



Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon

52nd District



Announcements & Events

March 2022

A Message from Jo Anne...

March is Women's History Month, but every month is Women's History Month on my calendar. Every day and everywhere, women are passionately creating a better world. In looking at history to learn from our struggles and achievements, we also focus on the future. We have made tremendous strides forward. I'm encouraged to see women blazing new trails in science, public service, the arts, education, trade, manufacturing, finance, care, and more. And every day, I am proud to serve alongside the women of New York State's Assembly.

This month, Brooklyn's own Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg will posthumously receive the National Museum of American History's "Great Americans" medal, richly deserved. Justice Ginsberg's legacy continues to inspire women and girls throughout our state and nation.

I am particularly delighted that President Biden has nominated Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court. She is the daughter of two public school teachers. She is committed to our democracy's principles of a fair and impartial justice system. As a public defender, she represented defendants who did not have the means to pay for a lawyer and would be the first former federal public defender to serve on the Supreme Court upon confirmation. She will be the first Black woman on the Supreme Court.

We still have hefty fights before us. The U.S. Senate recently failed to take up the Women's Health Protection Act—already passed by the House—that would enshrine access to abortion in federal law. This is significant given that Roe v. Wade is currently under serious threat due to a case currently before the Supreme Court Case; its upcoming decision could gut Roe or even reverse it. This is why I am so proud to have helped pass NY State's historic Reproductive Health Act in 2019, which codified Roe v. Wade protections into state law. I will always stand up to protect our constitutional right to abortion in NY, in Texas, and for people across our country who deserve access to basic health care. I will keep fighting for universal child care, fair pay for home care workers, equal pay for all, and initiatives for women to achieve true equality.

Nominate a local Woman to Honor This Month! There are so many incredible women in this district who are making a difference. Email us your suggestion of who we should highlight this month - from a local teacher, staff or a volunteer at a non-profit or mutual aid group, a woman in business, or someone else who inspires you. Send us their name, a picture, why they inspire you: simonj@nyassembly.gov or 718-246-4889.

Youth Materials: If you'd like to learn more about NY women who are trailblazers, email simonj@nyassembly.gov to request a Women's History Month brochure, & a Women's History Month Drawing & Activity Pamphlet. You can also stop by my Carroll Gardens office on 341 Smith Street to pick them up.

Sincerely,

Jo Anne Simon

March is
**WOMEN'S
HISTORY
MONTH**

Honoring the women who
persevered, broke down barriers
and shattered glass ceilings to
create a better America

Reducing Hospital Costs & Improving Maternal Health

Care: We must provide affordable health care to ensure healthy pregnancies and to end the maternal health crises in New York. Rising hospital prices act as a significant barrier to quality care, and disproportionately impact Black and Brown mothers. I joined 32BJ and advocates to call for access to quality hospital care at fair, equitable and transparent costs. Passing the Hospital Equity and Affordability Law (HEAL bill A08169) is one way to tackle this longstanding public health issue.

It's important that we also focus on mental health in addition to physical care, given the prevalence of maternal depression and anxiety both during and after pregnancy. If you are feeling sad, anxious or depressed - you are not alone. Call the state-wide Helpline: Toll free: 855-631-0001 or visit NY's [Postpartum Resource Center](#).



Transportation Budget Hearings, Electric Vehicles & the BQE: The legislature just finished conducting state budget hearings. At the transportation budget hearing, I again urged the State Dept. of Transportation (DOT) to work closely with City DOT to repair and re-imagine the BQE corridor and the deteriorating triple cantilever. My bill to get illegally overweight trucks off the BQE is now law, and I've urged the city and state to roll it out as soon as possible since these large trucks cause significant wear and tear to the roadway. We also need collaboration at all levels of government--and community involvement--to plan for an environmentally-sound future of the BQE; I've urged the state to play an active role in this project. I also urged State DOT Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez to use federal formula funds for high-priority projects to advance urgent priorities in the City, like the BQE. You can [watch a brief clip of our conversation here](#).

Last November and again in January, I participated in hearings regarding Zero Emission Vehicles/Electric Vehicles (ZEVs/EVs) in NY and what we need to do to make this happen in our state and fulfill the mandates of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. From charging stations, to sharing technology, to "range anxiety," to concerns about the sale and distribution of EVs, to the power sources generating our electricity, and labor concerns, there is much we need to examine, so that NY can make fully informed policy decisions and expand access to these initiatives. The consequences of not doing so are enormous as we have learned from the IPCC's most recent report - we don't have much time left to avert climate catastrophe.

NY Actions Regarding Ukraine. I want to acknowledge the unprovoked and unjustified invasion of the sovereign nation of Ukraine. This is an outrageous attack on democracy by a cruel dictator with a long history of oppressing his own people, and Putin must be held accountable. Governor Kathy [Hochul has taken several measures](#) against Russia, including signing an Executive Order that will stop investments and purchases involving Russia, effective for as long as the federal government's sanctions against Russia are in place. She is also welcoming Ukrainian refugees to our state. NY has long been a beacon of light and hope for people fleeing oppression, and I believe it should remain so for refugees from all parts of the world seeking asylum. There are many organizations coordinating resources to help those in need; several can be found [here](#).

