

**Testimony of the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs  
Before the  
New York City Council on Consumer Affairs**

**Hearing on Intro. 697:  
The City Laundry Equity and Accountability Act**

**June 18, 2015**

Good morning Chairperson Espinal, Council Member Torres, and members of the New York City Council Committee on Consumer Affairs. I am Amit S. Bagga, Deputy Commissioner of External Affairs at the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (“DCA”). I am here representing Commissioner Julie Menin, who is unable to attend today, but sends her best to the Committee and commits to working with you to address the important issue that is the subject of today’s hearing. I am also joined by my colleagues Mary Cooley, Director of City Legislative Affairs, Tamala Boyd, Deputy General Counsel, Eileen Yap, Assistant General Counsel, and Richard O’Hara, Director of Enforcement.

We are also joined by colleagues from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“DOHMH”), Chris D’Andrea, Director of the Environmental Health Assessment & Communication Program within the Department’s Bureau of Environmental Disease and Injury Prevention and Dr. Keren Landman, a medical epidemiologist with infections disease training, from the Department’s Bureau of Communicable Disease. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today about Intro 697, which would require DCA, among other things, to define and enforce standards of cleanliness for laundry delivery vehicles. DCA would like to thank Council Member Torres for highlighting this important issue and Chairperson Espinal for holding today’s hearing. We at DCA share the Council’s goal of ensuring that all of our City’s workers are protected, particularly the most vulnerable.

DCA is the largest municipal consumer protection agency in the country, and it is our mission to empower consumers and businesses alike to ensure a fair and vibrant marketplace. The agency licenses approximately 80,000 businesses across 55 different industries, mediates complaints between consumers and businesses, conducts patrol inspections and legal investigations, educates businesses about laws and rules, and also enforces New York City’s Earned Sick Time Act, commonly known as the “Paid Sick Leave” law. In addition to its licensing, consumer protection, and labor-related work, DCA operates the Office of Financial Empowerment (“OFE”).

**Laundry Licensing**

The laundry industry is one of the 55 industries currently licensed by DCA. This scheme consists of two license categories: a “laundry” license and a “laundry jobber” license. In general terms, laundries are defined as those businesses where on-site laundering is offered, either for use by the general public or by businesses such as hotels, restaurants, or public institutions. These laundries include, for example, neighborhood laundromats and those laundries that primarily service other businesses. Notably, dry cleaners and laundries that exclusively service hospitals or

charitable institutions are not included in this category. As of June 15 of this year, there are 2,628 licensed laundries across the five boroughs.

Laundry jobbers are defined as businesses that do not offer washing and drying services on site, but rather those that accept laundry for cleaning and then send it to a laundry site for washing and drying. This license category was originally designed to regulate such services offered by dry cleaners, which are a significant number of laundry jobber licensees. These dry cleaners are not licensed to perform dry cleaning work, but rather to facilitate the washing and drying of clothing off site. As of June 15 this year, there were 1,780 businesses across the five boroughs that are licensed as laundry jobbers.

Intro. 697 seeks to require “industrial laundries” in New York City to obtain licenses from DCA. The existing laundry licensing law already requires all laundries, except those that are expressly exempt in the law, to obtain a DCA license. Any laundries performing washing and drying services without a license would be considered to be engaging in unlicensed – and therefore unlawful – activity. We are happy to work with the Council to identify any such unlicensed businesses and help them to come into compliance with the current licensing law.

Since January 2014, DCA has conducted nearly 3,000 inspections of laundries and more than 1,450 inspections of laundry jobbers. During this same period of time, DCA has received more than 800 complaints about laundries and laundry jobbers, and we have issued more than 600 violations. The most common violations issued to laundries since January 2014 have been for failures to post a refund policy, price lists, and for illegally charging different prices based on gender.<sup>1</sup>

### **DCA’s Jurisdiction**

DCA’s jurisdiction over laundries and laundry jobbers allows us to enforce the City’s Consumer Protection and Licensing laws and rules, which cover general business practices and the provision of necessary disclosures.

While the agency’s jurisdiction has been expanding to include the implementation of certain labor-related laws, such as the Paid Sick Leave and Transit Benefits laws, both of which are legal constructs entirely separate from our consumer protection and licensing laws, it is beyond DCA’s jurisdiction, ability, and expertise to define and enforce minimum standards of cleanliness and sanitary conditions, as Intro. 697 would have us do. Any enforcement of such standards would require extensive scientific and environmental assessments of equipment, processes, and vehicles; assessments that DCA is not able or qualified to perform. Furthermore, the New York State Department of Labor (“State DOL”) currently prescribes health and safety standards for businesses that are classified at the state level as “factories,” which includes laundries.

The existing legal framework regulating laundries and the health and safety of laundry employees is complex, as it implicates federal, state, and city laws. For example, as the Committee is no doubt aware, general workplace standards for health and safety are established and enforced by the United States Occupational Health and Safety Administration (“OSHA”),

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<sup>1</sup> DCA has also issued 45 violations for unlicensed activity during this time period.

and the addressing the spread of communicable diseases is done by a host of agencies at all levels of government, including, but not limited to, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), the United States Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”), and the New York State Department of Health. The City’s Law Department is currently reviewing Intro. 697., a process that involves researching the origin of the City’s licensing of laundries, which dates back likely to the nineteenth century. Understanding the historical regulation of laundries at both the state and city levels will enable the administration to better collaborate with the Council in shaping appropriate amendments to the current statute.

Any such amendments to this statute that require enforcement would also have to appropriately align with any existing constraints in an agency’s labor contracts. DCA cannot require our inspectors, who have no training in disease identification or transmission, to conduct the types of inspections required by Intro. 697. In general, our inspectors conduct inspections of brick-and-mortar businesses for compliance with signage, pricing, and disclosure rules. Requiring DCA inspectors to perform the inspections enumerated in this bill is also likely to violate their existing collective bargaining agreements, and DCA is working with the City’s Office of Labor Relations (“OLR”) to learn more.

### **Questions of Public Health**

To address questions of public health, I will now ask my colleagues from DOHMH to provide comments.

DOHMH believes that the scope of the risk to the public’ health from clothing and linens laundered at “industrial laundries” has not been established. In the past five years, we have received between 33,000 and 50,000 calls annually, the bulk of which were complaints about public nuisances. To the knowledge of our Bureau of Communicable Disease (“BCD”), none of these calls were related to complaints of contaminated clothing or linens from an industrial laundry. In the twenty-year institutional memory of BCD staff, DOHMH has not traced any disease transmission via commercially laundered linens.

Although the scientific literature contains reports of infections associated with contaminated linens, these have been exclusively reported in hospitals. These reports are not generalizable to the community at large for two reasons: hospitalized patients are far more susceptible to infection than people in the community, and microbes colonizing hospital surfaces are far more likely to be both pathogenic and resistant than microbes in the community.

