



Assemblymember  
**Jo Anne Simon**

52nd District



News & Events

September 2024

**A Message from Jo Anne...**

Welcome back to all the students returning to school this week. You could feel the excitement in the air throughout the community this week. I'm wishing the best of luck to all of our learners and their families for a successful and fulfilling school year!

Thank you to everyone who donated to our school supply drive! We appreciate your generosity in providing local students with quality supplies. Thank you to our partners at Camp Friendship, Gowanus Mutual Aid, and Save 63 Tiffany Place for distributing the school supplies to students.

**We are still accepting school supplies until Sept 9th for our last distribution event.** Feel free to drop off any supplies to our office, 341 Smith Street, Monday - Friday 9:30am - 5pm, through Monday, September 9th.

**Lastly, please hand in your summer reading challenge forms!** If your child participated in the reading challenge, congratulations! We'd love to give participants a certificate of completion. Please hand in your form via email at [simonj@nyassembly.gov](mailto:simonj@nyassembly.gov), mail, or stop by my office at 341 Smith Street.

Sincerely,

Jo Anne Simon

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**Deadline TODAY, Sept 6th: Give Feedback on School Funding Formulas.** The Rockefeller Institute is collecting feedback on possible changes to the Foundation Aid formula that determines school district resources. They will submit a final report to the State with recommendations on modifying the current formula. It's likely that these recommendations will impact the Governor's next education budget proposal. **Rockefeller has received inadequate feedback so far, so please take a few minutes to give feedback and spread the word.** You can [submit your comments here](#) (or [get testimony guidance from the Alliance for Quality Education \[AQE\] here](#)).

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**Advocates for Children Education Helpline & Case Assistance.** It's back to school season! Families can call AFC's Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline with questions about the NYC school system. Their Helpline is staffed by bilingual education specialists who provide information and resources and, in a limited number of cases, assign AFC attorneys to represent low-income families. They can speak with families in their language. The phone number is 866-427-6033 (toll free), and it is open from Monday to Thursday, 10:00AM to 4:00PM.

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**Flu Shot Clinic, Wednesday October 2nd, 2024.** We are partnering with NYU, along with Senator Andrew Gounardes, to provide free flu shots to the community at the NYU Langone Health Cobble Hill ED (70 Atlantic Ave) on Wednesday, October 2nd from 2pm-7pm. Insurance is not required. You must be 18 years or older. Appointments are required. Please [RSVP online](#) or call 718-246-4889.

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**Java with Jo Anne on Fri. 9/20.** Is there a community issue or current event you're passionate about? Come and talk with me about it! Join me and your neighbors for a cup of coffee at my next "Java with Jo Anne." We will gather at **Kos Kaffe in Park Slope (251 5th Ave)** on Sept. 20th from **10am-11:30am**. Please [RSVP online](#) or call my office at 718-246-4889.

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**NYSED Task Force on Dyslexia and Dysgraphia to Hold Public Hearings.** The goal of this new task force is to prepare a comprehensive report of findings and recommendations, which are due December 22, 2024. These hearings will focus on screening methods, reading interventions, and educational supports. Make your voice heard and register to testify [here](#) at the virtual hearing on September 23, and register [here](#) for the in person NYC hearing on October 1.

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**New Covid-19 Booster & Mpox Vaccine.** Covid-19 cases have been rising in NYC all summer. The [FDA recently approved](#) a new seasonal Covid-19 booster that is designed to target the strains currently circulating and offer protection against severe illness during the fall and winter seasons. You can use the city's [Vaccine Finder](#) to find an appointment near you. The vaccine is free under most insurance policies, including Medicare and Medicaid.

As we see the rise of a new Mpox strain in other countries, consider starting your vaccine series today. Mpox can spread to anyone through close, personal, skin-to-skin contact. Learn more and book an appointment to get the vaccine at no cost [here](#).

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**Food Pantry Donations Needed:** Friends of Thomas Greene Park is hosting a Pantry Day, in coordination with others, on Saturday, September 21, 2024, 10am until supplies last, DeGraw Street (Third Ave between DeGraw & Douglass). Join us as friends helping friends, in securing food access and combating food insecurities. All are welcome to participate by donating food or partaking of the pantry. Contact [Fotgp2024@gmail.com](mailto:Fotgp2024@gmail.com) for drop-off details.

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**Upcoming E-Waste & SAFE Disposal Events.** There will be three E-waste events held throughout the district in the upcoming months. Recycle your TVs, printers & computers, keyboards, mice, phones, video games, VCRs & more (SAFE events collect additional waste).

