

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

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APRIL 22, 2021
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HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING VIRTUAL ROOM 1

B E F O R E: CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS

COUNCIL MEMBERS: ADRIENNE ADAMS
LAURIE CUMBO
KEVIN RILEY
INEZ BARRON
JUSTIN BRANNAN
CARLOS MENCHACA
ROBERT F. HOLDEN
I. DANEEK MILLER
VANESSA L. GIBSON
YDANIS RODRIGUEZ
KEITH POWERS
FERNANDO CABRERA

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

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3 SGT. BRADLEY: Cloud is up.

4 SGT. PEREZ: Backup is rolling.

5 SGT. BRADLEY. Thank you. Sergeant
6 Kotowski, you may begin.

7 SGT. KOTOWSKI: Thank you and welcome to
8 today's remote New York City Council hearing of the
9 Committee on Public Safety. At this time would
10 Council, staff please turn on their videos. Please
11 place electric devices on vibrate or silent. Thank
12 you. Chair, we are ready to begin.

13 CHAIR ADAMS: Good morning. I'm Council
14 Member Adrienne Adams of the 28th District in Queens
15 and I'm the Chair of the Committee on Public Safety.
16 We are joined this morning by Majority Leader Cumbo,
17 Council Members Riley, Barron, Brannon, Powers,
18 Menchaca, and Holden. I'd also like to acknowledge
19 the hard work of Committee Counsel Daniel Ades,
20 (inaudible) Williams, and Alia Reynolds (SP?).
21 Today, we're voting on Resolution Number 13722020,
22 calling upon the United States Congress to pass and
23 the President to sign HR1280S.3912 which is the
24 George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020. Before
25 we address the Resolution itself, I just want to say

2 something about Tuesday's verdict. It's hard not to
3 be conflicted about the meanings of this conviction.
4 I'm not talking about rather or not the jury got it
5 right. I don't have any doubt that the jury got it
6 right, but it's hard to ignore the fact that that
7 verdict is an except to what normally happens in
8 police misconduct cases. No matter how strong the
9 evidence, no matter how many witnesses or cell phone
10 videos or body camera videos there are, these
11 convictions are exceptionally rare, and what should
12 have been an open and shut case had the entire
13 country on edge. This verdict is such a relief
14 instead of a foregone conclusion telling me that
15 there is so much work left to be done that there are
16 people out there who believe that this conviction is
17 anyway, an attack on the good men and women who put
18 on a uniform or that officers need the discretion to
19 do what Derek Chauvin did tells me that we need to
20 fundamentally change our understanding of what
21 authority police office truly need to keep themselves
22 and all of us safe. Turning to the Resolution before
23 us today, I'm not going to say that the Council
24 asking Congress to pass this Bill is the Be-all and
25 End-all of what we need to do to move forward. It is

2 just one small step. It's this Council recognizing
3 that we can't do everything locally. We've tried to
4 do our part curbing the use of qualified immunity,
5 banning the use of chokeholds, requiring departments
6 to public a standard set of penalties to be used in
7 police disciplinary cases, requiring more
8 transparency in the information the department
9 reports publicly, but there are certain changes that
10 legally need to happen at the Federal level and at
11 the State level, and as local elected leaders, it is
12 incumbent upon us to take every opportunity to weigh
13 in and support our allies in Congress as they work to
14 move barriers, to accountability and justice. The
15 Federal Bill this Resolution endorses would expand on
16 some of the reforms we'd enacted further limiting the
17 use of qualified immunity and banning chokeholds at
18 the National level. It would also ban the use of no-
19 knock warrants in drug cases and make it easier to
20 prosecute police misconduct in Federal Court among
21 many other things. These reforms are no anti-police
22 reform. Just as Tuesday's verdict was not anti-
23 police verdict. By holding police departments across
24 the country accountable, we will restore public faith
25 in the officers who have dedicated themselves to

2 public service, would answer our calls when we need
3 them, and who watched the video of George Floyd's
4 murder with the same disgust that I felt, that we
5 felt when we saw what happened almost one year ago.
6 With that, Council, I turn it over to you.

7 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Are
8 you, Madama Chair, asking for a roll call vote?

9 CHAIR ADAMS: Yes, unless the Majority
10 Leader would like to add remarks.

11 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Yes, thank you so
12 much, Chair Adams. Can you hear me at this time?

