



# ASSEMBLY MEMBER LATOYA JOYNER

## 77<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

[ASSEMBLY.STATE.NY.US/MEM/LATOYA-JOYNER](http://ASSEMBLY.STATE.NY.US/MEM/LATOYA-JOYNER)



FEBRUARY 2016 - NEWSLETTER

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### Assemblywoman Joyner Speaks to Youth, Parents



Supporting our youth and the community, Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner spoke to public school parents and students at events organized by New Settlement Apartments' College Success Program and Parent Action Committee, which focused on championing access to quality education and leveling the playing field with restorative justice practices.

### Assemblywoman Holds Faith Development Lunch



Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner and Rev. Dr. Raymond Rivera held a Faith Leaders Development Luncheon at the Latino Pastoral Action Center, where faith leaders in the Bronx gained important information from Rev. Karim Camara, executive director of the Governor's Office of Faith Based Community Development Services and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development.



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#### LATOYA'S LINE

**Statement of Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner Regarding Governor Cuomo's Proposal to Transform MTA Subway Stations.**

"Bringing these 21st Century changes to 30 New York City MTA subway stations, including the 167th Street and 174-175th Street B, D train stations in my district in the Bronx, will help to modernize and significantly ease transportation woes for thousands and thousands of riders. I commend Governor Andrew M. Cuomo on his vision to help limit the stresses of getting around with technology and innovation. These station face-lifts will make it easier to live and work in the Bronx and New York City."

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#### District Office - Constituent Service Hours

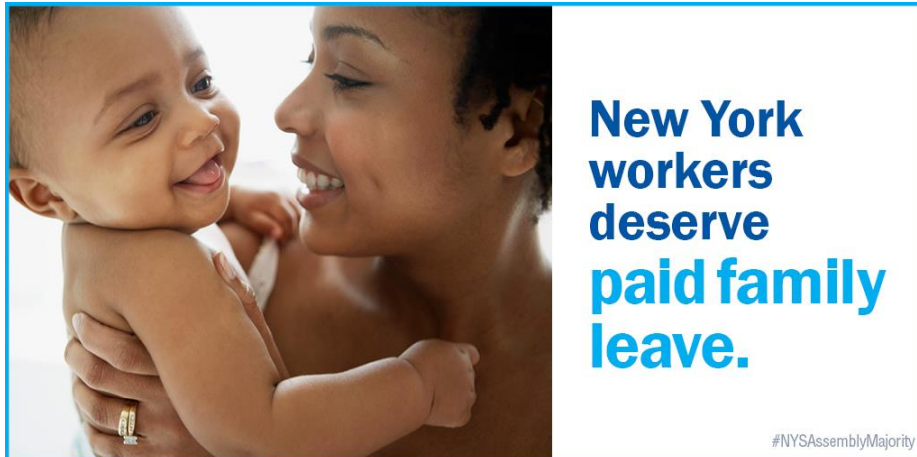
**When:** Monday - Thursday (10 AM-6 PM), Friday (10 AM-5 PM) **Where:** 910 Grand Concourse, Suite 1JK (btwn E. 162 & 163 Streets)

## Assemblywoman Supports Passage of the Paid Parental Leave Act

ALBANY, N.Y. – The New York State Assembly passed legislation on Feb. 2 that will provide workers in New York with up to 12 weeks of paid leave each year to care for family members in need.

Under the [Paid Family Leave Act](#), individuals could use New York State's Temporary Disability Insurance to receive paid time off from work for up to 12 weeks to care for family members, bond with a new child or address certain issues arising from a family member's military service. During the course of the paid family leave, the worker would be paid two-thirds of their average weekly wage, up to a maximum benefit level.

"No one should have to choose between their paycheck and caring for a family member in need. Passage of the Paid Family Leave Act solidifies the Assembly's crucial stance in supporting New York working families – the backbone of my community in The Bronx," **said Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner (D-Bronx, 77<sup>th</sup> AD)**. Having up to 12 weeks of paid time off made available from New York State's Temporary Disability Insurance rectifies an impossible scenario that so many families face today in New York, where a drop in pay is almost certain in any family life event – even when welcoming a new family member into this world. The status quo is unacceptable and this commonsense policy can ensure employee satisfaction and retention as well as maintain a healthier and more financially stable footing for working families in New York."



## Assemblywoman Joyner: Make sure to apply for money-saving tax credits

As you prepare your return, keep in mind that there are a number of tax credits that can help put more money back in your pocket.

