



Assemblymember
Dan
QUART
Reports to the
People

Summer 2012

Keeping Our Community Safe



Assemblymember Quart speaking to community members at National Night Out Against Crime.

It is important for our community to maintain its vigilance even as crime rates continue to be low. I was happy to attend this year’s National Night Out Against Crime at both the 17th and 19th precincts in Manhattan. National Night Out builds relationships and trust between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. Police officers spoke to community members about problems in their neighborhoods and shared information about what they can do to prevent crime. I was proud to stand with our local law enforcement officials and was happy to join our local communities in thanking our local NYPD officers for their hard work keeping our neighborhoods safe.

Not all crime happens out in the open, though. As more and more of our lives are conducted online, many victims are not aware that they have been victimized until long after the crime has taken place. Identity theft is one of these crimes; it continues to be the most prevalent form of consumer fraud in this country. Senior citizens can be some of the most vulnerable individuals to this kind of crime, often due to a willingness to reveal personally identifiable

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Improving Access to Health Care

In my first year in office, I have worked to increase access to health care services for my constituents. Senior citizens, children, and the uninsured often have the most serious health care needs and the least access to services. I have worked with local health organizations to provide health services to seniors, children, and those who do not have medical insurance.

For uninsured adults, access to health screenings can mean the difference between early detection of a relatively easy-to-treat problem and a protracted battle with a serious illness. Mammograms are an essential tool for early detection of breast cancer, saving women's lives. I have partnered with the American Italian Cancer Foundation to bring their mobile mammogram van to locations in the district to provide screenings to women who otherwise might not have access to a screening.

Even for people who have access to health insurance and medical care, dental care is often an afterthought. However, untreated dental problems can lead to serious health consequences. Working with New York University's Dental School, we provided a den-



Assemblymember Quart with P.S. 198 students visiting the dental van.

tal van for the students of P.S. 198 at Third Avenue and East 96th Street, ensuring that all the students at that school were able to be treated by a dentist.

Last October, just a month after taking office, I hosted my first Senior Health Fair at Knickerbocker Plaza in Yorkville. I brought together some of the major health care organizations in our neighborhood to provide information, services and screenings, including blood pressure and glucose tests, to senior citizens. Additionally, the Visiting Nurse Service of New York provided free flu shots to all attendees. I was pleased with the community response to the health fair and will expand the health fair this coming fall with additional organizations and services.

Rent Protections for Seniors

Senior citizens on fixed incomes are often faced with increasing rents that they cannot afford. This is particularly unfair given that many of these seniors have been



living in the same building or neighborhood for decades. The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program is designed to solve this problem; anyone over the age of 62 who meets the qualifications can apply for an exemption to any rent increases in their buildings and their landlords receive an equivalent credit on their city property taxes to offset this cost. This program has prevented many seniors from having to move out of their homes due to increasing rents.

In the last legislative session, I sponsored legislation that would increase the income threshold for SCRIE application, ensuring that the law keeps up with the economic reality faced by our seniors. I will continue to fight in Albany to ensure that seniors are treated fairly.

My staff is available to help any constituent determine whether they are eligible for this program and help with program application and administration problems.

Fixing Property Tax Inequalities

Since taking office, no issue has been of greater concern to my constituents as the inherent inequity in New York City's property tax system. The City of New York's property tax system has been historically inequitable to Class 2 cooperative and condominium owners.

In New York City, all properties are divided into four classes, each of which is treated differently. The most glaring inequity is in the different treatment of Class 2 owners.

For the past 16 years, this inequity has been partially cured through a tax abatement for Class 2 owners. The state legislature has extended this abatement four times since 1996 to ensure that property ownership does not become out of reach for middle class New Yorkers.

I was and remain a co-sponsor on the Assembly bill extending this critical abatement. However, because of continuing negotiations with the City of New York concerning matters not directly related to the abatement, the abatement bill was not passed before the end of the legislative session. While the Mayor has agreed that homeowners' tax bills will still

include the abatement until the legislature is able to vote on the bill in a special session later this year, this type of verbal agreement is simply not sufficient. New York condominium and cooperative owners deserve certainty in their property taxes that is bound by legislation.