13 CHAIR ADAMS: Yes.

14 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I want to first
15 begin by thanking you for your leadership. I know
16 that dealing with all of this as we have spoken, in
17 terms of being Chair of the Public Safety Committee
18 at this particular time in history, and losing both
19 of your parents during the pandemic, you have
20 continued to show such strength and determination in
21 ushering history forward. So, I really thank you, my
22 Spellman Sister, and I love you, and I just, I really
23 support you in all that you do, and I'm going to
24 speak at the stated meeting on this, but you know, I
25 just wanted to say that on Tuesday, the whole nation

2 watched with batted breath as the jury deliberated
3 over the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis
4 police officer. I'm positive that many, if not all
5 of us breathed a collective sigh of relief when the
6 Judge read out the guilty verdict, yet George Floyd
7 still does not breathe. His life was cut short
8 violently, publicly, and without any sympathy, care,
9 or recognition of the fact that he was a father, a
10 son, and a brother, and a friend to so many. This
11 particular Legislation as you have said is not anti-
12 police package. This is a humanity package. This is
13 something for myself, as the mom of a 3-year-old
14 black boy that I have to do before I leave office as
15 I am term-limited. This Legislation will transform
16 law enforcement culture by prohibiting all racial and
17 religious profiling, creating accreditation standards
18 for police departments, banning chokeholds and no-
19 knock warrants, limiting military grade equipment
20 transfer to State and local law enforcement, and
21 empowering communities to create new public safety
22 approaches and grants for community-based
23 organizations. The US House of Representative has
24 already passed HR1280, and the Senate and President
25 should immediately follow suit. This is our part

2 here in New York City to add to this chorus and to
3 this voice to usher this forward, and I am proud to
4 stand with you as the Chair of this Committee and
5 pushing this forward. I thank all the members of the
6 Committee and particular the black, Latino, and Asian
7 Caucus for their support as well as their advocacy
8 around this entire Legislative package. Thank you.

9 CHAIR ADAMS: Thank you so much, Madame
10 Majority Leader and thank you for your leadership as
11 well. I'd also like acknowledge that we've been
12 joined by Council Members Miller, Gibson, and
13 Rodriguez. With that, let us begin the vote.

14 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good
15 morning, William Martin, Committee Clerk, roll vote
16 Committee on Public Safety. Resolution 1372, Chair
17 Adams.

18 CHAIR ADAMS: I vote Aye.

19 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:
20 Rodriguez.

21 CM RODRIGUEZ: Permission to explain my
22 vote?

23 CHAIR ADAMS: Permission granted.

24 CM RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Chair, and I
25 (inaudible) started organizing around the issue of

2 excessive use of force by some members of the NYPD
3 and also working hard to improve the relationship
4 between the police and community. You know, for many
5 of us, our experience is completely different from
6 our colleagues that we are paying for embracing the
7 fight of being progressive, but for many of us, we
8 don't have to be described as progressive because
9 we've been working hard being progressive, working
10 hard to make us organized and then we don't have
11 limited counting of those cases of our people, you
12 know, being killed by excessive use or member of the
13 police force. It doesn't matter if that happened in
14 New York City, it happened in Brooklyn, the last one
15 that happened, you know, in other states. I think
16 that this effort of this Resolution has, you know, a
17 clear decision and commitment which seems to address
18 a systematic, racist society where we live.
19 Unfortunately, innocent people have been losing their
20 lives because of the culture of this nation. This is
21 not only about the law, this is about the culture
22 where some people feel that they are superior,
23 superior because they have a gun, superior because,
24 you know, the color of their skin, superior because
25 they have more resources, and I think again, that in

2 the name of our children, we have to continue
3 learning from what happened to George Floyd. As far
4 for me, in the 90s, I was working with Anthony
5 Miranda, the President of Latino Police Officers,
6 working with President Eric Adams as a President of
7 the black police officers, with Reverend Charton
8 (SP?) and many others addressing a systematic, racist
9 society that we have where unfortunately innocent
10 people been losing their lives by the name of a
11 percentage of police officers who want nothing
12 (inaudible), but the bad apples are everywhere. We
13 have to learn from George Floyd and hoping with this
14 Resolution, we also continue doing our part to
15 address that problem. With that, I vote Aye.

16 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
17 you. Council Member Gibson.

18 CM GIBSON: Permission to explain?

19 CHAIR ADAMS: Permission granted to
20 Council Member Gibson.

21 CM GIBSON: Thank you so much, Chair
22 Adams and good morning everyone. Thank you so much
23 colleagues. I too want to echo the sentiments
24 expressed by our Majority Leader, Laurie Cumbo.
25 Chair Adams, you have been incredibly strong during

2 such a challenging time, and we love you, your
3 sisters in the Women's Caucus, your colleagues in the
4 Council, we love you and will continue to pray for
5 your strength. You have been working relentless
6 hours as Chair of Public Safety and also dealing with
7 personal struggles, and we just simply thank you so
8 much for your incredible strength at this time. I
9 want to thank Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo for
10 leading this Resolution on today's agenda today, and
11 I am certainly in support of this because this is a
12 very important moment for us in the history of this
13 country. When we all saw the murder of George Floyd
14 last year, it sent shock waves throughout this
15 country. We watched, as an African American man was
16 senselessly murdered on video taped and it reignited
17 a conversation on racial injustice in this country.
18 Many advocates, activists, elected officials took to
19 the streets last summer demanding accountability and
20 also recognizing that justice will be achieved, and
21 with this week's guilty verdict in the murder of
22 George Floyd, we recognize this important moment in
23 history because our advocacy, our fight, and our work
24 every day towards a fair and just society was
25 solidified with this verdict, but we know our work

