



**City Council  
Committee on Health  
Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams  
Tuesday, June 18, 2019**

Good morning Chair Levine and the City Council Committee on Health. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing about prohibiting the sale or offer for sale of foie gras made from force-fed birds.

Brooklyn is home to 2.6 million residents, a population that represents the largest county in both New York City and State. The public health of our constituents is therefore one of the most important responsibilities of the Brooklyn borough president — including not only the physical health of New Yorkers, but also their emotional well-being and mental health. That's why we asked Council Member Cabrera to introduce Reso 238 to ban processed meats from school food. That is why we worked to expand Meatless Monday to all hospitals and schools, aided by Council member Helen Rosenthal's Meatless Monday resolution.

Intro 1378, which would prohibit the sale or offer for sale of foie gras made from force-fed birds, as well as the further provision of such foie gras in any manner in food service establishments, addresses both public health concerns.

Foie gras is unhealthy for humans. It derives 85 percent of its calories from fat and can trigger the production of a certain compound that raises one's risk of developing Alzheimer's and Huntington's disease, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease: New York's number-one killer.

To produce foie gras, workers force pipes down the throats of confined male ducks and geese two to three times each day. This routine force-feeding causes the birds' livers to swell to up to 10 times their normal size, which causes difficulty standing and the birds to tear out their own feathers and attack each other out of stress. For humans to inflict this pain upon these animals is of course emotionally and psychologically damaging.

Foie gras has already been banned in Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK.

Ultimately, there is no justification from a nutritional or humanitarian standpoint for foie gras to be available for sale or consumption in New York City. I believe it is our obligation as policymakers to ensure that New York City agencies and institutions do not continue to force-feed our health care crisis or perpetuate the suffering of animals. I stand with the 24 council members who have co-sponsored this historic and important bill that will promote and protect the health of all New Yorkers. Thank you.