

Assemblyman

Jeffrey Dinowitz

Reports to the People of the 81st Assembly District

SPRING 2014

District Office: 3107 Kingsbridge Avenue, Bronx, New York 10463 • (718) 796-5345
Norwood Satellite Office: 3450 Dekalb Avenue, Bronx, New York 10467 • (718) 882-4000, ext. 353
Albany Office: 941 Legislative Office Building, Albany, New York 12248 • (518) 455-5965
Email: DinowitzJ@assembly.state.ny.us

Serving the communities of Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Norwood, Riverdale, Van Cortlandt Village, Wakefield and Woodlawn

Dear Constituent:

There are so many issues facing our community and the City of New York. I am pleased to report to you that I have had a very productive 2014 so far, both in our district and in Albany in dealing with many of these issues.

I successfully fought to get the speed limit on automobiles reduced in a large section of Norwood. Working together with Senator Jeff Klein, we put a halt to the proposal by Montefiore Medical Center to build an oversized, 11-story facility on Riverdale Avenue. I have also been able to convince DOT to install new speed bumps throughout my district. We are currently working to get the City to build a pedestrian bridge in Van Cortlandt Park over the Major Deegan Expressway. There are many other issues and projects that I am working on as well.

In Albany, we passed a new state budget that provides funding to expand pre-kindergarten programs to every child in New York whose parents want it for their children. The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program (SCRIE) was expanded significantly to include many more seniors by raising the maximum income from \$29,000 to \$50,000. One of the failings of the final budget was that real campaign finance reform provisions were not included.

A number of my bills have been passed this year. My National Popular Vote legislation passed both houses and was signed by the Governor. My legislation to increase the availability of Naloxone will save thousands of lives. A number of my consumer bills have passed as well.

My excellent district office staff helps our constituents with every conceivable problem, especially housing issues; they are superb at cutting through government red tape. Everyone on my staff is also a notary public, and we provide free notary service. If there is any issue you would like to discuss or any problem we can be helpful with, please do not hesitate to contact my office. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Dinowitz
Member of Assembly



Elected officials including State Senator Jeff Klein, Mayor Bill de Blasio, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., and Council Member Andrew Cohen celebrate the city's huge victory in including funds for universal pre-K in the new state budget.

Controversial Montefiore Project Stopped in its Tracks by Dinowitz, Klein

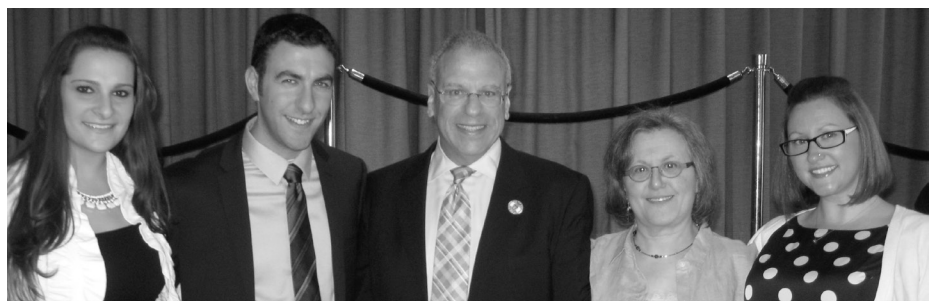
From the beginning, Montefiore's proposed development on Riverdale Avenue was a quagmire waiting to happen. Their plan was devised without any input from the community or from the local elected officials, all of whom have subsequently expressed grave concerns regarding the project.

Riverdale Avenue, an already congested thoroughfare with limited parking, wouldn't be able to absorb the type of traffic Montefiore's development would create. The effects a project of this size, at this location, would have on the community would be debilitating. That is why State Senator Jeff Klein and I worked hard to pass a new state law that will subject every prospective health facility in Bronx County similar to this to a mandatory community review process before any project can break ground.

Montefiore's project is now subject to this community review process and as a result they will not be allowed to construct any new facility at the proposed Riverdale site for well over a year. This will ensure that the voice of the people is heard and the community will have its say before any final decisions are made. I am proud that we were able to get this new pilot program review process into the state budget and I am hopeful that it will stifle this and other poorly conceived projects that would hurt our community in the future.