The administration will continue to monitor and review literature, reports, and other research materials on this topic and is more than happy to update and work with the Council on public health issues such as these in the future.

Our colleague from DCA will now provide closing remarks.

## **Conclusion**

As the Members of the Committee are aware, DCA has eagerly taken on the enforcement of recently-enacted laws that significantly increase protections for workers. The agency is deeply committed to realizing Mayor de Blasio's vision of reducing income inequality and ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to key rights and protections, regardless of the languages they speak or where they live.

DCA thanks Council Member Torres for highlighting some of the dangers that those employed in industrial laundries might face, and look forward to working with the Council to explore this issue further.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today; my colleagues and I are happy to answer any questions you might have.

Miguel Figueroa, Industrial Laundry Worker  
New York City Council, Committee on Consumer Affairs  
June 18, 2015  
Re: Bill Number 697

Good Morning Chairman Espinal and members of the Committee on Consumer Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of the CLEAN Act.

My name is Miguel Figueroa and I live in the Bronx. I strongly support Bill Number 697 because I've seen firsthand the many reasons why we need to clean up our city's dirty industrial laundries.

I worked for more than six years in an industrial laundry in New York washing clothes for luxury hotels in Manhattan. My position was launderer, and sometimes I worked on the dryers.

On this job, our managers didn't make sanitation a priority for employees... or the linens we laundered. The dirty clothes that I washed sometimes came contaminated with blood, feces, or vomit. But I separated these dirty linens prior to washing without gloves, gowns or a protective mask. It didn't seem like our managers cared if we were safe; they just wanted the work to move quickly.

Workplace conditions became so bad at my job that in 2010 a federal judge put an injunction on the facility to demand the owners comply with federal labor laws.

These industrial laundry owners also showed little concern over the sanitation and quality of the linens cleaned in their facilities even though they were going to be used by the public.

For example, we didn't always wash and disinfect the containers that carried the dirty laundry to the plant from the hotels. These bins often arrived with a bad smell and rotten food and napkins. When they arrived, we would clear them out, and we sent them to the other packing area. Then, after a plastic bag was placed in the bins, clean laundry was packed inside and sent out to the hotels.

Dirty containers weren't the only problem ignored by my managers; they also overlooked dirty linens. Once, the laundry facility sent product to the customers without even washing it because two of our three washing tunnels were broken. They gave us the order to take the containers filled with dirty laundry and take them to the ironing area so they could just be pressed. The product went like that to the customer, ironed but not washed.

These are only few examples of why I support Bill Number 697. I believe the CLEAN Act is a step in the right direction for ensuring that all industrial laundries offer a healthy work place for workers and a hygienic product to the public.

Thank you.



# Committee of Interns and Residents *SEIU*Healthcare.

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Testimony IN SUPPORT of Int. No. 697 – Regulation of laundries  
*New York City Council*  
*June 18, 2015*

“Every medical and public health professional in New York City should read this new report on irresponsible industrial laundries and immediately join the campaign to pass the CLEAN Act. It’s clear that the worst actors in the industry are exposing New Yorkers to serious public health risks by cutting corners and not properly cleaning linens. Far too many linens containing contaminants and toxins are touching the hands and bodies of New Yorkers every day. We shouldn’t wait for a public health disaster tied to industrial laundries to emerge. Instead, we should fix the problem now before it gets out of control, and the best solution is swift passage and implementation of the CLEAN Act.”

For more information, please contact:

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# NEW YORK CITY CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL AFL-CIO

President  
VINCENT ALVAREZ

Secretary-Treasurer  
JANELLA T. HINDS



## Testimony of Anthony Thomas, Political Director New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO

### New York City Council Committee on Consumer Affairs

June 18, 2015

Good morning, my name is Anthony Thomas, and I am the Political Director of the New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO. Representing 1.3 million workers across 300 affiliated unions, the Central Labor Council strongly supports Intro. No. 697, the CLEAN Act. Outsourcing in commercial laundry has significantly altered the dynamics of the industry, and requires some regulatory catch-up. Industrial laundries are unlicensed by city government, yet clean linens for the City's hotels, hospitals, and restaurants used by millions of people. The CLEAN Act takes sensible steps to implement a licensing system, modernizing the industrial laundry sector for the 21st century.

Conditions in sweatshop industrial laundries leave many workers incapable of supporting their families or participating in the city economy. One study by the Brennan Center found the average laundry worker's day can be well over eight hours, and sometimes longer than twelve hours, six days a week<sup>1</sup>. These workers earn minimum wage, receive little-to-no benefits, and between 70% and 80% are women. A large share of the workforce is comprised of immigrants, and many are paid off-the-books.

What is happening in New York City's industrial laundry sweatshops is part of a national problem. Epidemiologists commissioned by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) conducted an inquiry into a deadly fungal outbreak at a children's hospital in New Orleans<sup>2</sup>. The CDC determined the deadly fungus had been transmitted by contaminated linens from an industrial laundry; it emphasized hospital linens should be laundered, packaged, shipped, and stored in a manner minimizing exposure to environmental contaminants<sup>3</sup>. The recommendations of the CDC are not out-of-line with the non-compulsory, national industry standards.

High-road industrial laundry operators in and around New York City choose to comply with the voluntary industry standards, but sweatshop operators do not. Workers in sweatshop laundries in the metropolitan area have reported instances of gross neglect of sanitary procedures by sweatshop laundry operators. As common sense and CDC-commissioned epidemiologists state, providing a sanitary product for public consumption should not be voluntary; it should be required.

Int. No. 697 is an important piece of legislation to modernize New York City's industrial laundry industry. Proper regulation and oversight will help ensure industrial laundries are clean, handle all linens properly, treat laundry workers fairly, and protect the public health of our entire city. This legislation will provide oversight for compliance with City laws, workplace standards, and establish strong guidelines of cleanliness. Int. No. 697 will prevent the contamination of linens used by hotels, hospitals and restaurants across the city. The CLEAN Act is a win for all New Yorkers, and prepares our growing economy for the 21st century. Thank you for your time and consideration.