Protesting NYC's anti-LGBTQ+ Job Appointments. I joined my LGBTQ+ colleagues, activists and allies at a rally to urge NYC Mayor Adams to reconsider his appointments of people who are homophobic and transphobic, and who oppose abortion. We must stand up against hate in our City and show that New York City is a place that values the diversity of its people. Three of the appointees have a history of vocally supporting discrimination or even harshly repressive policies against LGBTQ+ people in New York and around the world. I also signed onto a letter with my state colleagues to express that in a City as diverse as New York, we must ensure that people in positions of public trust must serve all New Yorkers without favor or prejudice.

Job Fair Wrap-up: I was glad to co-sponsor a recent Job Fair at Wyckoff Gardens and Gowanus Houses, sponsored by Council Member Lincoln Restler and others in mid-February. The [African American Planning Commission](#) partnered with The HOPE Program to seek local residents for jobs at its upcoming shelter in the district. The Hope Program has a variety of job training, adult basic education, industry certifications, work wellness services, internships and job placement with long-term support ([learn more here](#)).



I strongly encourage all Brooklyn employers to work with the community to organize job fairs or job postings, and I thank

Councilmember Restler and all the co-sponsors & staff, the job seekers, the employers, and tenant leaders Theresa Davis, Joe Ann Brown, Valerie Bell, and everyone involved in organizing the day.

Roundtable - Learning to Read is a Civil Right: How We Drive Change. Please join us for this discussion Tues., March 1, 2022, featuring Kareem Weaver, Carissa Berliner, and Naomi Peña. Sponsored by the Literacy Academy Collective and co-sponsored by myself and many others. This event is free and open to all. Register here: <http://bit.ly/LACRead>

Action to Help Tenants Fight Back Against Predatory Landlords, 3/2/2022: My office is joining Councilmember Lincoln Restler for a canvass of tenants living in buildings owned by Greenbrook Partners. These tenants are at risk of the [same predatory practices Greenbrook has used in other Brooklyn buildings](#), where the private equity firm is aggressively raising rents and displacing tenants. We'll be going door to door informing tenants of their rights and inviting them to a tenant resource session with housing lawyers from [Communities Resist](#) (CoRe) and activists from the Greenbrook Tenant Coalition.

Please fill out this [sign-up form](#) to volunteer and give information to tenants this Wed., March 2, from 5:30 to 7:30pm. Meet in front of Borough Hall by the fountain, and then we will go to BK Heights, Boerum Hill, & Downtown BK (there is also an event in North Brooklyn Thursday night: [sign up](#) here).

Street Namings to Honor Our Neighbors. I recently attended two street co-naming events in our district. One was to rename Baltic Street at Bond Street in honor of Nicholas Heyward, Sr. whose life's mission was transformed by tragedy when his 13 year old son Nicholas, Jr. was shot and killed by a police officer in the stairwell of Gowanus Houses in 1994. I remember this day well; it brought young people in the community together to exchange their toy guns for books. At the time, it was asserted that the officer mistook Nicholas' toy gun for a real one. Nick Sr. spent the rest of his life pursuing justice for his son who had been playing with a toy gun that was orange in color and clearly not realistic.

The other street co-naming honored Kenneth "NuNu" Cassilla, a much loved young man and budding rap star from Wyckoff Gardens who was shot execution style on a bus in Miami 8 ½ years ago. His killer has not been identified. The community who raised him and loved him turned out for the event in the snow and rain for the emotional event. May Nick and NuNu rest in peace and may their names on the corners of Baltic and Bond, and Baltic and 3rd Ave, respectively, give us pause to remember them and their contributions to our community.

Bridges for People: I was excited to attend the Transportation Alternatives Bridges 4 People [Manhattan Bridge Connections](#) event to call for improved street design and bike infrastructure in this district and beyond. We highlighted major bike infrastructure issues that need urgent attention from the City and DOT. The event also builds on the success of last year's addition of a bike lane to the Brooklyn Bridge and advocates for improving connections to all of Brooklyn's East River bridges.



I have long called for safer streets, improved re-designs and slower speeds, along with additional investment in public transit so that we can reduce reliance on cars and keep our streets safe for pedestrians and cyclists.

My advocacy for traffic calming as a community leader (along with other area neighborhood leaders and Transportation Alternatives) led to the first traffic calming study and project in New York City in 1999. It was the first effort where community members were permitted on the consultant selection team, a role I served in along with Jane McGroarty from Brooklyn Heights and Jerry Armer from Cobble Hill. We fought hard against NY DOT and insisted on pilots that would show New Yorkers how street design can help keep all users of our streets safer. I am proud to have moved the ball forward against the odds so early on.

