



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz

Reports to the People of the 81st Assembly District

APRIL 2018

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

Dear Neighbor:

The tragedy in Parkland has shaken all of us: parents, students, educators, and community members alike. While we are fortunate that New York State has some of the strongest gun laws in the country, we need to do more. It should not be easier to buy a gun than to buy a car, but that is the unfortunate truth in many parts of our country. Furthermore, weak gun laws in other states allow criminals to purchase weapons and bring them undetected into New York. Our federal government needs to standardize background checks for purchasers of firearms, ban the purchase of military-grade weapons, and institute mandatory waiting periods on firearm purchases.

In New York, there are several common sense reforms that can be implemented which will make our communities safer. We can issue temporary restraining orders through our judicial system that prohibit dangerous individuals from possessing or purchasing firearms. We can clarify which weapons are banned by eliminating loopholes. We can better equip law enforcement to monitor and respond to welfare checks and mental health concerns. However, one thing that we cannot do is acquiesce to the NRA-backed campaign to attack victims of gun violence and undermine proactive legislative action.

After Sandy Hook in 2012, the NRA successfully lobbied against a reform package promoted by President Obama which might well have prevented tragedies in Parkland, Sutherland Springs, Las Vegas, Orlando, San Bernardino, Roseburg, Charleston, Santa Barbara, Washington Navy Yard, and so many others. We cannot let them stand in the way of progress for any longer. Countless people, including children, have died as a result of gun violence, and any legislation that could prevent these deaths is virulently opposed by the NRA and those in Congress who support their agenda. It is long since time for that to end.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Dinowitz
Assemblyman

Predatory Towing at West 230th and Broadway Dunkin' Donuts

I was disturbed to learn after numerous complaints from my constituents that a certain towing business appears to be engaging in illegal behavior at the Dunkin' Donuts' parking lot on West 230th Street and Broadway. My office has been told this company has repeatedly and illegally informed constituents who have fallen victim to their predatory towing practices that they must pay the full \$125.00 fee (plus tax) to unhook their car from the tow truck, and that they must pay cash. The law requires that towing companies accept two forms of credit card payment, and cannot demand cash. Additionally, they cannot charge the full towing fee just to unhook the car. While none of the constituents who have visited my office have disputed that they left their cars parked in the lot and left, they have all informed me that they were forced to pay cash and the full fee by threatening and rude employees. I have contacted both the 50th Precinct and the Department of Consumer Affairs and asked that they investigate these complaints as soon as possible, as this company continues its conduct every day and more people fall victim to their scheme. In the meantime, I advise my constituents to be wary of parking at the Dunkin' Donuts at all, lest they fall victim to this themselves.



Assemblyman Dinowitz celebrated St. Patrick's Day with members of the Riverdale Senior Center. Pictured with him are Eric Dinowitz, Congressman Eliot Engel, and William Weitz.



Assemblyman Dinowitz, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, served on the public protection subcommittee in recent budget negotiations.

Second Bus Transfer

In the Assembly, I have long sponsored and fought for legislation (A.9627) which would create a universal second free MetroCard transfer to better serve New Yorkers in transit deserts and those who depend on ADA accessibility. The MTA Board approved a second free transfer, but only in circumstances where there is a planned or unplanned service disruption. Transit users can now receive up to two paper transfers for both planned and unplanned service disruptions on the bus, or two General Order Transfers for a planned General Order disruption in the subway.

While this is a step in the right direction, those New Yorkers who live in underserved transit deserts such as the Bronx, Queens, and Eastern Brooklyn as well as those who rely on elevators and ADA accessible transit are still left in de facto two-fare zones. My legislation, which will be reintroduced, eliminates the requirement of a service disruption for a second free transfer. While I am glad that New Yorkers will not have to pay two fares when they are victims of subway and bus service changes, there still remain many people who suffer even under normal service conditions. I will continue leading the fight for transit parity and urge affected users to make their voices heard as well.

FREE Notary Service

Our 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 attended a recent meeting of the Marble Hill Tenants Association, where he spoke about the funding for improved lighting that he secured for Marble Hill houses. Pictured next to him is Tony Edwards, President of Marble Hill Tenants Association.



Assemblyman Dinowitz was joined in Albany by many of his colleagues as well as mass transit advocates in the fight for improved bus service.

DOT Refuses to Recombine Bx10 and Bx20 Bus Stops

As part of the design improvements at the intersection of Kappock Street and Knolls Crescent, DOT made the decision to separate the Bx10 and the Bx20 bus stops despite the fact that they serve the same route going north until West 246th Street. I have requested that DOT restore these two bus stops to the same location so that riders can wait at one location to take whichever bus arrives first. This particularly affects seniors and those with mobility impairments who cannot quickly run to the other bus stop if need be.

