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NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 30, 2015
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MAYOR DE BLASIO SIGNS LEGISLATION CREATING AN OFFICE OF LABOR STANDARDS

Also signs package of Open Data legislation

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today signed nine bills into law – Intro. 743-A, creating an Office of Labor Standards; Intros 898-A, 890-A, 900-A, 914-A, and 915-A, which strengthen and modify existing requirements related to open government data; Intro. 783-A, related to interest rates on emergency repair bills for residential buildings; Intro. 956-A, extending the Biotechnology Tax Credit; and Intro. 982-A, extending the current rate of hotel room taxes. The Mayor also held a public hearing for Intro. 314-A, which will be signed at a later date and is related to the establishment of the Department of Veterans Services.

The first bill, Intro. 743-A, creates an Office of Labor Standards. The Office will make recommendations for worker education, safety and protection, educate employers on labor laws, create public education campaigns regarding worker rights, and collect and analyze labor statistics. The Director of the Office will have authority to conduct investigations, serve subpoenas, and impose civil penalties on businesses that violate NYC's labor standards. The Office will also enforce Paid Sick Leave and Mass Transit Benefit laws.

"This bill is a huge step forward in protecting vulnerable workers and strengthening our workforce," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "The Office of Labor Standards will ensure rules, regulations, and laws designed to improving working conditions are enforced properly, and that workers and businesses know and understand those laws. I want to thank Speaker Speaker Mark-Viverito, and Chair of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor, Council Member Miller."

"The Office of Labor Standards is a proposal I first made back in February during my State of the City Address, because hard working New Yorkers deserve an office that is dedicated to ensure that all of their rights are being protected," said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. "Protecting workers has been an ongoing goal of this Council for many years, and this office is long overdue. I'd like to thank the de Blasio Administration and all my colleagues for helping make this office possible."

"Today is a momentous day for working people here in the City of New York. This office will create and uphold standards that will improve the quality of life for workers throughout the five boroughs," said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller, Chair of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor**. "Our city now has a body that will be able promote workers' rights, analyze labor trends and educate employers on labor laws, among other items."

"The creation of the Office of Labor Standards is an important first step to beef up the city's enforcement of workplace standards," said **32BJ President Hector Figueroa**. "We look forward to working with the mayor, the City Council and other allies to ensure it is as robust an agency as possible so New York City can truly lead the way in protecting people's rights on the jobs and improving conditions."

"With the creation of the Office of Labor Standards, Mayor de Blasio has once again demonstrated his commitment to workers' rights in New York City. This important new office will ensure that all employers are held accountable if they violate New York City labor standards, especially as it relates to Paid Sick Leave and Mass Transit Benefit Laws. Because of this, we applaud the Mayor's continued dedication to working people in this City," said **Peter Ward, President, New York Hotel and Motel Trades Council**.

"The creation of an Office of Labor Standards will help give a voice in City government to the issues facing New York workers. Workers need City officials who are focused on their needs, from private sanitation workers who are paid far less than their public sector counterparts, to industrial workers whose jobs are impacted by development policy. Thank you to Speaker Mark-Viverito, the City Council, and Mayor de Blasio for making this a reality," said **George Miranda, President, Teamsters Joint Council 16**.

"Make the Road New York has spent the entirety of its existence fighting wage theft. The resources available at all levels of government to police our wage laws are paltry, and the result is a tragic reality: it often makes better business sense for employers to steal workers' wages and simply build the slight chance of being caught into the cost of doing business. Today Mayor Deblasio and Speaker Mark-Viverito are telling exploitative employers that the old way of doing business is coming to an end - our city will not tolerate the continuation of rampant wage theft and other workplace abuse on our watch," said **Deborah Axt, Co-Executive Director, Make the Road New York**.

"A new New York City Office of Labor Standards will help ensure the safety of all workers in their workplaces, while also ensuring that employers will not discriminate against their employees. This will help combat the theft of wages from low-wage workers across the city from car washes to fast food restaurants," said **Jonathan Westin, Executive Director, New York Communities for Change**.

"Today's action by Mayor de Blasio is great news for New York's working families. Creating good jobs that are backed by strong and enforceable labor standards is essential to taking on the inequality crisis in our city, and a strong Office of Labor Standards will be a key part of that work," said **Bill Lipton, NY State Director, Working Families Party**.

The five data bills, Intros 898-A, 890-A, 900-A, 914-A, and 915-A, strengthen and modify existing requirements related to open government data. Intro. 898-A requires a data dictionary for every data set on the open data portal. Intro. 890-A requires the preservation of additional archival data and the establishment of standards for preservation. Intro. 900-A requires the standardization of address and geospatial information for all data sets on the portal to ensure the data is clear, understandable, and uniform. Intro. 914-A requires the Department of Information Technology & Telecommunication to respond to public data set requests on the NYC Open Data Portal within two weeks and for the relevant agency to make a final determination within two months. Intro. 915-A requires that any data updated outside of the Open Data portal on another website is correspondingly updated on the portal. In his remarks, the Mayor thanked Speaker Mark-Viverito for her leadership, and Council Members Cabrera, Gentile, Kallos, Torres, and Vacca for sponsoring these bills.

"In 2012 we set a new bar for transparency and civic engagement with passage of the most comprehensive open data law in the country," said **Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications Commissioner Anne Roest**. "Today, we're honored to join the City Council, Mayor's Office of Data Analytics, and partners across the city in advancing new legislation that will keep the de Blasio Administration at the forefront of these efforts. To be as effective as it can for all New Yorkers, open data needs to be usable data – and these bills will help us achieve that goal."

