



Attention young readers: Don't forget to mail in your NYS Assembly Summer Reading Challenge calendar!



Assembly Member

Rebecca A. Seawright

Community Bulletin

FALL 2015

DISTRICT OFFICE: 1365 First Avenue (between 73 St. & 74 St.) • New York, NY 10021 • 212-288-4607
ALBANY OFFICE: Room 818 Legislative Office Building • Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-5676
Email: seawright@assembly.state.ny.us • Website: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Rebecca-A-Seawright>

Dear Neighbor,

Thank you for sending me to Albany to represent our New York State Assembly district and to fight for our interests. In my first legislative session I sponsored and obtained passage of important legislation that passed both houses; six bills total and five that were approved by both the New York State Assembly and Senate. As was reported in "Our Town" this summer, my legislation proved to be "an unusually prolific early showing," and included health insurance safety nets for the City's small businesses; financing for new initiatives to clean up the City's waterways; protection for people receiving spousal maintenance and child support; and funding for community programs on Roosevelt Island. Although this was my "freshman session," I was appointed as Chair of the Assembly Subcommittee on Consumer Fraud Protection, and as a member of the following standing committees: Judiciary; Corporations, Authorities and Commissions; Banks; Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development; and Consumer Affairs and Protections. I was named to the Assembly Workgroup on Operations to help revamp the antiquated processes of this legislative body in need of great reform.


Like my legislative colleagues, I co-sponsored and supported many initiatives essential to our district and the people of New York, including extending rent regulations in our City, maintaining existing affordable housing while allowing for the creation of affordable units. I co-sponsored numerous bills to strengthen the rights of women and senior citizens, to improve transportation, and to provide additional funding to our schools. I fought hard to pass a bill to stop the East 91st Street Marine Transfer Station while working with other elected officials to, at the very least, move the proposed ramp one block north. Ultimately, thanks to the unwavering dedication of our community, officials have agreed to relocate the ramp to the MTS so that it no longer bisects Asphalt Green. I continue to believe that the Transfer Station does not belong anywhere near a residential community and that we must continue the fight!

I am especially proud to have played a part in not only extending, but also improving rent regulations in New York City. The four-year renewal raises the luxury decontrol ceiling to \$2,700 (up from \$2,500) and maintains the income trigger of \$200,000 for two consecutive years. It is so important that this district maintains its existing affordable housing and also that it creates new affordable units. Next year, I hope to obtain even more improvements to affordable housing.

At the same time, with the help of my dedicated staff, after my inauguration we reopened a district office that had been sitting dormant for six months; we have been providing continuous constituent services to our district residents ever since. I proudly represented our district in Albany, never missing a single day of session or even a vote. We have much more work to do but this newsletter will provide you with a summary of the legislation for which we advocated and important information of potential help to you.

If there is any way that I can be of service to you, my office is just a call, e-mail or visit away.

My Best,


Rebecca A. Seawright
Member of Assembly, 76th District

Assembly Member Seawright Stands Up for Women's Rights

Recent events related to Planned Parenthood reveal once again how there are organized groups just waiting to seize on any opportunity to limit choice and limit access to contraceptives on the federal level. We need to be proactive on the state level to counteract what is happening on the federal level. If we don't choose to act, we will lose them.

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright is proud to be a member of the N.Y.S. Assembly and Women's Caucus in 2015 where she protected and fought for women's rights to choose. The Assembly Member joined Assembly Member Deborah Glick and co-sponsored legislation (A6221) that would codify the protections of *Roe v. Wade* into state law. This bill passed the Assembly but not the N.Y.S. Senate.

In 2015, the legislature passed two significant pieces of legislation in both the Assembly and Senate for the protection of women. First, New York is the only state in the nation to advance legislation to ensure prenatal care for all. This legislation makes pregnancy a qualifying event for enrollment in a health insurance plan (A6780B/S5972). Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright co-sponsored this legislation with her colleague Assembly Member Aravella Simotas. As importantly, Assembly Member Amy Paulin and Assembly Member Seawright also co-sponsored successful legislation to combat human trafficking. A0506/S0007 ensures that law enforcement agencies will be provided with the tools necessary to stop suspected traffickers and to protect the victims of sex trafficking.



Assembly Member Seawright attends National Night Out in August with former Community Board 8 Chair and current 19th Precinct Community Council President, Nick Viest. In her speech, Rebecca spoke about the importance of maintaining a strong partnership between the community and police force.

Cleaning the Hudson and All NYS Waterways

In an effort to continue the environmental recovery of New York City's waterways, Assembly Member Seawright sponsored Assembly Bill 7881, her first bill to pass the Assembly. The bill will extend previous state legislation to support cleanup projects and will allow for the continued funding of new initiatives to clean up our waterways.

New York City currently employs a Combined Sewage Overflow system which, when faced with excess water, releases overflow sewage and rainwater directly into our waterways. This legislation will work to combat that dilemma by granting subsidies to companies to help create new waste water treatment which will prevent the overflow system from being used. This will prevent future sewage from being dumped into the waterways, make them cleaner, and help restore the rivers to their former glory.

