



ASSEMBLY MEMBER LATOYA JOYNER

77TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Bronx Tenant March for Stronger Rent Laws



Last month, Assembly Member Latoya Joyner spoke out against the housing affordability crisis currently plaguing Bronx families in the 77th Assembly District. At the Dec. 20 rally, organized by the Bronx Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA), Assembly Member Joyner vowed to strengthen current rent laws, which are up for renewal in 2015.

Christmas at the Highbridge Houses

Before the Christmas holiday, Assembly Member Joyner met with constituents and families at the Highbridge Houses' Christmas celebration.



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LATOYA'S LINE

Speaking to *City & State* magazine for its "Meet the Class of 2015" special report, Assembly Member Joyner explains why she is prepared to represent the 77th Assembly District:

"I believe that effective representation comes from leaders who are from the community and are committed to the advancement of that community. With my Albany experience, participation in the local community board, and law degree, I wanted to serve the interests of my community in the state Capitol."

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PUBLISHED OP-ED ARTICLES

Assembly Member Joyner recently published Op-Eds in *City Limits* and *Gotham Gazette*. With a targeted focus on helping Bronx families in the 77th Assembly District, she plans to address current food shortages at local food pantries and increase the affordability of housing by strengthening current rent laws.

No 'SNAP' Solution for New York City's Food Insecure Dilemma

BY LATOYA JOYNER

ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN
CITY LIMITS ON Nov. 5, 2014

Food pantries across the five boroughs are having trouble keeping their shelves stocked with nutritious foods. Meanwhile, the economic situation for many in New York City, especially families, has not improved and food lines just continue to grow.

Weekly, more and more New Yorkers find themselves reaching out to food pantries to gain access to healthy meals. In the 77th Assembly District, the district I

will represent in Albany, the food pantry for Riverwatch, Inc. is seeing similar surges on its distribution lines. According to Clyde Thompson, its executive director, the number of people needing food is “becoming crushing.” Every Thursday, from 2 to 6 pm, when food is handed out, Riverwatch sees an average of 300 people; there haven't been any slowdowns, either.

But it's not just a problem for the Bronx. Other pantries are suffering the same woes, where children are legitimately hungry and families choose to keep their utilities running rather than a healthy meal. The root of the problem is linked to residents who work but do not qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the nation's food stamp program that offers assistance to low-income individuals and families. Additionally, countless working households stave off any income increases that could jeopardize their eligibility for SNAP. Current minimum wage levels also do little to help the situation.

Almost one in five New Yorkers rely on SNAP and one in three City residents struggle to afford food, according to the New York Food Bank of New York City. In order to meet this demand, emergency food programs like food pantries and soup kitchens have traditionally stepped in to help needy New Yorkers; there are about 800 of which currently serve the five boroughs as part of Food Bank For New York City's network.

Meanwhile, in the Bronx, about 56 percent of feeding agencies have

said that they don't have enough food to meet growing demands in the community. Last year, 85 percent of New York City's food pantries and soup kitchens reported an increase in the number of people they served over the previous year.

Overall, Bronx families are the most food insecure, more so than the rest of the city. While just over 1.4 million people call the borough their home, about 30 percent are poor – double the poverty rates for both New York and the nation. And according to the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, one in three Bronx residents lived in food insecure households during 2010 to 2012.

It's no shock that having three healthy meals daily can work wonders for all New York City families, but there needs to be an increased focus on food pantries and other emergency food services. In Albany, I will advocate to increase awareness for New York City's food insecure problem.

SEE MORE
AT: <http://citylimits.org/2014/11/05/no-snap-solution-for-new-york-citys-food-insecure-dilemma/>

The Bronx's Growing Affordable Housing Problem

BY LATOYA JOYNER

ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN
GOTHAM GAZETTE ON OCT. 8, 2014

Affordability of housing is a growing problem for Bronx residents and families, more so than any other New York City borough. Having grown up in the area, and now working as a court attorney for a New York City Civil Court Judge, I have seen firsthand the troubles Bronx residents and families are facing. This is one reason I decided to run for the New York State Assembly in the 77th District.

The Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness said recently that the Bronx is in dire need of intervention. For instance, the number of homeless families in the Highbridge and Concourse sections increased 37%, to 633

families, from 2005 to 2010. Meanwhile, Bronx median rents increased by 10.5% to \$954 per month. And the office of New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer pointed out in April that housing affordability – computed by rent-to-income ratios – decreased for every income group in the city. The hardest hit are those New Yorkers earning less than \$40,000 a year. The Bronx median household income is \$34,300.

Overall, the 1,084 homeless Bronx families make up the bulk of the city's homeless population, according to a recent Daily News report. And surging rent increases are partly to blame. As an active member of Community Board 4 and the Neighborhood Advisory Board, I know how integral affordable housing is to the lifeblood of this borough. Meanwhile, it's unclear whether current City policies are headed in the right direction. The Rent Guidelines Board voted 5-4 in June to raise rents by 1% for one-year lease agreements for the nearly one million city homes regulated under the stabilization law. If you plan to sign a two-year lease, your rent will rise by 2.75%, according to the board's decision.

But the families protected under these guidelines make up only 45% of all rental units in the City,

according to a 2011 New York City housing survey conducted by the Census Bureau.

There may be some light at the end of the tunnel for tenants, however. Mayor Bill de Blasio's laudable "Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan" to create or protect 200,000 affordable housing units over the next decade is a refreshing source of hope. According to the Community Service Society of New York, the city lost about 385,000 units of affordable housing between 2002 and 2011.

More than ever before, housing and rent regulations need a tune-up to address the current and future needs of Bronxites. With rent regulations up for renewal in Albany in June 2015, I will advocate to strengthen existing laws that will preserve and protect affordable apartments

SEE MORE
AT: <http://www.gothamgazette.com/index.php/opinions/5403-bronx-growing-affordable-housing-crisis-joyner>



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7 POINT AGENDA FOR THE 77TH - LATOYA'S LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

1. Affordable housing and stronger rent laws for Bronx families.
2. Advocating for education and youth development.
3. Supporting our seniors and community centers.
4. Enacting the state Dream Act and ensuring that new immigrants have the same opportunities as all New Yorkers.
5. Raising the Minimum Wage.
6. Equal pay for Equal work! Ending unfair gender pay practices.
7. Quality and affordable health care.

Our work in Albany is in no way limited to the above list. I will work hard to ensure that the 77th Assembly District's voice will be heard.

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