"We are deeply committed to principles of open data and these bills will help us ensure that all New Yorkers find this data easy to use," said **Chief Data Officer Amen Ra Mashariki**.

“Increased access to data is critical for open government and transparency in the digital age. With a strong Open Data Law and one of the most robust civic tech communities in the country, New York City continues to lead the way in enabling all New Yorkers to find innovative solutions to tough urban challenges. I thank Mayor de Blasio, City Council Speaker Mark-Viverito, City Council Technology Committee Chair Vacca, and the bill sponsors for their vision and leadership,” said **NYC Chief Technology Officer Minerva Tantoco**.

“This package of five bills will dramatically strengthen the Open Data Law,” said **Council Member James Vacca, Chair of the Committee on Technology**. “Each piece of legislation will improve users’ experience, and ultimately, will make a larger amount of data more accessible to all. My bill will ensure that the datasets on Open Data contain the most up-to-date information possible. I thank Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Mark-Viverito for making these important bills a priority, and Council Members Gentile, Cabrera, Torres and Kallos, for their input. With this legislative package, New York City will continue to lead the way with government transparency.”

“Standardizing address and geospatial information for datasets on the Open Data Portal will provide a solution to the frustrating issue of mapping data with no set format,” said **Council Member Ben Kallos**. “I thank Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Mark-Viverito, and Chair Vacca for their commitment to transparency and open government. These meaningful improvements to the Open Data Law ensure an Open Data Portal that is more accessible and usable for New Yorkers.”

“Today’s enactment of the Open Data bills is a significant step in improving transparency and response to the public’s request for government data. My bill, Intro 914, will ensure open data requests are answered in a timely manner and will remove the backlog of requests that have been lingering for months and even years. I applaud the Speaker and Council Member Vacca for their leadership in pushing these bills, and thank the Mayor for quickly signing the Open Data bills into law,” said **Council Member Ritchie Torres**.

Council Member Vincent Gentile said, “The Open Data Legislative Package ensures that all New York City residents can access and easily comprehend our City agencies’ flow of information. In order to take the information we show past false transparency hidden in unnecessary complication, I have proudly sponsored Intro. 898: Requiring a data dictionary for every data set on the open data portal. This will create an online dictionary of all of the terms used by City Agencies on the Open Data Portal that the general public otherwise would not realistically understand. It will also require that context be given to the terms, measurements, and other data presented. Context will include such information as data history and method of collection. Finally, the bill will make it so that the timing of the data presented is given for the purpose of making the public clear on the relevance of what they see. Today, we take strides to support a more knowledgeable, more involved public, and in doing so, create a stronger city.”

“I am proud to be part of the movement to open data and structure it to improve public access. Opening up data is allowing many government agencies around the U.S. and the world to improve efficiency and find solutions to long-standing problems. Int. 890 will create and preserve archives of New York City data that will allow us to track trends over time, thus providing critical insight about solutions to tough policy challenges,” said **Council Member. Fernando Cabrera**.

The seventh bill, Intro. 783-A, changes the rate of interest applied by the Department of Finance to unpaid charges owed by landlords to the City for emergency repair work conducted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. The rate of interest is currently set at 7 percent, and this bill changes the rate of interest to whatever rate the Council adopts in each fiscal year. In his remarks, the Mayor thanked Speaker Mark-Viverito and the bill’s sponsor, Council Member Williams, Chair of the Committee on Housing and Buildings.

The eighth bill, Intro. 956-A, extends the Biotechnology Tax Credit for three years, through December 31, 2018. The Biotechnology Tax Credit is a refundable credit of up to \$250,000 against the unincorporated

business tax and the general corporation tax, which is available to small New York City based biotechnology companies. The ninth bill, Intro. 982-A, extends the current rate of the additional tax on hotel room occupancy – which is 5.875 percent – for four years, through November 30, 2019. The New York City Hotel Room Occupancy Tax is a tax imposed on the occupancy – or the right to occupancy – of a room or rooms in a hotel. In his remarks, the Mayor thanked the bill’s sponsors, Council Members Garodnick and Ferreras-Copeland.

"New York City is uniquely positioned to be a leader in the life sciences and biotech sectors, and the investments we are making will activate the untapped economic potential of these sectors," said **New York City Economic Development Corporation President Maria Torres-Springer**. "With initiatives like the Early Stage Life Sciences Funding Initiative, our plan to triple the amount of wet lab space in the City, and now the extension of the Biotechnology Tax Credit, New York City continues to bring important innovations to market, generating thousands of quality jobs and elevating New York City's status as a leader in health care."

"Biotech is growing faster than ever, and New York is wisely giving this industry additional tools for growth," said **Council Member Dan Garodnick**. "This tax credit has proven successful in giving startups a little help as they strive to stay on the cutting edge."

“As a leading tourist destination, it is vital for the Council to support the tourism and hotel industries while reaping those benefits for the residents of New York City. Intro 982-A to extend the current rate of tax on hotel bookings strikes a good balance between supporting our economy, helping maintain core services, and still allowing tourism and the hotel industry to flourish. I’d like to thank the Mayor for supporting the Council’s decision to extend this tax; and Economic Development Committee Chairman Daniel Gardonick for working with me on this legislation,” said **Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Chair of the Committee on Finance**.

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