- **E-waste Event, Sat. September 7th:** 10am-1pm at the Old Stone House (w/DSNY & CM Hanif), 4th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues. Drop off your e-waste. See [list of what you can bring & more details here.](#)
- **E-waste Event, Wed. September 25:** 10am-2pm at DUMBO Pearl Street Triangle (w/LES Ecology Center, CM Restler, DUMBO BID). Drop off your e-waste. [More details.](#)
- **SAFE Event, Sun. September 29th:** 10am-4pm cars line up at 63rd Street and 2nd Avenue (follow blue signs to ferry parking) at Brooklyn Army Terminal, Pier 4 Parking Lot to dispose of your e-waste. W/DSNY & NYCEDC. SAFE (Solvents, Automotive, Flammables, and Electronics) events collect e-waste and chemical products & medical waste. [More details.](#)

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**Prop 1 Anti-Discrimination Provisions & Voter Registration Information.** Below is information for the November 5, 2024 General Election. You can visit the Brooklyn Board of Elections (BOE) at 345 Adams Street, 4th Fl, Brooklyn, NY 11201, or call 718-797-8800.

**Register to vote by October 26th, 2024.** You can register online at <https://e-register.vote.nyc> or via mail or in person. Applications must be received by BOE no later than October 26, 2024 to be eligible to vote in the General Election.

**Request an absentee ballot by October 26, 2024.** Submit your request for an early mail ballot or absentee ballot online (<https://vote.nyc>), by mail, email, or fax.

**Vote Early: Saturday, Oct. 26, 2024 - Sunday, Nov. 3, 2024.** Early voting hours vary by day, so check before you go: <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/>

**Military & Overseas Voting Deadlines:** See deadlines here: <https://elections.ny.gov/military-and-overseas-federal-voting>

**Ballot Proposition 1 on Abortion Rights, LGBTQ+ Protections & Anti-discrimination Protections.**

Voters will also have the opportunity to vote on a ballot proposition, so remember to flip your ballot. The text of Proposal Number One from the NYS Board of Elections is as follows:

- Adds Certain Protections to the State Bill of Rights.
- Adds anti-discrimination provisions to the State Constitution. Covers ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity and pregnancy. Also covers reproductive healthcare and autonomy.
- A “YES” vote puts these protections against discrimination in the New York State Constitution.
- A “NO” vote leaves these protections out of the State Constitution.

Please [see the ballot proposition text here.](#)

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**Public Meeting on Gowanus Soil Vapor Testing: 9/19.** Join the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) & NYS Health Department (DOH) on Thursday, September 19th at PS 372 (215 1st St) from 7-9 pm for a Community Session on the Gowanus Canal and Soil Vapor Intrusion (SVI) testing. Presentations will focus on SVI test results from the last heating season & plans on the next round of SVI testing.

Gowanus SVI Testing. The Gowanus Canal was designated a superfund site in 2010 by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The cleanup plan includes dredging and capping the canal floor and installing controls to prevent combined sewer overflows and other contamination from compromising the cleanup. Another aspect of the cleanup of the area near the Canal is run by the NYS DEC, which is the agency in charge of the Brownfield Cleanup Program. DEC is currently conducting SVI testing, a process typically conducted during the heating season to ensure no contaminated vapors are infiltrating homes, and to help with remediation when it is necessary.

I urge all property owners who have received a testing request from DEC to authorize the agency to do this critically important testing. This step will contribute to a safer and cleaner community.

If you have any specific health concerns or questions, you can contact these agencies:

- EPA: Thomas Mongelli, (212) 637-4256 [Mongelli.Thomas@epa.gov](mailto:Mongelli.Thomas@epa.gov)
- NYS DEC: Heidi Dudek, (518) 402- 0193 [heidi.dudek@dec.ny.gov](mailto:heidi.dudek@dec.ny.gov)
- NYS DOH: Scarlett Messier-McLaughlin, (518) 402-7874 [bee@health.ny.gov](mailto:bee@health.ny.gov)
- NYC Dept.of Environmental Protection: Valentina Mascaro, 934-216-0209 [GowanusCCL@johnson-asberry.com](mailto:GowanusCCL@johnson-asberry.com)

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Georgia School Shooting. Unfortunately, this week another school shooting - this time in Georgia - has altered the joy and excitement of the new school year for too many people. The shooter used a semi-automatic assault-style rifle and was **a student known to have expressed serious threats of gun violence the prior year.** Tragically, in Georgia, there is no “red flag” law like the New York State law I passed in 2019. This was also a school where all the students had participated in lockdown drills and were theoretically supposed to “know what to do” - except that didn’t protect them from the shooter. This is another reason our lockdown reform bill is important - because there is no data substantiating that lockdown drills keep kids safe from gun violence in schools. If we are going to do lockdown drills that traumatize children, less is more. What we do know prevents gun violence is strong gun violence prevention laws rooted in evidence-based solutions like we have in New York, which is why New York State has one of the lowest rates of gun violence in the country.