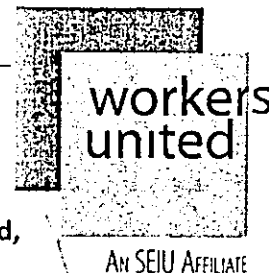
1 "Unregulated Work in the Laundry and Dry Cleaning Industry in New York City", *The Brennan Center*, 2007. [http://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/dsawload\\_file\\_49379.pdf](http://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/dsawload_file_49379.pdf)

2 Ian Urbina and Sheri Fink, "A Deadly Fungus and Questions at a Hospital", *The New York Times*, April 23, 2014. [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/23/us/a-deadly-fungus-and-questions-at-a-hospital.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/23/us/a-deadly-fungus-and-questions-at-a-hospital.html?_r=0)

3 Jonathan Duffy et al., "Mucormycosis Outbreak Associated With Hospital Linens", *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*, May 2014, Volume 33, Issue 5, p. 472-476. [http://journals.lww.com/pidj/Abstract/2014/05000/Mucormycosis\\_Outbreak\\_Associated\\_With\\_Hospital.9.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/pidj/Abstract/2014/05000/Mucormycosis_Outbreak_Associated_With_Hospital.9.aspx)

# INDRY DISTRIBUTION AND FOOD SERVICE JOINT BOARD

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Testimony of Megan Chambers, Laundry Distribution & Food Service Joint Board,  
Workers United, SEIU

NYC Council Consumer Affairs Committee Hearing June 18, 2015  
Bill # 697, "CLEAN Act"

Good morning, Chairman Espinal and members of the Consumer Affairs Committee. My name is Megan Chambers. I am here today to provide testimony on behalf of the Laundry, Distribution & Food Service Joint Board, Workers United, SEIU in support of Intro #697, the "CLEAN Act". Our union organizes and represents industrial laundry workers in the New York City metropolitan area and is a member of the CLEAN NYC coalition.

Some 5,000 industrial laundry workers work today at more than 50 industrial laundry facilities in and around New York City. Industrial laundries are more like factories than your neighborhood Laundromat, laundering thousands of pounds sheets, towels, tablecloths, uniforms and other washables every hour for our City's restaurants, hotels, hospitals, nursing homes and doctor's offices. Whether the laundry plants are located in the Bronx, Queens or Brooklyn, or outside the city line, they exist to profit off of prime laundry customers in New York City. More than 300 industrial laundry delivery trucks criss-cross New York City on an ordinary day, collecting dirty product, and delivering clean items. Yet, there is currently no local, state or federal law to assure patients, tourists, consumers and uniformed workers are receiving a clean, safe product.

Industrial laundry workers do hard, dirty work often under difficult conditions. Most are immigrants, and a majority are women. Where workers are not represented by a strong union, they usually earn at or close to minimum wage, do not receive employer-paid health insurance, and are often exploited – shorted on overtime pay, denied proper care and compensation for work-related injuries, and denied protective gear and other basic safety protections. Our union is dedicated to helping industrial laundry workers improve their wages, benefits and working conditions, and to ensuring a safe workplace for these workers.

Some industrial laundry operators are responsible employers who pay legal and living wages, provide health insurance to employees, follow safety regulations, and hold themselves voluntarily to high standards of product cleanliness. Sadly, however, too many industrial laundries are run by irresponsible operators who show blatant disregard for employees, the public and even the law.

In 2012, a Bronx industrial laundry owner was found guilty by the federal government's National Labor Relations Board of illegally retaliating against an employee who was organizing his co-workers for better working conditions by throwing hot coffee in the worker's face, cursing him, and firing him. In other instances, Bronx industrial laundry workers have reported separating dirty hotel laundry, which at times contained feces, used syringes, used condoms, and blood,



without gloves and masks, in violation of OSHA regulations. Where employers grossly neglect safety regulations, workers die in industrial laundries. In 2007, two workers died of chemical fumes at an industrial laundry in northern New Jersey. In 2011, a worker was crushed to death at an industrial laundry on Long Island.

In many cases, industrial laundry workers who report working in unsafe conditions also report witnessing practices at industrial laundries that compromise the cleanliness of the product being sent to customers and used by the general public. For example, workers have reported a practice of unloading bins of soiled linen from trucks, then loading those same bins with bags of clean product without first disinfecting the bins, even when bins were contaminated by blood or feces. In addition, workers have reported instances when dirty laundry that didn't appear visibly soiled was pressed, folded and returned to customers as "clean" when it had not, in fact, been washed. In short, laundry operators who disregard their employees' well-being are often disregarding the safety and well-being of consumers.

The potential risk to consumers from these kinds of disturbing and irresponsible practices should not be underestimated. A report issued by Council Member Torres, in conjunction with the CLEAN NYC coalition, cites numerous cases where serious illnesses were carried in healthcare linens believed to be clean. The report cites, among other sources, a medical journal article published last year by epidemiologists who were commissioned by the US Centers for Disease Control to conduct an inquiry into a deadly fungal outbreak at a children's hospital in New Orleans. The epidemiologists determined that the deadly fungus had been transmitted by contaminated linens and emphasized that "hospital linens should be laundered, packaged, shipped and stored in a manner that minimizes exposure to environmental contaminants."

Intro 697, the "CLEAN Act", fills a glaring gap, for in spite of the exhortation of the epidemiologists, no law currently exists that requires industrial laundry products to be sanitary, or even clean. Under the "CLEAN Act", the Department of Consumer Affairs would set basic standards for cleanliness for industrial laundry products, and would license and inspect laundries to protect consumers. The "CLEAN Act" will protect New Yorkers regardless of whether the restaurant or doctor's office they frequent contracts with an industrial laundry located inside or outside the five boroughs. Industrial laundries located in the five boroughs would be licensed and inspected. Those operating outside the city would have their delivery trucks licensed.

There are those who may say that because *some* industrial laundry contractors are responsible actors who adhere *voluntarily* to high standards of product cleanliness, the industry as a whole should not be regulated. But I view that the other way around. To me, the fact that there are industrial laundry operators who manage successful businesses and make a profit while adhering to high standards of cleanliness should make us ask – why shouldn't they all? Why should irresponsible industrial laundry operators be allowed to disregard the public health when a

better business model is viable? And why should it be optional, or “voluntary”, for industrial laundries to provide sanitary products to the public? As the report released by Council Member Torres and the CLEAN NYC campaign spells out, only 5 of the 50 industrial laundries serving New York City are certified under the voluntary standards that the laundry industry associations have established – that’s just 10%.

In conclusion, Intro 697, the “CLEAN Act”, is vital to raising standards and ensuring accountability in New York City’s industrial laundry industry. It will ensure that industrial laundries clean and handle all linens properly. It will create uniform standards and expectations for consumers. And it accomplishes this through a simple, common-sense approach -- building on the fact that DCA already licenses retail laundries such as dry cleaners and laundromats. Bringing oversight to this industry will benefit workers and the general public alike.

Thank you.

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Testimony of TRSA  
Intro 697, the Clean Act  
Before the Consumer Affairs Committee  
New York City Council  
New York, New York,  
June 18, 2015  
David Potack, President  
Unitex Textile Rental Services

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, I am David Potack, President of Unitex Textile Rental Services. I thank the Committee for this opportunity to address City Council Bill 697 the CLEAN Act.

Unitex Textile Rental Services is a provider of healthcare uniforms and linens. We are a fourth generation family owned and operated company founded in 1915. We currently have over 1,500 employees working at 11 local facilities who are represented by Workers United. We are Hygienically Clean certified.

