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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS PUBLIC HEARINGS AND SIGNS INTROS 261-A, 271-A, 211-A, 597-A, 433-A, 681, AND 555-A

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Okay – a whole lot of lawmaking going on today – we have a number of different pieces of legislation. And we’re going to be turning over the room at at least one point because there are so many people who are here for different pieces of legislation. So we’ll tell you when that is.

So I want to welcome everyone.

First, we’re looking at Intro 261-A – join in, everyone, join in – 261-A, which prohibits discrimination based on consumer credit history; the sponsor, Council Member Brad Lander. And thank you, Council Member, for taking the lead on this important issue. The history is that employers have often screened candidates with credit checks when hiring, and this has had a disproportionately negative impact on low-income New Yorkers and on people of color. And now, as a result of this legislation, from now on, the vast majority of employers will not be in a position to use the applicant’s consumer credit history as a measure in the hiring process. This is part of our larger effort in the city of New York to ensure that hiring is fair for all New Yorkers, and that people are judged on merit and are not discriminated against. It is another step towards building a more fair and inclusive city, and a city where everyone has an opportunity to succeed. And that’s what this is about fundamentally – ensuring that not only are people treated fairly, but that people are not excluded from economic opportunity, which is absolutely consistent with the goals of this administration.

I want to thank our – my counsel, Maya Wiley, for her hard work on this issue. I want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. And now I would like to introduce our very-busy Human Rights Chair who’s getting a lot of business lately – Chair of the New York City Human Rights Commission Carmelyn Malalis.

[...]

Mayor: Well, I want to thank you – I want to thank all the speakers, all the members of the coalition who got us to this day. I want thank Council Member Lander for his leadership. I think –

[Applause]

– I think that what you’re hearing is also very much tied into the challenges we face in this country, because you didn’t used to have this much student debt, you didn’t used to have this much economic dislocation. And so I appreciate this legislation in and of itself because it’s fighting discrimination. I appreciate it because it’s going to open up the doors of opportunity for people who need it. But I also appreciate it because it’s a response to the times we’re living in, where a hardworking young lady like you would not have had that challenge to begin with, because people didn’t live with the assumption of massive student debt. It’s one of many problems we have to address in this country, but here’s a way, locally, we can at least give people some of the support they deserve as they grapple with that bigger challenge. So, you know, I think there’s a lot of energy and enthusiasm in the room, so I presume people are ready for me to sign the bill. Is that right?

[Applause]

[Cheers]

[Mayor de Blasio signs Intro 261-A]

[...]

Mayor: Okay. Is – Jon Paul, is this turnover or not? Next one? Okay, here we go. We got – but wait! There’s more! Okay, everyone, we’re going to do another piece of legislation, so if you’re staying in the room, focus on this next exciting piece of legislation. If you’re exiting, please exit calmly, because now we’re going to talk about fighting air pollution – this is also a very good one.

Okay. Jon Paul. Help them along.

Okay. Intro 271-A. Intro 271-A updates the New York City air pollution control code; the sponsor, Council Member Donovan Richards, Chair of the Environmental Protection Committee – thank you, Council Member, for your leadership.

In 1970, New York City passed the air code – at that point, when our city and our country were in a pollution crisis. And we passed the air code, played a pivotal role in reducing pollution over these last decades, but has not had a major revision in these last decades, and it’s time. Air pollution, of course, continues to be a major concern. It’s linked to fundamental health problems, including asthma, heart disease, and bronchitis. It contributes to 4.5 percent of all annual deaths in the city. So even though we’ve made a lot of progress, still much work to be done, and particularly true is that our lowest income communities are hit hardest by the challenge of air pollution.

This bill will help us to improve air quality by bringing the code into the 21st century with a series of important changes, including regulating additional sources of emissions like motorcycles, boilers, and generators. And – yes, even in 2015, we have to increase restrictions on burning coal – still a relevant issue. Our goal for New York City – we said it in our OneNYC plan – to have the best quality air of any major city in this nation by 2030. We’re very proud of that commitment, and we intend to keep it, and enforcing a stronger air code will help us to get there. It’s very much connected to our core concept running through the OneNYC plan of a more environmentally sustainable city, and a more economically sustainable city at the same time. And this is something we feel every neighborhood, all five boroughs – this is the kind of change we need to make so we can fulfill that vision of a fair and equitable city, both economically and environmentally.

I want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for her extraordinary support, and now bring up the woman in charge of keeping this a clean and green place, our Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Emily Lloyd.

[...]

[Mayor de Blasio signs Intro 271-A]

Mayor: Okay. So, we’re now going to work on Intro 211-A, which requires the Department of Transportation in coordination with the MTA to create a plan to expand our Bus Rapid Transit network. The sponsor of this legislation, again, Council Member Brad Lander – good day for Council Member Lander. Select Bus Service, SBS, helps people move around the city, helps people commute more efficiently and faster. And thanks to dedicated bus lanes and off-board fare collection, the whole process works better for everyone. So this is what we want to do more and more. The plan is to add 13 new SBS routes across the five boroughs by 2017 – and the planning process will engage local elected officials and communities. We’re working to ensure every neighborhood in all five boroughs has appropriate access to transportation. We all know mass transit is critical for all of us. It’s critical for the economy of the city, the future of the city. It is particularly critical for those New Yorkers for whom resources are very tight and incomes are very tight, and mass transit is their lifeline – it connects them to jobs, schools, medical appointments, everything – so that’s why this is so important.

I want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for her support. I want to thank our DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg for her good work on this bill. And now I'd like to bring up the bill's sponsor, Council Member Brad Lander.

[...]

Mayor: Let's sign this bill into law, shall we?

[Mayor de Blasio signs Intro 211-A]

Mayor: You want more laws? We got more laws.

Okay, Intro 597-A requires the city to establish a car-sharing program – this is a very cool one, Stacey, very cool – car-sharing program for all city agencies that use vehicles; sponsored by Council Member Ritchie Torres.

From 2016 through 2019, the city will reduce its vehicle fleet by 2 percent each year. This is really good news for our city – less pollution, less congestion, will cost the taxpayers less, a lot to like, and this will have, again, environmental benefits and fiscal benefits.

I want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for her support, and now let's hear from the driving force, along with Council Member Torres, behind this legislation, DCAS Commissioner Stacey Cumberbatch.

[...]

[Mayor de Blasio signs Intro 597-A]

[...]

Mayor: Okay. Intro 433-A adds safety precautions to protect our children from electrical hazards. This is sponsored by Council Member Andrew Cohen – and Andy, I want to commend you – your first bill ever getting signed – congratulations, and I appreciate your focus on our children.

Every year, children across the city, children across this country are severely injured from playing with unprotected electrical outlets. This bill will help protect our children. It requires building owners to install safety devices over outlets in common areas, and it helps us in all our efforts to create a safer living environment for our children.

I want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for her support. And now I'd like to introduce our buildings commissioner, Rick Chandler.

[...]

[Mayor de Blasio signs Intro 433-A]

Mayor: Okay, we have now Intro 681 – establishes the Meatpacking Area Business Improvement District. Normally, it would be known as the Meatpacking District, but the word district is already in Business Improvement District, isn't it? So it's the Meatpacking Area Business Improvement District. This bill is sponsored by Council Member Corey Johnson. It will serve parts of the West Village and Chelsea. The BID will invest in street beautification, sanitation, and public safety efforts. It will also support businesses through direct outreach to the community and customers through workshops, marketing, etcetera.

We are very, very committed to helping our local small business community thrive, and BIDs have proven to be an important part of reenforcing local businesses.

So I want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for her support. I want to thank Finance Chair Julissa Ferreras, back from her honeymoon for this occasion.

Council Member Julissa Ferreras: Wedding.

Mayor: Wedding. Second wedding. So many weddings. Can you keep track?

I want to thank the commissioner – is not going to be here. Okay, I want to thank Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer, small business commissioner who has been fantastic – thank her for her support. And now I'd like to introduce the bill's sponsor, Council Member Corey Johnson.

[...]

[Mayor de Blasio signs Intro 681]

Mayor: All right, one more. We can do this. One more.

Okay, Intro 555 will make the New York City rent freeze programs – okay, everyone, focus – either – if you're going, go quietly, please – we're going to do one more. Intro 555 will make New York City rent freeze programs for seniors and tenants with disabilities more responsive. This is the SCRIE and DRIE programs. The sponsor of this legislation is Council Member Julissa Ferreras.

The New York City rent freeze programs protect seniors and tenants with disabilities by freezing rents or exempting units from future rent increases. The bill creates two ombudspersons to answers questions and assist tenants and landlords, and it adds transparency with new reporting requirements. It will help ensure that the city remains affordable for our most vulnerable residents. And it's an essential part of our overall efforts to keep this city affordable and inclusive for all.

I want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for her support. And now I am honored to introduce Chair Julissa Ferreras.

[...]

Mayor: Just for – I have to say a few words in Spanish related to all the legislation that we have signed today.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we will now sign the legislation.

[Mayor de Blasio signs Intro 555]

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