Here are some money savers:

- the Empire State Child Credit, a refundable tax credit worth up to \$330 per child for ages 4-16;
- the Child and Dependent Care Credit, a tax credit based on a sliding income scale for working parents who pay for child care or those who live with a spouse or dependent who is physically or mentally incapable of self-care;
- the federal Child Tax Credit, a non-refundable tax credit of up to \$1,000 per child under the age of 17, or the refundable Additional Child Tax Credit; and
- the Real Property Tax Credit, a refundable tax credit worth up to \$375 for eligible homeowners and renters.

New York City residents are also eligible for the New York City School Tax Credit, a refundable tax credit of up to \$125 for

qualifying taxpayers. City residents can also earn up to \$500 with the New York City Enhanced Real Property Tax Credit.

Workers with low or moderate incomes can qualify for the federal and state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), recouping portions of the income tax withheld from their paychecks. To qualify for the New York State and federal EITC, you must:

- have worked full or part time at some point during the calendar year;
- be raising "qualified" children at home;
- have income below \$39,131 (\$44,651 if married) with one child;
- have income below \$44,454 (\$49,974 if married) with two children;
- have income below \$47,747 (\$53,267 if married) with three or more children; or
- be a worker between the ages of 25 and 65, earning less than \$14,820 (\$20,330 if married) with no children.

**To be eligible for the New York City EITC, in addition to the above requirements, you must be a full- or part-year resident of New York City, claim the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and file a New York State income tax return. For more information on any of these credits, visit [tax.ny.gov](http://tax.ny.gov).**

## Assemblywoman Joyner: Bronx Tenants Deserve Better



BRONX, N.Y.— **Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner (D-Bronx, 77<sup>th</sup> AD)** stood with tenants of 1475 Sheridan Avenue as they demanded action from landlord, Steven Finkelstein.

Residents filed suit against **Finkelstein Timberger East Real Estate** in the Supreme Court of Bronx County for dangerous and detrimental conditions during past renovations.

The complaint charges that Finkelstein performed past work in a very reckless fashion. He has cut off gas and failed to provide gas service for as much as eight months during renovations, forcing tenants to give up their kitchens and bathrooms months at a time, and forced them share a

common bathroom on another floor. Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) and attorneys from Legal Services NYC-Bronx and The Legal Aid Society, are assisting tenants.

*"I am shocked and appalled by the complete disregard and unacceptable treatment tenants of 1475 Sheridan Avenue in The Bronx have received from their landlord, Steven Finkelstein. Denying access to essentials, such as a bathroom and kitchen, for over eight months is an unnecessary hardship and top concern of mine—especially when so many families are finding it difficult to make ends meet and keep a roof over their heads. Bronx families deserve more, and they deserve better as tenants of our great borough."*

*--Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner (D-Bronx, 77th AD)*

## JOYNER PROMOTES DIVERSITY

### Assemblywoman Joyner Explores Diversity in Legal Profession



As Chair of the Subcommittee on Diversity in Law, Assemblywoman Joyner met with colleagues, judges, attorneys and other leaders of the legal profession for a roundtable to discuss ways to increase diversity in the legal profession. The legal profession has a profound impact in New York – at the community level and in government.

In the 2015-2016 state budget, the Assemblywoman backed Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP), including the New York Legal Educational Opportunity Program (LEO) — a program that affords minority and low-income students an early introduction to the legal profession. The Assemblywoman's advocacy culminated in increased funding and the reinstatement of the LEO program for New York students. The LEO program was first introduced by former New York State Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye – its primary goal was to help ensure diversity in the legal community and serve those individuals that have traditionally been under-served in the legal profession.

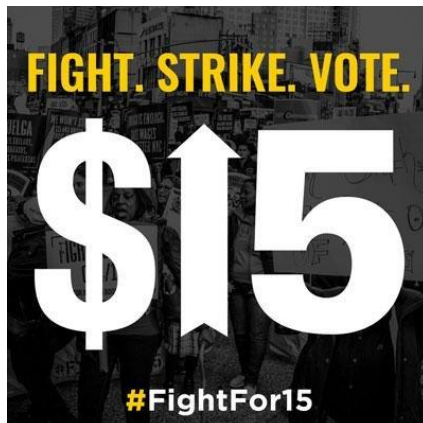
**City Limits:** [New York's Attempt to Diversify Legal Profession](#) (opinion article by Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner)



## Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner Supports \$15 Minimum Wage for All New Yorkers

"The current minimum wage handcuffs so many families that work full-time from escaping the grips of poverty. An increase to a \$15 per hour minimum wage— a more sustainable and livable income – will put more money in the pockets of New Yorkers and Bronxites.

