



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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COUNCIL TO VOTE ON LEGISLATION TO PROTECT FIREFIGHTERS FROM HAZARDOUS BUILDING CONDITIONS

Also introduces resolution calling upon Congress to reform federal immigration policy

City Hall, May 9, 2007 – Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn and members of the City Council will vote today on critical fire safety legislation that would require the Department of Buildings to alert the Fire Department when buildings receive certain alteration permits for major renovations. Speaker Quinn, along with Council members Melissa Mark Viverito and Kendall Stewart, will also introduce a resolution urging the United States Congress to institute comprehensive immigration reform.

FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION

The Council will vote on fire safety legislation that will require the Department of Buildings to notify the Fire Department when certain alteration permits are issued for major building renovations. This bill came out of the experience of a tragic 2006 Bronx fire in which two firefighters were killed and others were injured when a floor collapsed beneath them.

These alteration permits, commonly known as Alt-1 type permits, allow builders to make substantial changes to the building such as increasing the number of habitable rooms on a floor or adding building stories. Currently, the Fire Department is informed only about permits related to the installation of fire suppression, sprinkler, and alarm systems. It is not routinely notified when Alt-1 type permits are issued. Having knowledge that a building is undergoing these types of major renovations, would better inform firefighters who might have to respond to a fire or other emergency in the building.

“Unforeseen complications can cost firefighters their lives,” said **Speaker Quinn**. “Accurate information goes hand-in-hand with courage towards safely putting out fires and saving lives. This bill will arm our firefighters with knowledge of possible dangerous conditions inside of a building, helping to keep both firefighters and building occupants alive and safe. I commend Council member Martinez for his leadership on this issue.”

“Today's legislation will help prevent tragedies like the one that cost us two of New York's Bravest just last year,” said Fire Safety and Criminal Justice Committee Chair **Miguel Martinez**. “When firemen walk into a burning building, they should know if construction inside is going to make a dangerous job even more difficult. I am proud to vote for a bill that will help save those who put their lives on the line to protect us.”

“The UFOA applauds the efforts of Speaker Quinn, Chair Martinez and the City Council for their call to action in addressing some of the flaws that exist in the permitting process. With all the major renovations taking place in our city we welcome this legislation which will help protect our members and the citizens of New York City,” said **Uniformed Fire Officers Association President Peter Gorman**.

“We thank the City Council, Speaker Quinn and Chair Martinez for putting this bill forth. It will help improve safety for firefighters and the citizens we are sworn to protect,” said **Uniformed Firefighters Association President Steve Cassidy**.

IMMIGRATION REFORM RESOLUTION

The Council will introduce a resolution urging Congress to institute comprehensive immigration reform. The Council's resolution supports policy changes that would provide legalization, family unification, and ultimately create a path to citizenship for hardworking immigrants. Furthermore, the Council supports the implementation of laws that will protect the rights of all workers and restore fundamental due process and civil rights in order to promote full civic participation and the integration of immigrants. New York City has an estimated 625,000 undocumented immigrants.

Congress is currently considering the Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy (STRIVE) Act of 2007, which is a significant step towards comprehensive immigration reform. Representatives Joseph Crowley and Nydia Velazquez of New York are among the co-sponsors of this bill.

“New York City continues to rely on the hard work of immigrants who have been our city’s backbone for generations,” said **Speaker Quinn**. “Misguided immigration policies have a terrible impact on families, neighborhoods and communities. I join my colleagues in urging Congress to make real immigration reform a priority.”

“This vital piece of federal legislation is the first step in comprehensive immigration reform,” said Immigration Committee Chair **Kendall Stewart**. “I applaud the members of the House for putting partisan politics aside and focusing on an issue that affects millions of people across our country.”

“The STRIVE Act of 2007, introduced by Congressmen Luis Gutiérrez and Jeff Flake, demonstrates that congressional bipartisan support for comprehensive immigration reform is achievable. As a country, we can no longer stand by and be party to policies and practices that tear families apart and erode fundamental civil liberties,” said Council member **Melissa Mark Viverito**.

“More than any other place in the world, New York shows us that immigrants make our economy and our country stronger in so many ways,” said **New York Immigration Coalition Executive Director Chung-Wha Hong**. “Every day that passes without comprehensive immigration reform is a day that raids and deportations tear apart families, disrupt our economy and create a growing humanitarian crisis across the nation. We need immigration policies that recognize the contributions of every immigrant and encourage the kind of growth and revitalization that happen when immigrants are welcomed as part of our communities.”

9/11 HEROES HEALTH IMPROVEMENT ACT RESOLUTION

The Council will vote on a resolution in support of the 9/11 Heroes Health Improvement Act of 2007. This federal legislation, introduced by New York Senator Hillary Clinton, establishes a grant program to support organizations that treat those suffering from ill health effects as a result of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

“We have an obligation to stand for those who had the courage to rush to our aid during and after the events of 9/11. I applaud Senator Clinton's leadership in ensuring that the health of those first responders and relief workers does not remain another casualty of these devastating attacks,” said **Speaker Quinn**.

“If received, this Federal funding would greatly aid these individuals who are ill due to the aftermath of 9/11 and would recognize their illnesses not only as a New York City issue but a national issue as well,” said Civil Service and Labor Committee Chair **Joseph Addabbo**.

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