



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 788-7116

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Contact: 212-788-7116
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COUNCIL VOTES ON CITY'S BUDGET MODIFICATION

Also Votes on Override Vetoes to Regulate Pedicabs, Ban Metal Bats

City Hall, April 23, 2007 – City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn and members of the City Council will vote today on the City's second quarter budget modification, which recognizes \$1.8 billion in new revenue. The Council will also vote on overriding two mayoral vetoes at today's Stated Council meeting. If the vetoes are overridden, these bills will license and regulate pedicabs as well as ban the use of metal bats in New York City high schools. In addition, the Council will vote on a resolution calling upon the Congress and the State to reverse budget cuts that would close a number of 21st Century Community Learning Centers throughout New York State.

BUDGET MODIFICATION

The revenue and expense budget modifications to be voted on by the Council recognize \$1.8 billion in new revenue, including \$1.25 billion in broad-based tax revenue, which is derived from continued strong Wall Street performance and robust real estate market. The increases in revenue increase the current year's surplus to \$3.7 billion.

The revenue modification proposes to use this surplus to prepay certain Fiscal 2008 expenses, including \$3.2 billion in debt service cost, \$208 million in transit subsidies, \$225 million for libraries and \$91 million in Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) operating costs. An additional \$227 million in resources are allocated to the Department of Social Services to leverage federal Medicaid reimbursements on behalf of HHC.

The expense modification includes \$15 million in funding that will start the implementation of the City's poverty commission initiatives and \$92 million that will provide additional resources to ACS, including protective services, foster care, childcare programs. Additionally, \$71 million will be allocated for collective bargaining, with \$40 million allocated towards implementing the recent UFT contract agreement.

PEDICAB LICENSING AND REGISTRATION

This legislation would regulate and license pedicabs, improving transportation safety and reducing pedicab congestion, especially in the Midtown area where hundreds of pedicabs are now operating without any regulations or safety measures. Key features of the pedicab legislation include:

- Creating licensing and insurance requirements for pedicab businesses and drivers;
- Permitting no more than 325 pedicabs to operate in the City at any one time;
- Limiting business owners from owning and operating more than 30 pedicabs at one time; and
- Requiring pedicabs owners to post fare calculations, like taxi cabs.

Additionally, this legislation requires each pedicab to conform to several safety standards, including allowing no more than three passengers per cab; installing brakes that are impervious to rain or wet conditions; and having headlights, tail lights, and turning signals. All pedicabs must be annually inspected by the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and are required to display a DCA-issued license plate.

“This legislation is designed to make pedicabs safer for passengers and drivers, and less disruptive to small businesses, pedestrians, and other vehicles,” said **Speaker Quinn**. “We believe the new equipment requirements, like water proof breaking systems and battery operated head and tail lights, will only serve to increase confidence in pedicabs as a safe and reliable mode of transportation. We also believe that the proposed cap will allow the industry to thrive, while alleviating congestion in the parts of the city most frequented by pedicabs. Every other transportation service in New York City has some kind of regulation, and those businesses are flourishing.”

“The Council is acting to create a legal template for the pedicab industry, in order to give it an ability to establish legitimacy,” said Consumer Affairs Committee **Leroy Comrie**. “This body has worked hard for more than a year in meeting with all parties to reach a fair consensus. We are confident that we have reached that goal.”

Transportation Committee Chair **John C. Liu** said, “Pedicabs provide another option for the riding public in our transportation system. This legislation strikes a balance that ensures convenience, safety, and competition. Properly regulated competition between different transportation modes for scarce street space and traffic lanes will ultimately benefit us all.”

Eighteen months after the enactment of the law, the DCA, in conjunction with the Department of Transportation and the NYPD, will be required to issue a report to the Council focusing on pedicab consumer safety and the effects on traffic and congestion.

METAL BATS BAN

Members of the City Council will vote on an override of Mayor Bloomberg’s veto on legislation to ban the use of non-wood bats in public high schools. The legislation, sponsored by Council members James Oddo and Lewis Fidler, would only allow wood bats that have been approved by Major League Baseball for Major or Minor League play to be used in high school baseball games. This measure would take effect on September 1, 2007.

There have been several incidents in which children have been injured due to the use of metal bats. Last summer, two young players suffered serious injuries when they were hit by line drives off metal bats. A Staten Island pitcher was also struck in the face by a line drive that caused extensive cranial injuries.

Speaker Quinn said, “The City Council has taken up this issue because of the ample evidence that shows metal bats significantly increase the risk for young athletes. This is an appropriate safety step to protect our high school athletes.”

Council member Oddo said, “When I first learned about the veto, I said 'let's play two,' quoting the former baseball great Ernie Banks. This second vote, like the first, is about protecting the health and safety of our young athletes and I am proud to cast my vote on their behalf.”

Council member Fidler said, “This is not about whether baseball should be the crack of the bat or the ping of the bat. It’s about eliminating unnecessary risk from high school competition before one of our kids gets hurt or killed for no reason.”

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

The Council will also vote on a resolution calling upon the United States Congress, the Governor and the State Legislature to address funding shortages that would close a number of 21st Century Community Learning Centers throughout New York State. These after-school Centers provide valuable academic support and enrichment opportunities for children at high-poverty and low-performing schools.

Two hundred and seven of these Centers throughout New York State, 60 percent of which are located in New York City, are in jeopardy of being shut down in June 2007 due to a funding shortage. If the Centers are not funded beyond June, approximately 20,000 children in New York City alone will lose these vital after-school programs.