For approximately 50,000 additional New York City employees – including teacher aides, custodial aides and family and infant care workers, an increase in pay is needed and necessary. I commend the excellent work of Mayor Bill de Blasio to raise wages to \$15 an hour by the end of 2018 for all City government employees and employees who provide contracted work for the City at social service organizations. Someone that works full-time to provide for their family should not have to choose between paying their rent, keeping their lights on or putting food on their table.



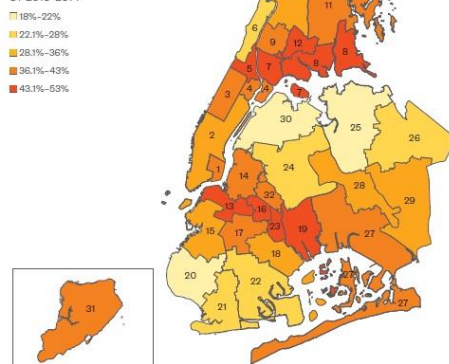
Unwavering support from Governor Cuomo to burgeon the minimum wage for fast food and state university workers – including a potential statewide increase to a \$15 per hour minimum wage – indicates that there is backing for this much-needed change in earnings that will allow New Yorkers to achieve the American dream. Leaders of this pursuit, the Assembly Majority has historically pushed for an increase in the minimum wage in order to boost opportunity and dignity for all families."

--Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner (D-Bronx, 77<sup>th</sup> AD)

## Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner Calls for Immediate Action to Address Chronic Absenteeism of Homeless School Children

Faced with a crisis level of chronic absenteeism of Bronx school children living in homeless shelters, **Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner (D-Bronx, 77th AD)** is urging local and state leaders to take "immediate action" to enhance efforts to meet the needs of

Chronic Absenteeism  
Among Homeless Students  
SY 2013-2014



Source: Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness

those children. Saying that the growth of homelessness in New York City has too often left our most vulnerable New Yorkers without access to the educational resources needed to succeed, Assemblywoman Joyner is also calling for the development of homeless-specific educational interventions – an essential

part of "effectively responding" to the City's ongoing housing crisis.

"The effect of homelessness on children who are striving to learn in school is one of the most devastating impacts of the growing reliance on shelters for housing," Assemblywoman Joyner said. "In the last four years, one out of every nine New York City school students has experienced homelessness and as recently as October 2015 there were an estimated 23,800 children living in homeless shelters throughout New York City.

"There are far reaching educational consequences when children are being raised in a shelter system that often falls short of providing the nurturing and encouraging environment they need to succeed," Assemblywoman Joyner said. "Every child has the right to the best possible education and we need to take immediate action to ensure that New York's educational system makes good on that promise."

The impact is most clearly seen in the dramatic level of chronic absenteeism that is prevalent among school children living in shelters. Most recently chronic absenteeism has reached 42.4% of homeless Bronx students, according to the latest report by the Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness.

"In my own district, Bronx Community School District 9, we have the highest rate of homelessness in the entire City with fully 18% of the student body experiencing homelessness during the 2013-14 school year and it's had a significant impact on academic performance," Assemblywoman Joyner said. "By using targeted programs that focus on reducing the number of empty seats in classrooms, we can bolster graduation rates, enhance test scores and improve educational success."

***"By more effectively integrating the programs and resources of the New York City Department of Education, the Department of Homeless Services and the Human Resources Administration in a holistic approach and utilizing after school programming focused on the needs and interests of homeless students we can achieve results that will benefit many of our children," Assemblywoman Joyner said.***



## **Homelessness Crisis Isn't Just in the Shelters. It's in our Schools.**

**By Latoya Joyner**

**January 15, 2016**

**(Published by *City Limits*)**

New York City has reached its highest levels of homelessness since the Great Depression. Homelessness is not only impacting families, it is also having a devastating effect on our children and their education.

The ongoing crisis of New York's homeless youth has reached epidemic proportions with one out of every nine students in New York City public schools experiencing homelessness within the past four school years, according to data from the Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness (ICPH). Additionally, the Coalition for the Homeless has found that as recently as October 2015 more than **23,800 children were homeless**. It may be hard to imagine the effect unstable housing and living conditions can have upon children but substantial data is now available on the absenteeism rates of homeless children - and it does not paint a pretty picture.

