



Assemblymember
Jo Anne Simon

52nd District



Announcements & Events

April 2022

A Message from Jo Anne...

I am thrilled to announce that my Local Input for Community Hospitals (LICH) Act ([S3131/A02251](#)), also named after Long Island College Hospital, passed the Assembly with bipartisan support. This major piece of legislation ensures that communities receive notice and can provide input -- and the State Department of Health has oversight -- before hospitals, maternity or emergency departments are closed. This bill will help address the trend of healthcare facility closures with little to no public comment or public planning.

The LICH Act is all about patient safety, transparency, and engagement. When SUNY Downstate proposed closing LICH in 2013, the State Department of Health neither notified nor sought input from the surrounding communities that LICH had served for 156 years, including low-income communities of color that had been designated 'Health Professional Shortage Areas' by the federal government. The Red Hook and Gowanus communities -- literally underwater during hurricane Sandy -- were left high and dry by the hospital's closure. This harmful trend is happening across the state -- over 40 hospitals have closed in the last 20 years.

This bill ensures a role for real community input and state review to protect New Yorkers before hospitals or major departments are closed. The bill is supported by a broad coalition of healthcare and patient advocacy groups. You can [read the full press release here](#). The bill now must be passed in the Senate.

Sincerely,

Jo Anne Simon

Legislative Updates

Assisted Living Residences Bill is Passed: My bill [A.2211](#) to strengthen the public's protections during the closure and or decertification of assisted living residences passed the Assembly. This will ensure that what happened at One Prospect Park will not happen again. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with that residence, in 2013 the owner of One Prospect Park, an assisted living facility, received a permanent license to operate. He promptly decided to sell it for twice what he had purchased it for, and sent notices of eviction to 125 seniors who resided there - many of whom were over 90 years old. This was devastating and despite the community's rallying and six stalwart residents suing to remain, eventually all of the residents were displaced. A2211 would prohibit an operator from evicting residents from assisted living facilities with less than 120 days notice, prohibit increasing rents until a closure plan has been formally approved by the State Department of Health, and mandates that facilities assist residents in securing alternate housing appropriate to their needs. You can [view my remarks on the bill here](#).

Strengthening our Sexual Harassment & Discrimination Laws: I recently attended a bill signing for two bills I co-sponsored. One closes a "personal staff" loophole in the State Human Rights law by clarifying that the state or a locality is considered an employer of anyone serving in the state or local executive, judiciary, and legislative branches. That means staff of elected officials can now hold the governmental entity liable for damages and other relief if they have been sexually harassed. Another bill banning the unauthorized disclosure of personnel files as retaliation for engaging in protected activity, such as filing a complaint with a state agency for harassment, or discrimination was signed on the same day. Thank you to the NYS Sexual Harassment Working Group for their tireless advocacy on these issues.

Save the Date for the 7th Annual Dyslexia Awareness Day - May 12, 2022!

Dyslexia Awareness Day builds support for the dyslexic community and those with related learning disabilities. We feature legislation to improve literacy rates and strengthen our educational system.

[Register here for this free, virtual event.](#)

Allies include dedicated parent-activists, students, educators, advocates, and legislators from throughout New York State. We will share strategies, experiences, and advice.

Dyslexia is common – in every class of 30 students, 5 or 6 of them have dyslexia, but most of them will not be identified for years, and many never are. Let’s work together to change that. Be part of the conversation.

I’m proud to sponsor this event once again with Senator John Brooks, along with Senators Robert Jackson and Zellnor Myrie, and Assemblymembers Robert Carroll and Harvey Epstein.

SAVE THE DATE
DYSLEXIA AWARENESS DAY
Virtual Day of Advocacy
Join us for the
7th Annual NYS Dyslexia Awareness Day
Thursday, May 12th, 2022

Sponsored by

Assemblymember
JO ANNE SIMON

Senator
JOHN BROOKS

Co-Sponsored by

Senator
ROBERT JACKSON

Senator
ZELLNOR MYRIE

Assemblymember
ROBERT CARROLL

Assemblymember
HARVEY EPSTEIN

RSVP: <https://dyslexia-awareness-day2022.eventbrite.com>
Please contact simon@nyassembly.gov or 718-246-4889 for details or questions about this free event.

