

Assembly Member

Rebecca A. Seawright

Community Bulletin

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My attendance record in the NYS Assembly: 100%.

Dear Neighbor,

I have the pleasure of serving as the Assembly Member for District 76. Please allow me to share the progress we are making for the betterment of our neighborhood and our state. There is much more progress to be made, and many important issues that need to be addressed in the next legislative session. The best ideas come from you, and I invite you to stay in touch with me about topics that are important to you.

I envision a Manhattan that includes many more equal opportunities regardless of socio-economic class. That means a Manhattan with more affordable housing, quality public education starting with pre-k and finishing with accessible graduate schools, and services for all our seniors so they can enjoy their lives with dignity and the support they have earned. I envision a Manhattan with safe streets for all - pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists. I envision a Manhattan with affordable health-care and public transportation that is much more responsive to the needs of our communities. And I envision a Manhattan that remains the cultural and arts capital of the world, where greenery still matters, and solar becomes more ubiquitous. That is the Manhattan I want for my constituents.

In Albany, during the past two legislative sessions, I have passed ten important bills, eight were signed into law, and three involve improvements for Roosevelt Island. Some examples are featured in this newsletter. In addition, I co-sponsored many more significant pieces of legislation with my Assembly colleagues.

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

Highlights: What We Accomplished in Albany

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright is pleased to announce significant budget and legislative achievements in Albany that strengthen investments in the future of our community and State:

- Historic raise in the minimum wage to \$15, with gradual increases over several years
- New paid family leave program that ensures no worker is forced to risk his/her job to care for a loved one
- SUNY/CUNY tuition freeze and increased operating and capital funding
- Restored funding for the Second Avenue Subway
- Funding for upgrades to local water and sewer infrastructure statewide
- A middle-class tax cut has been created so that hardworking families can keep more of their hard-earned money
- Eliminated New York Tampon Tax

Lowlights: Ethics Reform - We Must Do Better

"I have zero tolerance for corruption in government. That is why I supported a resolution to amend the New York State Constitution that provides for the stripping of pensions for public officials convicted of a felony related to their official duties. Politicians who betray the public trust and use their office to subvert the law and line their own pockets shouldn't be rewarded with pension benefits paid for by taxpayers. Unfortunately, those who serve in government sometimes forget what public service is all about – service to constituents and to the people of our state. Politicians aren't above the law, and this legislation makes clear that there are serious consequences when they commit a crime. If you defraud the people, we'll defund your pension," said Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright.

Note: For this amendment to become law, it must pass in both chambers again next legislative session. After that, it will be placed on the ballot as a public referendum for voters to amend the New York State Constitution.



**Seawright
 Stands up
 for Voter
 Participation**

At the March press conference, Assembly Member Seawright called for much needed reforms to increase voter participation in city and state elections and to improve how elections are administered. Seawright said: "I am proud to join my colleagues in the fight for these critical reforms in New York City and across the State. It is our civic duty to improve how we conduct elections and pave the way for voters to actively participate in the process of electing those who hold public office. The current voting restrictions and barriers to a ballot limit citizen participation. Voter turnout in New York City hit a historic low in November of 2014, when only 25% of registered voters cast a ballot. Even in areas with the highest participation, including the 76th Assembly District, more voters stayed home than cast a ballot. Only 34% of registered voters made it to the polls for that election. Our voter participation reflects the health and stability of our democracy, and we need to strengthen our democracy. Women obtained the right to vote in 1920 and this year marks the 100th anniversary of the women's suffrage movement. Every American – female or male – who is eligible to vote should have access on Election Day to voice their choice. Now is the time to enact reforms that facilitate voter registration and turnout!"

Transportation

Seawright Fights for Second Avenue Subway in Albany, Helped Secure \$1 Billion

“This budget season it was critical that the MTA be fully funded so that projects like the Second Avenue Subway can be completed on schedule. We needed to close the gaps in transportation infrastructure by funding projects like this to relieve the burden on the ridership and on neighboring transit systems. I made this my key priority in this legislative session and, together with my colleagues, we were able to restore funding for the Second Avenue Subway, including the \$1 billion that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority slashed from its capital budget for the project last November,” said Assembly Member Seawright. According to the MTA, Phase 1 of the Second Avenue Subway construction was on time and on budget. Construction will be completed in October 2016 to allow time for training and test operations for the official public opening in December 2016.



Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright, MTA Capital Construction President Dr. Michael Horodniceanu and Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney attend the last tour of the Second Avenue Subway before December 2016 opening.

