

# Cornegy Bill Looks To Level Playing Field In Construction Industry

By Kelly Mena  
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A newly passed city legislation might level out the playing field for many minority workers in the highly competitive construction industry across the city.

On Monday, **City Council Member Robert Cornegy Jr.**'s (D-Bedford-Stuyvesant, Northern Crown Heights) bill, Introduction 1382-B, passed unanimously with a vote of 45 to 2. The legislation will work to tackle discrimination in the city's construction industry.

The bill will require certain contractors employed on city-funded construction projects to disclose to an agency designated by the mayor, the zip code of their employees' primary address; the address, block, and lot number of the city-funded construction project; and whether such contractor is certified as a minority-owned or women-owned business enterprise (WMBE).

"Every year New York City spends millions, if not billions of dollars funding the construction of development projects all across our city. A large part of the logic of government spending like this is that the jobs created by that spending benefit the economy. In the construction industry, the jobs created on these projects often serve as pathways to the middle-class. Unfortunately, communities of color are woefully underrepresented in our city's construction industry," said Cornegy.

The bill comes just two months after the passage of the controversial construction safety bill, Intro 1447-C, which instituted mandatory construction worker safety training standards. The legislation was the target of many opponents who argued that the bill skewed towards the unions as it exempted members from the new training requirements, whereas day workers and independent contractors, many of whom are immigrants or minorities, often lack the money and language skills to get training.

However, **City Council Member Jumaane D. Williams** (D-Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood), who was the prime sponsor of the safety bill, believes that

Cornegy's legislation in combination with his own are going to go a long way to solve some of the challenges in the construction industry.

"It's an important measure to have passed, and it's one step in a longer process to change the culture of the construction industry and open up more opportunities for minorities and women within that industry. We've been working to change the culture of safety in the industry, but there are many other issues with the culture as well, and we're glad that this bill helps to address the immense challenges and underrepresentation faced by minorities and women within this system," said Williams.

Intro.1382-B will also require the city to publicly disclose data regarding worker demographics and report on observable trends, as well as create record-keeping requirements for contractors.

"This information will add much-needed accountability to the awarding of large contracts to developers who promise a diverse workforce, and will ensure that we in government are meeting our commitment to create a fair and equitable city for all New Yorkers," added Cornegy.