

COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FIRE  
AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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Wednesday, May 18, 2022

Start: 4:05 p. m.

Recess: 4:16 p. m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: Joann Ariola, Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David M. Carr

Carmen N. De La Rosa

Oswald Feliz

James F. Gennaro

Robert F. Holden

Kevin C. Riley

Lynn C. Schulman

Kalman Yeger

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Kagan, Hanif, Sanchez

COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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

[N/A]

2 SERGEANT PEREZ: Turning on the cloud recording.

3 All recordings are rolling.

4 Good afternoon, welcome to today's New York City  
5 Council's remote Committee Hearing on Fire and  
6 Emergency Management. Everyone, please turn on your  
7 videos at this time and silence all electronic  
8 devices.

9 All written testimony can be submitted to  
10 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

11 Thank you, Chair Ariola, we are ready to begin.

12 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you so much.

13 Good afternoon, I am Council Member Joann  
14 Ariola, and I am the Chair to the Committee on Fire  
15 and Emergency Management.

16 Today I am joined by my colleagues Council  
17 Members Schulman, Feliz, Yeger, Kagan, Carr, Riley,  
18 Hanif, Gennaro, De La Rosa, and Sanchez.

19 Today we are voting on two important pieces of  
20 Fire Safety legislation related to electric space  
21 heaters.

22 First Proposed Introduction 106-A, sponsored by  
23 Council Member Sahana Hanif, will prohibit the sale  
24 of portable electric space heaters unless such  
25 devices are equipped with certain safety features

2 aimed to minimize fire safety risks posed by  
3 overheating and tipping over.

4 Second, Proposed Introduction 131-A, sponsored by  
5 Council Member Pierina Sanchez, will require the Fire  
6 Department to conduct fire safety education and  
7 outreach related to the safe operation of electric  
8 space heaters in residential settings. Additionally,  
9 the law will require that all safety materials  
10 disseminated by the Fire Department will be made in  
11 the top 10 most commonly spoken languages in the  
12 City.

13 Introduced in response to the deadly Twin Parks  
14 fire earlier this year, which was started by a  
15 malfunctioning space heater, these common sense  
16 measures will promote public safety, by ensuring that  
17 space heaters sold in New York City are equipped with  
18 industry standard safety features and that New  
19 Yorkers are sufficiently educated on safe operations  
20 of these commonly used devices.

21 I want to thank the administration and council  
22 staff for all of the work they have done in  
23 finalizing this legislation.

24 I will now turn it back to council staff.

25 (NO RESPONSE)

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2 Anybody?

3 LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR VAZQUEZ: Chair... (CROSS-  
4 TALK)

5 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay, great... (CROSS-TALK)

6 LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR VAZQUEZ: Chair, uh, I  
7 believe, uh, the sponsors of the legislation want to  
8 provide opening statements. Chair Sanchez...

9 (CROSS-TALK)

10 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Oh, I'm [INAUDIBLE 00:03:11]

11 UNKNOWN: [INAUDIBLE 00:3:12]

12 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yep.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Sure, absolutely, uh,  
14 well, thank you... Thank you so much, uh, Chair  
15 Ariola, for this vote today. Uh, this City Council  
16 is committed to fire safety for all New Yorkers.

17 I just want to speak just for a second on  
18 Introduction 131-A, which I have introduced, and it  
19 coming for a vote today. As The Chair has said, it  
20 will expand educational outreach and increase  
21 language access for so many immigrant communities  
22 across New York City. There has been a lot that we  
23 have heard throughout the past few months about the  
24 work that the FDNY does and that the City of New York  
25 does to educate communities on fire safety. But,

2 language access has been a recurring theme in terms  
3 of what we need to do better; we need to provide more  
4 language access. And, one particular thing that I am  
5 excited about is for Introduction 131, uh, the  
6 educational material that will be produced through  
7 this bill will include the new restrictions that will  
8 be created through Council Member Hanif's  
9 Introduction 106.

10 So, you know, this... This is the first package  
11 of legislation addressing the Twin Parks fire. It's  
12 just a start. Uh, just a little while ago, we voted  
13 for a few bills out of The Housing and Buildings  
14 Committee. And, this does not mean that we now rest.  
15 We continue to improve building and fire safety in  
16 tangible ways across the City of New York, including  
17 holding our landlords accountable, modernizing our  
18 fire and building codes, and ensuring code  
19 enforcement is working in the best interests of all  
20 New Yorkers.

21 So, thank you so much, uh, Chair Ariola for this  
22 today.

23 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you, Council Member.

24 Council Member Feliz, would you like to make an  
25 opening statement?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you so much,  
3 Chairwoman Ariola. I want to thank all of my  
4 colleagues, uh, who have been working on these many  
5 different pieces of fire safety legislation.

6 On the issue of fire safety, we must do many  
7 things including: Number one, tackling the issues  
8 related to the causes of fire --including defective  
9 space heaters and also space heaters that are unsafe;  
10 at the same time we have to work on additional  
11 legislation to make sure that, in the case where  
12 there is a fire, families could safely escape. And  
13 this is why, uh, we were able to work on self-closing  
14 door laws.

