



# News...

## FROM COUNCIL MEMBER TONY AVELLA



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Press Release

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### **Avella's Humane Education Resolution Heard by Education Committee**

Today, Council Member Tony Avella's Humane Education Resolution was the subject of a long awaited public hearing before the City Council's Education Committee. Resolution 497/2006 was originally introduced by Avella on September 13, 2006 and calls upon the Department of Education (DOE) to increase compliance with Section 809 of the New York State Education Law, which requires instruction on the humane treatment and protection of animals, by issuing a memorandum to all New York City public schools that notifies them of the humane education mandate and by requiring all elementary school principals to direct their teachers to act in accordance with this requirement.

"With the critical need for humane education in our city's school system, and a clear State mandate requiring that it be done, I am hopeful that my colleagues will support and pass this important resolution," stated Avella.

"Humane education helps cultivate compassion and respect in students toward animals, people, and the environment," said Meena Alagappan, Executive Director of Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers (HEART). "HEART enthusiastically supports passage of Council Member Avella's Resolution 497 to increase compliance with New York State's humane education law in NYC schools. We have found that educators are usually unaware of the existence of this law, but they have been receptive to incorporating humane education in their classes. Resolution 497 with its notification provision would help ensure that this valuable education is offered in our city's schools."

"Many educators are unaware of New York's 60 year-old law requiring humane education in public schools. For this reason, kids today are rarely taught the importance of treating our animal friends with respect and kindness," said John Phillips, executive director of the League of Humane Voters of New York City. "Council Member Avella's Resolution 497 will help to increase awareness of and compliance with the humane education mandate. It is the first step toward our goal of seeing humane education lessons as part of the curriculum in every school in the state. Resolution 497 has our full support."

Virginia Chipurnoi, President of the Humane Society of New York, added, "The Humane Society of New York wholeheartedly supports Intro. No. 497 which seeks to encourage compliance with New York State's humane education law. Not only does humane education teach young people to understand the importance of caring for animals with whom they live but also promotes an ethic that extends far beyond. Teaching empathy for those who cannot speak for themselves encourages kindness, compassion and respect. These are qualities that will benefit the youngsters, the animals with whom we share our planet, and our society."

"The United Federation of Teachers strongly supports humane education programming in our schools as evidenced by the fact that they have had a UFT Humane Education Committee (UFT/HEC) since April 1989," said Dr. Sheila Schwartz, Chairperson of UFT/HEC. "Our Committee urges immediate passage of the City Council humane education resolution as a means towards increasing student knowledge, compassion and responsible behavior toward animals, the environment and people."

Nilda Rivera, Principal of Public School 36X, The Rising Stars School, added "Humane education provides early awareness in young children that we must all be responsible for our world for they will have to come up with solutions in the future to world problems."

"The Committee on Legal Issues Pertaining to Animals enthusiastically supports Res 497 introduced by Council Member Tony Avella. We think this call to the NYC Department of Education to encourage compliance with the current law which requires the teaching of humane education in NYC schools is an important first step to reduce youth violence and create a more humane society for both animals and people" stated Jane Hoffman, Chair of the NYC Bar Association's Committee on Legal Issues Pertaining to Animals.

"Teaching our children the importance of care and empathy for animals is a fundamental aspect of the ASPCA's mission," said Dr. Sheryl Pipe, Senior Director of the ASPCA. "Learning the value of animals and understanding why we need to be concerned with their welfare will provide lasting benefits for this next generation, including reduced violence among youth and better understanding of city-wide issues regarding animals."

"The Council must demand that DOE fulfill the mandate set forth by the State Legislature in educating our children on the humane treatment and protection of animals and this is the Council's opportunity to do so," concluded Avella.