DOT has so far refused to restore these bus stops, using the argument that there is not enough space at the original bus stop location for two buses to stop without blocking the crosswalk (which is true) and that the Bx10 and Bx20 have too frequent service to be at the same location (to which I disagree). However, there are still two buses stopping at this location (the Bx20 and a Manhattan express bus) and the Bx20 only runs for part of the day with at most three buses per hour.

I will continue pushing DOT to recombine the Bx10 and Bx20 to properly reflect how our community uses the bus, but I encourage anyone who is affected by this decision to also call DOT and let them know directly. Bronx DOT can be reached at 212-748-6680 during standard business hours.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Appointed Member of Sexual Harassment Workgroup

I was pleased to be named by Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie as part of a workgroup to address sexual harassment. The onset of the #MeToo movement has opened doors and conversations that have previously never seen the light of day, and encouraged victims of sexual harassment to come out of the shadows and reveal their experiences to the world. It is painfully clear by myriad accounts we have heard publicly that large numbers of women, and many men, experience some form of sexual harassment during their education, social or professional life. It is clear that we as a society need to take a hard look at ourselves to determine why sexual harassment and sexual misconduct are so pervasive, and why victims so often remain silent. What we in the Assembly can do now is ensure that people feel protected from this behavior and create avenues through which victims can come forward without fear of skepticism, or reprisal from their abusers. I am proud to join my colleagues in the Assembly to determine how best to do that, and look forward to crafting legislation that creates meaningful change.

Reproductive Health Act Update

As you may know, this year marks the 45th anniversary of the landmark *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision. Three years before *Roe*, New York became the first state in the nation to pass legislation protecting and recognizing the reproductive rights of women. Since then, the Assembly has fought tirelessly to protect this constitutional freedom for every woman in New York State. While many other states continue to pass legislation limiting a woman's access to reproductive health care, the Assembly has passed the Reproductive Health Act (A.1748) to update state law to reflect the protections recognized by the courts under the New York State Constitution and the U.S. Constitution. However, this vital legislation has failed to make it to the State Senate floor for a vote. Attacks from Washington make it more important than ever that we codify *Roe v. Wade* into law to guarantee this fundamental right in New York. We look forward to bringing up this important legislation again this session.

Dinowitz-Sponsored Tenant Protection Law Now in Effect

I recently struck an important blow against corrupt landlords in the fight to protect affordable housing in New York City and to protect low income tenants by enacting legislation that requires a notice be prepared by the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) regarding authorized non-rental fees that can be imposed by landlords. This legislation passed both houses of the legislature unanimously and is one of a very few pieces of pro-tenant legislation to become law.

Landlords often attempt to illegally raise the rent of protected tenants by imposing unidentified fees that circumvent allowable rent increases. These fees are often used as a tactic by unscrupulous landlords as a way to increase their rent revenues beyond the permissible amount set annually by the Rent Guidelines Board. These can include legal fees and late charges, background checks, employment verification, and others. Many low-income tenants are unaware which fees are legally allowed and which are not and often simply pay the fees to avoid threats of eviction or further legal action. The DHCR currently publishes a fact sheet (#44) regarding fees for rent regulated tenants, and this legislation would simply require that this fact sheet be included in the rent stabilization lease rider currently provided. I am pleased that this law went into effect on February 20.



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured with anti-smoking advocates from across New York at their recent Albany lobbying day.



Assemblyman Dinowitz, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Dr. Betty Rosa, Chancellor of the NYS Board of Regents, and the Bronx Assembly Delegation are pictured after Dr. Rosa's re-election as a member of the NYS Board of Regents. Assemblyman Dinowitz proudly nominated her for the third time.



Fixing our subways and buses is a top priority and Assemblyman Dinowitz is shown here with mass transit advocates speaking to the media and demanding more funding.

New York Dream Act Passes State Assembly

In the Assembly I helped pass the New York State DREAM Act to expand access to higher education for the children of immigrants (A.9605-A). This legislation helps more hardworking students earn a college degree, begin successful careers, and give back to their communities. The DREAM Act would give undocumented college-bound students who meet certain eligibility requirements, such as attending high school in New York, access to the state Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Collegiate Science and Technology Program (C-STEP) and similar programs at community colleges. These students were brought here at a very young age and know only the U.S. as their home. They are already benefiting from public education from pre-K through high school and are eligible for the in-state tuition at SUNY and CUNY schools. Cutting off assistance as they attempt to complete their education is illogical and wasteful of the resources already spent developing these New Yorkers. Now the State Senate needs to pass this bill.