15 I want to thank all of my colleagues for the  
16 different pieces of legislation that we are working  
17 on, on additional fire safety, uh, and I am looking  
18 very forward to continuing to work to, uh, tackle all  
19 of the causes of fires including space heaters, but  
20 also E-bikes, which is an emerging problem, and many  
21 more issues.

22 I want to congratulate all of my colleagues for  
23 all of the work they have done on this issue. Thank  
24 you so much.

2 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you, Council Member  
3 Feliz.

4 I would now like to ask Council Member Hanif to  
5 speak on the bill that she is proposing.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you so much, Chair  
7 Ariolai, good afternoon, everybody. I appreciate  
8 you, Chair Ariola, for including Introduction 106-A  
9 on today's agenda, and for your proactive support on  
10 this bill.

11 Thank you to Council Member Feliz for introducing  
12 this bill with me, and uh, for you continued  
13 leadership on this issue in the face of immeasurable  
14 pain.

15 And, thank you to many members of this committee  
16 for signing on as sponsors including: Council Member  
17 Riley, Council Member Yeger, Council Member Holden,  
18 Council Member Yeger, Council Member De La Rosa, and  
19 Council Member Schulman.

20 I also want to thank committee staff for your  
21 tireless, tireless, work.

22 The tragic and avoidable Twin Parks fire in  
23 Council Member Feliz's district was caused by a space  
24 heater that was on a prolonged period of time and  
25 then overheated. Incidents like this are a leading

1 cause of fires. And, according The Consumer Product  
2 Safety Commission, portable heaters are involved in  
3 about 1,700 fires per year nationwide, resulting in  
4 about 80 deaths and 160 injuries. Unfortunately, we  
5 know that we cannot eliminate space heater usage in  
6 New York City. And, while landlords have an  
7 obligation to their tenants to provide adequate  
8 heating, this obligation is often not met, and  
9 residents are forced to use heaters to stay warm.

10 Introduction 106-A will ensure that heaters are  
11 as safe as possible in order to prevent future  
12 tragedies. If passed, this require all space heaters  
13 sold in New York City to be equipped with one, a  
14 thermostat; two, an automatic function that disables  
15 the heater upon overheating or tipping over; and  
16 three, safety certification from a nationally  
17 recognized testing laboratory.

18 This would significantly reduce the risk of  
19 heater causing a fire. Along with the other bills on  
20 today's agenda, this legislation would go a long way  
21 in creating a safer city.

22 Thank you all so much.

23 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLAI: Thank you, Council Member.

24 So, I believe we are ready for a vote.  
25

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good afternoon, William Martin,  
3 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on Fire and  
4 Emergency Management on proposed Introductions 106-A  
5 and Proposed 131-A, both items are coupled.

6 Chair Ariolai?

7 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Aye on all.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

9 Holden?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Aye on all.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

12 Yeger?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

15 Riley?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: I vote aye on all.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you, sir.

18 Gennaro?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: Madam Chair, I wish to  
20 speak on my vote.

21 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Go ahead, Council Member...

22 (CROSS-TALK)

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: Okay, yeah, and thank  
24 you, uh, Thank you, Madam Chair, I want to  
25 congratulate the sponsors of the bills for a great

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2 job, and I thought I was already signed on to both  
3 bills, but I'd like to ask The Clerk to add my name  
4 to whatever bill I am... I think I am certainly one,  
5 but I thought I was on both. Sorry about that.

6 So, I ask The Clerk to put me on both, and with  
7 that, I proudly vote aye.

8 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you, we'll get on that  
10 definitely.

11 Council Member Feliz?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Congratulations, uh,  
13 Council Member Hanif, thank you for your work on this  
14 very important issue. I proudly vote aye on all of  
15 the bills.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

17 De La Rosa?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Aye on all, and I,  
19 too, want to congratulate the colleagues on this  
20 important package of legislation.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

22 Schulman?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Aye on all, and I join  
24 everyone in congratulating all of my colleagues on  
25 their hard work on these bills.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. [LOST CONNECTION]

3 Council Member [INAUDIBLE 00:10:23]... (CROSS-TALK)

4 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: You kind of cut off that was  
5 why.

6 SERGEANT PEREZ: Clerk, could you please call, uh,  
7 the next council member?

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Sorry, uh, Council Member Carr?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: With congratulations to all  
10 of the co-sponsors, I vote aye on all.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

12 By a vote of 9 in the affirmative, 0 in the  
13 negative, and no abstentions, both items have been  
14 adopted by the committee.

15 Madam Chair, that is a full committee, you can  
16 close at your convenience.

17 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Congratulations to all.

18 And, we all move forward towards a safer New York  
19 City. Congratulations. And... (CROSS-TALK)

20 UNKNOWN: Congratulations... (CROSS-TALK)

21 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And, [INAUDIBLE 00:11:08]  
22 now [GAVELING OUT] [GAVEL SOUND] end our meeting.

23 Thank you.

24 UNKNOWN: Thank you.

25 UNKNOWN: Okay, bye-bye.

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UNKNOWN: 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 July 2, 2022