by Josh Burd
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At each of the City Council's stated meetings, council members introduce bills, most of which will never become laws (for the process by which bills become laws, click here). As a regular feature, Gotham Gazette discusses some of the legislation proposed at each meeting.

At its most recent stated meeting on November 29, the members of the City Council introduced bills related to commuter vans, underage drinking and nightlife, and communication among the city's protection services.

FAKE IDS AND NIGHTLIFE

Council members Peter Vallone Jr., and Melinda Katz each introduced bills in the council's continued campaign to stop underage drinking and make nightlife safer .

Vallone, the chair of the Public Safety Committee, proposed Intro 484 , which would enable the city to shut down businesses that produce or sell fake IDs. The violations would fall under the a section of city law that would allow officials to condemn those places, including locations that have the equipment to make fake IDs.

Earlier this year, Katz introduced a resolution that would have urged the state to ban "bottle service" -- a practice in which club patrons must buy expensive bottles of hard liquor to gain access. The resolution was never passed. Katz introduced Resolution 626 on November 29, which calls on the New York State Legislature to require that bottle service be handled by a waiter or waitress, instead of simply leaving a bottle of liquor on a table where underage clubgoers would have easy access to it.

COMMUTER VANS

Through its commuter van system, the city licenses more than 200 vans to 65 different private operators, according to the Taxi and Limousine Commission. The vans first started appearing during the 1980 transit strike and the city has since continued to use them alongside other forms of public transportation.

City law prohibits these vans, which carry up 20 passengers, from picking up passengers off the street. Instead, operators must pre-arrange service on the telephone and drivers must keep records of their passengers.

However, Councilmember Yvette Clarke's office points out this is not actually the case -- in practice, commuter vans regularly take “street hails” much like taxis. Clarke proposed Intro 481 to lift the requirements and eliminate the impractical standards.

COMMUNICATION AMONG RESCUE WORKERS

During the Giuliani administration, Emergency Medical Service personnel were kept from listening in on the police department's radio frequency. On 9/11, when communication problems between rescue workers was said to hinder rescue attempts â€“ and may have cost lives. Councilmember Councilmember Alan Gerson proposed Intro 482 to reestablish radio communication between police department and the emergency medical service. Â