I also am a strong supporter and cosponsor of the bills in the Crash Victims and Safety package. This includes the "crash victims bill of rights" ([A09152](#)), A6681 to allow New York City to operate speed-safety cameras 24/7, [A5084](#) to require instruction in pedestrian and bicyclist safety as part of the drivers pre-licensing course, [A4655](#) to ease restrictions so cities can establish speed limits below twenty five miles per hour, and several others. I also sponsor a bill to lower the threshold for drunk driving from a blood alcohol concentration level of .08 percent to .05 percent (Simon A7197/ Liu [S131](#)).

[New Cyber Security Center opens in Downtown Brooklyn. New York City is partnering with 6 other large cities across the state to open a joint command center to monitor cyber security.](#) The command center is located inside the Metrotech Center in downtown Brooklyn and is staffed by federal, state, and city law enforcement officials. While there are not any current known cyber threats to New York State, Governor Hochul says the White House warned governors across the country to be on high alert given the current geopolitical situation with Russia.

[Update on Gowanus EPA Superfund Cleanup:](#) Last week, the EPA released a letter regarding the Former Citizens Gas Works Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP), also known as Public Place, site in Gowanus, which again raises concerns about locating housing and a school at that site.

EPA is still concerned that contaminated groundwater will continue to migrate off-site at levels that may not satisfy the integrity of the canal's Superfund remedy. "The potential for continued lateral migration and the resulting changes in the distributions of off-site NAPL and groundwater contamination following remediation remains a primary concern," according to the [EPA letter dated 2/23/2022](#). EPA's position is that supplemental remedial measures should be considered.

The parties responsible for the toxic contamination of the canal AND the surrounding area must be held accountable for a thorough and safe cleanup. The principles of environmental justice must be the foundation for any future development at the site. I have long been concerned about the serious environmental impacts

for the community due to the existing pollution, along with increased extreme weather events due to climate change and the flood zone of the area.

On a related note, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued their most dire report on the threat to all life on our planet from climate change. It states that we are dangerously close to irreversible multiple climate hazards cascading across the globe, beyond our capacity to address. More information is available [here](#).

Housing Lotteries:

Housing Lottery Opportunity Greenpoint due April 19, 2022. The Actors Fund is excited to spread the word about a lottery for new rent-stabilized apartments for moderate and middle-income households along the waterfront in Greenpoint. Eligible households will have a combined annual income between \$51,840-\$167,570. To learn more and to apply online, visit their [website](#). To request a paper application, send a request by mail to: The Bellsip, Settlement Housing Fund, Inc. 247 West 37th St. 19th Fl. New York, NY 10018. You can also learn more about how to apply for this lottery by attending a webinar in March or April. See available dates and [sign up](#) here.

Housing Lottery Opportunity in Prospect Heights, due March 14, 2022. There are affordable units available at 18 Sixth Ave, Brooklyn, 11217. Studios and one, two, and three bedroom units available. Qualified applicants will need to meet income requirements. Preference given to residents of Brooklyn CBs 2, 3, 6, and 8. For more information, visit [Housing Connect](#). To request an online application, email 18sixthavenue@mutualhousingny.org. To request a paper application, send a letter to: Brooklyn Crossing, c/o MHANY Management Inc, 470 Vanderbilt Ave, 9th Fl. Brooklyn, NY, 11238

Housing Lottery Opportunity in Ft. Greene due March 21, 2022. Applications for affordable units are now being accepted at 196 Willoughby St, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Studios, one bedroom, and two bedroom apartments available. To find out if you meet the income requirements and to apply online, visit [Housing Connect](#). To request a paper application, email 196willoughbystreet@mutualhousingny.org or write a letter to: MHANY Management Inc., 470 Vanderbilt Ave, 9th Fl., Brooklyn, NY 11238

Free Tax Prep Assistance: It's that time of year again! You can get free help using NYC Free Tax Prep at most sites if your family earned \$72,000 or less or you are a single filer who earned \$50,000 or less in 2021. IRS certified VITA/TCE volunteer preparers can prepare returns for you or assist you in preparing your own returns online. Find a location or set up a virtual appointment by calling 311 or go to: nyc.gov/taxprep

Make Compost, not Trash. You can still sign up for NYC Sanitation Department's (DSNY) free Curbside Composting pick-ups. DSNY collects food scraps, food-soiled paper, and yard waste so it can be turned into compost or renewable energy. Residents in currently eligible neighborhoods must sign up. Composting keeps our neighborhoods clean and healthy and makes our city more sustainable.

The following Brooklyn Community Boards (CBs) continue to receive curbside composting service: 1, 2, 6, and 7. Residents in these CBs can continue to [sign up online](#) or by calling 311. Unfortunately, expansion of Curbside Composting outside of CBs currently receiving service is paused until further notice. DSNY is working with the City's new Administration to evaluate the program and determine the best service model to help divert food waste from landfills. DSNY has encouraged everyone to [keep signing up for the program](#) as public support is an important consideration as NYC plans a path for citywide Curbside Composting.

Sign up for my Email Alerts. Email simonj@nyassembly.gov to stay informed of events & policy issues!

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