



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR AND SIGNS  
INTROS. 856-A, 1069, 1077, 1078 AND 1055**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Okay, welcome to the hearing everyone. First piece of legislation today is Intro. 856-A, which establishes discounted memberships to Parks Department recreation centers for our veterans and the disabled. It is a well-deserved sign of our gratitude to the men and women who have served our country. It is also a way of uplifting New Yorkers with disabilities. The sponsor is Councilmember Mark Levine, co-prime sponsor Councilmember Eric Ulrich. The Parks Department already provides recreation centers discounts to seniors and young people. This bill will give veterans and people with disabilities an affordable way to stay healthy and stay active. I want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, our Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver, our Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities Commissioner Victor Calise. And now it is my honor to introduce our Commissioner for the Mayor's Office and Veteran's Affairs, General Loree Sutton.

[...]

**Mayor:** Alright with that we now can sign this bill into law.

[Mayor de Blasio signs Intro. 856-A]

**Mayor:** Okay, that's it folks. Alright the next set of bills provides raises for our city's elected officials and also makes historic reforms to the City Council. These are reforms that have been talked about for a long time – decades in fact, and today these reforms are finally going to go into effect. And, I think it's going to make our city government stronger and better for years and decades to come. These bills strike an important balance between recognizing the hard work of public servants and enacting reforms that protect the integrity of city government. They were derived from the recommendations of the Quadrennial Advisory Commission, an independent three member commission that carefully reviewed the compensation levels of our elected officials. I just want to take a moment to thank the Chair, Fritz Schwartz, and Commission member Jill Bright, both of whom are here, and in absentia Paul Quintero, the third member. I've had an opportunity over the years to work with many different commissions and blue ribbon panels and this group did extraordinary work – very sober, very thoughtful, very historically-grounded work. And, I think you'll be able to look back at the fact that your work led to real profound changes and reforms that had been again, called for not just years but, for decades. I want to thank you both for your service to this city.

After comprehensive analysis the commission came up with a fair and well-reasoned set of recommendations. First— and these will be reflected in the legislation that we will be talking about now. First, Intro. 1069 requires the City Council to prohibit Council members from earning outside income in future sessions. The sponsor is Councilmember Ben Kallos, the Chair of the Committee on Governmental Operations. Now the people of New York City have a right to expect that their public servants are always putting them first. And, this bill honors that by literally redefining what it means to be a member of the City Council. It makes the role of a City Council member a full-time job, which it has not been in the past, and it clarifies that Council members will now wholly dedicate themselves to the duties of their public office. I'd also like to praise the commission for

recommending, and the Council for implementing a rule forbidding what's been known as 'lulus' – allowances that were granted to Council members for their leadership of committees. This is a practice that was criticized for years because it allowed potentially for favoritism among the members. And, now that practice has been forbidden by recommendation of this commission and act of the Council.

Next, Intro.1077 requires the city to make the financial disclosure forms of its elected officials available on the Conflict of Interest Board's website, the sponsor is Councilmember Jimmy Vacca. If we want to be a government that's fair to our people, open to our people and trusted by our people, then we must make these much needed and long overdue reforms that hold our elected officials to the highest standard. Now for the first time, the ground rules will be clear and consistent for anyone who considers running for public office in our city. I want to make clear and this is something I really commend both the commission and the Council for. We are saying very clearly – if you run for public office going forward, if you run for particular City Council, you are making a decision to forgo the income that you previously might have been able to achieve. In the past some Council members made hundreds of thousands of dollars – while working as a Council member – and made hundreds of thousands of dollars in outside income. This ends that practice once and for all and says if you make the choice to run for office it's a voluntary choice – you are agreeing to a level of compensation that might be less than what you could get in the private sector. But, if you choose public service, you are making a choice. And it's a choice that has to be considered carefully and then honored fully once you walk through the doors of the public sector.

Intro.1078 extends the amount of time the Quadrennial Advisory Commission has to review the compensation of elected officials, that's sponsored by Councilmember Jimmy Van Bramer.

And, finally Intro.1055 increases the annual salaries of the mayor, Public Advocate, members of the City Council, Borough Presidents, Comptroller and District Attorney— District Attorneys, excuse me. I just want to say again for the record. I made it very clear that I will not accept any pay raise in this term. The people of the city in 2017 will determine who they want to be the mayor in the next term. I believe that this action is appropriate for the next term. But, in my case I will not be accepting a pay raise in this term. The sponsor I should just note of Intro.1055 has become Melissa Mark-Viverito.

The salary increases in this legislation are fair when you consider both the reforms that are being enacted or the amount of time that has passed since the last Quadrennial Commission, almost a decade. And, how hard our elected officials work, public service is by definition a 24/7 calling. It is necessary for a public servant to be on call every hour of every day to work every single day on behalf of the people that they represent. It requires focus, it requires energy, and an unwavering devotion to the people of this city. The compensation of our public officials should reflect their round the clock commitment. And, the rules that they play by must reflect the responsibilities, the seriousness of those responsibilities and the fact that those responsibilities must always come first in all they do. Again, I thank the commission for providing a framework for reforms that has previously eluded the city for decades. And I commend the Council for accepting the commission's proposals. I also want to recognize a number of Council members that I mentioned – Councilmember Van Bramer, Majority Leader Councilmember Vacca who played a key role in achieving this legislation. Now it's my pleasure to introduce the chair of the Quadrennial Advisory Commission. I will just note, if you have not had the opportunity to look at Fritz Schwarz's public service over the years, it is absolutely extraordinary— going back to the famous church committee in the U.S. Senate in the early '80s—

**Fritz Schwarz, Chief Counsel of the Brennan Center:** '70s.

**Mayor:** Mid - '70s, close—

[Laughter]

In the mid-70s, which uncovered a number of abuses in our national intelligence organizations and led to fundamental reforms at the national level through his service as the Chair of the 1989 Charter Commission which, fundamentally remade the city government of New York City. And, obviously as Corporation Counselor of the City, and now playing the role he plays at the Brennan Center. In so many ways Fritz Schwarz has had an amazing and positive impact on New York City. One of the great – I'm going to have to make you blush here Fritz – truly one of the great reformers and civic leaders of this city over the last not only quarter century, but more. I want to thank him for all he's done and I welcome, Fritz Schwarz.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** Thank you very much. Let me say to Susan and Dick – you're two of the consciences of this city. And, your batting average is pretty damn good in recent years for the reforms that you have called for that have come to pass but, I know your work is not done. And you'll continue to hold our feet to the fire. And Susan, I just want to say you just warmed my heart because you invoked a phrase that was taught to me long ago by my aunt Yola – who is now 95-years old – who would regularly say 'Don't let perfect be the enemy of good.' So I think today is an example of a lot of good happening for our city, and I appreciate both your testimonies. Let me just say a few words in Spanish before we sign the bill.

[Mayor speaks in Spanish]

With that, we will now sign the legislation.

[Mayor signs Intros. 1069, 1077, 1078 and 1055]

The legislation is now law. We are now concluded.

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