Crosstown Bike Lanes and Citi Bike Expansion

In response to her constituents, Assembly Member Seawright wrote a letter to Community Board 8 with concerns for the alternative plan to New York City Department of Transportation’s proposal, which resulted from the May 4th transportation committee meeting. Citi Bike plans to expand the number of stations on the Upper East Side. The New York City Department of Transportation decided to “proceed with the installation of bicycle lanes on two of the presented pairs: East 70th and 71st Streets, and East 77th and 78th Streets” according to their June 22 letter. “Changes to our urban landscape come with many benefits but also many challenges. We need more than vests and bells to create safe streets, we need enforcement and innovative legislation designed to help law enforcement, cyclists, motorists and pedestrians alike. I am pleased to co-sponsor several pieces of legislation introduced to make our streets safer, such as assigning penalties to businesses using bicycles for commercial purposes when bicycle operators violate traffic laws, the addition of a bike safety component to all Drivers Education courses, increased fines when a violation involves a bike lane, preventing motor vehicles and motorcycles from being allowed in the bike paths of New York City. I would like to thank Community Board 8’s Transportation Committee, the East 79th Street Neighborhood Association, and my colleagues in Manhattan and in Albany for bringing bicycle safety to the forefront of the movement for safe streets. With increased enforcement and new policies to govern our streets, our neighbors may then benefit from the health and environmental impacts of increased cycling,” said Assembly Member Seawright.

UES Bus Service

According to MTA, the ridership on M15, M101, M102 and M103 has been decreasing in the last few years. “We need critical improvements to the bus service that meets the needs of the commuters in our urban communities. We need more frequent local busses, a bus schedule that is reliable, and a bus system that is efficient and ensures adaptability into the 21st century,” said Assembly Member Seawright. “Many families, children and seniors rely on the bus service as primary means of transportation. New Yorkers need public transportation they can depend on to get to their grocery store, work or school. I will continue to advocate for better local bus service, and work with my colleagues to fix the buses in our neighborhood.”

Waste Transfer Station

Assembly Member Seawright continues to push back on the Waste Transfer Station and is working vigorously with the Community Advisory Group, advocacy groups, Sen. Liz Krueger, other elected officials and neighbors to fight against the waste transfer station that does not belong in our community.

Protect Your Tenant Rights



Every day we see tenants who are facing eviction and harassment by their landlord. If you or someone you know is experiencing harassment by their landlord, please consider our community office a resource for dealing with any housing issues you may be experiencing. Our office can assist with answers to your rights as a tenant, and provide information on the following:

- Repairs
- Harassment and dealing with the threat of eviction
- Rent increases for rent-regulated apartments
- MCI increases
- Rent overcharge
- Buyout offers
- SCRIE/DRIE applications
- Roommates and home sharing
- Forming a tenants’ association

We cannot provide legal advice, but can provide referrals to agencies, community groups, and pro-bono legal services. It is illegal for building owners to force tenants to leave their apartment or surrender their rights. Harassment can include: not offering lease renewal, repeatedly trying to offer a “buyout,” offering a “buyout” in a threatening manner, unjustified eviction notices or illegal lockouts, threats and intimidation, rent overcharge, and failure to provide necessary repairs or utilities. If you notify the owner in writing that you do not want to be contacted about the offer, the owner is not permitted to contact you again for 180 days unless there is a court order. There are penalties for owners who harass tenants. If a court finds harassment, the court may issue a restraining order against the owner to prevent further harassment. Penalties ranging from \$1,000-\$10,000 may be imposed for each unit in which the tenant is being harassed. If there are dangerous conditions or a lack of services, report the conditions to 311 and call Assembly Member Seawright’s community office at 212-288-4607 as soon as possible.

Seawright secures \$3 million dollars in Capital Grants for Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island, and \$150,000 in Priority Project funding, to support public schools, services for senior citizens and open green spaces.

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright Tours Roosevelt Island with Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer



Christina Delfico, FDR Four Freedoms Park Conservancy CEO Sally Minard, Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright, Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and FDR Four Freedoms Park Conservancy Chair Barbara Shattuck Kohn tour the park on July 13, 2016

“I was pleased to join Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul on her visit to Roosevelt Island, which included a tour of the Four Freedoms Park and up-and-coming Cornell Technion. She saw first-hand the need for workforce development and infrastructure support as economic



activity increases on the island. As we walked by the iconic statue by Jo Davidson that stands in the spirit of the four freedoms, we discussed the great legacy of Roosevelt Island and the importance of our community to the city and the state. The American Dream is very much a part of that legacy and we are proud to have allies like the Lieutenant Governor with us, as a visitor, an advocate, and friend,” said Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright.

