

DORIS/DCAS Merger Proposed Legislation

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The Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc. (ART) continues to support the [New York City Department of Records and Information Services \(DORIS\)](#) and to advocate for DORIS as the New York City Council considers legislation, Intro. No. 486, to merge DORIS with the [New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services \(DCAS\)](#). As it is described in the legislation's title, Intro. No. 486, proposes "A local law to amend the New York city charter and the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the transfer of functions from the department of records and information services, and to repeal chapter 72 of the charter concerning the development of records and information services."

DORIS was originally established in 1914 as the municipal reference library of New York City. DORIS is today composed of the [Municipal Archives](#), the [City Hall Library](#), [Grant Administration Unit](#), and the [Municipal Records Management Division](#).

To learn more about the status of Intro. No. 486, please see the following link to the New York City Council [here](#).

Since learning of this proposed legislation, ART has been a community leader and organizer around this issue, [producing a fact sheet](#) summarizing the legislation, and [creating a list of concerns and recommendations for New York City Council](#). Representatives from the ART Board, together with ART members, other concerned organizations and local citizens, attended an informational session on 15 March 2011 about the proposed DORIS/DCAS merger.

ART also organized two meetings to discuss the DORIS/DCAS merger. The first meeting, held on 4 April 2011, was an opportunity to communicate with our members regarding this issue. For the second meeting, ART reached out to representatives from area professional organizations including archivists, records managers, librarians, genealogists and historians. [Notes from this second meeting are available](#).

After receiving feedback from all who attended the meetings, ART President Rachel Chatalbash testified at a hearing on the proposed legislation held by the New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations on 27 April 2011. [A transcription of the hearing and copies of oral testimony are available on the City Council website](#) (you will see a link for the committee report and hearing testimony) and [here](#) (PDF). Following the hearing, the

proposed legislation was laid over, meaning no action was taken. An article about the hearing by ART Secretary Catherine Carson Ricciardi: "Pros & Cons Speak Out at Public Hearing on the Proposed Merger of the NYC Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) with Another Agency" is available [here](#).

ART is currently working with City Council member Gale Brewer on this issue. Updates will be provided as information is available.

Historian Barry W. Seaver has written extensively on the origins of New York's Municipal Archives, and Rebecca Rankin's role in advocating for the city's archives and the archival profession. For a historical overview, [here is his article "Rebecca Rankin's Campaign for a Municipal Archives in New York, 1920-1952."](#) In the 2 July 2001 *New York Times* article "[City's History Rewritten from Municipal Archives](#)," Glenn Collins illuminates the challenges faced by New York's Municipal Archives, as well as the opportunity for the municipal archives to increase our understanding of New York's history.

Additional Press Coverage:

Laura Nahmias, "[Lost In The Stacks; Bloomberg pushes records-agency merger, librarians push back](#)," *City Hall News*, 23 May 2011, <http://www.cityhallnews.com/2011/05/lost-in-the-stacks/> (accessed 23 October 2011)

Henry Stern, "[Condemned to Repeat It; DCAS Swallowing DORIS Would Slight City History](#)," *New York Civic*, 28 April 2011, <http://nycivic.org/story/condemned-repeat-it/> (accessed 23 October 2011)