by Josh Burd
Monday, November 06, 2006 12:00 AM

At each of the City Council's stated meetings, council members introduce bills, most of which will never become laws (for the process by which bills become laws, click here). As a regular feature, Gotham Gazette discusses some of the legislation proposed at each meeting.

At its most recent stated meeting on October 25, the City Council introduced several bills and proposed resolutions related to pay raises for elected officials, education, state services for children and families, military reservists' eligibility for the NYPD, and bicycle lanes.

PAY RAISES

Speaker Christine Quinn joined with several other council members to introduce legislation that would result in a 25 percent increase in the council's salaries, as recommended by a recent mayoral commission. The bill, Intro 458, also recommends pay raises for the mayor, public advocate, borough presidents, comptroller, and district attorneys.

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Councilmember Letitia James was active last week, proposing two bills related to education and three resolutions calling for reform of the state's children and family services.

Intro 459 addresses a concern by James' office that enrollment in the city's elite specialized high schools is not reflective enough of diversity in the population. The bill would require the city's Department of Education to report to the council on programs that prepare students for these schools, which include the Bronx High School of Science and Stuyvesant High School. These annual reports by the department would detail student enrollment, completion of the programs, and acceptance into specialized schools, all broken down by race and gender.

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The councilmember's office also expressed concern that many public school districts in the city aren't up to speed with the condition of their science facilities. Intro 460 calls for the Department of Education to provide annual reports to the council on the laboratory equipment and facilities in public school district.

Resolution 579 urges the state legislature to pass the Safe Harbour for Exploited Youth Act, which would call for more sympathetic treatment and services for sexually exploited children. James also proposed Resolutions 580 and 581, which call for reform of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. The first calls for the creation of the Office of the Child Advocate to oversee the agency, while the second asks for legislation that would prohibit discrimination and harassment in the facilities and require its administrators to become more conscious of such abuses.

MILITARY RESERVISTS ELIGIBILITY FOR THE NYPD

Councilmember Miguel Martinez proposed Intro 463, which responds to many frustrated military reservists who do not meet requirements to apply to the NYPD. Current city law requires applicants to have either a high school diploma with two years of full-time U.S. military service or to have completed 60 college credits. The proposed law would enable applicants with six years of honorable part-time service in the military reserves, with a high school diploma, to qualify for the NYPD.

BICYCLE LANES

Councilmember David Weprin proposed Resolution 587 to prevent what his office says are poorly planned and unsafe bicycle lanes in his and other districts. The resolution calls on the city to plan with significant input from community boards, which know best how bicycle lanes fit into the neighborhoods.

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