some of the greatest talent in our city. His sudden
17 passing this past March, at the age of forty-five,
18 was a devastating loss to both the music world and
19 our community. By designating October 10th as Casey
20 Benjamin Day, we are not only honoring his memory,
21 but also celebrating his lifelong contributions to
22 music and to the cultural fabric of our city.

23 I want to acknowledge T L Cross and the family of
24 Casey Benjamin for their continued advocacy of his
25 legacy.

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2 In closing, I want to thank the members of this
3 committee, and the Chair, for considering these two
4 resolutions, Youth Empowerment Month and Casey
5 Benjamin Day, both represent the values that define
6 our city - creativity, resilience, and the belief in
7 the potential of every New Yorker young and old.

8 Together, we can ensure that these legacies of
9 empowerment and inspiration continue to shape New
10 York City for generations to come. And thank you so
11 much, Regina.

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you, Council Member
13 Williams.

14 I just want to recognize the members who are
15 here: Council Member Ossé, Majority Whip Brooks-
16 Powers, Council Member Hanks, Council Member Louis,
17 Council Member Williams, Council Member Ung, and
18 Council Member Carr, and, of course, Council Member
19 Hudson to my left, and Council Member Hanif, thank
20 you all.

21 Thanks, again, Council Member Williams. Now
22 Council Member and Majority Whip Brooks-Powers will
23 provide remarks on her resolutions.

24 MAJORITY WHIP BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, Chair,
25 and good morning, colleagues.

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2 Today, I'm proud to stand before you as a
3 daughter of Jamaican immigrants and request your
4 support for Resolution 518, which formally designates
5 October as Jamaican Heritage Month in New York City.

6 Jamaicans are a vital part of our city's fabric,
7 especially in Southeast Queens where the influence of
8 Jamaican culture through music, art, and innovation
9 has had a profound impact on the community. Their
10 contributions go far beyond the arts, touching areas
11 like science, education, and entrepreneurship, making
12 New York City stronger and more vibrant.

13 With Jamaicans representing 5.5% of the city's
14 foreign born population and 2% of the total
15 population particularly concentrated in Southeast
16 Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, the cultural and
17 economic contributions of this community cannot be
18 overstated.

19 This resolution allows us to honor Jamaica's rich
20 heritage and its enduring influence here in New York
21 City, while also aligning with Jamaica's National
22 Heritage Week celebrated in the 3rd week of October.
23 It's an important opportunity for us to officially
24 recognize the lasting contributions of the Jamaican
25 community. I am proud to bring this resolution

1 forward and look forward to celebrating the vibrant
2 legacy of Jamaica each October. Thank you.

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4 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you, Majority Whip
5 Brooks-Powers.

6 And, now, Council Member Hudson will provide
7 remarks on her revolution.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you so much, Chair.

9 For so many fans watching and following, the New
10 York Liberty has long served as a place of community
11 building and inspiration. Today, more than 25 years
12 after the team's founding in 1997, the New York
13 Liberty remain a bastion of hope for our city. As a
14 coveted professional sports franchise, with elite
15 athletes who use their platform to remind us that the
16 fight for equality and justice, while never truly
17 complete, can also be fun to watch and can yield
18 championships of which we can all be proud.

19 On October 20th, New York, Liberty did just that,
20 making history by securing the franchise's first ever
21 WNBA title while also delivering a basketball
22 championship title to the five boroughs for the first
23 time in 50 years.

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2 Resolution 629 will forever enshrine October 20th
3 as New York Liberty Day, and will remind us that when
4 we invest in women, we win. Let's go Liberty.

5 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Alright, thank you so much,
6 Council Member Hudson.

7 I would also like to thank my staff, as well as
8 the committee staff who worked on preparing this
9 hearing, including Katie Loeb, my Chief of Staff;
10 Eddie Amador, my Director of Legislation; Christina
11 Yellamaty, the Committee's counsel; Regina Paul,
12 Legislative Policy Analyst, who also drafted three of
13 these resolutions, at least; and Sandra Gray,
14 Financial Analyst.

15 I think we are now ready for the vote, Billy.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning, William Martin,
17 Committee Clerk, rollcall vote for the Committee on
18 Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International
19 Intergroup Relations. All items are coupled.

20 Chair Rivera?

21 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I vote aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Louis?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: I vote aye, and
24 congratulations, Council Members Williams, Hudson,
25 and Brooks-Powers.

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
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1 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Hanif?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: I vote aye, and
3 congratulations to my colleagues.
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5 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Hanks?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Congratulations, I vote
7 aye.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Hudson?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Aye on all.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Ossé?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Aye on all.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Ung?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Aye on all.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Williams?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I vote aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Carr?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Aye on all.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 9 in the
19 affirmative, 0 in the negative, and no abstentions,
20 all items have been adopted by the Committee. And,
21 Madam Chair, that is a full committee.

22 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you so much, and
23 congratulations to my colleagues. And, with that, we
24 close the Committee, thank you. (Gaveling Out)

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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 24, 2024