I am speaking on behalf of our company, and as Vice Chairman of TRSA, the Textile Rental Services Association of America, and for the commercial laundry industry as a whole.

TRSA represents a \$16-billion industry employing nearly 200,000 people at more than 1,500 facilities nationwide. The industry reaches every major business and industrial region and municipality in the country. Most Americans benefit at least once a week from the cleanliness and safety provided by the industry—through its laundering and delivery of reusable linens, uniforms, towels, floor mats and other products for the healthcare, hospitality and industrial/manufacturing sectors. TRSA member companies' services minimize environmental impacts on air, water and solid waste disposal while reducing costs for millions of customers.

TRSA recognizes Councilman Torres' good intentions in crafting Intro 697, but has significant concerns over the current language in the legislation. The legislation ignores existing safety standards and a strong record of health and safety within the commercial laundry industry. The proposal is redundant by duplicating federal and state OSHA standards and inspection protocols, adds an unnecessary tax and increases the burdens on the commercial laundries serving New York City.

However, on premise laundries in hospitals and charitable laundries are exempt from this legislation. Why would they be exempt if they operate in the same manner as commercial laundries with the same equipment? Shouldn't they be held to the same safety and cleanliness standards as all commercial laundries?

The commercial laundry industry is a 100-year-old industry that has continued to adapt to meet the needs and standards of the time. As the industry's advocate, TRSA has a strong track record of working

in partnership with local, state and federal authorities to improve commercial laundry standards and practices for the benefit of TRSA members, their employees and customers.

The TRSA must regretfully oppose Intro 697 for the reasons already noted, and because it is constructed around a factually flawed report - based largely on decades-old data and a fundamental misreading of several studies. The report is titled: "Irresponsible Industrial Laundries: A Major Public Health Threat."

I am here to say that the vast majority of commercial laundries are neither irresponsible nor do they process goods that in any way pose a public health threat. Quite the opposite. We operate in a highly regulated and transparent environment while producing textiles that are cleaner than private citizens can produce in their own homes.

Specifically, the CleanNYC report:

- Is based on isolated and outdated anecdotal events, not statistical data or trends.
- Ignores existing safety standards in the industry, as well as a strong record of health and safety within the commercial laundry industry.
- Ignores that laundries currently must follow regulations from several governmental agencies: several within the Department of Labor such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Wage and Hour division, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) to name a few. The Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Health and Human Services are all agencies under which the commercial laundry industry has to work with in order to operate.
- The report also ignores that each of these regulatory agencies has methods for reporting and investigating violations at the federal, state and sometimes the local level.

Many parts of the Clean NYC study are flawed and misleading. They either take information out of context or do not provide a complete picture. One of the more significant flaws of the report is that at no time was the industry contacted for input. Another major flaw of the report is that it does not give the entire context of the footnoted information or it uses outdated information to falsely accuse the commercial laundry industry of endangering public safety.

The first main tenet of the study is that the industry is rarely scrutinized and operates in the shadows outside the gaze of government.

Nothing could be further from the truth – in fact the commercial laundry industry is one of the most highly regulated industries. We have to operate within a myriad of laws and regulations from the federal, state and even local levels of government.

We are governed by OSHA, Wage and Hour, the Fair Labor Standards Act, Department of Transportation, the federal and state Environmental Protection Agencies as well as local water districts just to name a few. These entities have the authority to, and, in fact, do show up to inspect our operations - at times without prior notification. Due to the number of inspections and audits we receive when working within each of these areas, it is impossible for legitimate commercial laundries to operate

in the shadows or outside the gaze of government. At the same time, we fear that while legitimate commercial laundries will carry the burden of this legislation, the actual bad actors the legislation seeks to target will merely ignore its requirements—much as they do the body of existing laws already on the books.

This is one reason the industry cannot support Intro 697 in its current form. Often working with all these levels of government is costly, duplicative and confusing, this legislation would add yet another barrier to operating a business by adding another layer of cost and duplicative requirements. In short, the cost of doing business will rise yet again for legitimate, unionized employers, while the bad actors continue to skate under the radar.

### **THE COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY INDUSTRY IS A SAFE PLACE TO WORK**

The report also claims that the commercial laundry industry is an unsafe industry for employees. As an example, it states that out of more than 200,000 employees in the U.S. commercial laundry industry, there is an employee injury rate of 3.5%. In fact, that number is misleading because out of those injuries the vast majority were minor, requiring a Band-Aid or the application of a cold pack. Only 0.45% of these injuries were considered “of consequence.”

TRSA and I believe that one injury of consequence is too many. The industry has taken it upon itself to maintain worker safety as a top priority. As a matter of fact, TRSA just conducted its Fourth Annual Safety Summit to continue to develop and share best-management practices to keep commercial laundry workers safe.

TRSA's latest annual national Safety Survey showed dramatic, across-the-board reductions in incidents at commercial laundries. In fact, the Textile Services Industry Safety Report indicated that safety improvements at commercial laundries exceeded those in the overall private manufacturing industry. The questions included in the survey are based on OSHA standards.

Specifically, the report found the Total Recordable Incident Rate (TRIR) for TRSA members dropped by 27.3% between 2010 and 2014. Similarly, TRSA members' Days Away, Restricted and or Transfer Rate (DART) dropped by 25.6% during that same period.

As for the private manufacturing industry, its TRIR and DART rates fell by 9% and 8.3%, respectively, during this same period, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

### **THE COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY INDUSTRY KEEPS THE PUBLIC SAFE**

The CleanNYC report claims that there is no oversight to know if linens and garments used by the public are washed and processed. As the President of a commercial laundry, I can tell you first hand that our clients know if textiles are being properly processed. The market is one of the best indications of a clean product. If a commercial laundry does not deliver clean safe goods to a customer, the customer will change providers. In this competitive market of New York, a poor provider does not stay a provider for long. In the case of my company, the hospitals we serve throughout the five boroughs, and throughout the northeast US, would quickly put me out of business if we failed to for our jobs long before any inspectors would.

For over a decade, TRSA has developed standards that focus on the processing and delivery of clean and safe textiles. To enhance cleanliness standards even further, TRSA developed the Hygienically Clean certification program.

Hygienically Clean prescribes known best-management practices for the processing of clean textiles. The program is further enhanced by an updated testing protocol to ensure that textiles are in fact hygienically clean. TRSA has established Hygienically Clean certifications in each the healthcare, food service, hospitality and food-processing industry segments.

The commercial laundry industry is also required to follow all federal, state and local guidelines for producing safe and clean textiles. These guidelines are established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and OSHA. The CDC states on its website that the risk of actual disease transmission from soiled linen is negligible. Rather than rigid rules and regulations, it recommends common-sense hygienic practices for processing and storage of linen.