Click [here to learn more](#) about how to request a Red Flag protection (aka Extreme Risk Protection Order).

Major Reforms to School Lockdown Drills: I’m happy to report that the NYS Board of Regents and the NYS Education Department adopted new regulations to reform New York's harmful and ineffective lockdown drills. They included many of the reforms that I had been advocating for, along with Senator Andrew Gounardes through our bill A6665/S6537. However, New York State still must reduce the number of mandated drills, which has to happen through legislative action.

The updated regulations include significant reforms: they ban active shooter simulations, require advance parental notification of lockdown drills, ensure that students and staff are informed that the exercise is in fact just a drill and not a real school shooting event, and ensure that drills are age-appropriate and trauma-informed.

For far too long, we have put students through ineffective and an excessive number of mandated school lockdown drills - four per year - for no justifiable reason. In 2016 under the former Senate

Majority, the legislature passed a mandate through the budget that schools conduct 4 lockdown drills a year - **that's more than 46 other states in the nation**. The number of statutorily mandated drills was made up from whole cloth, without any reference or support in academic literature. My bill reduces the number of mandated lockdown drills in New York schools from four to two, while ceding flexibility back to school districts which can conduct more drills if they so choose.

A large and growing body of evidence suggests that the drills are causing lasting emotional harm to students, teachers, and the larger community. Everytown for Gun Safety found that excessive and aggressive lockdown drills contributed to a 42% increase in anxiety and a 39% increase in depression amongst students. Some children even fear for their lives not understanding their drill was a simulation. Further, there is **no evidence that the drills prevent gun violence and virtually no evidence showing their efficacy**. We are doing more harm than good.

We must take the onus off children to keep themselves safe and instead focus on gun violence prevention policies that are grounded in evidence-based research and that prevent such shootings. We are extremely fortunate to have not had a mass school shooting in New York State; they comprise less than 1% of total gun violence incidents nation-wide.

Nevertheless, I'm thrilled about the reforms achieved thus far and I will keep pushing to right-size the number of lockdown drills mandated by the state.

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**Grieving & Weaving at Green-Wood Cemetery, 9/23**, 6:30pm - 8:30pm, Green-Wood, 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue. Free to Attend, but registration is required: [sign-up here](#). If you like to knit, crochet, or engage in another kind of crafting, Grieving & Weaving is for you. Green-Wood invites you to share your craft, your projects, and your thoughts with them. As neighbors create together, you'll talk about the significance of handmade items in both our personal and collective histories. Hear more about the workshops in [this recent NPR radio](#).

All skill levels are welcome, from beginners to experts! They'll lead a tutorial for newcomers in both knitting and crocheting, while those at intermediate and expert levels are encouraged to bring their ongoing projects. You may bring your own yarn, needles, and hooks; some materials will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

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**Help with your Heating Bills: Home Energy Assistance Program**. HEAP helps people pay the cost of heating their homes. Eligibility is based on income, household size, primary heating source, and if anyone in the home is under age 6, 60 or older, or disabled. Applications *typically open in early October* so [check the state's website here to apply](#) or apply online at [www.mybenefits.ny.gov](http://www.mybenefits.ny.gov) or call 718-557-1399. If you are a homeowner, you may be eligible for a Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement benefit to keep your home's primary heating source working.

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**Need Help with a Neighbor Dispute or Tenant / Landlord Issue?** New York Peace Institute (NYPI) is one of the nation's largest community-based mediation programs. NYPI provides people and communities in conflict the resources they need to resolve disputes and address incidents of harm by offering mediation and restorative justice processes for a variety of situations, including housing issues between landlords and tenants, interpersonal conflicts between neighbors, educational disputes between parents of children with a disability and the school, workplace conflicts between co-workers and supervisors, issues impacting a community, such as discord around shared space, or disputes within an organizational setting, cases pending in court, such as for custody, visitation, small claims. Learn more and get in touch by visiting <https://nypeace.org>

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**New Student Subway OMNY Cards.** At the start of this school year, all eligible students will receive brand new Student OMNY Cards with expanded transit benefits. Starting September 5th, students can tap their Student OMNY card to receive: four free rides every day; all day (not just certain hours); every day of the year (not just school days), and one card for the entire year. The new card is a faster, easier, and better way to ride! [Learn more here.](#)

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**New Garbage Bins:** The NYC Department of Sanitation mandates that all 1-9 unit properties use secure garbage bins with lids by **November 12, 2024**. If you already use a bin with a secure lid that is 55 gallons or less for trash, you may continue to use it until **JUNE 2026**. After that, you will need to switch to the official NYC Bin, [found here](#). According to DSNY, the bins are inexpensive, robust, and designed to keep rodents out. [Learn more here](#). Please note that this rule doesn't cover recycling bins; people can continue to use the bins they have been using.