This bill passed both the Assembly and Senate and is awaiting Governor Cuomo's signature.

Assembly Member Seawright Votes to Protect a Woman's Right to Choose

Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright was a co-sponsor and strong supporter of a bill sponsored by Assembly Member Deborah Glick that would amend the outdated language of New York State law, affirming the constitutional right to make reproductive decisions that women across the country have had since the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision. The legislation, formerly part of the ten-point Women's Equality Act of 2014 and part of the Assembly's broader agenda to ensure full equality for women, would guarantee a woman's right to choose and ensure constitutionally protected access to safe, legal abortion (A6221).

"Women have a constitutional right to make decisions about their own bodies, and that choice must always be protected as provided under *Roe v. Wade* and subsequent Supreme Court decisions," Assembly Member Seawright said. "My mentor Sarah Weddington, the attorney who successfully argued the landmark *Roe v. Wade* case, would be proud to see that the New York State Assembly has passed legislation which, if signed into law, would codify a woman's right to choose."

While A6221 passed the Assembly this session, the bill did not succeed in the Senate. Assembly Member Seawright will continue to fight for the Women's Reproductive Health Act when she returns to Albany for the upcoming legislative session.

A Continued Fight Against the Dump

As promised, the first piece of legislation that I introduced in Albany was A5264, a bill designed to immediately stop construction of the dump, pending the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and multiple public hearings to address the community's concerns.

The bill gathered 19 co-sponsors in the Assembly, including the majority of the Manhattan delegation, but ultimately was not passed. I continue to oppose the dump and am hopeful that we will find even more legislators who support this community's fight against a residential dump.



Assembly Member Seawright speaking to young women at the Bella Abzug Leadership Institute (BALI) at Hunter College. BALI assists young women develop valuable leadership skills with programs that include public speaking, debates, and critical thinking.

Released Funds on Roosevelt Island

Assembly Member Seawright passed two bills in the Assembly this session specifically related to Roosevelt Island. Her legislation confirming the distribution of Public Purpose Funds on Roosevelt Island passed both the Senate and the Assembly. These funds support important community programs for seniors and youth.

A7974/S5813, jointly sponsored in the Senate by Senators José Serrano and Martin Golden, confirms RIOC's authority to provide grants to not-for-profit corporations and/or governmental agencies that provide direct services or benefits to Roosevelt Island residents. The legislation was introduced due to confusion over the future of Public Purpose Funds which RIOC has been distributing to the community for more than 20 years.

Moving the 91st Street Ramp

On the last day of July, Mayor de Blasio finally agreed to a concession regarding the Marine Transfer Station. A ramp will be installed one block north – at 92nd Street – which will eliminate the need for the ramp bisecting Asphalt Green. Though I am thrilled and relieved that the thousands of children visiting Asphalt Green every year will not have to dodge the swarms of garbage trucks entering the facility, I continue to oppose the Marine Transfer Station.



Assembly Member Seawright fighting to stop construction on the East 91st Street Marine Transfer Station, pictured here on the floor of the Assembly in Albany with Assembly Members Colton and Quart as well as members of Pledge 2 Protect.

Protect Yourself Against Consumer Fraud

As the Chair of the Subcommittee of Consumer Fraud Protection, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright wants to make sure that no one falls prey to the countless schemes designed to rob innocent, unsuspecting people of their personal information or money. One of the best ways to protect yourself against consumer fraud is by staying informed!

There are people who wish to scam you out of your well earned money. Here are some ways to avoid falling victim to these schemes:

- Read your credit card bills and bank statements thoroughly to make sure all of the charges are accurate. Call your credit card company if you see any unauthorized charges.
- Make sure you are familiar with where you send your money. If payment information for recurring charges changes, call the company involved using a phone number from an old piece of mail.
- Utility companies will never come to your door to collect payment. If such a thing should happen call the said company for verification.
- Make sure to shred all documents filled with personal information; do not throw them out!
- Be wary of suspicious phone calls and emails.
- If you think you have been scammed or have identified a scam please contact the Attorney General's Office at 800-771-7755, NYS Division of Consumer Protection at 518-474-8583 and 800-697-1220 or call 311 to speak with a representative at NYC Consumer Affairs.
- If you do not receive the attention you need, please call Assembly Member Seawright's office at 212-288-4607 or visit her office at 1365 First Avenue between 73 Street and 74 Street.

Improvements to Rent Stabilization Laws

This year the New York State Legislature voted in favor of a four-year extension of New York City's rent regulation laws, protecting rent regulated tenants until 2019. This extension raises the luxury decontrol ceiling to \$2,700 and maintains the income trigger of \$200,000 for two consecutive years. Also included in the extension is a longer amortization period for calculating major capital improvement rent increases, increased monetary penalties for landlord harassment and changes to preferential rent calculations after a vacancy lease rent increase. If you have any questions about the specificities of these changes, please call the NYS Department of Homes and Community Renewal Rent Info Hotline at 718-739-6400 or our office.

