



Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon



Reports to the People

Spring 2026

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

The legislature and the Governor are still in the throes of the annual budget dance at the time of this writing. The Executive put forward her budget proposal, and then the Senate and the Assembly both responded with our own one-house budget resolutions to underscore our priorities and areas of agreement and disagreement with the Governor. The three-way negotiations are currently taking place to get to a final budget, which was due on April 1, 2026.

There are many initiatives in the Assembly one-house budget that would make a real difference in the lives of New Yorkers, including investments in education and housing, meaningful actions toward universal child care, utility bill relief, support for public transit, and more. The Assembly budget also includes \$600 million to address the New York City school class-size mandate, which was my initiative.

There are several measures that I am fighting for in the final budget that didn't make it into the Assembly resolution, including mental health and health care reforms, ending tax exemptions for fossil fuel polluters, and my plan to end wage theft for workers and generate over \$200M annually for the Department of Labor.

We are also facing unprecedented challenges from a federal administration that slashed funding to states and localities and is actively undermining our renewable energy plans, targeting hardworking immigrants who power our economy, and ignoring the pain of families struggling against inflation, price-hiking tariffs, and spiking gas costs from the war with Iran.

Right now, half a million New Yorkers are set to lose their health care this July due to the federal government's malicious budget bill - including over 75,000 people in Brooklyn. While we cannot cover all of the federal cuts, I strongly believe this potential loss of health care coverage must be addressed in our state budget or through a state bill. The legislative health committee chairs have introduced such a bill and I am actively supporting it (A10926).

New York State must enact a final budget that builds a more affordable future for working families. Revenue is needed to breathe real life into our priorities - and I am part of a coalition that has identified several effective revenue-raising measures. This includes making our income taxes fairer and more progressive, raising taxes on the most profitable corporations, and implementing a capital gains tax. I'm also pushing for a stock transfer tax (A1494), and several other revenue measures of my own, such as my Stop Polluter Handouts Act (A3675), Stop Wage Theft from Workers EMPIRE ACT (A4278), and Reform Mental Health Services (A8055).

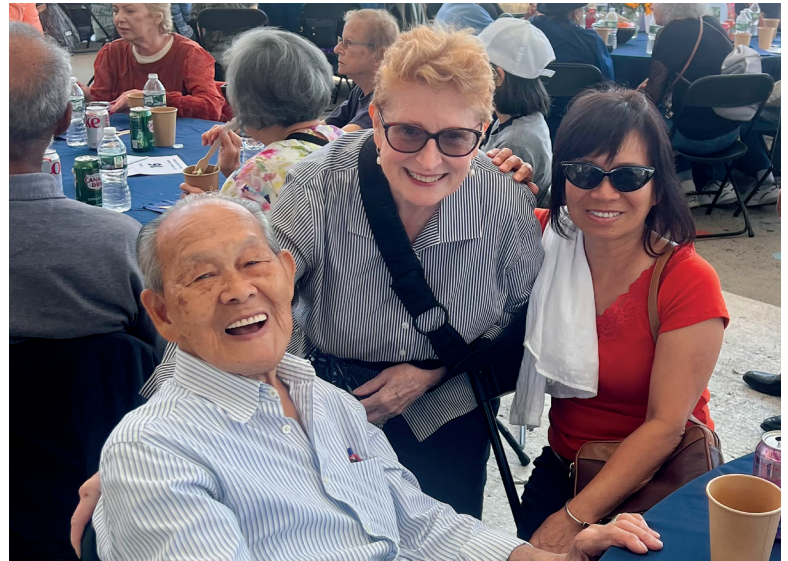
Please do not hesitate to contact my office with questions at 718-246-4889. You can also stop by my office in Carroll Gardens and speak with my staff about unemployment, SNAP, HEAP, housing, health care, transit and more.

It is truly my privilege to serve you.

Sincerely,

Jo Anne Simon

P.S. To receive more regular updates on policy & community news, email simonj@nyassembly.gov to **sign-up for my bi-weekly email alerts.**



Assemblymember Simon with constituents in Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Carroll Gardens Library to Re-Open Soon

Following the completion of major renovations at the local branch, the Brooklyn Public Library will install a new elevator and spruce up the branch. The branch is set to re-open in the summer of 2026. In the meantime, you can visit the Carroll Gardens pop-up location at 250 Baltic Street for book borrowing, returns and more. I was glad to be able to help fund the pop-up location, along with other local elected officials. For details on the pop-up library operations and the branch renovations, visit www.bklynlibrary.org.

New POW / MIA and American Flags in Carroll Park

I'm thrilled that beautiful new flags are waving in Carroll Park that properly honor and remember prisoners of war and those missing in action who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. I was at an event in the park when a constituent pointed out to my staff that the flags were worn and very tattered. My staff brought this issue to the NYC Parks Department, who trimmed the tree by the flagpole and replaced the flags. Thank you to the community members for your advocacy.