Bringing IDNYC to Upper East Side

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) and IDNYC, and New York Public Library Chief Operating Officer Iris Weinshall joined to celebrate the opening of a new IDNYC pop-up enrollment center at Webster Library on Wednesday, July 6. Public Advocate Tish James and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer spoke at this event to mark the importance of IDNYC’s benefits to all New Yorkers. “I am thrilled to partner with Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs and Iris Weinshall to bring IDNYC to the heart of the Upper East Side. It takes remarkable people with great vision to bring about something that 8 million people can identify with, free of charge and just a bus, tram or a walk away. More than 500 people enrolled in only 11 days,” said Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright! “This program is not just about having an identification card, but about opening up doors to so many incredible institutions in New York City and embarking on a cultural exploration.”



Public Advocate Letitia James, New York Public Library Chief Operating Officer Iris Weinshall, Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs General Counsel and Policy Director Sonia Lin

Helping the Homeless

The homeless on our city streets are one of my prime concerns. In March 2016, there were 60,144 homeless people in our shelter system, 91% higher compared to just a few years ago. It is alarming that thousands of homeless people sleep in our public spaces, unsheltered. Many people refuse to go to a shelter, afraid for their safety, and others struggle with chronic mental illnesses. Earlier this year, the New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli issued a report on the audit of shelters with findings of serious violations, recommending that the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA) takes steps to complete all annual inspections and ensure that problems in shelters are remedied and conditions acceptable. Unfortunately, there is a long way to go to address these pressing issues.

There is a need to solve the issue of the homeless living on the streets now, and to connect them to medical and housing services that they need. I will continue to monitor the situation in our neighborhood and I am working with agencies, organizations, and other elected officials, as well as the 19th Precinct to address this problem. I will continue to fight to preserve affordable housing, strengthen our rent regulation laws and protect tenants’ rights, so that people with low-income do not reach the shelter system or even worse, the streets.

Seawright Bill Allowing Ongoing Distribution of Public Purpose Funds Signed into Law

Bill expands legislation signed by the Governor in December



On April 13, 2016, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law a bill introduced by Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright that removes the sunset provision from last year’s legislation clarifying the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation’s ability to distribute Public Purpose Funds on Roosevelt Island. The removal of the sunset provision – which initially called for the legislation to expire on December 31, 2016 – allows RIOC to continue to distribute the funds without question into the future. Senator José Serrano sponsored the legislation in the Senate.

“For the past 25 years, the Roosevelt Island community has used public purpose funding to create a vibrant and supportive island for its residents,” Seawright said. “The community depends on this funding to ensure that its excellent programs for Islanders young and old continue year after year. Thank you Governor Cuomo for your support for Roosevelt Islanders once again. I am so fortunate to work with Senator Serrano to allow these funds to be annually distributed.”

Shred-A-Thon Breaks Record

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright partnered with Upper Green Side to bring Shred-A-Thon to our neighborhood. Senators Liz Krueger and José Serrano, Assembly Members Dan Quart and Robert Rodriguez, and Council Members Ben Kallos and Dan Garodnick co-sponsored the event. “It was a huge success, with a total of 143 participants – that means one person every minute and twelve seconds – a record-breaking turnout!” said Seawright.



Visiting the Carter Burden Center for the Aging: Seawright has allocated \$150,000 to the center for renovation of their Luncheon Program

Recent Tragic Events

The following statement was issued by Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright:

“We deeply mourn the lives lost during recent tragic shootings. At a time when the families of those deceased and injured in our nation are trying to recover from the pain of their senseless loss, we are faced with one tragedy after another. Every time a life is lost because of hatred – whether it be a fallen law enforcement hero or a victim of profiling or discrimination, we move further away from protecting – as the founders of our country cherished—the unalienable right to life, liberty and to the pursuit of happiness. There will be much focus on what can and must be done to prevent such horrible acts of inhumanity, but now our prayers and thoughts are with the innocent families and friends of all those who perished.”



Assembly Member

**Rebecca A.
Seawright**

SUMMER 2016

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Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright meets with members of the Medical Society

Supporting Our Local Hospitals

Assembly Member Seawright fought to obtain much needed funding for the New York Structural Biology Center (NYSBC) for expansion of the biomedical research institutions in Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Rockefeller University and Weil Cornell Medical College. Established 14 years ago, NYSBC has been providing key resources in structural biology to the entire scientific community. The proposed project will enable personalized medicine to become an engine of economic development in the state while affording New Yorkers access to the most advanced health care practices and treatments in the country.