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Pet advocates give F's to City Council

BY FRANK LOMBARDI
DAILY NEWS CITY HALL BUREAU
Sunday, January 27th 2008, 4:00 AM

If they were pets, half of the members of the City Council would be in the doghouse.

A pet-loving organization called the League of Humane Voters of New York City has issued a scorecard of how supportive the 51 Council members were last year of select legislation favored or opposed by the group.

With 100 as the top score and zero as the lowest, half the Council got scores below 50. Only six members scored 100, and 10 got a zero, including the big dog of the Council herself, Speaker Christine Quinn.

The Council as a whole averaged 47 - up from a belly-scraping 38 in last year's scorecard.

Here are the average scores by borough: Manhattan, 64; the Bronx, 60; Queens, 41; Brooklyn, 39 and Staten Island, 20. All showed improvement over last year's scores.

"They want us to vote for every pet bill that comes to the Council," said Councilman Leroy Comrie (D-Queens) of his zero rating.

But Councilman James Vacca (D-Bronx) said he was "honored" to get a score of 80 from the League of Humane Voters, adding, "I love my dog, and I believe in animal rights."

Vacca would have scored 100 except that he voted in favor of a bill to license and limit the number of pedicabs. The League of Humane Voters opposed the bill.

"Pedicabs are a humane alternative and a true competitor to horse-drawn carriages," the league said in its rating report (available on the Web at www.humanenyc.org/).

Councilwoman Letitia James (WFP-Brooklyn) reacted to her score of 60 by purring, "I'm thinking of adopting a dog - will that move my score up?"

Even before he infuriated some urban wildlife lovers with his crackdown on pigeons, Brooklyn Councilman Simcha Felder (D-Brooklyn) earned a zero.

Felder was in Israel and unavailable for comment, but his spokesman, Eric Kuo, said: "It is unfortunate that they feel this way. We look forward to working with Speaker Quinn to enact practical legislation that will protect the well-being of animals."

The grades were based largely on whether Council members sponsored bills calling for humane education in schools, allowing pets in housing, requiring fire sprinklers in pet stores and protecting wild animals in circuses.

Other zeros went to: Maria Baez (D-Bronx); Dennis Gallagher (R-Queens); David Yassky, Erik Dilan, Mathieu Eugene and Domenic Recchia (all D-Brooklyn), and Vincent Ignizio (R-S.I.).

The six with perfect scores were: Rosie Mendez and Gale Brewer (both D-Manhattan); Helen Foster and Annabel Palma (both D-Bronx) and Tony Avella and Hiram Monserrate (both D-Queens).

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Lombard for News
City Council Speaker Christine Quinn scored a zero.



Giancari for News
Queens' Hiram Monserrate scored a 100.

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