Other recommendations of CDC, as well as the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC), state that although contaminated textiles and fabrics in health care facilities can be a source of substantial numbers of pathogenic microorganisms, reports of health care-associated diseases linked to contaminated fabrics are so few in number that the overall risk of disease transmission during the laundry process likely is negligible.

When the incidence of such events is evaluated in the context of the volume of items laundered in health care settings, which is estimated to be 5 billion pounds annually in the United States, existing control measures (e.g., standard precautions by CDC and universal precautions from OSHA) are effective in reducing the risk of disease transmission to patients, staff and laundry workers. Therefore, use of current control measures should be continued to minimize the contribution of contaminated laundry to the incidence of health care-associated infections. These control measures are based on principles of hygiene, common sense, and consensus guidance; they pertain to laundry services utilized by health care facilities, either in-house or contract, rather than to laundry done in the home.

The CleanNYC report is based on 20 sourced "footnotes," but not one suggests laundries pose a public health threat; in fact, many of these citations are from reports that, if read from start to finish, would convince any reader that the health threat is negligible or rare.

For example:

- Footnote 2: A report from Slovenia, which discusses the possibility of contamination, but concludes: "It is obvious that the various existing control measures for hospital laundry are effective in reducing the risk of disease transmission to patients and staff."
- Footnote 3: A London report published more than 20 years ago characterizes threats as "rare."
- Footnote 5: A report from the CDC states that: "Although soiled linen may harbor large numbers of pathogenic microorganisms, the risk of actual disease transmission from soiled linen is negligible. Rather than rigid rules and regulations, common-sense hygienic practices for processing and storage of linen are recommended."
- Footnote 6: The same London report as #3.

- Footnote 7: The same Slovenia report from #2.
- Footnote 8: A special report from *Infection Control Today* confirming CDC conclusions on laundry safety.
- Footnote 9: A report on the 2009 New Orleans case in which infection resulted from improper storage of linens at a hospital, not laundry facilities. It also stated: "Infections attributed to contact with clean healthcare linens are extremely rare when compared to the billions of pounds of healthcare laundry processed annually in the US."
- Footnote 12: A survey copyrighted in 2008 but actually using 25-year-old data (1990 and 1992) on Hepatitis B infections from sharps. The report also states that the majority of the risk is for healthcare workers, not laundry workers.
- Footnote 14: A Brennan Center report that inappropriately confuses industrial laundries with laundromats and dry cleaners. Its basic premise is that without a union, workers will be mistreated; however it states: "About 70-80% of industrial laundry plants in the New York City area are unionized. There is virtually no union density in the other industry segments."
- Footnote 16: A report on a fatality involving a shuttle carrying washed laundry to a dryer in 2011. While this is a terrible incident, it involves a workplace accident, not "A Major Public Health Threat" to the general NYC population. Commercial laundries rank very high in OSHA safety improvement.

## **THE COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY INDUSTRY IS ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY**

One of the many often-overlooked benefits of commercial laundries is their TRSA-led focus on increasing sustainability. The industry has made significant investments in technologies that reduce the amount of water and energy needed for laundering while increasing the hygienic cleanliness of the products.

LaundryESP, a joint survey program between the EPA and TRSA, has documented our industry's progress in addressing evolving issues and priorities related to pollution prevention and resource conservation. The LaundryESP Facility Data Survey results reflect our success in protecting the environment and our respect for our customers' and the public's interest in green, sustainable business practices. The figures also demonstrate the efficiencies that we have realized through technological advances.

According to LaundryESP, over the past decade, water use per pound of production has declined from 2.31 gallons per pound to 1.55 gallons per pound, a decrease of 33%.

In 2009, the industry used approximately 20 billion gallons. Had it remained at its 1997 consumption level, this figure would have been about 30 billion.

These savings of 9.9 billion gallons represent the equivalent of the quantity of water used in a year for residential purposes by about 270,000 people or what might be saved if stringent indoor water conservation measures were implemented for 1.35 million people.

LaundryESP determined that total in-plant energy used per pound of textiles laundered declined consistently over the last decade. The overall drop was 27% from 3,101 Btu per pound to 2,262.

If the industry's energy intensity had remained at a 1997 level, its total energy use would have been 40.3 trillion Btus rather than 29.4 trillion Btus. Thus the energy efficiency gain saved 10.9 trillion Btus. This is the equivalent of the annual residential energy consumption for about 115,000 typical U.S. households (for space heating, water heating, and appliances).

LaundryESP calculates the industry's annual carbon footprint from this consumption, expressed as a total of pounds of carbon dioxide per pound of textiles processed. This figure has declined by 24% from 0.47 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> per pound of textiles to 0.36 pounds.

If the industry produced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2009 at the same rate as 1997, the total would have been 6.135 billion pounds rather than the actual 4.66 billion pounds. This means that textile services facilities avoided 1.476 billion pounds of emissions, the equivalent of:

- Taking 134,000 typical cars off the road
- Planting about 30 million trees

The commercial laundry industry is very price sensitive. By raising the industry's costs, Council Bill 697, would result in an increase in prices. Any price increase would encourage the use of disposable products which have a negative impact on the environment compared to reusable linens. One ton of paper consumes 17 trees, three cubic yards of landfill space and pollutes 20,000 gallons of water.

A study done by Exponent Research Group proves that, compared with disposables, reusable textiles use significantly less resources, last for a significantly longer amount of time, and are recycled to further lengthen their life cycle. Reusables are clearly the more sustainable choice.

## **CONCLUSION**

In closing, I reiterate that TRSA regretfully must oppose to Intro 697, not because we disagree with the sponsors' goals, but because the bill is based on bad research, is duplicative of existing regulatory frameworks for the industry, contains several technical flaws, and will not achieve its ultimate objectives.

I welcome anyone on the council to visit one of our plants to see for yourself how a laundry plant operates and see the benefits the industry provides to the public and the community.

I thank the committee for allowing me to submit these comments and am willing to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Thank you



**Conor Hanlon, Field Researcher, Service Employees International Union**  
**New York City Council, Committee on Consumer Affairs**  
**Bill Number 697**  
**June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

Good Morning Chairman Espinal and members of the Committee on Consumer Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of bill number 697 (the CLEAN Act). My name is Conor Hanlon, and I am a researcher for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). I was the principal researcher and author of "Irresponsible Industrial Laundries: A Major Public Health Threat", which was released by Councilman Torres and CLEAN NYC.

### Introduction

First I'll start with a brief background. The linen rental and industrial laundry industry consists of at least 50 facilities employing over 5,000 people in the greater New York area.<sup>i</sup> These facilities in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and the suburbs wash, dry, press and deliver sheets, towels, napkins, work uniforms, patient gowns, and more to thousands of New York city hospitals, hotels, restaurants, and other businesses.

