

Dear Neighbor,

As 2012 draws to a close and the shock of superstorm Sandy recedes, we must remember that many of our neighbors are not as fortunate as some of us. We can and must discuss how to address the obvious challenges of climate change, but we have to assist residents who are still out of their homes, and businesses that suffered both physical damage and serious economic injury from lost business during and after the storm.

We can help local businesses by renewing our commitment to shop locally. Even if this holiday season is not as robust for our local stores as they would hope—or need, we can make the extra effort through the beginning of the New Year to add to their bottom line by continuing the shop local initiative.

Each new year in Albany begins with a focus on the state budget. This year will be no different, but we will have a spotlight on the implications of the storm and the supports necessary to ensure that neighborhoods and communities can recover. Hopefully, we will have some clarity about the support from the federal government and a better understanding of the resources that will be available from insurance. But make no mistake; this will be a long process of review and negotiation to address the many needs that exist throughout the region.

But every disaster gives us an opportunity to consider how we can do things better. Rebuilding should take into account the ability of incorporating renewable energy sources so that people and communities are not solely dependent on an electrical grid that has demonstrated its weaknesses. Moving into the 21st century should be accompanied by innovations that strengthen our capacity to withstand what nature and changing weather patterns throw at us. From our transit system, to our communication systems and our individual ability to get through a prolonged power outage, it is a chance for us to give new approaches a chance.



Impact of Climate Change on New York State

In the past seven years, New York State has repeatedly been the victim of massive flooding caused by momentous storms. In 2005 one storm alone caused 13 inches of rain in the Hudson Valley. In 2006, flooding occurred in 13 counties around the state. In 2011, Hurricane Irene struck and while its impact was not as severe as expected in New York City it caused enormous damage throughout the State. And now we are still recovering from 2012's Hurricane Sandy, whose impact devastated our City and fundamentally changed our ideas on the infrastructure necessary to withstand superstorms. Climate change is having a dramatic impact on our state, and if the storms we have seen in the last few years are any indication of what is to come, we need to commence serious conversations on how we are going to adapt to these changing realities.

The process of global warming is fairly straightforward, but its impact is complex. When cold, fresh water from the glaciers and ice caps melt into the warmer, saltwater, many changes start to happen. One outcome is rising sea levels. A recent study by the National Geological Survey indicates that the Atlantic Ocean on the East Coast of the United States is rising three times more quickly than the average rising waters around the world. Another invisible consequence is the release of methane gas as the Arctic ice caps melt. Methane gas is trapped in and under the glaciers and is being slowly released into the atmosphere as the ice melts. Methane is the most destructive of the greenhouse gases.

Not only is methane released through melting of polar ice caps, it is also released through the use and extraction of natural gas. Although natural gas has been argued to be a better fuel alternative, because it burns cleaner than other fossil fuels, this is only a partial analysis of the situation. An ancillary result of the use of natural gas is the release of methane into the atmosphere when it is burned. The release of methane is only exacerbated if the gas is obtained through hydrofracking. We already know that hydrofracking as an activity itself can be dangerous and detrimental to the environment, but what is often overlooked is the many components of this process that can be dangerous not for those of us immediately around the site of hydrofracking, but also the long-term impact this has on the planet, and climate change.

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It's Time to Increase the Minimum Wage

In November of this year, more than 200 fast food workers went on strike throughout New York City to protest against low wages and working conditions in the industry. These workers' main complaint was that the current minimum wage makes it impossible for anyone who works in the fast food industry to escape poverty.

The current minimum wage in New York is \$7.25 per hour. Working a 40-hour week while earning a minimum wage means that the maximum salary an individual can earn for the year is \$16,000. A 2-person household is eligible for food stamps if they earn less than \$19,000. Therefore, minimum wage jobs are ultimately subsidized by the government through assistance programs. Considering that McDonalds earned \$5.5 billion in profits last year, this seems outrageous.

The minimum wage in New York State is at the federally mandated level which is \$7.25/hour. It is difficult to imagine living in New York City on this meager income. The states surrounding New York already have made adjustments to their minimum wages. Connecticut's minimum wage is \$8.25/hour and New Jersey has a bill before the governor that would raise the minimum wage to \$8.50/hour. These facts discredit any arguments that cite a competitive disadvantage for New York if the law is changed.

Income inequality in the nation is at its highest levels since the Great Depression and New York State has the greatest concentration of income inequality in the nation. Although my Assembly

District is in a prosperous area, there are pockets of poverty within it, and more substantial areas within an easy bus ride where there is severe poverty. In addition, many people are surviving on social security and they find it difficult to get by.