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured with the new Chief Commanding Officer Patrol Borough Bronx Larry Nikunen at the annual breakfast of the 47th precinct community council.



Assemblyman Dinowitz recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of his election to the NYS Assembly. Hundreds of people attended this event held at the Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale. He is pictured here surrounded by his daughter-in-law Tamar, son Eric, wife Sylvia and daughter Kara.

State to Fund Universal Pre-Kindergarten

Perhaps the most exciting news of the year is that newly elected New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, with the strong support of the State Legislature, kept his promise to bring full-day Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) to New York City! Every child deserves a first-class education, and this year's state budget makes a significant investment in our children to ensure they have every opportunity to succeed. I was proud to vote for a state budget that included over \$8.6 billion for NYC schools, an increase of over \$435 million from last year, including \$300 million for the UPK program. Because of this legislation Universal Pre-Kindergarten is already in effect, and children who turn 4 years of age by December 31, 2014 are eligible to enroll for FREE pre-kindergarten for September 2014.

Early education has positive long-lasting effects on our children, their academic achievement and prospects for the future. During their formative years, it is critical that we provide children with high quality pre-kindergarten programs that instill a solid educational foundation. Investing in UPK is a major accomplishment that will benefit our children and our city immensely for years to come.

More than 41,000 families have already applied for pre-K, an increase of 10,000 from last year. While the deadline to apply online through the Department of Education has passed, eligible families will be able to apply directly at schools from June 9th to June 20th. I strongly encourage all families with young children to visit the Department of Education's website (schools.nyc.gov/prek) for more information.



The funding in the 2014-2015 NYS budget for Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs was a huge victory for all New Yorkers. Assemblyman Dinowitz is with Mayor Bill de Blasio at the Riverdale Neighborhood House early learning program. They are shown here with a very bright four year old.



Assemblyman Dinowitz attended Pajama Day at Riverdale Temple Nursery School and read "Llama Llama Red Pajama" to the children.

Expansion of SCRIE Income Eligibility

The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program offers eligible seniors an exemption from future rent increases. If you qualify, your rent amount will be frozen and the City of New York will give your landlord a property tax credit which is equal to the amount of your future rent increase. **I am happy to report that the New York State Legislature has expanded the SCRIE income eligibility from \$29,000 to \$50,000.** Effective July 1, 2014, if your income is \$50,000 or less and you meet the eligibility criteria listed below, you may be eligible for the SCRIE program:

To qualify for SCRIE, you must:

- Be at least 62 years old.
- Rent an apartment that is rent controlled, rent stabilized or hotel stabilized; or live in a Mitchell Lama apartment or a Housing and Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) shareholder apartment.
- Be named as the tenant of record or if you live in rent controlled apartment be named in the rent order or have been granted succession rights to the apartment.
- Live in your apartment as your primary residence; have a combined income in your household that is \$50,000 or less in the previous calendar year.
- Spend more than one-third of your monthly household income on rent.

SCRIE applications are available at my office. Please call or visit my office if you would like assistance to complete an application.

DOT to Install Dinowitz-Requested Speed Hump on Irwin Avenue

Following a request by my office, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) has agreed to install a speed hump on Irwin Avenue, between West 238th Street and West 232nd Street. The request was first made in 2012.

I am pleased that the DOT has heeded our warnings about unsafe traffic conditions on Irwin Avenue. Over the years, my office has received a significant number of complaints about speeding in this residential corridor, which houses a lot of children and senior citizens. The lack of traffic calming measures on Irwin between West 238th and West 232nd street was a very serious problem, so I am glad the DOT recognized that danger and has decided to fix it. The location will now be forwarded to the DOT's Street Maintenance and Engineering Divisions for scheduled installation.



Assemblyman Dinowitz met with representatives of the student government of the In-Tech Academy (MS/HS 368.) These bright, inquisitive, and hardworking students had many questions about the job of an Assemblyman, politics, and a wide array of issues.