For example, in the Bronx **42.4 percent of students experiencing homelessness were considered chronically absent in the 2013-2014 school year**. In Bronx Community School District 9 - the

school district that I represent in the New York State Assembly - **18 percent of the student body was homeless in the 2013-2014 school year - the highest among the New York City Department of Education's school districts**, according to data from the ICPH. Usually, homelessness leads to displacement that is not only outside of their current school district, but outside their current borough. It is no surprise that State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia identified 55 New York City schools as struggling. Our children are facing disruptive life events through homelessness that impact their development as future leaders. We must level the playing field.

For those students experiencing homelessness, chronic absenteeism, displacement, poor test scores on statewide exams and disruption of their school schedule are just some of the limitations these students will face as they pursue their education. In District 9 we see its impact as - along with being the school district with the largest number of homeless students - it is also the school district with the largest number of students who have left school after becoming homeless.

Too often, I hear from families in my district that need help; they are struggling to pay their rent and put food on the table for their children. Pursuing an agenda focused on enhancing economic justice - by taking important steps like raising the minimum wage - will help us reduce the number of homeless Bronx students. But it is not enough. **We need to develop and implement educational strategies designed to limit empty seats in our schools, enhance test scores, bolster graduation rates and improve educational success for our community's children.** For those experiencing homelessness, school

may not be a top concern, but children need to be present at school in order to learn. This is where New York City's Community Schools model and other interventions can be effective catalysts for change and lead efforts to curb absenteeism and enhance academic outcomes.

A more nurturing and encouraging environment both in the classroom and at their current home will achieve substantial results, and help ensure that no seat is left empty in our schools. **A clear recognition of the impact of homelessness on school performance, the development of after school programs tailored to the unique needs of homeless students, and the holistic integration of programs and resources of the New York City Department of Education, the Department of Homeless Services and the Human Resources Administration are essential responses to the needs of children living with homelessness.**

**A family component designed to increase access to social services in order to limit the cycle of homelessness in our great city should be included. Access to programming and services can lead to success for families in transitional and shelter housing predicaments; success not only for the family, but also a sound educational footing for their children.**

- **ASSEMBLYWOMAN OFFERS FREE TENANT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner is proud to announce a partnership with **New York City's Tenant Support Unit**. Tenant Support Specialists are available **every Thursday from 11:00 AM-3:00 PM**, and can help provide support to tenants that may be experiencing housing related issues such as:

- Harassment
- Purposeful denial of essential services
- Overcharges
- Possible eviction

**For more information, please call Assemblywoman Joyner's Office at 718-538-2000.**

- **ASSEMBLYWOMAN OFFERS FREE HOUSING LEGAL SERVICES**

In partnership with the Neighborhood Association for Inter-Cultural Affairs, legal professionals will be on hand to assist your housing concerns every second and fourth Thursday, from 3:00 PM-6:00 PM (Starting March 16).

- **ASSEMBLYWOMAN JOYNER INVITES YOU TO SEARCH FOR YOUR LOST MONEY**

In partnership with New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, we will be hosting a State Unclaimed Fund Event at 1131-1133 Ogden Avenue (near W. 166th Street) this Thursday, Feb. 4 from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM. Representatives from the State Office of New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli will be on hand to assist you in your search.

- **ASSEMBLYWOMAN JOYNER PLANS JOB READINESS WORKSHOP**

Assemblywoman Joyner offers free Workforce Development Workshops. In collaboration with the SUNY Bronx Educational Opportunity Center, free workshops that will offer tips and training for resume preparation, job searching strategies and interview techniques on a monthly basis within my Community Office, which is located at 910 Grand Concourse, Suite 1JK Bronx, NY 10451.

The next Workforce Development Workshop will take place on Wednesday, March 16 at 12:00 PM.

**You can register by calling Assemblywoman Joyner's Community Office at 718-538-2000.**

- **2016 BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATIONS**

Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson, State Senator José M. Serrano and Assemblywoman Joyner invite you to 2016 Black History Month Celebration on Friday, February 26 at 5:30 PM at the Bronx Museum of the Arts (1040 Grand Concourse). It will be a night of award presentations, entertainment, giveaways and refreshments.

**To RSVP, please contact the Council Member's District Office at 718-588-7500.**

- **A CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

Congressman José E. Serrano & State Senator José M. Serrano invite you to A Celebration of Black History Month on Monday, February 22 at 2:00 PM-5:00 PM at Hostos Community College (120 East 149<sup>th</sup> Street) in Savoy Manor or 'D' Building

**To RSVP, please call 718-620-0084.**