During conversations that occurred during the national election, it was apparent that there was a very large disconnect between many Americans and the experience of those who live in rarefied and fortunate circumstances. The same individuals who argue for tax breaks for large corporations were often times the same ones arguing against raising the minimum wage. Corporate welfare was deemed acceptable but policies that helped the working poor were considered a grave threat to our economic recovery. Corporate welfare is not just some tax loopholes, but include the many casual perks of power from travel to meals and other entertainment.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt first proposed a federal minimum wage in 1937, in the middle of the Great Depression, there was tremendous backlash from the business community. Corporate leaders claimed a minimum wage would send the country into an economic tailspin. However, FDR did not relent and the wage was set at \$.25/hour. Much has changed in our nation since 1937, but those opposed to increasing the minimum wage for workers are recycling the same arguments that were not persuasive 85 years ago. Raising the minimum wage did not send our country into a deeper abyss. In fact, raising wages was the first step towards end-

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The Future of Telephone Networks in New York City

Hurricane Sandy turned off the lights in Lower Manhattan and made any kind of communication extremely difficult. Cell phone service that we take for granted became intermittent at best. And cell phones ceased to function altogether once their batteries were exhausted. However, those fortunate enough to have landlines and phones that did not need an additional power source, were able to stay connected during the storm. On a personal level, my copper wire landline was a lifeline during the storm. I have always kept an old style land phone in the closet and was able to maintain communication with friends, family and neighbors even though I was sitting in the dark. Sandy demonstrated that it is essential to have communication systems that are independent of the electrical grid but sadly what was once taken for granted will soon no longer be.

In addition to copper wires, the main communication system in the City is operated through a Verizon Fiber Optic Network called FIOS. When it is operational, FIOS provides good service, but in the case of an extended blackout it is useless. Verizon FIOS needs electricity to operate and it currently has a battery back-up generator that lasts only 8 hours in the case of an emergency. If we lose power again in the middle of the night, you could wake up in the morning and have no telephone service, and the back-up generator would be for naught.

In many parts of Lower Manhattan, where copper wires were damaged, Verizon has stated that it will not replace the old system because of cost concerns. This will no doubt mean that in the not so distant future a customer's only choice will be FIOS and the increased bills that come along with that service.

The monopolistic aspect of FIOS is extremely troubling. Verizon and other phone companies are still required to lease space on their copper lines to competitors, a requirement that dates back to the Telecommunications Act of 1996. However, with certain exceptions, the phone companies are not required to lease space on its fiber optic network to competitors. Therefore, by removing copper lines it will be impossible for customers in those areas to have any choice about their phone service. This is a damaging change that creates a monopoly without public review.

Hurricane Sandy helped expose many shortcomings of New York City's infrastructure, especially pertaining to flooding impact on our electrical grid. The reality of climate change ensures that this will not be the last time our City is faced with severe weather. I am gravely concerned that in the future our telecommunication system will be completely linked to our electrical grid. The old fashion landline phone sitting in your closet may soon be rendered inoperable, and in an emergency, that might be an extremely unsafe proposition.

Rethinking New York City's Approach to Education

As we approach the end of Mayor Bloomberg's tenure, we are left with a city that has undergone tremendous change in its character. An area that has perhaps experienced the most change is our public education system, which has been drastically altered under Mayoral Control, which before Mayor Bloomberg had never been granted to a New York City mayor. It dissolved community school boards and centralized control of the Department of Education (DOE) within the Mayor's office, made way for a series of major reforms that have fundamentally reshaped the lives of our students, teachers, and parents.

Much of this change has come by way of an intensive push for charter school expansion. Under the Mayor, charter school growth in New York has been exponential. There were only 18 charter schools when the Mayor took power, but under his watch that number has ballooned to over 139, with plans to open an additional 50 charters in the next year alone. Perhaps even more indicative of charters' growth, the number of students attending charter schools grew to over 48,000 in the 2011-2012 school year, a 24% increase from just the year before. It should be noted, however, that these students represent just under 5% of New York City's school population. Focusing so much attention on this small portion of the City's school children is detrimental to the overall achievement of all students.