Concrete Recycling Facility Updates

At long last - after over a year of community advocacy and pressure from local elected officials - NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) has shut down the concrete recycling facility in the Columbia Street Waterfront District. DOT removed the concrete piles and ceased operations at the site. No community should be forced to experience the same adverse impacts on air quality, health, street safety, noise and quality of life that our constituents faced from the site operations - which clearly didn't belong in a residential neighborhood. I am thankful to my colleagues and the community residents for their persistence and partnership in getting this site closed down.

Environmental News

I'm honored to have been named the NY League of Conservation Voters' Assembly Environmental Champion. In a major victory for the environment and New Yorkers' wallets, Governor Kathy Hochul signed my bill (A8888) to repeal the outdated 100-foot rule. This ends a hidden subsidy that allows utility companies to pass the cost of new gas infrastructure to ratepayers. This rule has not only been raising our energy bills, but also keeping us tied to polluting, expensive fossil fuels. The repeal of the 100-foot rule will save New Yorkers nearly \$600 million annually and help us achieve our clean energy goals.

I'm also glad to report that my bill was signed into law to protect monarch butterflies (A9436). Monarch populations have sharply declined, and my bill ensures that the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) takes steps to preserve butterflies and the ecosystem that depends on them.

Fracked Gas Pipelines. I have also fought against the unjustifiable rate increases from utility companies, in addition to fighting new fracked gas pipelines. I'm terribly disappointed to report that after we successfully fought off the proposed Williams NESE pipeline three times, the NYS Public Service Commission (PSC) pushed the measure through on short notice with little public input. This underwater pipeline would deliver fracked gas from Pennsylvania through the waters of Brooklyn and New York City up to Queens. The state had previously rejected the proposal due to negative impacts on the environment and water quality.

The PSC's - and the DEC's - reversal and approval of the pipeline and permits is a stunning betrayal to New Yorkers. They have sided with the fossil fuel industry at the expense of New Yorkers' wallets and health. Williams, an energy infrastructure company based in Oklahoma, would construct the pipeline and sell the fracked gas to National Grid, which will pass those costs to New York ratepayers in the form of increased 'delivery charges.' This decision locks us into decades of expensive, polluting pipelines, with the \$1B in construction costs passed onto ratepayers who are already struggling to pay their utility bills. The President put enormous public pressure on the Governor to approve the pipeline.

Fighting for our Climate Law. You may be aware that the Governor is aiming to roll back the Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act (CLCPA) - New York's landmark 2019 climate change law - under the guise of affordability, primarily relying on a March 2026 NYS Energy Research and Development Authority memo with logic that I believe to be faulty and no cited methodology underlying a bizarre version of a cap and invest proposal that no experts or legislators are supporting. We should be evaluating successful cap and invest proposals that have yielded significant revenue from several other states, such as Washington, with cited methodology. The reality is that the main driver of sky-high utility bills is our reliance on costly fossil fuels and the need to repair aging gas infrastructure and pipelines. The CLCPA has not yet been implemented and is certainly not the driver of utility costs.

Rolling back this climate law would move the state in the wrong direction. We should be accelerating investments in affordable energy that create good union jobs and build a healthier future. The CLCPA set ambitious goals prioritizing environmental justice to protect communities that have borne the lion's share of environmental harm, while requiring those goals be achieved in the most cost-effective way. Renewable energy is the cheapest and most easily scalable; it would also blunt the impacts of the global oil markets' volatility - which we are seeing now at the gas pump.



Assemblymember Simon advocating for climate protections.

Historic Mental Health Settlement for Kids

After a lawsuit (C.K. v. McDonald) revealed that too many children were being sent to hospitals or institutions because community-based care was unavailable, the State reached a historic settlement requiring it to expand and improve mental health services for children and families. Instead of leaving families with no options until a crisis hits, the settlement pushes the State to make real, accessible mental health care available. This means more support for children in their communities, so they can get help earlier and closer to home.

As Chair of the Assembly Mental Health Committee, I am committed to ensuring that our mental health system is robust and accessible, that we invest in preventive community-based care, and that staff are better paid (workers are egregiously under-paid and leaving the field as a result causing chronic staff shortages). This is not an easy feat as there was quite a disinvestment in mental health care for decades. While we are starting to turn that tide in New York, it will take time and we are experiencing higher than ever rates of mental health issues that started to increase during Covid. This will be a marathon and I am in it for the long haul.



Assemblymember Simon and students advocating for mental health resources.

Wage Payment Integrity Act

My bill protects workers from wage theft by closing a loophole in state law. The bill (Simon A2222 / Gounardes S2236) clarifies that bonuses and other payments that are not purely discretionary count as wages and employers must inform employees when payments are purely discretionary. Workers should be able to count on the compensation they are promised. The bill has passed both the Senate and the Assembly. Now, onto the Governor!

Gowanus Canal Updates

We are seeing progress in the work to clean the polluted Gowanus Canal. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been working to construct bulkhead support systems from the 3rd Street to Hamilton Avenue portion of the canal to prevent the existing waterfront structures from collapsing during the canal dredging and cleanup activities. After the bulkhead system construction is completed, EPA will dredge the top layer of contaminated sediment.

