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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. Contact: Allen Roskoff / [917-553-7180](tel:917-553-7180) / Aroskoff@gmail.com

2016 Annual New York City Council Ratings Report

New York's City Council Speaker Mark-Viverito presided over a lackluster spate of legislation in 2016. Despite reforms, she has ruled with a tight fist and has provided us with little upon which we can rate the council members as few bills have made it to the floor.

Speaker Mark-Viverito had deftly exploited procedure to exert control.

Though procedures exist to bypass Speaker approval, they are difficult to utilize. The procedures to get bills drafted, scheduled for committee hearing, and assigned to a committee are also Speaker controlled. Though the option of filing a motion to discharge exists, the Speaker retains so much power that the fear of retaliation is warranted.

Even bills that have a majority of members as sponsors have been blocked from hearings and a vote.

Here is the Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club's (JOLDC) score-card:

RIGHT TO KNOW ACT: The Council's record for 2016 is particularly marred by the Speaker's refusal to permit a vote on two critical bills that comprise the "Right to Know Act".

Rather than allow an up-or-down vote on the two bills, each of which have majority of sponsor support of the Council, the Speaker negotiated a deal in private to accommodate the New York City Police Department. Hawk Newsome, President of Black Lives Matter of Greater New York, stated that "the Black community is put in danger by Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito's refusals to allow a Council vote on the two pieces of legislation that would strengthen protection of people of color against police abuse. We are deeply offended by the speaker's actions."

BILLS RATED: We have identified eighteen votes from 2016 to utilize for our ratings. Members are additionally rated on whether they are sponsors of the two "Right to Know Act" bills, as we believe Council Members who stood up on this issue deserve credit.

Additionally, JOLDC notes but does not take into consideration a late (December) 2015 vote in which the Council voted 43-4 (absent four members) to allow tax money to be allocated for security personnel in private

schools. Only Council Members Danny Dromm, Corey Johnson, Rosie Mendez and Inez Barron, had the courage to stand up for the separation of Church and State and against organizations notorious for practicing homophobia.

PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS: We continue to question how a caucus, which claims to be the progressive wing of the Council, can include Jumaane Williams as a member. Council Member Williams has steadfastly refused to support marriage equality, the rights of transgender people and has consistently espoused views in opposition to a woman's right to choose. We find his inclusion in the "progressive wing" to be an affront to the rights of the LGBTQ community, to women and all supporters of reproductive rights. We stand with the four members of Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club, Danny Dromm, Rosie Mendez Dan Garodnick and Laurie Cumbo who chose not to be part of this Caucus.

LGBT CAUCUS: We are extremely proud of the distinguished service of all five members of the LGBT Caucus who serve on our Board of Governors; Rosie Mendez, Danny Dromm, Ritchie Torres, Corey Johnson and Carlos Menchaca. All have been part of a cohesive caucus coming together to serve the community and have stepped up in times of crisis. All five joined together in protest of the vicious attack on Rentboy.com and all five have contributed to the community through legislation and budgetary needs. All five assisted this club in the efforts to secure clemency for 67-year-old lesbian Judith Clark who has served 35 years in prison.

Two members of the LGBT caucus, however, raise grave concerns for our community.

Both Queens Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer and Bronx Council Member Jimmy Vacca refused to sign onto the letter to the U.S. Attorney protesting the prosecution of Rentboy.com, a cause that merited support from prominent LGBT legal organizations, several members of Congress and The New York Times. Neither Van Bramer nor Vacca joined the struggle to secure clemency for Judith Clark.

Van Bramer's ongoing fight against "adult" establishments in his district flies in the face of the fact that the LGBT movement was formed both to achieve civil rights and the fight for sexual freedom. It came as no surprise that Van Bramer was chosen to serve in a leadership position in the City Council (Majority Leader). Historically, when a community comes to power the most subservient and non progressive of the community are chosen by the establishment for advancement.

We find such sycophantic behavior disturbing and unprincipled.

The newest member of the LGBT caucus, Bronx regular Jimmy Vacca, came out last year (at the age of 60). Vacca has shown up at LGBT rallies, fundraisers and has joined the caucus in endorsements of colleagues. It must be remembered, however, that Mr. Vacca chose to sit out the many struggles of the LGBTQ community while so many placed their lives on the line fighting for equality and in the long fight against AIDS.

A great many members of our community sacrificed family, friends, employment and health to be part of the struggle for our rights. Having sat out decades of hard work to achieve equality, Vacca does not deserve a seat at the leadership table.

When an oppressed minority gains in their struggle, more conservative elements from that community feel empowered to step forward. Our community is no exception to this rule.