These facilities bear little resemblance to your corner laundromat or dry cleaner. They look much more like factories, often housing specialized washing machines capable of washing thousands of pounds at a time. A large industrial laundry can process more than 10 million pounds of laundry a year.<sup>ii</sup>

Workers in these plants, often immigrants, women, or people of color, can be subject to unreasonable production standards. Workers know that failure to meet the strict quotas required of them can lead to discipline or even termination. It is little surprise that when their managers have this kind of mentality, workers report that quality suffers.

It's important to note that many laundries have recognized the need to do better. There are voluntary certification programs created by those in the industry which mandate that best practices be followed and set minimum standards for cleanliness of clean laundry. Many workers in New York City area industrial laundries are represented by unions and have safer and better working conditions.

But we simply cannot rely on uneven standards and voluntary programs to ensure quality. The people who stay at New York hotels, eat at its restaurants, and seek care at its healthcare facilities expect and deserve safe, clean linens.

### Risk to Health

"Safe" is key, especially when talking about linens used in healthcare settings. As we lay out in our report, it has been repeatedly confirmed in medical literature that failure to follow best practices in washing, handling, and delivering linen can lead to contamination. These same studies have also shown that exposure to contaminated linen can lead to life-threatening illnesses in patients. Some examples include:

- *Bacillus cereus* meningitis in two patients was traced to linen; it was found that the bacteria was not being killed by the wash process.<sup>iii</sup>
- Recurring *Streptococcus pyogenes* outbreak among newborns in a maternal unit was traced to infant vests being dried in a contaminated drier.<sup>iv</sup>

- An *Aspergillus flavus* outbreak was traced to linen after it was found that the delivery truck did not have a proper back door, allowing contamination by dust from road construction.<sup>v</sup>
- A Mucormycosis outbreak at Children's Hospital of New Orleans in which five children died was traced by investigators to linen which was likely contaminated at the laundry facility or in the delivery process.<sup>vi</sup>

## The CLEAN Act

Given the potential for harm, it is crucial to set base-line standards for quality in linen processing. Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, there is currently no law or regulation at the federal, state, or local level which requires industrial laundries to provide a clean, safe product. This is why the CLEAN Act is so desperately needed. The Act sets minimum standards of cleanliness and mandates that best practices be followed at industrial laundries.

What the act proposes is common sense. The requirement to follow best practices to prevent contamination and submit to inspections to ensure that these procedures are being followed mirrors the same requirements of the industry's voluntary certifications. Inspecting trucks is a necessary measure to ensure standards across the board, as approximately half of all laundries in the region are outside the five boroughs.

I believe this is the best way to ensure that New York's hospitals, doctor's offices, restaurants, and hotels are provided with clean and safe linen. Representatives of the Textile Rental Services Association (TRSA), however, have criticized the bill, stating that it is "redundant, duplicating federal and state OSHA standards and inspection protocols", and using the exemption for on premise hospital laundries to claim that the bill is not actually intended to guarantee linen quality.<sup>vii</sup>

These criticisms are entirely without merit. While I do believe that raising standards in the industry can only serve to help laundry workers, this bill in no way duplicates occupational safety and health standards. Rather it directs the Department of Consumer Affairs to issue guidelines to ensure linen quality: protecting consumers at New York's restaurants, hotels, and healthcare facilities. The industry's objection to the hospital exemption is also misplaced. Unlike off site laundries, on premise hospital laundries are strictly regulated and inspected already.<sup>viii</sup> The CLEAN Act will close the loophole that allows off-site healthcare laundries to escape scrutiny under the current regulatory regime.

## Conclusion

With multiple medical studies confirming that contaminated linen can transmit disease, it is imperative that laundries operating in and serving businesses in the city follow best practices to ensure that they are providing a sanitary product. Expanding the current Department of Consumer Affairs laundry license is a pragmatic and common-sense approach which will raise standards in the industry and protect New York City residents and guests.

Thank you again for your time and attention. I'm happy to answer any questions about my testimony or the content of the report that you might have.

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<sup>i</sup> Estimate based on data from Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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<sup>ii</sup> See, for example: <http://www.trsa.org/page/laundry-pounds>, <http://www.goodwilllaundry.com/AboutUs.aspx>, [http://www.mlive.com/business/west-michigan/index.ssf/2009/10/facility\\_washes\\_30\\_million\\_pou.html](http://www.mlive.com/business/west-michigan/index.ssf/2009/10/facility_washes_30_million_pou.html)

<sup>iii</sup> Barrie, D., Hoffman, P.N., Wilson, J. A., & Kramer, J. M. Contamination of hospital linen by *Bacillus cereus*. *Epidemiology & Infection* 113, 297-306 (1994).

<sup>iv</sup> Brunton, W. A. Telfer. Infection and hospital laundry [Letter to the Editor]. *Lancet* 345, 1574-1575 (1995), cited in Fijan, Sabina and Sostar Turk Sonja. Hospital textiles, are they a possible vehicle for Healthcare-associated infections? *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 2012, 9, 3330-3343.

<sup>v</sup> Pyrek, Kelly. Healthcare textiles: the continued imperative for cleanliness. *Infection Control Today Special Report*, September 2014.

<sup>vi</sup> Duffy, Jonathan, Harris, Julie, Gade, Lalitha, Pharm, M., Schulster, Lynne, Newhouse, Emily, O'Connell, Heather, Noble-Wang, Judith, Rao, Carol, Arunmozhi Balajee, S., and Chiller, Tom. Mucormycosis outbreak associated with hospital linens. *The Pediatric Infection Disease Journal* 2014 May;33(5):472-6.

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.trsa.org/news/industry-raps-nyc-licensing-regulatory-bill>

<sup>viii</sup> See the New York State Hospital Code and the Joint Commission's standards for hospital accreditation.

**CLEAN Act: Int. No. 697 - In relation to the regulation of laundries**

**Thursday, June 18, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in the 14th Floor Committee Room, 250  
Broadway, New York, NY**

**Dr. Carol McLay, DrPH, RN, Faculty**  
*University of Kentucky College of Nursing*

Thank you so much for inviting us to speak with you today about this important public health issue.

I am here today in support of the CLEAN Act legislation which would extend the much-needed licensing and regulation to cover industrial laundry operators and ensure that minimum standards are met for the cleanliness and safety of linens and textiles used by millions of New York City residents and visitors every year.

Most of us assume that our hotel sheets, restaurant serviettes, and hospital linen are clean and safe for our use but unfortunately that is not always the case.

Healthcare textiles are fabric products such as bedding, towels, and patient or employee clothing that touch patients and employees on a daily basis. Contaminated textiles in healthcare facilities are known to be a source of substantial numbers of harmful organisms that are deposited on these fabrics from body substances such as blood, skin, stool, urine, vomit, and other body tissues and fluids.

