

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

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September 14, 2023

Start: 9:30 a.m.

Recess: 9:35 a.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Diana Ayala, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Tiffany Caban

Linda Lee

Chi A. Osse

Lincoln Restler

Sandra Ung

Nantasha M. Williams

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone
3 check for the Committee on General Welfare. Today's
4 date is September 14, 2023, located in Council
5 Chambers, recorded by Steve Sadowsky.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Welcome to today's New
7 York City Council hearing on General Welfare.

8 Please silence all cell phones and
9 electronic devices. At no point should you approach
10 the dais. If you need assistance, please contact one
11 of these Sergeants-at-Arms.

12 Chair, we're ready to begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. [GAVEL]
14 Good morning, everyone, and welcome to today's
15 hearing. My name is Diana Ayala, and I am the Deputy
16 Speaker of the New York City Council and the Chair of
17 the General Welfare Committee.

18 Today, our Committee will be voting on
19 Proposed Intro. 1080-A sponsored by Council Member
20 Lee. This bill will require the Department of Social
21 Services to make information on emergency feeding
22 programs, food benefits programs, and senior centers
23 available on DSS' website as well as through Access
24 HRA. The information will be provided in a way that
25 will allow users to search for an emergency feeding

2 program, a location to apply for food benefits
3 program, or a senior center by ZIP code, hours of
4 operation, and other relevant categories. The bill
5 would also require DSS in collaboration with the
6 Department for the Aging to make written information
7 on emergency feeding programs, food benefit programs,
8 and senior centers available at job centers, senior
9 centers, SNAP centers, and any other relevant
10 locations.

11 Council Member Lee, would you like to
12 make a statement on your bill?

13 We're going to pass it over to Council
14 Member Lee.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Thank you, Chair
16 Ayala. Good morning, everyone.

17 So many of us here, whether from our work
18 before or at the City Council, have worked firsthand
19 with any one of the 1.2 million food-insecure New
20 Yorkers. This 15 percent of our city is not just
21 constituents. They are our neighbors, friends, and
22 family. As someone who used to run two senior centers
23 and Meals on Wheels programs, I've seen how our
24 seniors can become especially desperate. Without a
25 doubt, we need more resources and food programs, but

2 it's also an issue of clarity and accessibility of
3 information. Our city is facing challenging and
4 uncertain times, but New Yorkers should never have to
5 worry about or be confused about where they can
6 obtain their next meal. With this legislation, the
7 City Council will be mandating the Department of
8 Social Services to make information on nearby
9 emergency feeding programs, food benefit programs,
10 and senior centers accessible and searchable through
11 its website and the Access HRA application. This
12 format will allow folks to input their ZIP code,
13 hours of operations, status as a senior citizen, or
14 any other relevant category.

15 Thank you so much, Chair Ayala, for your
16 leadership and counsel in all things and thank you to
17 my Colleagues for all their support in this effort.

18 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you, Council
19 Member Lee.

20 At this time, I'd like to acknowledge my
21 Colleagues who are already here. Council Member
22 Caban, Lee, Osse, Restler, Ung, and Williams.

23 I'd also like to thank the Committee
24 Staff who worked to prepare this hearing and vote,
25 Aminta Kilawan, Senior Legislative Counsel, David

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2 Romero, Legislative Counsel, Julia Haramis, Unit
3 Head, and finally my Staff, Elsie Encarnacion, Chief-
4 of-Staff.

5 I would now like to turn it over to the
6 Clerk to do the roll call for this vote.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good
8 morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call
9 vote Committee on General Welfare on Proposed
10 Introduction 1080-A. Chair Ayala.

11 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Aye.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Caban.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABAN: Aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Lee.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Osse.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSE: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Restler.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Permission to
20 explain?

21 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Permission granted.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Every like so
23 often I think about trying to create exactly this for
24 our District, and it's challenging because the
25 information is always changing, and it puts a lot of

2 onus on staff to be constantly updating exactly where
3 people can for different resources and services, but
4 the City agencies that are funding these programs
5 know exactly what's open, when, where, and why, and
6 having that information readily accessible online is
7 critically important for people to take advantage of
8 it so I support this wholeheartedly. I want to thank
9 Council Member Lee for her leadership and think it's
10 a really great piece of legislation.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: And you
12 vote aye?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Ung.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Williams.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I vote aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: With a
19 vote of seven in the affirmative, zero in the
20 negative, and no abstentions, item has been adopted
21 by the Committee.

22 CHAIRPERSON AYALA: Thank you. With that,
23 this vote and hearing is closed. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date September 18, 2023