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Bill Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Final Score
I. Barron	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	85
J. Borelli	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
F. Cabrera	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	80
M. Chin	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
A. Cohen	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	75
C. Constantindes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	N	N	80
R. Cornegy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	85
E. Crowley	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	85
L. Cumbo	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	95
C. Deutch	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	50
I. Dickens	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	N	N	65
D. Dromm	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
R. Espinal	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	90
M. Eugene	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	90
J. Ferreras-Copeland	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	85
D. Garodnick	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	N	N	70
V. Gentile	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	90
V. Gibson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	85
D. Greenfield	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	N	Y	A	A	N	N	45	
B. Grodenchik	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	80
C. Johnson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	90
B. Kallos	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
A. King	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	Y	Y	80
P. Koo	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	85
K. Koslowitz	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	85
R. Lancman	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	80
B. Lander	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	85
S. Levin	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	90
M. Levine	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
A. Maisel	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	70
M. Mark-Viverito	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	85
S. Matteo	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
D. Mealy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	A	Y	Y	75
C. Menchaca	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	95
R. Mendez	Y	A	A	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	80
I. D. Miller	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	Y	Y	80
A. Palma	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	75
A. Reynoso	N	Y	Y	Y	NV	NV	NV	NV	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	65
D. Richards	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	95
Y. Rodriguez	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	Y	Y	80
D. Rose	M	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	70
H. Rosenthal	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
R. Salamanca	*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	80
R. Torres	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A	Y	Y	75
M. Treyger	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	90
E. Ulrich	Y	A	A	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	35
J. Vacca	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	55
P. Vallone	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	65
J. Van Bramer	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	80
J. Williams	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	90
R. Wills	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	A	Y	Y	Y	A	A	A	Y	Y	25

Remember, while the votes of elected officials are important, they do not tell the complete story. Constituent services, advocacy, progressive leadership, political leadership, commitment to change and to stand up to the status quo, especially to dangerous demagogues like Donald J. Trump are some of the other factors that reflect the effectiveness of our elected officials.

Explanation of votes and sponsorships utilized in 2016 City Council Ratings

Votes:

1. Intro. 0632/15. Bill requiring new grocery store ownership to keep staff for transition period to review and evaluate their work and consider retention. Vote Jan. 19, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
2. Intro. 0819/15. Bill to repeal Administrative Code provisions which restricted Human Rights Law regarding sexual orientation discrimination. Vote March 9, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
3. Intro. 0814/15. Bill to recognize certain court cases that interpret Human Rights Law so as to maximize deterrence of discriminatory conduct. Vote March 9, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
4. Intro. 1004/15. Bill to expand the required ninety-day retention period for building services employees to include employees previously excluded. Vote April 20, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
5. Intro. 1070/16. Bill reducing civil penalties for certain minor infractions such as public urination and littering. Vote May 25, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
6. Intro. 1067/16. Bill reducing penalty for violation of open container law. Vote May 25, 2016. Our position - Yes Vote.
7. Intro. 1059/16. Bill providing for community service instead of civil fines as penalties in NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings cases for minor infractions such as open container, public urination, and littering cases. Vote May 25, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
8. Intro. 1057/16. Bill reducing use of criminal summons for various low level offenses. Vote May 25, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
9. Intro. 0209/04. Bill imposing minimum fee of \$5 cents for plastic or paper bags at retain, convenience and grocery stores. Vote - May 5, 2016. Our position -Yes vote.
10. Intro. 0871/15. Bill requiring single occupant toilet rooms to be useable to persons of any gender. Vote June 21, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
11. Intro. 0775/15. Bill establishing time periods for Landmarks Preservation Commission to take action on landmark status applications. Vote June 8, 2016. Our position - No vote.
12. Intros. 0824/15 and 0539/16. Bills requiring NYC Police Dept. to provide annual report regarding Civilian Review Board complaints and use of force incidents. Vote - July 14, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
13. Intro. 0446/14. Bill prohibiting discharge of oil or natural gas waste to surface water bodies. Vote - August 16, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
14. Intro. 0642/15. Setting of standards relating to use of clean heating oil. Vote - Sept. 28, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
15. Intro. 1011/15. Bill setting ninety-day retention period for certain food service workers (not restaurants) when food service contact ends. If evaluation of worker is positive worker to be retained. Vote - Oct. 13, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
16. Intro. 0990/15. Bill extending prohibition of acceptance of contributions from political committees who have not registered with Campaign Finance Board to those candidates not participating in city's public funds program. Vote - Dec. 15, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
17. Intro. 1262/16. Bill requiring Dept. of Corrections to produce inmates for trial, Grand Jury or release with their personal clothing or if not available Dept. must provide adequate non-uniform clothing. Vote - Dec. 6, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.
18. Intro. 1261/16. Bill authorizing Dept. of Finance to waive a fee of up to 3 percent that Dept. currently collects from cash bail posted in criminal cases. Vote- Dec. 6, 2016. Our position - Yes vote.

Sponsorship ("Right to Know" bills):

19. Intro. 541/14. Bill requiring that prior to a police search police officers convey the right of individuals to deny consent or to withdraw their consent during the search.
20. Intro. 182/14. Bill requiring law enforcement officers to identify themselves to the public and provide the reason for the law enforcement activity that caused the interaction with the public.