Common organisms that are found on healthcare textiles include Gram-negative bacteria, coagulase negative staphylococci, and *Bacillus* sp. in addition to normal skin bacteria.<sup>1,2</sup> Many of these organisms may persist for extended periods of time on textiles that are improperly processed, some for more than 90 days.<sup>3</sup>

Healthcare textiles have been implicated in numerous outbreaks of infection.<sup>4,5</sup>

Two fatal cases of meningitis caused by the bacterium *Bacillus cereus* sparked an investigation, which discovered that hospital linen was heavily contaminated by the *Bacillus cereus* spores caused by an inadequate wash process.<sup>6</sup>

In another investigation of bloodstream infections caused by *Bacillus cereus*, hospital linens and the hospital washing machine were found to be highly contaminated with this bacterium, which was also isolated from the intravenous fluid of symptomatic patients. The linens had been washed in the hospital washing machine, which reused water for washing and rinsing. Furthermore, the machine had not been cleaned for over ten years.<sup>7</sup>

An extensive investigation of a recurring outbreak of streptococcal infections associated with a maternity unit was conducted. Investigation of the laundry and in particular, the hot air dryers, revealed extensive contamination with the outbreak strain of *Streptococcus*

*pyogenes*. The babies were being infected shortly after birth from newborn vests which were placed on the babies to keep them warm.<sup>8</sup>

A fungal outbreak of *Aspergillus flavus* among patients causing multiple mycetomas, (which are chronic inflammation of the tissues caused by fungus) was traced to linen after it was found that the delivery truck did not have a proper back door, allowing contamination of dust from road construction.<sup>8</sup>

More recently, 5 children including 2 newborns, a 10 year girl, an 11 year old girl, and a 13 year old boy tragically died at the Children's Hospital of New Orleans after coming in contact with a deadly fungus that was transmitted to them through the linen on which they slept. According to a report by the mother, the 13 year old had been in the hospital for 18 days when his mom noticed a black quarter-sized spot under his arm. Two days later it was identified as mucormycosis. During early stages of infection the skin often appears relatively normal but quickly becomes reddened and swollen before eventually turning black due to tissue death. This child underwent 20 procedures as a result of complications from the infection before he died as a direct result of the fungus.

The investigators concluded that the linen had likely been contaminated at the laundry facility or during delivery.<sup>9</sup>

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Given the potential for harm to the public, high standards in the processing and handling of laundry are crucial. Some laundries wash both restaurant or hospitality linen in the same facility as health care laundry is washed, which means a restaurant napkin may be processed using the same equipment as used for soiled linen in healthcare facilities. The public expects clean linen and garments in our restaurants, hotels, and hospitals but since there is no mandatory oversight or standards, there is no way to know that the linens and garments used by the public are being washed and processed in accordance with industry standards.

Evidence-based standards and industry best practices have been established by the Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council (HLAC) and the Textile Rental Services Association (TRSA), which offer voluntary certification programs. Unfortunately only 5 out of 50 laundries in the NY area are certified under these programs.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "*Guidelines for environmental infection control in health-care facilities*" states while soiled textiles may be heavily contaminated with harmful organisms, if they are handled, transported, and laundered in a safe manner the risk of disease transmission is negligible.<sup>10</sup>

Getting soiled linens clean is a complicated process. A successful laundering procedure is dependent on several factors including duration of laundering procedure, mechanical action, dosage and type of added detergents and disinfection agents, bath ratio, type of linen, and filling ratio. Four important factors of the laundering procedure are: duration, mechanical action, chemicals and temperature. If one of these factors is decreased, such

as for example temperature, then the other factors must be increased to achieve the same laundering and disinfecting effect.

The exact correct optimized combination of these factors is critical in order to achieve a hygienic laundering procedure for textiles. Furthermore, clean linens must be maintained in a clean state and prevented from becoming contaminated before use. This involves handling, packing and storing linen in a manner that protects it from exposure to dust and dirt, particularly when being transported from an off-site laundry facility.

A laundry's failure to follow the proper procedures during any of these steps can lead to a final product that is contaminated, rather than clean. Following scientifically based industry standards and adhering to rigorous laundry standards ensures that many of these risks to the public are minimized.

There is currently no regulation of industrial laundries in New York City and no way to ensure that clean, and safe linen is provided to New Yorkers and the 55 million tourists that visit us annually. The CLEAN Act legislation seeks to close that gap by ensuring consistent monitoring of the entire laundering process coupled with best practices for laundry processes in accordance with accepted industry standards.

We must demand from their laundries the highest standards in the processing of their textiles - standards that cover the complete textile processing cycle, from handling and transporting, to laundering and finishing, and customer service.

We ask for your support for this important bill to establish the minimum standards of cleanliness among industrial laundries and safeguard the health of the public.

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**Testimony of Meg Fosque, Make the Road New York and Make the Road  
Action Fund  
NYC Council Consumer Affairs Committee Hearing  
June 18, 2015  
Bill # 697, "CLEAN Act"**

Thank you Chairman Espinal and members of the Consumer Affairs Committee for the opportunity to speak before you this morning. My name is Meg Fosque, Lead Organizer for Make the Road New York and Organizing Director for Make the Road Action Fund. On behalf of Make the Road I'd like to submit this testimony in support of Bill 697 the "CLEAN" Act.

Make the Road is the largest non-profit participatory immigrant organization in New York with more than 16,000 families and small business members, and 12,000 members in our sister entity, Make the Road Action Fund. We employ a multi-faceted approach to helping immigrant and low-income New Yorkers through community organizing, policy innovation, education and legal and survival services. As an organization that represents immigrant families, we are particularly concerned about how immigrant workers are treated in the largely unregulated commercial laundry industry.

Immigrants represent a significant portion of the 5,000 industrial laundry employees who work in and around New York City. Unfortunately these workers are routinely exploited by unscrupulous employers who prey upon their immigrant workforce. Many immigrant laundry workers do not have the protections of a strong union contract and are working in facilities where they face serious health and safety hazards and rampant labor law violations. They are paid at or close to the minimum wage, do not receive employer-paid health care or compensation for work-related industries. This has real repercussions, not just for laundry workers, but for the public at large who use products processed in these facilities.

This is hard and dirty work. Daily laundry workers come in contact with bodily fluids and other hazardous materials, such as syringes. They work with heavy machinery and are exposed to harmful chemicals. Despite this, many laundry workers never receive proper safety training and are denied basic protective gear. Without proper protection and training, laundry workers are



at serious risk of infection and disease. In some cases these unsafe conditions have resulted in serious injury and even the death of laundry workers.

These injuries are preventable and we cannot continue to allow workers to be exposed to these dangerous working conditions. While some employers are responsible actors who voluntarily adhere to high standards, the industry as a whole has a disturbing track record and is in need of oversight.