DOT Installs Norwood Slow Zone

Last year, after submitting a request along with Assemblyman Gjonaj to the Department of Transportation (DOT), I was proud to announce the establishment of the Norwood Slow Zone. This year I could not be happier to announce that it is now in effect and making a dramatic difference in the community. In the last few months the DOT has added over 13 speed bumps and 12 Slow Zone gateways to the area, greatly reducing the risk of severe traffic injuries. In fact, the DOT speed bumps have already resulted in a 20% reduction in speeding, and has reduced the risk of severe traffic injuries by over 40%. The designated Slow Zone, which encompasses all of the side streets within the boundaries of East Gun Hill Road, Bainbridge Avenue, East 204th Street, and Webster Avenue, includes 3 schools, 2 day care centers, and the Williamsbridge Oval. The creation of this Slow Zone is a big stride in protecting the members of our community and I hope that Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero initiative brings these Slow Zones to even more communities throughout the city.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Helps Pass State Budget That Invests in New York's Future

The 2014-15 state budget creates jobs and ensures a better economic outlook for New York State. It also makes a commitment to invest in our kids' education in addition to needed reforms to Common Core. The spending plan totals \$138 billion and continues the state's fiscal discipline by holding spending growth to less than 2 percent for the fourth consecutive year.

Historic investment in education and reforming Common Core

The 2014-15 state budget increases school aid by \$1.1 billion, or 5.4 percent, which is \$551 million over the executive budget proposal. The budget allocates more than \$8.6 billion to New York City schools, an increase of over \$435 million more than last year and more than \$203.2 million over the executive budget proposal. The budget also dedicates \$300 million per year for two years for Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) in New York City.

The budget incorporates recent legislation passed by the Assembly that helps fix the flawed implementation of Common Core. It protects students from unfair consequences based on test results and ensures the security of sensitive student data. The reform also bans standardized tests for students in grades K-2; prohibits Common Core test scores from solely or primarily determining grade promotion; delays the use of test results from becoming part of the permanent record for students in grades 3-8; makes changes to assessments for students with disabilities and English language learners pursuant to a federal waiver submitted by the State Education Department (SED); and significantly limits the amount of classroom time used for test preparation and assessments.

Making college education more affordable

The budget helps grow our higher education system by providing \$10.4 billion for SUNY and \$4.3 billion for CUNY. It also increases funding for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for the first time in 14 years and restores funding for other college opportunity programs. The budget also provides an additional \$20.2 million for community colleges, increasing base aid to SUNY and CUNY community colleges by \$75 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student, bringing the total to \$2,497 per FTE.

Two percent COLA for caregivers of the elderly and disabled

The state budget includes \$13 million to support 2 percent salary increases for direct care workers, including those caring for the disabled at non profits licensed by the state. The first Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) will take place on Jan. 1, 2015, and the second increase will go into effect on April 1, 2015. These caregivers assist the most vulnerable New Yorkers, and this pay increase will help ensure a well-qualified and adequately staffed human services workforce.

Safeguarding the environment

The budget continues a commitment to protecting New York's environment for future generations by increasing funding to the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) by \$9 million – for a total of \$162 million. In addition, the budget plan also provides \$92.5 million to support capital investments in our state parks.

Dinowitz Calls on City to Build Van Cortlandt Park Pedestrian Bridge



Community Leaders and elected officials came together to demand the city keep its promise to build a pedestrian bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway to connect the two sides of Van Cortlandt Park. From left to right are Community Board 8 Chair Robert Fannuzzi, Council Member Andrew Cohen, State Senator Jose M. Serrano, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park Chair Christina Taylor, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Congressman Eliot Engel, and Community Board 12 Chair Father Richard Gorman.

I continue to advocate for one of our community's most precious resources, our parks. I have been fighting alongside community leaders and other elected officials, such as Congressman Eliot Engel and City Council Member Andrew Cohen, to hold the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to its promise to build the Croton Pedestrian Bridge in Van Cortlandt Park. This bridge is something our community was promised years ago and, by improving access to all parts of Van Cortlandt Park, would be a great a benefit to neighboring communities.

