

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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March 18, 2021
Start: 9:32 AM
Recess: 9:49 AM

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 1)

B E F O R E: CHAIR MARK LEVINE

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Keith Powers
Robert F. Holden
Darma V. Diaz
Mathieu Eugene
Alicka Ampry-Samuel
Inez Barron

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

2 TECHNICIAN: Sergeant, can you start on your
3 equipment?

4 SERGEANT: Thank you.

5 TECHNICIAN: The Cloud is rolling

6 SERGEANT: Back-up is rolling.

7 TECHNICIAN: Sergeant go with your opening, please.

8 SERGEANT: Good morning and welcome to today's New
9 York City remote hearing on Health. At this time
10 would all Council Members and Council Member staff
11 please turn on your videos. Thank you. To minimize
12 disruption please place all electronic devices to
13 vibrate or silent mode. Thank you. Chair Levine you
14 are ready to begin.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you so much Sergeant.
16 Good morning everyone. I'm Mark Levine, City
17 Council Member and Chair of the Council's Committee
18 on Health. Today we're going to be holding an
19 important vote on several pieces of legislation
20 including two bills and two resolutions. I want to
21 acknowledge that we're joined by fellow Health
22 Committee members Council Member Powers, Council
23 Member Barron, Council Member Holden. I also see
24 that we're joined by Council Member Miller, and in a
25 minute to give us some opening remarks. The first

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2 bill we're considering today is Intro 2236-A of
3 which I'm a proud sponsor. As we know, the vaccine
4 rollout in our city has been significantly impacted
5 by supply shortages, but also currently requires
6 navigating dozens of websites and requires hours of
7 time, technology skills to work through those sites,
8 and in many cases the ability to speak English.
9 Intro Number 2236-A will help create a better
10 system. The bill will require the Department of
11 Health and Mental Hygiene or another agency
12 designated by the Mayor to develop and maintain a
13 website, which operates as a unified scheduling
14 system for COVID 19 vaccinations for all cooperation
15 vaccination locations and providers located in New
16 York City. This will be a filter... this will be
17 filterable by zip code and eligibility category. The
18 website will also allow an eligible user to receive
19 notifications when new vaccine appointments are
20 available and to pre-register for such appointments.
21 Next, we will also be voting on Intro 864-A
22 sponsored by Speaker Johnson. This bill will expand
23 the investigations that DOHMH is required to conduct
24 under existing law whenever it is alerted about a
25 child with an elevated blood lead level. DOHMH is

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2 another, or another relevant city agency will be
3 required to conduct investigations of specific
4 locations where the child may have been exposed to
5 lead. This bill will also create additional
6 requirements for landlords with lead hazards and
7 require DOHMH to provide information regarding
8 special education services available through the
9 Department of Education to parents or guardians of
10 children under age 18 determined to have an elevated
11 blood lead level. This bill will strengthen our
12 existing laws in protecting children from lead
13 poisoning incidents and I was proud to sign on as a
14 co-sponsor of this bill. Next, we'll be voting on
15 two resolutions, Resolution 1535 sponsored by
16 Council Member Miller calls on the New York State
17 Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign
18 legislation allowing local health departments to
19 implement changes to approve the COVID 19 vaccine
20 rollout. These changes include expanding eligibility
21 to include those who live in the zip codes most
22 impacted by COVID 19, and calling on the State to
23 develop a publicly accessible real time vaccination
24 dashboard which discloses vaccination data
25 disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, age,

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2 sexual orientation, employment and zip code.
3 Finally, we'll be voting on Resolution 1529-A, which
4 I'm pleased to sponsor. This resolution calls on
5 the New York State Legislature to pass and the
6 Governor to sign legislation to protect New York
7 State's safety net providers and special needs plans
8 to eliminate the Medicaid Pharmacy Carve-out. The
9 Medicaid Pharmacy Carve-out will cause extensive
10 harm to community health centers, safety net
11 hospitals and services for those living with HIV and
12 AIDS. Given the disproportionate impact of COVID 19
13 on the most vulnerable communities and the providers
14 that serve them, we must not just delay the carve-
15 out or try to supplement it with budgetary actions.
16 We must eliminate this carve-out. I want to thank
17 my colleagues on the Health Committee for being
18 here. I see that we are also joined by Council
19 Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel fellow Health Committee
20 member as well as Council Member as well as Council
21 Member and Doctor Mathieu Eugene, and I want to
22 thank the staff of the Health Committee who have
23 done such incredible work on the bills and Resos
24 today Counsel Harbani Ahuja and Sara Liss, Policy
25 Analyst Em Balkan, and Finance Analyst Lauren Hunt