When employers do not maintain a clean and safe working facility for their employees, this frequently translates into the quality of their product. Laundry workers report soiled linens being passed off to customers as clean; linens that are used in our restaurants, hotels and hospitals. This is not only unsanitary, but has serious public health implications. As documented in the report issued by Council Member Torres and the Clean NYC coalition, soiled linens can transmit of deadly fungus and bacteria.

A commercial laundry industry that is clean and safe for both customers and workers is vital for the functioning of our city. Intro 697, the "CLEAN" Act will help ensure that industrial laundries and the products they process are clean and sanitary. By creating accountability the Act will help raise standards for both workers and consumers and help address some of the most pressing problems in the industry.

Thank you for your attention.



June 18, 2015

Amir Nathan  
TIMNA  
109 Saint Marks PL  
New York, NY 10009

Dear Chairman Espinal and members of the Committee on Consumer Affairs:

I am writing to express my support for Bill Number 697 relating to the city's industrial laundry industry.

As a restaurant owner, I am both deeply concerned and outraged about the lack of regulation in the facilities that supply napkins, table cloths, and aprons to our businesses.

Patrons expect a pleasurable dining experience at New York City restaurants. They expect our dining establishments to be sanitary; which is why area restaurants are regulated.

Most restaurant owners will tell you that we don't mind adhering to standards and regulations if it means we're helping to protect the public's health. In fact, it's our responsibility to ensure that our customers aren't harmed by our meals.

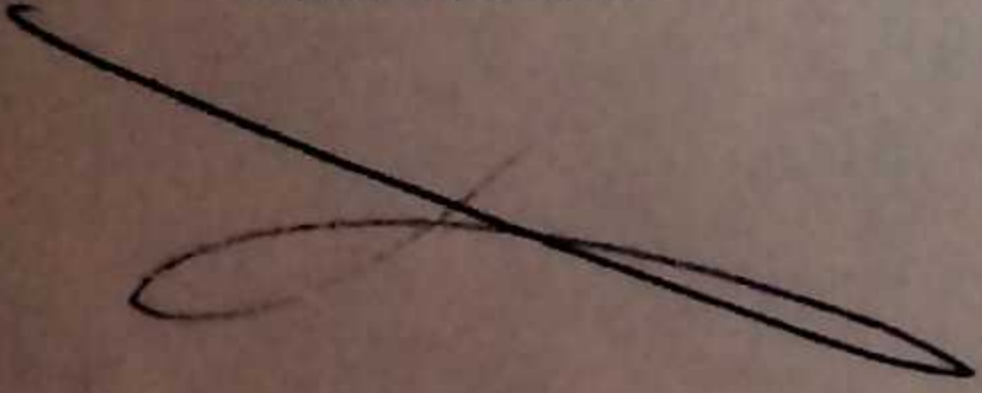
However, health standards in our restaurants are being compromised when our linens are not sanitary. What's the point of a restaurant grading scale, if our dishes are resting on soiled tablecloths? Are these regulations even effective, if our patrons are using less than clean napkins?

This is why I strongly believe the City Laundry Equity and Accountability (CLEAN) Act is needed in our city. When one business in our restaurant supply chain acts unethically, it hurts our entire industry.

The CLEAN Act would help protect the public's health and the integrity of New York City businesses that depend on them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amir Nathan





Candis Tolliver – Deputy Political Director (NY), Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ  
New York City Council, Committee on Consumer Affairs  
Bill Number 697

Good morning.

Thank you for taking the time to hear testimony in support of Bill Number 697.

My name is Candis Tolliver and I am the Deputy Political Director of SEIU 32BJ for New York — representing over 70,000 workers in New York City. We would like to first thank Councilmembers Torres and Garodnick for recognizing the need to raise standards in our city’s industrial laundries.

Far too often, industrial laundry workers are working in sweatshop conditions. Most of these workers are recent immigrants, desperate to keep their jobs – so they don’t speak out about the horrendous, unsanitary conditions where they work, the hazardous bodily fluids and chemicals they’re exposed to, or the sweatshop culture that pressures them to place quantity over quality.

In the industrial laundries run by irresponsible operators, workers are reluctant to speak out to protest unsanitary conditions. They don’t report how they’re being encouraged to place clean linens back into dirty bins. They’re not likely to feel comfortable calling the City or a news source when an irresponsible laundry owner has them send batches of linens that haven’t been properly laundered out to a hospital, hotel or restaurant.

Why? These workers feel intimidated by their employers and fear retaliation. Without regulations, some laundry owners are allowed to act irresponsibly, endanger their employees, and threaten public health.

The CLEAN Act will provide the oversight that has been severely lacking, and help ensure that all linen delivered to the public will meet the same standards. That’s why SEIU 32BJ supports this bill, and we believe every member of the City Council should as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anthony Thomas

Address: 275 7th Ave NY, NY 10001

I represent: New York Central Labor Council

Address: 275 7th Ave, 18th Fl NY, NY 10001

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

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Name: Candis Tulliver

Address: 25 W 18th Street

I represent: SEIU 3280

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Derck Grater

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: 1179 SEIU - VP

Address: 330 W 45th St NY, NY 10035

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Name: KEVIN L. ANDERSON

Address: Medical S. & Laboratory

I represent: DR. HUNT

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Chris D'Andrea

Address: Director, Environmental Health Assessment

I represent: DOHMH Communication

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Richard O'Hara

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DCA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mary Cooley

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DCA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL** *questions*  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Armit Bagga

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DCA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL** *questions*  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tamala Boyd

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DCA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*questions*

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eileen Yap

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DCA

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 697 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MIGUEL ENRIQUE FIGUEROA

Address: 296 BROOK AVE. # 4 E BROOK NY 10454

I represent: LDFS Joint Board

Address: 18 WASHINGTON PLACE 2ND FLOOR

NEWARK NJ 07102

**THE COUNCIL**  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 697 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 6-18-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Megan Chambers

Address: 66 Overlook Ter NY NY 10090

I represent: LDFS Joint Board, Workers United

Address: 18 Washington Pl. 2nd Fl.

Newark NJ 07102

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 697 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition  
Date: 6/18/15

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: David Potack  
Address: 1st Muequiston Parkway South A14 Vernon NY 10550  
I represent: Unitex and TRSA  
Address: Same

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL** is able to answer  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK** questions

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition  
Date: 6/18/15

(PLEASE PRINT)  
Name: RICHARD O'HARA  
Address: 42 BROADWAY  
I represent: DCA  
Address: 42 BROADWAY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 697 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 6/18/05

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Conor Hanlon  
Address: 1515 Market St #1000, Philadelphia, PA 19102  
I represent: SEIU  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: June 18/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carol McLay  
Address: 601 Wichita Dr, Lexington Ky  
I represent: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms