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MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO SIGNS LEGISLATION ON AIR CONDITIONING REGULATION FOR BUSINESSES AND PACKAGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILLS

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today signed nine pieces of legislation into law – Intro. 850-A, related to air conditioning systems; Intros 643-A, 706-A, 753-A, 758-A, 766-A and 768-A, require various reporting with respect to inmates in the custody of the Department of Correction; Intro. 784-A, which requires that new inmates are provided with a bill of rights; and Intro. 767-A, which requires the DOC to publicly post its use of force policies.

“I know I’m not the only one who has walked past open doors to feel a blast of cold air pouring out. We don’t need to be cooling our sidewalks! By requiring businesses to simply close the door, this bill is a win on multiple fronts, and is a small, but important part of our efforts to fight climate change,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “In addition, these eight criminal justice bills are a great step forward for fairness and transparency, and will deepen our efforts to usher in a new, safer era for the Department of Correction.”

“We have a moral obligation to treat individuals incarcerated in city jails humanely,” said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “The Council is proud to have passed these laws to shed light on the treatment of inmates in New York City’s jail system so we can properly address the issues that tend to arise in city jails. I’d like to thank my colleagues and this administration for their partnership in taking action to address these human rights issues.”

The first bill, Intro. 850-A, increases the number of business covered by Local Law 38 of 2008, which requires stores that are 4,000 square feet or larger, or part of a chain of five or more stores in New York City to keep their doors closed when an air conditioner or central cooling system is running. The legislation removes the size requirement, making this law applicable to businesses of any size that do not fall under specific exemptions. In his remarks, the Mayor thanked the bill’s sponsor, Council Member Constantinides, and Council Member Richards.

Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council Environmental Protection Committee, said, “Shutting the front doors of businesses so that air-conditioning doesn’t escape will conserve energy and allow business owners to save on their utility bills. This law will significantly impact our power grid, where most plants are old, inefficient, and produce larger emissions. The Department of Consumer Affairs has been spreading the word about the environmental and financial impacts of keeping doors open through a public awareness campaign geared toward business owners. As we move closer to our goal of reducing our carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050, we must consider common sense policies like this. I thank Mayor de Blasio and DCA Commissioner Menin for their partnership on this legislation.”

“Making sure businesses close their doors during summer months when they are using air conditioning is a simple common sense measure that will not only conserve energy for the city, but it will also save small businesses money in the long run,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “In order to reach our goal of drastically reducing carbon emissions, conserving energy anywhere we can is essential to making New York

City cleaner and more sustainable. I'd like to thank Mayor de Blasio and Council Member Costa Constantinides for their dedication to environmentally-focused legislation.”

The second set of bills – Intros 643-A, 706-A, 753-A, 758-A, 766-A and 768-A – place various reporting requirements with respect to inmates in the custody of the Department of Correction, including, among other requirements, information and statistics related to inmate demographics, segregated housing units, inmate visitation, bail amounts, sentencing lengths and inmate grievances. Intro. 784-A requires the DOC to provide every new inmate with a document that summarizes their rights and responsibilities within the facility. In addition, Intro. 767-A requires the Department of Correction to publicly post its use of force policy on the DOC's website. These requirements, which provide for greater transparency and oversight of the DOC, are consistent with this administration's commitment to improving jail facilities. In his remarks, the Mayor thanked Speaker Mark-Viverito for her leadership, Council Member Crowley, Chair of the Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice, and Council Members Garodnick, Dromm, Rosenthal and Barron for sponsoring these bills.

“Incidents of violence have plagued the Department of Correction for far too long, and these policy changes will improve jail operations and provide greater transparency and oversight of the Department. By communicating inmates' rights and code of conduct in spoken language through Intro. 784-A and also monitoring extensive housing waitlists in Intro. 643-A, we can ensure the rights of every inmate, bring about a reduction in violence and a greater grasp of control,” said **Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, Chair of the Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services**. “Thank you to Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, my City Council colleagues and fellow committee members for their commitment to improving jail conditions.”

“The need for reforms at Rikers is obvious,” said **Council Member Dan Garodnick**. “We need much more transparency about what happens behind those walls – from segregated housing to the use of force. A civilized society must be able to keep its inmates safe.”

“Visitation is critical to helping individuals held in our jails maintain ties with their family, friends, and professional resources, which eases their reentry into society,” said **Council Member Daniel Dromm**. “Of particular concern is ensuring children stay connected with their parents. Keeping track of statistics around visitation will help the city improve the process for all involved, including facility staff.”

Council Member Inez Barron said, “The hearings held by the Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services this year, highlighted that there are many areas involving inmate life that need to be more closely scrutinized. The Department of Corrections was unable to produce hard data about many of the circumstances regarding inmates. Intro 758 will require DOC to post quarterly reports regarding inmates' grievances, status of their grievance and the resolution or dismissal of their grievance. The report will also require that this information be disaggregated by various categories throughout individual facilities. Inmates are entitled to certain rights while they await trial and or serve their sentences. This bill, along with other bills signed into law today, seeks to address complaints by inmates and their families about the conditions in our prison facilities. I am pleased that my colleagues have passed this bill and the Mayor is signing it into law today.”

“I am grateful to Mayor Bill de Blasio and the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice for their commitment to jail reform and their work in shaping 753-A to make its data reports as thorough and regular as possible. 753-A allows all of us to get answers to crucial questions that we cannot answer today: of the over 10,000 inmates in City jails right now, what charges are they facing, how long have they been locked up, and for what bail amounts? In other words, we're spending over \$2.2 billion on this system, and this bill tries to answer the question, ‘Why?’ We all suspect that New Yorkers who have not been found guilty of a crime languish in jail just because they are too poor to pay their bail. Now we'll have the facts. Transparency is the first step to securing fair treatment for these individuals, and I look forward to working with the Administration to use these reports to continue to reform our jails,” said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal**.

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