Gun Violence Research Tax Check off: My amended bill to create a mechanism where state taxpayers can contribute to the NYS Firearm Violence Research Institute passed both houses of the legislature and was signed into law by the Governor this month! The Institute’s scientific working group will comprehensively focus on firearm violence as a public health crisis, providing data to drive policy.

State Budget Highlights: The year’s Assembly budget resolution (often referred to as the Assembly’s “one house budget”) is chock full of important provisions to help New York’s families. The Assembly’s bill includes additional funding for the Environmental Bond Act, the provision of electric school buses on an expedited basis, and funding to provide additional child care, moving us toward universal child care for New York’s children and families.

It also provides fair pay for home care attendants who provide the critical service of caring for people who are older, ill, or disabled. Home care workers are overwhelmingly black and brown women who are far too often paid minimum wage. The work is difficult, and requires a variety of skills, but is vastly underpaid because the state has not funded cost of living adjustments for two decades, leading to a serious shortage of workers. As New Yorkers age and develop chronic conditions for which home care is needed, the workforce needs to grow and be fairly compensated.

Our one house resolution also includes over \$100 million to SUNY and CUNY to fully reimburse each system, eliminates the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) gap and increases the minimum TAP awards from \$500 to \$1,000, expands TAP for part-time students and restores TAP eligibility for incarcerated individuals. The Assembly budget provides \$1.63 billion in expansion capital for both SUNY and CUNY for a five-year capital plan and invests \$200 million in state operating support funds for both SUNY and CUNY. It also includes \$35 million over the executive proposal for a total of \$88 million for each system to hire more full-time faculty. We also provided over \$15 million in start-up funds for childcare

expansion at SUNY and CUNY, invested in additional scholarship funds for our nursing programs and increased funding for many successful educational opportunity programs. The Assembly budget also provides a \$2 million increase to help students with disabilities in college for a total funding of \$4 million.

We also included funding for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP). These programs will help keep hundreds of thousands of people in their homes.

As we enter the last week of negotiations over the State's budget (due April 1), I want to point out a few policy proposals in the Governor's budget that emanate from bills of which I am a sponsor. These include an approach to reforming the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (my bill: [Simon A8238](#)), and a mechanism for clearing New Yorker's criminal records after they have served their time and completed any period of parole called "Clean Slate" ([Cruz A6399](#)). I believe the Governor's proposal is too burdensome and the legislative approach to be more effective. I also support reinstating drinks to go, although the details have yet to be resolved, I am hopeful this will be in the final budget.

We are still fighting for many of the Assembly proposals to be in the final enacted budget, including Fair Pay for Home Care, higher education funding, and the elimination of the Medicaid cap imposed by the Cuomo administration several years ago. We are also still fighting for health coverage for all, as well as unemployment insurance support for touring artists and musicians and other excluded workers, and \$15 billion to be invested in decarbonizing New York. Climate change is on our doorstep and we cannot act fast enough. I recently participated in a [public art event with the NY League of Conservation Voters, members of local Girl Scout Troop 2414](#), which demonstrated the need for climate action, through an enormous melting ice sculpture at the Brooklyn Public Library's central branch.

[You can read more about the Assembly's one house budget here.](#)

Boerum Hill Fire & How to Help. I'm coordinating with the Boerum Hill Association, local electeds and the community to help our neighbors recover from the UFC Fit Fire which destroyed the homes of 17 residents (35 Dean St / 96 Boerum Place) who will now need our collective help to get back on their feet. [Please help out if you can.](#) The FDNY combated the 5-alarm fire for several hours, with over 200 Fire and EMS members on scene. There were several injuries, thankfully all non-life threatening.

