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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS SIGNS INTRO. 116 AND INTRO. 383**

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Good morning. Good morning. We're really happy to be joined here today by Kevin Kim, commissioner of the Department of Small Business Services, and Preston Niblack, commissioner of Department of Finance, two important commissioners in our agencies to deal with the economic stability of our city. I'm also really happy to be here with Councilwoman Julie Menin, who's always just coming up with great ideas of how to move our city forward in the right direction. I'm really excited about this bill, these two bills we are announcing today.

Today, our whole hearing is signing on two important bills that help our small businesses in working New Yorkers. For too long, the boulder of bureaucracy has gotten in the way of working New Yorkers and small business owners, of endless red tape, complicated processes, and agencies' silos have made it harder for New Yorkers to open and operate small businesses. And COVID-19 has only made it even harder.

Today, we change that and fulfill a key commitment from my Economic Recovery Blueprint. Today is about promises made, promises kept. Intro. 116 requires the Commission of Small Business Services to create a one stop shop NYC business portrait. This is something I talked about often. We send our small businesses and business operators around to too many different locations just to get a business opened and operated.

Through this portal, all applications, permits, licenses and related information needed to open and operate a small business in the city would be available. We're so happy to have Gale Brewer joining us as well.

Business owners have enough to worry about, and we are giving them some relief by lifting the bureaucratic burden off their shoulders. We are giving them all the tools they need in one accessible location. This is something we talked about over and over again. We heard this from business owners repeatedly. The challenges and difficulties of navigating government just to get their businesses open — we're removing those challenges. Small business, we say over and over again, they're the lifeblood of our city, and they're driving our recovery.

And we want to make it easier for New Yorkers to set up shop across the five boroughs. The days of going to a dozen different offices and websites, those days are over. And we are just

getting started on how we're going to continue to alleviate, if not eradicate those boulders that are in the way to prevent businesses from operating.

COVID-19 forced many businesses to close, leaving many commercial properties vacant, and we want to turn vacancy signs into open for business signs. And that is why this next bill will help us get there, by keeping better data on commercial vacancies in our city. Intro. 383 amends the Commercial Property Vacancy Registry Law. It requires the supplemental registration statements be filed by August 15th and February 15th each year, rather than a single filing on June 30th.

This is intended to increase the frequency of reported data on commercial vacancies in this city — so important. Small businesses are the heart of our city, and being able to open a business and be aware of the vacancies is a way to ensure that a healthy heart continues to beat. These two bills ensure that they are at the center of economic recovery, and our businesses will stay there.

So I want to thank Speaker Adrienne Adams, Councilmember Julie Menin, sponsor of Intro. 116, and Councilmember Gale Brewer, sponsor of Intro. 383. And I want to again, thank both my commissioners for their input in both these bills to ensure our small businesses are able to open and operate, and remain open in this city. Right now, I want to turn it over to Councilmember Menin to say a few words. Again, thank you, Julie, for this bill.

**City Council Member Julie Menin:** Thank you so much, Mr. Mayor. I am so ecstatic today, because you are going to be signing into law Intro. 116. And before I talk a little bit about Intro. 116, I really want to thank Commissioner Kevin Kim for his partnership. He's been a great partner in this, and I want to congratulate my colleague Gale Brewer on the signing of her bill as well. So Intro. 116, as the mayor says, creates a one stop shop portal. I campaigned on this issue when I was running for City Council. I'm a former small business owner. I used to own a restaurant and catering business that was located not that far from here.

And I can tell you firsthand how difficult it is to navigate city bureaucracy. If you want to open up a restaurant in New York City, you're literally dealing with twenty different separate applications, eight different city agencies. Frequently, you have to take a day or two off of work just to navigate that bureaucracy. Well, no longer will that be a case. With this one stop shop portal, we're literally consolidating every single city agency into one portal, one app, in eleven different languages.

And you're also going to be able to pay fines directly by clicking a link. And so, this is going to make it so much easier for our small businesses to operate. After COVID, we've seen that close to one third of the city's small businesses are at risk of closure. And so today, we're taking an enormous step forward to tackle this bureaucracy. And so once again, I want to thank the mayor and I also want to thank the speaker for her leadership in getting this bill through. Thank you.

**Mayor Adams:** Thank you. Thank you. Always coming up with good ideas. And I now want to turn it over to Councilmember Brewer to comment on Intro 383. Councilwoman.

**City Council Member Gale Brewer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. And I want to thank Councilmember Menin for prioritizing this. I certainly want to thank the Department of Finance staff. Wonderful commissioner, thank you very much, Preston Niblack, and I want you to know

mayor, these are two great commissioners. You know me, I don't like a lot of people. They're very special. Some time ago, when I was borough president, I was proud to pass Local Law 157 in 2019, and it established the city's first database to track vacant ground and second floor storefronts.

We did that with then Councilmember Helen Rosenthal. And the goal then as now, is to help neighborhood civic groups and policymakers use data to map vacancies in their areas to help fill empty storefronts with new businesses. The database went live in 2021, and since then, we've been working with advocates and businesses and the administration to improve its effectiveness. The bill signed today will report vital information to assess the proliferation of commercial vacancies, including whether ground floor or commercial properties are vacant, owner or commercial tenant occupied, and the expiration date on the lease.

This will give more data for better decisions. This bill also improves the timeliness of when data is collected and shared by the city. Thanks to the amazing work of the Department of Finance and the city council staff, we have reduced the lag time that data needs to be submitted to the portal, and in collaboration with finance, we have reduced the reporting window to sixty days. I don't think anybody would dispute the fact that storefront vacancies lead to more trash on our sidewalks, darker streets, less foot traffic, and less economic activity. This bill is a win for our communities, and will help us bring back those vital small businesses to our beloved commercial corridors. Thank you very much.

**Mayor Adams:** Thank you so much, councilwoman. We will now invite the public to comment on the bills if there are any public comments. No comment? Okay. I will now sign Intro. 116 and Intro. 383.

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