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2 for all their work in preparing for this hearing,
3 and I would like to que now our colleague Council
4 Member Miller. Excuse me, Council Member Barron.
5 Did you have a comment you wanted to make? Okay,
6 Council Member Miller as a co-sponsor I would like
7 to que you to say a few remarks please.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: (pause) When we set
9 up this morning here it's not my usual. They got you
10 Chair Levine.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: But we got in here
12 Council Member. Thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you for
14 allowing me and you so appropriately expressed the
15 mission of the legislation, but this legislation
16 itself is months in the making. Myself, colleagues
17 and typically the members of the Black, Latino and
18 Asian Caucus have been advocating for fair and
19 equitable vaccine rollout long before the first dose
20 was ever administered here in the city of New York.
21 We saw what that first rollout looked like. The
22 first two, the first three was very inequitable. The
23 fact of the matter is that nearly 25 to 35 percent
24 of those first vaccinated came from outside of New
25 York City and were not Black, Latino or Asian. We

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2 called for a common sense approach to the vaccine's
3 eligibility system including color coded tiers and
4 dashboards that would provide real time updates on
5 who was getting the vaccine and where. Today our
6 resolution has the support of the majority of the
7 Council and we are one step closer to finally
8 achieving vaccine equity to all. This is even more
9 important now that we're expecting more vaccines
10 thanks to the hard work of the Biden Administration.
11 Their goal is to broadly expand eligibility by May.
12 While we are certainly looking forward to
13 eligibility expansion, the fact remains that hard to
14 reach, under-served populations are still struggling
15 to gain access to the vaccine. Our office and other
16 local community partners have been working
17 diligently to help seniors and others set up vaccine
18 appointments that are scarce and many seniors are
19 especially not able to access them through the
20 online process. We know what... we know what works
21 and what doesn't. the pop-up vaccinations in
22 churches, mosques, synagogues and recreation centers
23 are a must, and as we build... rebuild and recover,
24 it is vitally important that we continue prioritize
25 communities that was hardest hit by COVID 19,

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2 frontline and essential workers in industries that
3 were hardest hit as well as communities of color.
4 Most have been... Most have equitable robust accents
5 must have equitable and robust access to the vaccine
6 as well as slowly regain... as we slowly regain some
7 semblance of normalcy here in our city. Resolution
8 1535 calls on the State and the Governor to sign
9 legislation that would allow health departments to
10 implement changes to COVID 19 rollout leading the
11 way to tailored approach to accommodate the needs of
12 the most vulnerable as we receive an increase in
13 supply from the federal government and seek to
14 achieve widespread inoculation. I want to thank my
15 colleagues for their overwhelming support. I would
16 also like to thank the Brooklyn Borough President
17 for his partnership and leadership on this
18 resolution and, of course, the members of the Black,
19 Latino and Asian Caucus. I would like to thank, of
20 course, Chair Levine for his partnership and support
21 and not just crafting this, but making sure that it
22 is being heard. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you so much
24 Council Member Miller. You are right on, and I'm
25 grateful for your leadership and that of the entire

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BLSC in focusing on the horrible inequity of

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vaccination and this pandemic in general. So much

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more work to do on this resolution. It definitely

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pushes us in the right direction. So, I think we're

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ready to go for a vote on these important bills and

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Resos. So, I'm going to ask our Committee Clerk, I

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think that's Billy Martin here with us today to

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please call the roll.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Good morning, William

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Martin, Committee Clerk, Roll call vote Committee on

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Health. All items are coupled. Chair Levine.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I vote aye on all

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Eugene.

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COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: (pause)

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WILLIAM MARTIN: We'll come back to you

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Council Member Eugene.

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COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I vote aye

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Council Member Barron.

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COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I vote aye, I vote

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aye.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank you Council Member.

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Council Member Eugene, thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Yes, sir, thank you.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Council member Barron.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, good morning.
Just permission to explain my vote.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Please.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. I want to thank the Chair and all the members that are here for their support of this legislation, and I want to ask that I please be added to any that I may not already be noted on as sponsor, and I vote aye on all. Thank you.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Absolutely. Ampry-Samuel

COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Good morning.
I vote aye on all.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Holden.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I vote aye on all.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Powers.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Aye on all.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank you. One moment.
Okay, by a vote of 6 in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions all items have been adopted by the committee, and Mr. Chair, there is one member outstanding.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay, thank you. I don't know if we're able to keep the vote open for a

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few minutes. Are we expecting to be joined by anyone?

COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Chair, we are going to hold the vote open for a couple of minutes.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Great. Okay, but thanks to all the committee members for being here. I am excited to be passing this legislation.

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
(pause)

WILLIAM MARTIN: Good morning Council Member Diaz.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Welcome, Council Member Diaz.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Are you ready to vote, Council Member?

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Pardon?

WILLIAM MARTIN: Are you ready to vote?

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Yes.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Are you recording for the vote?

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Yes.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Okay. On the continuation roll call Committee on Health

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Introduction 864-A, 2236-A and Resolution 1529-A
and 1535, Council Member Darma Diaz.

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Yes.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank you. The final vote
now on all items Committee on Health is 7 in the
affirmative, zero in the negative, no abstentions.
The items are adopted. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you so much Mr.
Clerk, thank you Council Member Diaz and that's
going to conclude our hearing of the Health
Committee. Thank you so much everybody.

COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Thank you.

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 2, 2021