

Grading Brooklyn Council Members on human rights

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2011 New York City Council Human Rights Report Card

The Human Rights Project at the Urban Justice Center recently released a very detailed report card grading City Council Members based on their votes on 72 pieces of legislation they believe impact human rights in various categories, whether they sponsored those bills (extra points for being the primary sponsor), and a questionnaire sent to each member.

Four Brooklyn Council Members earned a spot on their “A-List” including Tish James (88%), Jumaane Williams (88%), Charles Barron (80%) and Brad Lander (74%). Erin Markman, the Policy and Research Coordinator at the organizations, emailed me to help break down the results with specific examples:

Brad Lander scored 91% in Government Accountability because he sponsored every piece of human rights legislation that promoted Government Accountability, and he voted affirmatively on those that came up for a vote. He doesn’t score 100% because he was not the primary sponsor of any legislation. He scored only 38% in Health because he only sponsored four out of the ten bills we identified to promote human rights. That score, as well as slightly lower scores in other categories, brought down his overall score.

Leitita James scored high in all categories because she sponsored nearly all the legislation that promoted human rights, as well as being the primary sponsor of several pieces of legislation such as a bill that would provide legal counsel for senior citizens facing eviction, ejection, or foreclosure and a bill that would require the Department of

Correction to develop a discharge plans for all adolescent inmates who serve 10 days or more in a city correctional institution.

Jumaane Williams also scored high as a result of sponsoring nearly every piece of human rights legislation, but he was the primary sponsor of fewer human rights bills. He introduced a bill requiring brokers to provide notice that it is illegal to discriminate against applicants based on their source of income and a bill that would require the Mayor to appoint an officer to act as the City's Director of Minority-owned, Women-owned, and Emerging Business Enterprises to ensure that such enterprises are being offered city government contracts.

Charles Barron scored well as he sponsored most human rights legislation, but he was only the primary sponsor of one human rights bill, which would assist elderly tenants facing eviction by requiring the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, upon receiving notice of an impending eviction, to provide those senior tenants with a list of legal services.