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**Building Owners Must Submit Annual Parapet Inspection by 12/31.** Beginning January 1st of this year, the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) requires building owners to submit a parapet observation conducted by a person competent to inspect parapets, including, but not limited to a bricklayer, building superintendent, handyman, mason, architect, engineer, an inspector working for a NYS-authorized insurance company, or a NYS-authorized building inspector. This requirement applies to all buildings with parapets fronting the public right-of-way, regardless of height, except detached 1 or 2 family homes or buildings with a fence or other barrier preventing access to the exterior wall. Learn more [here](#) or email your questions to [parapets@buildings.nyc.gov](mailto:parapets@buildings.nyc.gov).

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**New Street Safety Bill: Daylighting.** I recently introduced a bill [A9985/S9769](#) to ensure that New York City is no longer exempt from the state's daylighting law. Daylighting creates additional space and safe visibility at curbs for pedestrians. This bill would improve street visibility at intersections and enhance pedestrian safety. Several Community Boards (CBs) across the city have recently passed resolutions in support of universal daylighting. I'm thankful to them for their forward-thinking work, **especially our very own CB8 and CB6.**

We are seeing far too many preventable fatalities and injuries from crashes at intersections throughout the city. The community is still reeling from the untimely death of a 7-year-old in Prospect Heights after being struck by a driver who was not able to see him at the intersection. Universal daylighting is a simple, effective way to improve street visibility and keep such tragedies from happening to anyone else.

If you would like to be involved in advocacy for this bill, or share a story about a particular intersection in need of safety upgrades, please contact my office at [simonj@nyassembly.gov](mailto:simonj@nyassembly.gov).

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**New Good Cause Tenant Protections are in Effect:** I was proud to pass good cause eviction protections against unreasonable rent hikes and retaliatory or discriminatory evictions. If you are eligible for Good Cause, you now have a right to remain in your home as long as you pay rent and follow your lease.

You may be protected under the new law if you live in a building with 11 or more units that was built before 2009. If your building has 10 units or fewer, you may still be protected if your landlord owns other buildings. The law does not apply to small landlords or tenants in rent-regulated/rent-stabilized buildings, public housing, or Section 8 housing.

Tenant protections include restricting rent increases by more than 5-10% based on inflation, guaranteed lease renewals or the ability to stay month to month without a lease, and preventing eviction without the landlord showing good cause. The NYS Department of Homes and Community Renewal (DHCR), must publish each year's reasonable rent increase by August.

You can visit [Housing Justice 4 All](#) and the [Legal Aid Society](#) for more detailed information and to see if you are protected. The city's Tenant Helpline can also answer your housing questions, refer you to legal services, and provide ongoing housing case management. You can access this helpline by calling 311 and asking to be connected to the Tenant Helpline.

While the version of Good Cause Eviction that made it into the state budget was a compromise and did not include all the protections that I had been fighting for, it still provides many tenants in market-rate apartments with protections they have never had before. 1.6 million households statewide are covered (roughly half of the state's renters) and in some counties, especially upstate, 75% of tenants will be covered (HJ4A).

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### **Transit Updates:**

**G train shutdown:** The summertime partial suspension of the G train has concluded! There are still some upgrades that are needed to complete the Signal Modernization Project:

- There will be no G train service from Bedford-Nostrand Avs to Court Sq on weeknights, Monday-Friday from 9:45PM – 5AM on the following dates: Sept 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>; Sept 30<sup>th</sup>-Oct 4<sup>th</sup>; and Oct 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>. During these times G service will run in both directions from Bedford-Nostrand Av to Church Av. Free B94 shuttle buses will make all G train local stops between Bedford-Nostrand and Court Sq, following the same route as during earlier phases of the project.
- Starting at 9:45PM on Fridays and through 5AM Mondays, G service will run in two sections: Between Bedford-Nostrand and Court Sq and Between Bedford-Nostrand and Hoyt-Schermerhorn. During this time, customers can take the A/C to Jay St-MetroTech and transfer to the F for continued service to G line stations.
- On weekends from 10/4 – 10/21, southbound F service will run express from Bergen St to Ditmas Ave. On the weekends of 10/25-10/28, 11/22-11/25, 11/29-12/2, northbound F service will run express from Ditmas Ave to Bergen St. On weekends from 11/1-11/18, northbound F service will run express from Kings Hwy to Bergen St.

