

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, STATE AND
FEDERAL LEGISLATION

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL
OPERATIONS, STATE AND FEDERAL
LEGISLATION

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June 6, 2024
Start: 9:42 a.m.
Recess: 10:08 a.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Lincoln Restler, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
David M. Carr
James F. Gennaro
Jennifer Gutiérrez
Shahana Hanif
Vickie Paladino
Lynn C. Schulman

1 COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, STATE AND
2 FEDERAL LEGISLATION

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3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Testing one, two.

4 Today's vote is on Committee on Government
5 Operations. Today's date is June 6, 2024, being
6 recorded in the Committee Room by Keith Polite.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning. This is a
8 Committee vote on the Committee of Governmental
9 Operations, State and Federal Legislation.

10 At this time, we are ready to begin,
11 Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Good morning. My
13 name is Lincoln Restler, and I'm the Chair of the
14 Committee on Governmental Operations, State and
15 Federal Legislation.

16 I'd like to start off by thanking the
17 terrific Members of our Committee who are joining us
18 for today's vote, and all the members of the public
19 who are here. I'd like to recognize Council Member
20 Shahana Hanif, Council Member David Carr, Council
21 Member Lynn Schulman, Council Member Gale Brewer,
22 Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez and, on Zoom, I
23 believe we do have Council Member Jim Gennaro. Thank
24 you for joining us all.

25 Today, we'll be voting on Speaker
Adrienne Adams' bill, Intro. 908-A, a bill that would

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2 give the Council Advice and Consent Powers over 20
3 Agency Commissioners. In addition, we will be voting
4 on seven State Legislative Resolutions, also known as
5 Home Rules or SLRs, in support of various State
6 legislation.

7 The updated version of Intro. 908-A bill
8 subjects the Chair of the City Planning Commission to
9 advice and consent just like all other members of the
10 City Planning Commission who have been subject to
11 advice and consent since 1989 and, upon further
12 review of State law, the positions of Commissioner
13 for Emergency Management and Veterans Affairs were
14 removed from this bill. In big cities across the
15 country, like Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, Phoenix,
16 in our New York State government, in the federal
17 government, appointments are overwhelmingly subject
18 to advice and consent and confirmation by their
19 respective legislators. New York City is the anomaly.
20 The Speaker's bill will establish checks and balances
21 and help ensure that more experienced, more
22 competent, more ethical leaders are serving in these
23 critically important positions, like Parks,
24 Sanitation, and DCAS. The idea of advice and consent
25 goes back to what we learn in grade school. It's

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2 about checks and balances and the simple idea of
3 making sure that each branch of government has
4 oversight over the other. A public hearing would be
5 held by the Council to require the Mayor's appointees
6 to demonstrate, both to this Body and to the public,
7 that they are deeply knowledgeable about their agency
8 and equipped to serve in these critically important
9 leadership positions. If the Mayor is nominating
10 qualified professionals to head these 20 agencies,
11 then he or she should have no problem getting consent
12 and approval from the Council. New Yorkers deserve to
13 have the best and the brightest in these key roles in
14 city government. Advice and consent of the Council
15 will help make that happen. I cannot recall a
16 previous Mayoral Administration giving testimony at a
17 Council hearing and then refusing to take questions.
18 This Administration has also made disingenuous
19 arguments about the substance and spirit of the bill
20 that I would like to correct on the record. Firstly,
21 this legislation will give the Council just 30 days,
22 30 days, to review the background of a nominee, hold
23 a public hearing, and vote, or the nominee is
24 automatically confirmed. I found the comparison of
25 this City Council to Tammany Hall to be extra rich

1 coming from this Administration. This legislation
2 would require more intense vetting, more public
3 scrutiny, more transparency, and indeed prevent
4 political patronage appointments from ever happening.
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6 I'd also like to highlight two of the
7 Home Rule Messages that we're passing today that will
8 improve our street safety and cleanliness. One is a
9 Home Rule Message in support of legislation proposed
10 by State Senator Andrew Gounardes and Assembly Member
11 Jeffrey Dinowitz to extend and expand New York City's
12 red light camera program. This legislation would
13 quadruple the number of intersections where traffic-
14 controlled signal photo violation monitoring systems
15 may be installed and operated from 150 intersections
16 to 600, establishing our New York City program as the
17 largest in the nation. Over the past 30 years of this
18 program's existence in New York City, there has been
19 a 73 percent decline in average daily violations per
20 camera, meaning drivers are safer and run less red
21 lights. In 2023 alone, 29 people were killed in red-
22 light-running crashes, the highest number ever
23 recorded. Installing more red light cameras will
24 quite simply save lives.
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2 The second Home Rule Message I'd like to
3 highlight supports legislation to allow New York City
4 to equip street sweepers with cameras to enforce
5 illegal parking during alternate side parking
6 periods. Under the State legislation proposed by
7 Assembly Member Brian Cunningham and State Senator
8 Robert Jackson, violators would be fined when
9 captured on camera by the Department of Sanitation
10 Street Sweepers, similar to the existing bus lane
11 camera program that fines vehicles parked in bus
12 lanes through cameras on MTA buses. Each street
13 sweeper, or broom, picks up a literal ton of debris
14 per shift, but it can't get the garbage if it can't
15 access the curb. This will make our streets
16 demonstrably cleaner and reduce the presence of rats
17 in New York City.

