



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

1 Centre Street, 19th floor, New York, NY 10007  
(212) 669-8300 p (212) 669-4306 f  
163 West 125th Street, 5th floor, New York, NY 10027  
(212) 531-1609 p (212) 531-4615 f  
[www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov](http://www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov)

Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

**Testimony of Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Regarding Proposed Rules  
For Implementing the Municipal I.D. Card System  
October 8, 2014  
New York City Human Resources Administration**

Good afternoon. My name is Gale Brewer, and I am the Manhattan Borough President. I would like to thank HRA, and Commissioner Banks for an opportunity to speak, and for promulgating these rules. They clearly reflect a determination to have the program succeed. I congratulate everyone involved in bringing this project to implementation. Many New Yorkers have been awaiting a program to help them access essential services. Resident identification cards have been used in other cities for years, and my understanding is that they are working well. I am proud that we are joining them.

After looking over the proposed rules, and the requirements for obtaining a Municipal Identification Card, I believe that the “point” system is a good idea, and that the Rules reflect a conscious effort to ensure that as many New Yorkers as possible are able to obtain I.D. Cards. However, I have several questions and concerns.

The locations where people can apply for the cards are not specified, other than a reference to the new law itself, which specifies that there must be at least one site in each borough. However, having more sites and types of locations where people can submit an application and obtain an I.D. are crucial to the program’s success. We all want to see these cards reach as diverse an audience as possible. As you know, this is the best way to ensure that

no stigma is attached and that the card identifies the user as a member of our New York community. I would like to see applications processed at senior centers, elected officials' offices, libraries, courthouses, and so on, as well as HRA's offices. In addition, to address this very deep need for identification among our young people, applications must be available at high schools, CUNY, and all college campuses. High school students are particularly excited about the Municipal I.D. as many only have a school I.D. now.

One way that the Administration has suggested that the I.D. be used is to make it a free ticket for at least a year to the larger cultural institutions. These institutions welcome a broader audience of New Yorkers, I am sure, but I hope that the Department of Cultural Affairs will work to support the institutions with additional funding if really needed. Also, I hope that the smaller cultural programs will also benefit, as they too need more audience participation. Another suggestion is that the I.D. could double as a library card. I hope that we can explore that function in the future.

In addition, it is my understanding that the proposed Rules make no provision for a website, but the new Administrative Code section requires that all applications be available on-line. Obviously this issue needs to be addressed.

Next, the types of identification used for calculating points toward proof of identity and residency reflect a great effort to be reasonable. I foresee a problem for a specific type of New Yorker, however. Many residents live in an "all cash" world. They do not have pay stubs. They may occupy a room in a relative's apartment. They don't have a lease, even though they pay rent. Many others don't have utility bills in their own name, even if they pay their share. As you know, not everyone has a child in the school system. We need a provision whereby someone in these situations could, with appropriate sworn statements, or witnesses, along with

less formal evidence, such as personal letters to their address as proof of residency, could nevertheless obtain an I.D. Card.

Cities such as New Haven, San Francisco, and Los Angeles already have municipal I.D. programs in place. I believe that some of these cities have used the I.D. cards to address the serious problem of the residents who are without banking services. I don't need to tell you that carrying cash around to pay bills and rent puts this "unbanked" population at risk. I would urge HRA and the Mayor to investigate how other cities are using these cards as debit and banking cards and pursue that use here in New York.

I look forward to the implementation of this program, and bringing all New Yorkers into the fold of a stronger, more self-identified and visible New York community.