More distressing is the City's failure to address the historical inequities within the City's property tax system. The previous extending legislation from 2007 required the city to devise a plan to overhaul the property tax system entirely, bringing more equity for all property taxpayers when it comes to both rate and assessment process. This plan was due to the state legislature by February, 2011, but never materialized.

The City of New York has consistently failed to correct these property tax code inequities, despite being specifically required to do so by the 2007 legislation. One of my top priorities is to demand that the Mayor, and the candidates who seek to replace him, address this persistent problem once and for all with a wholesale overhaul of the New York City property tax system.

Reach Out and Read at the Children's Aid Society

This summer, I was thrilled to spend some time with young patients waiting for their appointments at the Children's Aid Society, an event organized by Reach Out and Read in honor of Early Literacy Week.

Early literacy skills are a critical component of academic success. Reach Out and Read's innovative model provides books to low-income families during routine doctor's appointments, ensuring that they have access to age-appropriate reading material, allowing them to cultivate literacy skills in their children.

After reading with the children, I had the chance to tour the Children's Aid Society facilities in the Lord Memorial building on 45th Street in East Midtown. Children's Aid Society provides a variety of services for children in need in the Bronx and Manhattan, including opening comprehensive health care clinics. The clinic serves 60% of New York City's foster children with just two examination rooms.

Reach Out and Read and the Children's Aid Society are providing critical services to the children of our city and I was happy to be part of this tremendous collaboration. As the legislature works to pass next year's budget, I will fight to ensure that these organizations are able to access critical public dollars to fund their excellent work.



Assemblymember Quart spending time with patients at the Children's Aid Society.

Improving Air Quality in Our Neighborhoods

My top priority since being elected has been to eliminate the dirty air in our neighborhoods. We must make significant changes in how we generate and use power if we are to maintain our planet's livability for future generations. We also know that our dependence on fossil fuels has had a detrimental effect on our air quality, filling our air with pollutants like fine particulates that can have serious health consequences. Air pollution in our neighborhoods can be traced to two major sources: boilers burning dirty fuel oil and ambient air pollution from across the state and region.

I have been actively working on legislation to make it more affordable for property owners and cooperative and condominium boards to upgrade their boilers to burn cleaner fuel, improving the air quality on the Upper East Side and East Midtown.

The City of New York has required businesses and residents to retrofit their boilers to use cleaner fuel models; however, the State Legislature must now take steps to make that financially possible. Passing legislation in this area will be an important first step towards long term environmental sustainability, but it is only a first step. In

order to truly preserve our ability to breathe clean air, we also need to find new, renewable sources of energy.

Solar energy is a perfect fit for an urban environment. New York City, especially the Upper East Side and Midtown Manhattan, already have existing buildings that can be retrofitted with solar equipment to allow for passive energy generation, often adding energy to the grid reducing an entire community's dependence on dirty energy. Currently, only 9% of all of our state's energy comes from any renewable resource, including solar, wind, hydropower, and biofuels. In order to increase the amount of solar energy being used, two things are required. We need to begin by revamping our regulatory structure. Current regulations were designed for fossil fuels, but our regulations should be rewritten to facilitate renewable energies. We must also expand capital investments into solar equipment through loan and grant programs and tax incentives to make these renewable sources more affordable.

I will be offering legislation addressing the problems with our air quality and offering solutions in support of expanding solar energy and other renewable energy alternatives.



Assemblymember Quart talking to a constituent in his district.

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information. Seniors' increased use of the health care system can also make them susceptible to medical identity theft, where criminals will sell identifying medical information to an unauthorized user.

I have sponsored legislation that will add medical and health insurance identifying information to the definition of identity theft. As the methods of committing these types of crimes evolve, so must our laws. My legislation would greater protect seniors and other vulnerable New Yorkers from being victimized from identity theft by giving law enforcement the authority to arrest and prosecute this class of criminal. I will continue to fight for passage of this legislation.

For more information on identity theft and ways to protect yourself, please visit the Manhattan District Attorney's website at www.manhattanda.org, or by calling their office at (212) 335-9000.



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