In 1999, the New York City Council determined that the DEP should build a Pedestrian Bridge if it was feasible, and even after this study proved that this project was feasible, the DEP refused to pay for it. While the previous Mayoral Administration was busy bungling the construction of a \$3.2 billion water filtration plant our community didn't want or need, I am hopeful that with the new leadership at City Hall we will be able to work with Mayor de Blasio to make this bridge a reality and unite two halves of the park.

Assembly Passes Dinowitz Legislation Which Increases Access to Life-Saving Overdose Antidote, Naloxone; Thousands of Lives Will Be Saved



Assemblyman Dinowitz's new legislation to make Naloxone much more readily available will save thousands of lives. Naloxone is an "antidote" for heroin overdoses. He is pictured here with Assembly Health Committee Chair Dick Gottfried at a press conference announcing this victory along with members of Vocal New York, who fought for this legislation.

I am pleased to announce that the New York State Assembly has passed legislation I sponsored, A.8637, which would help stop accidental opioid overdoses and save thousands of lives by increasing access to the opioid overdose antidote Naloxone. If administered during an overdose, Naloxone can effectively and safely reverse the overdose by blocking the effects of opiates on the body. The legislation now awaits the signature of Governor Cuomo to become law.

The explosion of opioid abuse, especially heroin, in the last few years across the country has shed new light on accidental overdoses. This legislation will create further access to a life-saving drug that when administered properly is known to stop the effects of accidental overdoses. If we create more access in conjunction with ramping up outreach efforts, we can help save thousands of lives each year.

The legislation expands on a 2005 law I authored which established opioid antagonists as effective treatments. Accidental drug overdose is the number one cause of accidental death in New York, exceeding even motor vehicle accidents. Studies have shown that most overdoses are witnessed, and there is a 1-3 hour window in which an opioid overdose can be reversed, making many deaths preventable. Naloxone has proven to be a highly effective tool in reversing overdoses when properly administered.

Assemblyman Dinowitz National Popular Vote Bill Becomes Law – One of the Biggest Election Reforms Ever

I am proud that my bill for New York to join an interstate compact to award its electoral votes to the presidential candidate who wins the national popular vote was enacted and signed into law.

Unfortunately, presidential candidates concentrate their resources and political efforts on a pivotal few swing states. The result is that voters from states like New York, that have historically supported one party or another, are ignored despite having a large population.

It's time to put an end to having the presidency decided by a handful of swing states. My law will strengthen our democracy by ensuring that presidential candidates speak for the interests of all Americans, rather than competing for a small fraction of the votes in a few 'battleground' states.



A nationwide popular election can be implemented when enough states join the interstate agreement and pass identical laws awarding all of their electoral votes to the presidential candidate receiving a majority of the popular vote in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Currently, the National Popular Vote (NPV) law has been enacted by ten states and the District of Columbia, possessing 165 electoral votes – 60 percent of the 270 electoral votes needed to activate it. Passage by New York State added 29 electoral votes to the effort.

The United States is the only democracy with an indirectly elected executive. Each state's Electoral College membership is determined based on its total congressional representation in both houses, with the District of Columbia receiving three electors. In the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, the winners were selected based upon the outcomes of elections in one state because of its weight in the Electoral College.

Our democracy is founded on the idea that each vote represents an equal voice in our government, which is why the voices of millions of Americans shouldn't be stifled by the outcomes of a few states' elections. This law, if adopted by enough states, will ensure that every voice is heard and every vote is counted by awarding New York's electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the majority of the national popular vote. Once states comprising at least 270 electoral votes enact NPV, it will take effect and guarantee that the candidate with the most votes always becomes President.

Assemblyman Dinowitz attended the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center's new early childhood education center ribbon cutting along with City Council Member Andrew Cohen and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

Free Notary Service

My office provides free notary service during regular office hours, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please bring two forms of identification, at least one with your photo and signature, if you would like your signature notarized.



Assemblyman Dinowitz is joined by State Senator Jeff Klein, State Senator Eliot Engel, and Council Member Andrew Cohen, and Whitehall residents at a town hall meeting in the Whitehall Co-op.



State Senator Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Congressman Eliot Engel, and Council Member Andrew Cohen are shown at opening day with both the South Riverdale and North Riverdale baseball leagues.