Creating the Office of Utility Consumer Advocate

Currently more than 40 states and the District of Columbia have an independent state agency that represents the interests of residential utility customers. New York is one of few states, and by far the largest, without such an independent office. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, and the several nor'easters that recently struck, consumers in New York have been left without a voice and real representation when it comes to utility services.

Every year in the Assembly, I have fought for and passed legislation (A.7293) which would create the State Office of the Utility Consumer Advocate to serve as an independent advocate and appear on behalf of New York consumers in state and federal regulatory proceedings, as well as judicial review proceedings concerning rates and conditions of public service utilities. Currently consumers in New York are represented by the Public Service Commission as well as the Utility Intervention Unit, a division of the Department of State. Neither of them is able to act solely on behalf of the interest of consumers.

In other states where such an office exists, residential consumers have seen drastic savings in comparison to the actual amount of funding that goes to these offices. California's Division of Ratepayer Advocates lobbied over 200 times on behalf of California consumers resulting in \$4 billion in rates saved and increases avoided; in fact, they estimate that for every \$1 spent representing and advocating on behalf of California's public utility customers, the average customer saved \$153 per year. The creation of an appointed advocate with the powers allotted in this bill would give New York utility customers a voice at the table, saving them a considerable amount of money when it comes to the utilities they use every day.

This legislation has so far been unable to progress in the State Senate, despite passing the Assembly four times since 2013.

REMINDER: New York Primary Date Moved

I cosponsored legislation to move the 2018 state primary election date from Tuesday, Sept. 11, to Thursday, Sept. 13, out of respect for those who lost loved ones in the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, as well as those celebrating Rosh Hashanah (A.8917-A). The Assembly has also routinely passed legislation to consolidate the state's election calendar by combining the state and federal primary election dates to the fourth Tuesday in June (A.3052). This would not only prevent the primary from falling on Sept. 11 or Rosh Hashanah in the future, but would also save taxpayers an estimated \$25 million, and keep New York State compliant with the federal Military Overseas and Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act. Further, holding both primaries on the same date would make it easier for New Yorkers to vote, increasing voter turnout and strengthening our democracy.

Protecting Our Elections

With the stark absence of leadership from Washington D.C. in protecting our democracy from subversion and external threats, the Assembly has passed the Democracy Protection Act (A.9930) to help protect the integrity of New York elections by requiring greater transparency for digital political advertisements. The use of anonymous social media advertising by foreign adversaries definitively affected and threatened the integrity of the 2016 elections. It is absolutely imperative that this never happens again.

Under federal law, most political advertising on television and radio must disclose the organization or individual who paid for the advertisement. However, the law does not include online political advertisements. Under the proposal, the definition of "political communication" would be updated to specifically include internet and digital political advertisements and all political communications would be required to disclose who paid for such communication. Failure to comply with the disclosure requirement would result in a civil fine of up to \$1,000 or the cost of the communication.



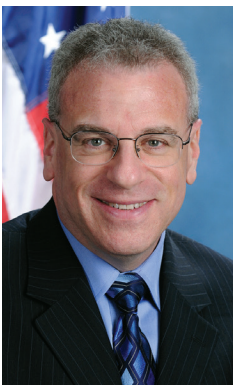
Assemblyman Dinowitz with honorees for SAR Academy; Lauren and David Lieberman (Center) Rabbi Tully Harcsztark-Principal of SAR High School (Far Left), and Rabbi Binyamin Krauss-Principal of SAR Academy (Far Right).



Assemblyman Dinowitz is shown attending the Parents Association auction for the Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy. Pictured from left to right are Tracy Shelton, Farrah Rubin, Eric Dinowitz, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Senator Klein, and Randi Martos.

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Jeffrey Dinowitz

April 2018

New York State Assembly Supports National Student Walkout

In the Assembly, I helped passed critical commonsense gun measures banning bump stocks (A.9958), keeping guns out of the hands of domestic abusers and dangerous individuals with clear 'red flags' (A.5025, A.8976-B) and establishing longer waiting periods to ensure thorough background checks (A.2406).

It's time the State Senate acted to pass these measures and protect New Yorkers, and it's time Congress took our cue and protected all Americans. Parents shouldn't have to send their children to school worried that they won't be safe. We can't allow this to become the norm – we as lawmakers cannot become numb, and our families cannot be left to live in constant fear.



Assemblyman Dinowitz attended Breakfast with the Band at PS 24. Pictured from left to right are Council Member Cohen, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Interim Acting Assistant Principal Nina Amster, and Principal Stephen Schwartz.