Additionally, the New York City Rent Guidelines Board approved the City's first ever rent freeze. For a one-year renewal lease with a start date between October 1, 2015 and on or before September 30, 2016 there is a 0.0% rent increase. For a two-year renewal lease with a start date between October 1, 2015 and on or before September 30, 2016 there is a 2.0% rent increase. Tenants with leases that must be renewed prior to October 1, 2015 may choose between a one-year renewal lease increase of 1.0% and a two-year renewal lease increase of 2.75%.



Assembly Member Seawright, the prime sponsor of legislation that confirms RIOC's ability to distribute Public Purpose Funds, argues in support of bill. An overwhelming majority of the Assembly Member's colleagues voted in favor of the bill, which is now awaiting the Governor's signature.



Constituent Services Manager Flor de Maria Eilets and Constituent Services Liaison Courtney Ferrissey distribute useful information to those attending National Night Out in Carl Schurz Park.

Seawright Votes for Passage of Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act

Assembly Member Seawright voted for passage of the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA), which ultimately passed in the Assembly with a vote of 88 to 45.

Gender identity or expression is commonly miscategorized as sexual orientation. This bill aims to end the ambivalence toward transgender individuals and prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or expression in employment, housing, public accommodations among other protections. It will also amend the penal code to classify offenses based on gender identity or expression under the hate crimes statute.

While many counties and cities in the state have passed laws protecting transgender individuals from discrimination, the laws vary in terms of the levels of protection offered. GENDA would apply throughout New York State and eliminate the inconsistencies from locale to locale.

During the debate on the floor of the Assembly, Seawright stood and argued in support of the Act which will extend rights under the law to people who identify as transgender. "We can all agree that all people should have equal protections under New York State law. In my district we have a vibrant transgender community," said Seawright.

Unfortunately, GENDA was not passed in the Senate. Assembly Member Seawright remains committed to advancing the rights and protections of transgender individuals and looks forward to supporting the bill in the next legislative session.



Local elected officials celebrate the United States Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriage throughout the country (left to right: Assembly Member Deborah Glick, New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, Assembly Member Dick Gottfried).

Assembly Member Seawright Works with Anonymous Donor to Provide \$150,000 to Complete the FDR Hope Memorial on Roosevelt Island



Assembly Member Seawright worked alongside an anonymous donor wishing to contribute \$150,000 to create the FDR Hope Memorial on Roosevelt Island. Here, Assembly Member Seawright presents Jim Bates, President of the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association, with the generous donation.

On August 12, 2015, Assembly Member Seawright presented a \$150,000 check to Jim Bates of the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association. The Roosevelt Island Disabled Association has been instrumental in the planning and fundraising for the completion of the FDR Hope Memorial. Unfortunately, due to lack of funding, the project has been held up since 2009. The plight of the association to furnish additional funds was published in the local media and seen by a charitable individual. The charitable individual, who asked to remain anonymous, worked with Assembly Member Seawright and the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association to bring this project closer to completion. Thanks to the anonymous donor and Seawright, the group is finally able to commission the artist to sculpt Franklin Delano Roosevelt sitting in a wheelchair, extending his hand to a young girl walking with crutches and leg braces.

Standing before the site upon which the monument will be located, the Assembly Member said, "I am honored to be here to assist with

the completion of the FDR Hope Memorial. Roosevelt's legacy has developed into something beyond what people alive at that time generally knew – that he was not just a remarkable president, but also an individual who prevailed despite his disability."

"I am thrilled that we were able to work with a remarkably generous constituent to finish this extraordinary memorial," Seawright said. "This is just another shining example of the incredible unity that exists in our district and I could not be prouder." The FDR Hope Memorial will symbolize the courage of those with disabilities in overcoming adversity.

Federal Agency Jobs for Seniors

The National Older Worker Career Center (NOWCC) is a non-profit organization specifically devoted to employing individuals who are 55 years of age or older. NOWCC has been placing older adults in full-time and part-time positions with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the US Department of Agriculture for 18 years.

To learn more about the National Older Worker Career Center's available positions, please visit <https://www.nowcc.org> or call 703-558-4200.



Assembly Member

Rebecca A. Seawright

FALL 2015

Community Bulletin

Minimizing Visits to Court Following Orders for Spousal Maintenance and Child Support

Assembly Member Seawright also sponsored legislation that ensures spousal maintenance and child support are properly allocated without the need to seek expensive court intervention when circumstances change. This legislation, which passed both the Assembly and Senate, ensures that a former spouse and parent who rely on these payments will be fully protected without returning to court (A7637/S5691).



Assembly Member Seawright stands with Senator Serrano, Public Advocate James and Manhattan Borough President Brewer honoring former Roosevelt Island Resident, Dominic Sciallo, who was recently inducted into the 2015 NYS Senate Veterans Hall of Fame.