18 I'd like to conclude, finally, I'm sure
19 for my Colleagues, by saying thank you to the
20 Committee Staff, Jayasri Ganapathy and Erica Cohen,
21 for their hard work. I'd especially like to thank our
22 Intergovernmental Affairs Division, Carlos Beato,
23 Santa Soriano-Vasquez, Rick Arbelo. I'd like to thank
24 David Seitzer for his work in drafting the
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legislation, and I'd like to thank my Staff, as
always, for their great work.

I'd now like to ask the Clerk to call the
roll.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good
morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call
vote, Committee on Governmental Operations, State and
Federal Legislation, all items are coupled. Chair
Restler.

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Aye on all.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: Gennaro. Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Aye on all. I just
want to add that because I'm a member of the National
League of Cities, thanks to the City of New York,
I've been in touch with members of the City Council
in Los Angeles and Chicago, and I just want to say
they've been doing advice and consent for quite some
time, and one example in California was fabulous,
which is that in the background check that was
excellent nominee by the mayor, but more information
was determined by the City Council, and the mayor
recommended a harbor commissioner, and his wife was a
longshore woman worker in L.A., and that conflict
meant that she then became a longshore woman worker

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2 in Long Beach across the river. That kind of small
3 issue meant that there was no red flag and no
4 conflict of interest and, in both cases, Chicago and
5 Los Angeles, 99 percent of the recommendations from
6 the mayor are accepted, but it is beloved for
7 transparency and information that could be found out
8 during the process, comes out, addressed, and the
9 recommendation goes forward so I feel very strongly
10 about the bill that is for advice and consent. We've
11 done it before, and I strongly urge that everyone
12 vote for this bill. Thank you very much.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
14 you. Council Member Gennaro. We'll come back, Council
15 Member Gennaro.

16 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: We're having some
17 tech issues, but we'll hopefully hold it open for
18 him.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
20 you. Gutiérrez.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Aye on all.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Hanif.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Aye on all, and I'd
24 like to just add my enthusiasm for the Home Rule
25 Messages, particularly the expansion of red light

cameras and cameras on street sweepers and, of course
I'm a big supporter of Speaker Adams' advice and
consent reforms. Thank you so much. Aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Schulman.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Carr.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Permission to
explain my vote?

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Of course.

COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chair. I
just want to say a couple of words about Intro. 908,
the advice and consent bill. You know, my belief is
that advice and consent, generally speaking, is a
good thing in a political system and, as I said at
the hearing the other day on the bill, the question
before us as Council Members and the members of the
public is, is inserting advice and consent into an
already established and working political dynamic a
good thing? That's the question that really needs to
be answered, and I confess that at this moment I
don't have that answer, and I believe that it's worth
continuing the dialogue and the conversation, and
that ultimately this is a decision that should rest
with the voting public and so on that basis, in the

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2 interest of having this dialogue and this really
3 weighty matter continue, I'll be voting in favor of
4 Intro. 908 even if I continue to deliberate on it
5 internally and maybe come out one way or the other if
6 it eventually reaches the ballot. That being said,
7 I'll be voting aye on all with the exception of Pre-
8 Considered SLR 8, which is the red light camera
9 program bill, and Pre-Considered SLR 13, which is the
10 photo enforcement bill for alternate side parking,
11 and I vote aye on the rest. Thank you, Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much,
13 Council Member Carr.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
15 you. Vernikov.

16 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Would it be okay if
17 we ask Council Member Gennaro to vote while we have
18 him?

19 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Sure.
20 Council Member Gennaro.

21 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Council Member
22 Gennaro.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: Yes, sorry for
24 the technical difficulty. I can't see anything, but I
25 hope you can hear me, and I vote aye on all.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
3 you, Council Member.

4 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you very much,
5 Council Member.

6 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Sorry. We made it
7 work.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Paladino.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: I am going to
10 vote no on 908-A, I am voting no on SLR 8, the red
11 light cameras, and I am voting no on SLR 13, the
12 sanitation cameras, and aye on the rest.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
14 you. Results of the Committee vote. All items have
15 been adopted with a vote of eight in the affirmative,
16 zero in the negative, no abstentions with the
17 exceptions of the following, Intro. 908-A adopted by
18 the Committee with seven in the affirmative, one in
19 the negative, no abstentions, and SLRs 8 and 13
20 adopted by the Committee with six in the affirmative,
21 two in the negative, and no abstentions.

22 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Clerk, are we able
23 to keep the vote open for Council Member Vernikov?
24 She's on her way if that's all right.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: The roll
3 will be held open at request of the Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: We are now
5 concluding this morning's hearing of the Committee of
6 Governmental Operations, State and Federal
7 Legislation. Thank you all. [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 July 4, 2024