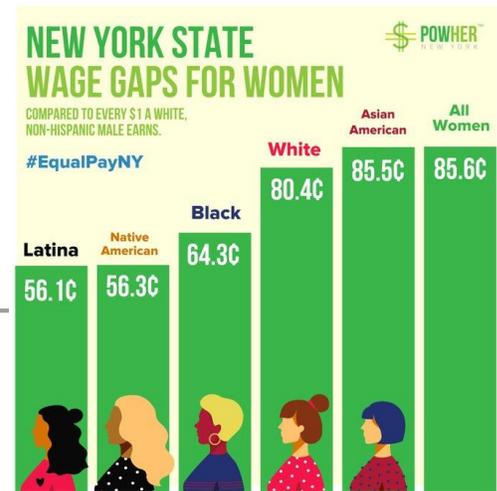
Subway Updates: Clark Street 2/3 & Court Street R. MTA tells us that they are on schedule for the completion of the Clark Street 2/3 station elevator replacement project, and will reopen the station with the three new elevators by the end of April 2022. Likely the same day, two entrances at Montague St. & Clinton Street to the Court Street R station will close for upgrade work to begin on that station's two elevators. The R station will remain open for customer use and subway service, but you will need to enter the station at Court Street. Work will continue through early Fall 2022. A 7-foot sidewalk area will be maintained at all times, and will not affect access to any building or store. The street barricades will look similar to the ones at Clark Street and will be approximately 8 feet in height. As we receive more information on this project, we will share it.

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

Public Service Commission Seeks Input on Proposed ConEd Rate Hikes. [ConEd is seeking approval to raise their gas rates](#) by 11.2% and electricity by 18.2% in 2023 in order to pay for system upgrades. The NY State Public Service Commission is holding several public hearings in the coming weeks to collect public comments. Anyone who wishes to submit a comment must pre-register. You can see all the hearing dates and register to submit a comment [here](#).

Fighting for Fair Pay.

It's outrageous that there's still a large pay gap between women and men. We need [Equal Pay](#) for everyone. March 15, 2022 is the symbolic date when full-time working women's wages equal the wages earned by full-time working men in the prior year. If we had closed the pay gap last year, we would have enabled women to pay for a year's worth of groceries & nearly a year's worth of rent.



Spring Cleaning Supplies Drive.

[Gowanus Mutual Aid](#) is collecting donations of cleaning supplies for neighbors in need through April 27. You can drop off donations at our District Office at 341 Smith St, Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm.

Housing Lottery Opportunity in 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 Bellslip, Settlement Housing Fund, Inc. 247 West 37th St. 19th Fl. NY, 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.

New Union Street Bridge Closure: The Gowanus Remediation Team (GRT) must conduct work to remove & stabilize sediments and install new electrical cables for the Union Street bridge's operation. Hotline for questions: 718.403.2451 or email info@gowanussuperfund.com. See more details below.

The Carroll St Bridge is now CLOSED to all traffic until further notice. GRT is working with City DOT and evaluating the condition of the bridge to determine when to reopen the bridge to traffic. Other aspects of the remedial work will continue as this evaluation is underway. Hotline for questions: 718.403.2451 or email info@gowanussuperfund.com.

Make Compost, not Trash: You can still sign up for NYC Sanitation Department's (DSNY) Curbside Composting pick-ups. Brooklyn Community Boards (CBs) 1, 2, 6, and 7 continue to receive curbside composting service. Residents in these CBs can still [sign up online](#) or call 311. Unfortunately, expansion of Curbside Composting outside of CBs currently receiving service is paused until further notice and is under evaluation. 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 composting.

COVID Updates:

- Stop by our office to pick up a free rapid at-home antigen Covid test. We have plenty. Please wear a mask!
- [Click here](#) to find a Covid test site near you or text "COVID TEST" to 855-48 to find a location.
- Find a Covid vaccination site near you: <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>.
- At-home testing for COVID-19 is available to all immunocompromised NYers and those ages 65 and older. To schedule an in-home appointment, call (929)-298-9400 between 9am and 7pm (7 days a week).
- The federal government is sending a **second round of 4 free at-home COVID rapid antigen test kits**. To receive your test kits, sign up [here](#) or call 1-800-232-0233.

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

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