The proliferation of charter schools is based on the idea that public education is best served through a market-based system, wherein the best schools can rise to the top and those that do not meet a determined standard will close. This idea is a radical re-imagining of our educational system, and encourages charter schools to cherry-pick the most talented students with the most motivated parents, depleting the resources of existing neighborhood public schools that have often served as touchstones for the communities they serve. Importantly, the Mayor's push for the expansion of charter schools has continued despite numerous research findings showing that the charter schools are often found to be performing either similarly or at a lower level than their traditional public school counterparts. They are also extremely expensive to operate and often come at a greater cost to taxpayers making them difficult to replicate; charter schools receive more funds per pupil than the traditional public schools they are co-located with, and many of the CEOs of charter networks have higher salaries than Dennis Walcott, the Chancellor of the entire DOE.

Charter schools were originally intended to provide options for those students who were not being adequately served by their neighborhood public school, or did not have access to a

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Assemblymember Deborah Glick speaks at opening of new Bleecker Street subway station. Also featured in picture are Councilmember Margaret Chin, Borough President Scott Stringer, Congressman Jerrold Nadler, and State Senator Daniel Squadron.



Assemblymember Deborah Glick at the ribbon cutting of the Bleecker Street seating area. Also featured in picture are Community Board 2 President David Gruber, designer Gail Wittwer-Laird, Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Village resident and philanthropist Clifford Levy, New York City Park's Commissioner Veronica White and State Senator Tom Duane.

Free or Low-Cost Outings in NYC for Fall 2012/Winter 2013

Battery Park City		
Museum of Jewish Heritage www.mjhnyc.org 646-437-4202 36 Battery Place (at First Place) New York, NY 10280 <i>Emma Lazarus (Poet of Exiles) exhibition</i> 10/26/12-12/31/12 Adults: \$12 Seniors: \$10 Children 12 and under: Free	Skyscraper Museum www.skyscraper.org 212-968-1961 39 Battery Place (at West Place) New York, NY 10280 <i>Urban Fabric: Building New York's Garment District</i> 7/25/12-1/20/13 General Admission: \$5 Seniors and Students: \$2.50	
Chinatown		
Museum of Chinese in America www.mocanyc.org 212-619-4785 In U.S. Comics, 1942-1986 and Alt. Comics: 215 Centre Street Asian American Artists Reinvent the Comic New York, NY 10013 <i>Marvels and Monsters: Unmasking Asian Images</i> 9/27/12-02/24/13 General Admission: \$10 Seniors and Students (with school ID): \$5.00 Children under 12 in groups less than 8: Free	Greenwich Village	
	Merchant's House Museum www.merchantshouse.org 212-777-1089 A 1950s Christmas in an 1850s Home 29 East 4th Street (between Lafayette and Bowery) New York, NY 10003 <i>Holiday Exhibition: From Candlelight to Bubble Light:</i> 12/06/12-01/07/13	
Soho		
HERE www.here.org 212-647-0202 General Admission: Free 145 Avenue of the Americas (entrance on Dominick Street) New York, NY 10013	<i>Kirk Nachman: de Anima</i> 11/14/12-12/22/12	
City Museums		
MOMA www.moma.org 212-708-9400 Target Free Fridays From 4pm-8pm; tickets not available in advance General Admission: \$25 Seniors: \$18; Students with ID: \$14 Children 16 and under: Free 11 West 53rd Street Held every Friday evening New York, NY 10019	<i>The Shaping of New Visions: Photography, Film, Photobook</i> until 4/29/13 <i>Born Out of Necessity</i> until 1/28/13 <i>9+1 Ways of Being Political: 50 Years of Political Stances in Architecture and Urban Design</i> until 3/25/13 <i>Bruce Nauman: White Anger, Red Danger, Yellow Peril, Black Death</i> until 2/18/13 <i>Goldfinger: The Design of an Iconic Film Title</i> until 3/18/13	
American Museum of Natural History www.amnh.org 212-769-5100 Recommended donations; Pay what you can General Admission: \$19 Seniors and Students with ID: \$14.50 Children (ages 2-12): \$10.50 Central Park West at 79th Street New York, NY 10024-5192	<i>Theodore Roosevelt Memorial</i> until 10/27/13 <i>Journey to the Stars</i> until 12/31/12 <i>Creatures of Light</i> until 01/06/13 <i>Kwanzaa 2012!: First Fruits of the Harvest</i> 12/29/12, Noon to 5pm <i>Festival Luna</i> 01/25/13 and 01/26/13, Noon to 5pm	
Metropolitan Museum of Art www.metmuseum.org 212-535-7710 Recommended donations only; Pay what you can Adults: \$25 Seniors: \$17 Students with ID: \$12 Children under 12: Free 1000 5th Avenue (at 82nd Street) New York, NY 10028	<i>Regarding Warhol</i> until 12/31/12 <i>Chinese Gardens: Pavilions, Studios and Retreats</i> until 01/06/13 <i>Faking It: Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop</i> until 01/27/13	
The Bronx Zoo www.bronxzoo.com 718-220-5100 Daily Hours for Fall/Winter Season 11/04/12-03/29/13, 10am-4:30pm Wednesdays are Suggested Donation days; Pay what you can	General Admission: \$16.95 Seniors: \$14.95 Children (ages 3-12): \$11.95 2300 Southern Boulevard Bronx, NY 10460	

