

COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH, DISABILITIES AND ADDICTION 1
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH,
DISABILITIES AND ADDICTION

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June 22, 2023
Start: 10:58 a.m.
Recess: 11:06 a.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Linda Lee, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shaun Abreu
Diana Ayala
Erik D. Bottcher
Tiffany Caban
Nantasha M. Williams

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Rita C. Joseph
Robert F. Holden

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2 ADDICTION

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3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Check one, two. Check
4 one, two. This is a prerecorded sound test for the
5 Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities and
6 Addiction. Today's date is June 22, 2023. It is being
7 recorded by Michael Leonardo with a guest appearance
8 of Walter Lewis (phonetic) in the Chambers.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning welcome to
10 today's New York City Council hearing for the
11 Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities and
12 Addiction.

13 At this time, we ask that you silence
14 cell phones and electronic devices to minimize
15 disruptions throughout the hearing. We thank you for
16 your cooperation.

17 Chair, we are ready to begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEE: [GAVEL] Good morning,
19 everyone, and welcome to the hearing on the City
20 Council's Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities
21 and Addiction.

22 Today, the Committee will vote on two
23 Proposed Introduction, Introduction 706A sponsored by
24 Council Member Abreu, and Introduction 1006A
25 sponsored by Council Member Bottcher as well as

several resolutions related to the Mental Health
Roadmap.

I just want to welcome our Committee
Members who are here. We have Council Member
Bottcher, Abreu, Council Member Ayala, Williams, and
on Zoom we have Council Member Caban, and, of course,
we have our special guest speakers who will be
talking on their resolutions today as well. Online,
we have Council Member Holden as well as our Majority
Leader Powers.

As we all know, the Council recently
announced the Mental Health Roadmap, a comprehensive
framework that seeks to redefine how we approach
mental health in New York City by fostering a
community that prioritizes care, understanding, and
compassion for every New Yorker. Our collective
responsibility as public servants is to take
meaningful action to provide support and resources
that empower our citizens to overcome adversity and
lead fulfilling lives. The Mental Health Roadmap
strives to accomplish that and represents a
collaborative effort that draws upon the City's
existing resources, the expertise of healthcare
professionals, mental health advocates, community

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2 leaders, and the invaluable input of our fellow New
3 Yorkers.

4 The two bills we're voting on today deal
5 primarily with increasing access to mental health and
6 behavioral health services in New York City. The
7 ability to access services is of paramount importance
8 and essential for the well-being and quality of life
9 for individuals who are facing mental health
10 challenges. By seeking and receiving timely and
11 appropriate mental healthcare, individuals can find
12 relief from distressing symptoms, regain control over
13 their lives, and ultimately improve their overall
14 functioning and happiness, but this cannot happen if
15 New Yorkers cannot easily search, locate, and access
16 nearby services. That is why I'm proud to hold
17 today's vote, not only on Council Members Abreu's and
18 Bottcher's Introductions, but the resolutions as
19 well.

20 At this time, I'd like to ask if any of
21 my Colleagues present would like to make a statement
22 on their bill.

23 Council Member Bottcher.
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you, Chair
3 Lee. I want to thank you for your leadership and also
4 all my Colleagues who are here today.

5 The bill that I'm sponsoring today will
6 require the City to do outreach in all communities
7 about the services that are available to New Yorkers
8 for mental health. There are actually significant
9 services that are available that are being
10 underutilized and, given the scale of the crisis
11 we're facing, none of the services that we have
12 should be underutilized so we look forward to the
13 passage of this bill and the Mayor's signature and to
14 seeing the City carry out a real, substantive,
15 comprehensive outreach campaign to ensure that all
16 New Yorkers are aware of the services that are
17 available.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Thank you, Council
19 Member. Just want to recognize we've also been joined
20 by Council Member Joseph who will also be making a
21 statement later.

22 Next, I'll hand it over to Majority
23 Leader Powers.

MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you. Thanks to Chair Lee for allowing me to make some brief remarks. I'm City Council Member Keith Powers.

Today, we continue to move forward on the City Council's Mental Health Roadmap which Chair Linda Lee and Speaker Adams worked diligently on as a blueprint for dealing with our mental health crisis, and while others will continue to debate how we can address this mental health crisis, the Council must and will continue to act. I want to thank Chair Lee and Speaker Adams for their leadership on this.

Among the items being considered by the Committee today are three resolutions that describe how we can better provide access to acute and long-term mental health services by fostering real coordination and collaboration between the City and State by completing 35,000 units of supportive housing, by having the federal government correct technical shortcomings in the 9-8-8 crisis hotline, and by ensuring that New York is doing its utmost to ensure insurance companies are covering behavioral health services on par with medical services as federal law requires.

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2 Together, these resolutions and other
3 items before you today begin to move the ball forward
4 on an issue that we can no longer ignore.

5 Congratulations to all my Colleagues on
6 their own legislation. I ask all the Council Members
7 here to join in supporting the Mental Health Roadmap
8 initiatives for a healthier and safer city. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Thank you so much.
11 Council Member Joseph.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair
13 Lee, and thank you for your leadership on this.

14 Today, I stand in support of Resolution
15 583 which calls on New York State to subsidize the
16 education and licensing costs of CUNY students who
17 commit to working in the public sector in the mental
18 health profession, which fields historically
19 experience high turnover rates and staffing
20 shortages. For today's vote, I'm urging all Members
21 of the Committee to vote favorably for Resolution
22 583. In doing so, you would help alleviate the
23 financial burden of those prospective students in
24 choosing a profession to serve mentally and heal New
25 Yorkers to get back on their feet. I'm counting on

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2 you to do the right thing. I can't reiterate my
3 immense satisfaction with you being my Colleagues.

4 Thank you for your service for the great
5 City of New York and its people.

6 Thank you, Chair Lee, and thank you,
7 Speaker Adams, for your leadership.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Thank you so much.
9 Finally, we'll move to Council Member Holden who is
10 joining us on Zoom.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you, Chair
12 Lee, and thank the Committee. This is a terrific day
13 for this Committee.

14 I'd like to thank all the co-sponsors of
15 the resolution, my Resolution 88. This resolution
16 calls upon the United States Congress to pass and the
17 President to sign legislation to fully repeal the
18 institutions for mental disease exclusion from the
19 Social Security Act. Repealing this provision will
20 allow states to use federal Medicaid funding to
21 provide mental health and substance use disorder
22 treatment services to adult Medicaid beneficiaries.
23 This resolution, along with the bills my Colleagues
24 are sponsoring today, are important steps, historic
25 steps in addressing the mental health crisis facing

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our city and state. Thank you and thank you to all
the sponsors and co-sponsors of these terrific bills.
Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Thank you, Council
Members.

In closing, I'd like to thank my Staff as
well as the Committee Staff for their work on this,
and we are ready to begin the vote.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good
morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call
vote Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities and
Addiction. All items are coupled. Chair Lee.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Ayala.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Abreu.

COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Caban.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABAN: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
you. Bottcher.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Hanif.
Mealy. Williams.

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COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I vote aye on
all. Congrats.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote
of six in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and
no abstentions, all items have been adopted by the
Committee.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: We're done, okay. With
that, we will close out the vote. Thank you all so
much. [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 June 28, 2023