2 remains undone. We must continue to life up the
3 families of so many others who struggle for justice
4 every single day. The murder of George Floyd
5 captured the hearts of so many Americans,
6 particularly Americans of color who continue to face
7 racism, discrimination, and oppression for so many
8 years in this country. Many of us went into this
9 trial with a level of hope and optimism praying for
10 justice, and while we recognize justice can bring
11 comfort and healing to the family, our fight for all
12 lives and black lives will always continue. I pray
13 for the family of George Floyd, and I pray for so
14 many other families as well including our sister,
15 Briana Taylor. May their deaths never be in vain but
16 continue to be a catalyst for necessary change in
17 this country. I am proud to support this Resolution,
18 supporting the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act
19 because I believe it is a right step in the direction
20 in which we need to be and it also strikes a
21 necessary balance of we fundamentally believe defines
22 our work in this country, and certainly in the City
23 Council. Thank you so much Chair Adams, thank you
24 Majority Leader Cumbo, and I proudly vote Aye on
25 today's Resolution. Thank you so much.

2 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
3 you Council Member. MENCHACA.

4 CM MENCHACA: Thank you Chair for your
5 leadership on this, this Committee and the work it
6 has ahead. It will not be easy as we move through
7 this work together, but I know that our open minds
8 and open hearts will continue to shape the work that
9 we have and for those who are leaving the Council, I
10 think it's going to incumbent on us to keep fighting
11 for our communities which makes me feel proud to vote
12 Aye on this Resolution. Thank you.

13 CHAIR ADAMS: Thank you.

14 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
15 you. Council Member Miller.

16 CM MILLER: Permission to explain?

17 CHAIR ADAMS: Permission granted to
18 Council Member Miller.

19 CM MILLER: Thank you, Madame Chair. I
20 think that while I echo the sentiments that we've all
21 taken a sigh of relief, you know, and as I watch
22 folks take to the street over the past year, and
23 young folks really become engaged, my first
24 experience with this type of violence, I was probably
25 10, and at 15, a really good friend, 14 years old,

2 was killed, Randolph Evans (SP?) by police officer
3 Robert Torsney (SP?) who said he saw a weapon that he
4 didn't see. Three days later, they found a bicycle
5 spoke and he pleaded guilty by reason of insanity,
6 admitting to epilepsy. Not only did he get off, we
7 continued to pay his disability retirement pension.
8 There's just ... I vote Aye.

9 CHAIR ADAMS: Thank you, Council Member
10 Miller.

11 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:
12 Brannan.

13 CM BRANNAN: With thanks to Chair Adams
14 for leading us through these times, I'm proud to vote
15 Aye.

16 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:
17 Holden.

18 CM HOLDEN: Eliminating qualified
19 immunity for police officers is dangerous. It's a
20 tough job. For that reason, I vote no.

21 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:
22 Powers.

23 CM POWERS: I vote Aye.

24 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Riley.

25 CM RILEY: Permission to explain my vote?

2 CHAIR ADAMS: Permission granted to
3 Council Member Riley.

4 CM RILEY: With gratitude, I would like
5 give praise to our Chair and echo the sentiments of
6 our colleagues. You are a remarkable Queen and you
7 have put in a lot of work during, you know,
8 tremendous times, so thank you. As a young black man
9 that lived in Bronx who had been subjected to stop-
10 and-frisk, even as working with government, I vote
11 Aye proudly for this Resolution, thank you.

12 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: There
13 were eight in the affirmative and one in the negative
14 and no abstentions. Resolution 1372 has been adopted
15 by the Committee and Chair Adams; we are awaiting one
16 more Council Member to vote. Thank you.

17 CHAIR ADAMS: Okay, thank you very much.
18 We will leave the vote open for 10 minutes. Thank
19 you, colleagues.

20 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Chair
21 Adams, we've actually been joined by Council Member
22 Cabrera.

23 CHAIR ADAMS: Perfect timing.

24 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:
25 Resolution 1372 Council Member Cabrera.

2 CM CABRERA: I vote Aye.

3 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
4 you. Vote now stands at nine in the affirmative, one
5 in the negative, and no abstentions.

6 CHAIR ADAMS: Very good. With that, Mr.
7 Clerk, are we good to adjourn?

8 LEGISLATIVE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Let me
9 double check, one moment, Chair. Chair Adams, so
10 yes. The final vote is nine in the affirmative, one
11 in the negative, and no abstentions. That's it.
12 Thank you.

13 CHAIR ADAMS: Very good. This concludes
14 today's hearing of the Public Safety Committee. This
15 meeting is hereby adjourned. Thank you.

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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 May 31, 2021