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MAYOR DE BLASIO SIGNS LEGISLATION ON REDUCED FEES FOR PARK AND RECREATION CENTERS, ELECTED OFFICIAL COMPENSATION AND REFORMS

Legislation – for the first time – provides historic reforms to how the Council does business when it comes to outside income, disclosure, and more

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today signed into law five pieces of legislation – Intro. 856-A, in relation to Department of Parks and Recreation center fees for seniors, young adults, veterans and persons with disabilities; Intro. 1069, in relation to making the members of the City Council full-time officials; Intro. 1077, in relation to increasing access to disclosure forms of elected officials; Intro. 1078, in relation to modifying the timing and deliberation time for the quadrennial advisory commission for the review of compensation levels of elected officials; and Intro. 1055, in relation to compensation of the Mayor, public advocate, members of the City Council, Borough Presidents, comptroller and district attorneys.

The first bill, Intro. 856-A, will reduce fees at least 75 percent off of the highest annual membership fee charged at Department of Parks and Recreation centers. The reduction in fees will be available to seniors, young adults between the ages of 18 and 24, veterans and persons with disabilities.

“Our parks and recreation centers should be readily available for all New Yorkers. This bill helps to ensure that our centers are affordable not just for our city’s youths and seniors, but for the women and men who have honorably served our country and to foster dignity for people with disabilities,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I would like to thank the bill’s sponsors, Council Members Mark Levine and Eric Ulrich, and the City Council for bring this bill before me.”

“New York City Parks has always made accessibility a priority at our recreation centers, which provide crucial recreational and educational resources to neighborhoods across the five boroughs,” said **Parks and Recreation Commissioner Mitchell Silver**. “Discounted rates for seniors, youth, veterans and people with disabilities help to ensure access to all those who want to play, learn and grow.”

“According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, most adults with disabilities are able to participate in physical activity, yet nearly half of them get no aerobic physical activity as compared with 1 in 4 adults without disabilities,” said **Victor Calise, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities**. “Reducing the fees at Department of Parks Recreation centers for individuals with disabilities will provide easier and more affordable access to recreation centers that provide adaptive exercise equipment, access to swimming pools, and overall accessibility for people with disabilities which is part of the City’s disability agenda.”

“Veterans and their families will enjoy the health benefits of engaging in sports and other activities through the use of City recreation centers, as well as spending family time enjoying the natural beauty of City parks,” said **retired Brigadier General Loree Sutton, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Veterans’ Affairs**. “Under the leadership of Mayor Bill de Blasio, MOVA is honored to partner with The Department of Parks and Recreation, the Mayor’s Office of People with Disabilities and the City Council to celebrate today’s bill signing,

making these extraordinary benefits more affordable for veterans and their families who have served our country.”

“Membership in the Department’s recreation centers, with their varied programs for active seniors, offers a fantastic way to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Passage of Local Law 856-A codifies into law the Department of Parks and Recreation’s current practice of making this great resource even more affordable for older New Yorkers. This initiative is an example of Age-Friendly New York City at its best,” said **Department for the Aging Commissioner Donna Corrado**.

“Recreation centers are especially important to two classes of New Yorkers: veterans and people with disabilities. This new law will make recreation centers more affordable for these groups and also ensure low cost recreational opportunities for young people and seniors trying to make ends meet,” said **Council Member Mark Levine, Chair of the Committee on Parks**. “This is one step we can take to show our gratitude to those who served, while providing greater access to the kind of exercise regimens and social interactions every person needs to enjoy a healthy life. I thank Mayor de Blasio, Council Member Ulrich and all of my colleagues for partnering in this effort, so that more New Yorkers can enjoy our wonderful recreation facilities at an affordable rate.”

“I first want to thank my good friend and colleague Council Member Mark Levine for introducing this piece of legislation and advocating on behalf of our city’s large and diverse veterans community,” said **Council Member Eric Ulrich**. “I also want to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio for signing this bill into law. Together, we are making New York City’s world class parks and recreational facilities more affordable and accessible.”

The second bill, Intro. 1069, requires the City Council to set forth rules prohibiting Council Members from earning most outside income, thus making Council Members full-time officials and minimizing potential conflicts of interest. In his remarks, the Mayor thanked the bill’s sponsor, Council Member Ben Kallos.

The third bill, Intro. 1077, requires the financial disclosure forms of New York City elected officials be made available on the conflict of interest board’s website, a step taken to increase transparency. In his remarks, the Mayor thanked the bill’s sponsor, Council Member James Vacca.

The fourth bill, Intro. 1078, extends the amount of time the Quadrennial Commission, a commission appointed to review the compensation of elected officials, has to conduct a review and issue a report, to 120 days. The bill also amends the year in which the commission is appointed from the second year of a four-year cycle to the third year. In his remarks, the Mayor thanked the bill’s sponsor, City Council Majority Leader Van Bramer.

The fifth bill, Intro. 1055, adjusts the annual salaries of the Mayor, the Public Advocate, Members of the City Council, the Borough Presidents, Comptroller and District Attorneys. These increases are derived from the recommendations of the Quadrennial Advisory Commission. In his remarks, the Mayor thanked the bill’s sponsor, Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito.

“These bills mean the Council will see historic reforms that have long been in the making – in fact, for too long. Today, that changes. This package strikes a balance between recognizing the hard work of public servants, and enacting reforms that protect the integrity of City government,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**, who has said he won’t take a raise this term.

“These unprecedented reforms will strengthen the Council as a legislative body and help Council Members better serve their constituents,” said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “By restricting outside income, designating Council Members’ positions as full-time jobs, and eliminating stipends for members, we are fulfilling many recommendations of good-government groups and setting a new standard for elected officials in our city.”

“City Council Members will be working full time for their residents without the influence of stipends and outside income,” said **Council Member Ben Kallos**. “New York City continues to lead with reforms the people

want to see at all levels of government. Thank you to Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito for bringing reform to the City Council and Mayor Bill de Blasio for signing these bills into law.”

“Disclosure forms are essential in providing accountability and transparency with regards to an elected official’s potential conflict of interest,” said **Council Member James Vacca**. “My bill simplifies the process of gaining access to disclosure forms. Instead of an arduous process that requires a written request and a fee, information will now be available online at all times. Making this information transparent is consistent with the goals of Open Data, of which NYC has been a nationwide leader. I’m pleased that Mayor de Blasio is signing this important bill.”

“Intro. 1078, which I sponsored, takes on two recommendations made by the recent Quadrennial Advisory Commission. First, this bill gives the commission additional time, up to 120 days, for research and deliberation before issuing recommendations. In fact, this bill allows more time than the commission itself requested,” said **City Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer**. “Second, the bill moves future commissions from the second year of each four-year term to the third year. This makes it more likely that the commission’s recommendations take effect in the next term, addressing issues associated with changes to compensation. I am proud to support these reforms, which improve the mechanics of City government.”

“I’m proud to see the City Council implementing several long-sought and important reforms,” said **Council Member Brad Lander**. “By eliminating "lulus" for leadership positions, we diminish favoritism and promote independence. By making City Council positions full-time and eliminating outside employment, we remove temptations of corruption and ensure that future representatives are dedicated full-time to serving constituents, and by putting our financial disclosures online, we advance transparency and avoid conflicts. By changing the timing of future quadrennial commissions we make it more likely that future raises take effect only in the following term. These changes further advance the already significant reforms the Council has made under Speaker Mark-Viverito’s leadership. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio for signing these reforms into law today.”

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