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Some of the very areas in New York State that have experienced major floods in the last few years are the same areas that are proposed to be used for hydrofracking activities. Among all of the other health and environmental risks associated with fracking, we have no guarantee that the sub-terrarium pipes used for fracking would not rupture if exposed by such massive flooding. No guarantee that the reservoirs of contaminated water that is a by-product of hydrofracking would not be mixed into the flood waters and spread all over the area. These areas can not afford any more risks or additional obstacles to recovery after major devastation.

Climate change has caught up to us in a real way. I am humbled by the way that this community and those around the city came together after the most recent storm. It is often said, New Yorkers are at their best when things are at their worst. I think New Yorkers, all over the State, are amazing and resilient in good times and bad, but we should be working to protect ourselves from such devastating outcomes in the future. We can not afford to engage in activities, like hydrofracking, that increase the impacts of climate change or risk of additional catastrophes.



Assemblymember Deborah Glick on the set of *The Good Wife* to promote the Post-Production Tax Credit in New York State. Also featured are Gina and Tony Argento from *Broadway Stages*.



Assemblymember Deborah Glick speaks at the City Council's announcement of a training program for abortion clinic escorts.

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ing the staggering economic inequality that we are greeted with again in 2012.

Everyone agrees that a strong middle class is the best thing for our nation, but time and again our economic policies do not reflect what is in the best interest of our country. For all those who claim raising the minimum wage will hurt the creation of new jobs, one needs look no farther than the example provided by Texas to see the fallacy in this thinking.

Texas has extremely lenient policies towards business and very little regulation on business. Although it has provided many jobs, it manages to have the 11th-highest poverty rate among all states as the majority of the jobs created do not pay higher than minimum wage. Although their unemployment rate may be low, these jobs do not support a middle class base that is essential for a strong economy.

21% of New Yorkers live in poverty. Raising the minimum wage would not be a panacea for all the ills of our City but it would be an important first step to ensure that the government does its part to help its citizens fulfill the American dream by rewarding work with a reasonable wage. I hope this year our State finally takes action that will instantly improve the lives of so many of our fellow New Yorkers.

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quality public school in their community. This has meant that while charters have expanded all over the city, certain areas with high performing schools, such as my district, have been left relatively untouched. However, even this is changing; charter networks such as Success Academy have begun moving into neighborhoods with quality neighborhood public schools with the support of the Mayor and Chancellor, even though there is little to no demand for different options. For example, School District 2, which encompasses my district, is slated to host two new Success Academy charter schools beginning next year, despite the repeated protests of the Community Education Council (CEC), neighborhood parents, and the staff of the schools with which they plan to co-locate. While for years charter schools have been shifting the educational landscape around us, their encroachment into new neighborhoods, such as the Village, regardless of need, now threatens to weaken the high-performing traditional public schools that have drawn and kept families in their communities.

My district faces very real educational challenges. Overcrowding in our schools continues to be a serious issue. P.S. 3, P.S. 11, and P.S. 41 are all over-subscribed, with P.S. 41 at over 135% of its capacity. With overcrowding has come the elimination of many of the offerings that make up a well-rounded education; art rooms, science labs, gyms, and even libraries have had to be given up for classroom space.

Rather than making investments in our successful neighborhood schools, and responding to community demands to open more neighborhood schools to serve its needs, the DOE's response has been to open unnecessary charter schools. Having charter schools enter our district is not a solution to overcrowding and in fact will likely only make the challenges our neighborhood schools face worse. The DOE, and the City, need to listen to the voices of parents, students, and teachers, by focusing resources on improving traditional, community-based public schools and reconsidering their single-minded focus on charter school expansion.

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Deborah Glick's

**NEIGHBORHOOD
UPDATE**



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