**Smith and 9th Street Station repair:** The MTA will be performing an escalator replacement project at the Smith-9th Street F and G station. This project includes complete replacement of the old escalators with new ones, and will improve their reliability. Phase 1 began in July and will last approximately 9 months. During this period, one escalator will be out of service in each bank, with one escalator running in each direction.

**BQE Closures:** Early morning single lane closures on the Queens-bound BQE from Atlantic Ave to Brooklyn Bridge are ongoing until September 19th. Work will begin on weekdays from 1:00am to 5:00am. The Atlantic Avenue ramp will remain open during this lane closure.

Two lanes on the Staten Island-bound BQE from Adams Street to Washington Street will be closed from 1:00am Saturday (9/14) to 5:00am Monday (9/16) per the schedule below. One lane will be available during the weekend for this stretch of the Staten Island-bound BQE. These lane closures are required for the installation of new pavement along the BQE (I-278). For further questions or concerns reach out to DOT Community Liaison, Anita Navalurkar at (347) 647-0876 or to [anavalurkar.consultant@dot.nyc.gov](mailto:anavalurkar.consultant@dot.nyc.gov).

**Manhattan Bridge:** Ongoing repairs to the Manhattan Bridge are taking place. The South Upper Roadway to Brooklyn will be fully closed in order to mill and pave the roadway at night time on September 6th and 7th from 11:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. During this time, the Lower Roadway of the Manhattan Bridge will operate in the Brooklyn-bound direction. Bicycle and pedestrian access on the Manhattan Bridge will not be affected by this work. From September 9th to the 16th there will be some lane closures. See below for more details.

**Brooklyn Bridge:** On September 11th from 12:00am-5:00am there will be single-lane, rolling closures in both directions in the early morning from midnight to 5:00 a.m. This will be done so NYC DOT can conduct maintenance on the Bridge.

**Interborough Express (IBX):** There are two events coming up where you can be involved in the construction of the Interborough express which would create 14 miles of new public transit between Brooklyn and Queens. On **September 10th** from 4:00pm-5:30pm a Community council meeting will be held. The IBX Community Council serves as a group of concerned community members, elected officials, and community groups who would like to be actively involved in the IBX planning process. If you would like to attend the upcoming meeting please email [IBXOutreach@mtacd.org](mailto:IBXOutreach@mtacd.org) for a zoom link. There will also be an Open House on **September 16th** from 6-8pm at 127 Pennsylvania Avenue (3rd Floor) Brooklyn, NY 11207 where you can learn more about the project and the environmental review process that will begin shortly. [Sign up here.](#)

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### **Community Events & News:**

- **Housing Lottery at 420 Carroll St Open Until October 28.** These 2 buildings are located in the Gowanus neighborhood and contain studios, one, two, and three bedroom apartments. For more information on eligibility and to apply, visit [Housing Connect](#). To request a paper application, send a self addressed envelope to 420 Carroll St % Housing Line, 109 E 9th St, Ground Fl, Brooklyn, NY 10003.
- **Carroll Gardens Library Construction Update.** The Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) reports that the construction is going as planned. The city's Department of Design and Construction (DDC) has completed asbestos abatement and will begin working on installing HVAC equipment on the roof. When that phase of work ends in the winter, the BPL will move onto the next phase of work. The BPL expects the library to reopen by the second half of 2025. In the meantime, the [bookmobile](#) will still serve the neighborhood along with the nearby Brooklyn Heights Library.
- **Met Council on Housing Renters Get Wise Workshop on Thursday, September 12 at 6:30pm.** This workshop, happening every second Thursday of the month, is a chance for you to get wise to landlord tricks and learn how to fight back. Good Cause Eviction, Rent Regulation, How to get repairs, and How to fight eviction. [RSVP for the Zoom link.](#)
- **Downtown Brooklyn's Evolution Map:** To mark twenty years since Downtown Brooklyn's rezoning, the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership has created an interactive StoryMap to showcase Brooklyn's growth. They have combined Google Streets View and historic images to showcase the progress that has been made. Check out the StoryMap [here.](#)

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**Sign up for my Email Alerts.** Email [simonj@nyassembly.gov](mailto:simonj@nyassembly.gov) to stay informed of events & policy issues!

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