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MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO SIGNS FOUR BILLS INTO LAW: INTRODUCTIONS 361-A, 493-A, 356-A, and 216-B

Legislation includes citywide simplification of shelter entry process for domestic violence victims

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today signed into law Intro 361-A, in relation to shelter eligibility, Intros 493-A and 356-A, in relation to voter registration, and Intro 216-B, in relation to accessible pedestrian signals.

Intro 361-A, sponsored by Council Member Corey Johnson, requires the Department of Homeless Services to grant a presumption of eligibility for applicants to the shelter systems who are exiting Human Resources Administration domestic violence shelters.

“Domestic violence can affect all New Yorkers—and for families who need additional housing assistance, the transition from the HRA shelter system to the DHS system has not been as smooth as it could be. This legislation will ensure that those individuals who need additional time to transition to permanent housing will be able to do so seamlessly,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I want to thank the City Council, led by Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and Council members Steve Levin and Corey Johnson for sponsoring this critical legislation.”

“From expanding and improving the city’s agency-based voter registration program to making our streets safer for pedestrians, to making vital city services more accessible for domestic violence survivors, the City Council is committed to making New York and our vital public services more accessible and livable for all our residents,” said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “I’m grateful to all my colleagues in the Council for their diligence and collaboration on these bills, and look forward to the work we can continue to do on behalf of New York City in the future.”

“More than a quarter of all families living in homeless shelters in New York City cite abuse as the cause for their stay,” said **Council Member Corey Johnson**. “There is no doubt that these survivors of domestic violence are often times among the most vulnerable members of the shelter population. However, they also come up against more barriers than others, largely due to the time limitations on stays in domestic violence shelters, due to New York State regulation. These

survivors should not be forced to undergo these extra steps. This is why I am proud to be passing this legislation, which deems families who have already been living in domestic violence shelters automatically eligible for DHS shelters, without having to undergo the unnecessary and repetitive pain of the PATH process.”

“This is a common sense piece of legislation that will make it easier to provide shelter for domestic violence victims,” said **Council Member Steve Levin, Chair of the General Welfare Committee**. “I am proud to co-sponsor this bill with Council Member Johnson that will grant a presumption of eligibility for victims exiting domestic violence shelters.”

Intro 216-B, sponsored by Council Member Mark Levine at the request of Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, triples the number of accessible pedestrian signals installed annually by requiring the DOT to increase the number of accessible pedestrian signals installed each year from 25 to 75.

“Thanks to this legislation, which Council Member Levine introduced in partnership with my office, more blind and vision-impaired New Yorkers will be able to cross our streets safely,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer**. “As the Council sponsor of the city’s original Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) installation requirements, I’m thrilled that we’re further accelerating the pace at which APS systems are installed, increasing the annual requirement to 75 signals. I look forward to continuing our work with Mayor de Blasio, the Council, and the accessibility community’s wonderful coalition of advocates to ensure that Vision Zero is inclusive of all New Yorkers.”

“Today our City takes another step forward to ensure that we create a more hospitable environment for our most vulnerable residents. Under the leadership of Mayor de Blasio, we are dedicated to making sure our city’s infrastructure is easily navigable for all citizens,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chair of the Transportation Committee**.

“Increasing the pace of Accessible Pedestrian Signal installations is a huge win for the 360,000 New Yorkers with visual impairments and for Vision Zero. These devices not only give these individuals the confidence to cross the street safely, they also save lives. Now DOT will be able to install APS devices in the intersections that need them most three times as quickly,” said **Council Member Mark Levine**. “There are so many individuals who played a huge role in advocating for increasing the number of installations, but I would especially like to recognize the PASS Coalition for their years of advocacy as well as to the Mayor’s Office and DOT for agreeing to implement this.”

“The implementation of 50 additional Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS’s) is an achievement for New York City, which strives to become the most accessible city in the world,” said **Victor Calise, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities**. “People with vision disabilities heavily rely on audible cues when crossing the streets, and with the addition of APS’s, they will have more confidence when crossing a dangerous intersection. The installation of accessible pedestrian signals at a quicker rate will provide enhanced safety to all city residents, continuing the main goal of Mayor de Blasio’s Vision Zero.”

Intros 356-A and 493-A, sponsored by Council members Jumaane Williams and Ben Kallos, codify the reporting requirements of Mayor de Blasio’s agency-based voter registration directive, requiring the Mayor’s Office of Operations to submit a bi-annual report to the City Council, expand the number of agencies required to participate in the voter registration form distribution program, and enhance the responsibilities of participating agencies.

“Every time a New Yorker interacts with government, they will be empowered to participate in their democracy,” said **Council Member Ben Kallos, Chair of the Committee on Governmental Operations**. “Voting is the bedrock of our community: It is how we as New Yorkers demand our rights and make our voices heard. The Expanded Agency-Based Voter Registration Law will take us one step closer to the goal of every eligible New Yorker being registered to vote.”

“Voter participation in New York is at an all-time low, and more must be done to make voter registration more accessible,” said **Council Member Jumaane D. Williams, Deputy Leader and Chair of the Council’s Housing and Buildings Committee**. “Government has a responsibility to maximize the potential of voter turnout, which is why I’m proud we have passed this important pro-voter bill. Intro 356 will improve pro-voter law compliance from City agencies by requiring them to produce and deliver a semi-annual report including the number of voter registration forms distributed, completed and transmitted to the NYC Board of Elections from each agency. I would like to thank the Mayor, Speaker and Chair of the Committee on Governmental Affairs for pushing this important bill. It is my hope that by 2016, voter turnout has improved not just in New York City, but across the country.”

Learn more about the bills:

- [216-B](#)
- [493-A](#)
- [356-A](#)
- [361-A](#)

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