The EPA is also constructing an 8-million-gallon and a 4-million-gallon combined sewer overflow (CSO) retention tank to prevent recontamination of the canal. The CSO tanks will reduce sewage overflows and improve water quality in the canal.

I had the pleasure of joining the NYC Department of Environmental Protection, NYC Department of Sanitation, Big Reuse, and the Gowanus Canal Conservancy for the opening of the new sanitation and composting facilities in Gowanus. The re-location and re-design of this critical infrastructure will allow for year-round composting and improved snow operations - and it makes room for construction of the second CSO tank. These investments mark an important step towards cleaner water and stronger city services for our community.

Gowanus Community Health Survey. Voice of Gowanus, a local non-profit, launched an anonymous survey to understand issues or potential health effects the community may be experiencing from living close to a Superfund site. Take the survey here: www.voiceofgowanus.org.

Atlantic Yards Updates

The NYS Empire Development Corporation (ESD) and a new developer - Brooklyn Ascending Land Co. - reached a new agreement to develop stalled parts of the Atlantic Yards project. The developers and ESD conducted community workshops to get feedback on their new plans. The developers will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the state, likely in July, and then the environmental review process will begin. At a minimum, the developer is obligated to construct two platforms over the railyard before building residential towers.

Additionally, the developer is requesting \$350 million in the state budget to help fund construction of the railyard platforms. This is public money, and the public must be given assurances that the project will move forward and deliver on its unfulfilled promises - including the more deeply affordable housing.

I've urged ESD and the Governor to prioritize the delivery of deeply and permanently affordable housing that New Yorkers urgently need - including the 1,031 affordable apartments for extremely low and low-income New Yorkers previously agreed upon in 2005 (yes, 2005!). I also stressed the need for overall accountability and oversight, street re-designs, and both indoor public space and outdoor public space with community input. This is needed throughout the project and that is also true of the projected plans for a very densely developed Site 5 (PC Richards and former Modell's site). I look forward to engaging with ESD on this project to ensure greater transparency and accountability.

Read ESD's new plans: esd.ny.gov/atlanticyards.

Advocating for Immigrants

US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has ramped up its presence in NYC, particularly in the Federal Plaza immigration court in Manhattan. A high school student from Downtown Brooklyn was detained in August and has been released after winning his asylum case. Buffalo resident Nurul Amin Shah Alam, a blind and disabled refugee, father and husband, tragically died and should still be alive today. The local sheriff's office coordinated with ICE and Mr. Alam ended up in ICE custody, who left him outside a Tim Horton's restaurant; he died from hypothermia and dehydration. The Erie County medical examiner ruled his death a homicide. I co-sponsor the New York for All Act (A3506), which would stop this kind of formal and informal collaboration between ICE and local law enforcement.

You have rights if ICE comes to your home, your school, your workplace or stops you on the street. You have the right to remain silent and to not open your door. You have the right to not sign anything. ICE must have a **signed** judicial warrant to lawfully carry out any arrests. For more "Know Your Rights information" including what to do if you see ICE in the community, visit the Immigrant Defense Project (www.immigrantdefenseproject.org) and Make The Road NY (<https://maketheroadny.org>). You can also contact my office.

**This is intended to provide general information about the rights of individuals and responsibilities of law enforcement under the U.S. Constitution and federal immigration law, it does not constitute - nor is it a substitute for - legal advice. Individuals should always remain mindful of their own safety and circumstances as well as their obligation to comply with the law in any encounters with law enforcement.*



Assemblymember Simon rallying to support immigrant New Yorkers.



Assemblymember Simon celebrating the new salt shed and composting facility in Gowanus.

Transit Updates

The NYC DOT is continuing essential interim repair work on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE). The MTA is also doing work on the G train throughout the spring and summer. Please sign up for my email alerts to receive regular updates, or visit the agency websites.

Grand Army Plaza Redesign. Grand Army Plaza is in dire need of traffic redesign and pedestrian calming measures - and it's finally happening! NYC DOT engaged the community for ideas and is holding meetings now to get feedback on their draft proposals.

Flatbush Avenue Redesign. NYC DOT has begun implementing the Flatbush Avenue redesign which will bring center-running bus lanes and six new concrete boarding islands from State Street to Grand Army Plaza. This will be Brooklyn's first-ever center-running bus lane, and a major upgrade for the 132,000 daily riders who rely on this corridor. The project aims to deliver faster, more reliable commutes, improve safety along one of Brooklyn's high-crash corridors, and create lots of new pedestrian space.

Congestion Pricing is Working. We have passed the one year anniversary of congestion pricing and it is working well. For 20 years I advocated for congestion pricing, first as a community activist and then as a legislator where I proudly co-sponsored NY's congestion pricing bill (A2008C, 2019).

Congestion pricing has done far more than just fund MTA capital needs. It has reduced gridlock and improved morning rush hour traffic speeds in the congestion relief zone up an average of 23%. It has also made the air cleaner with a reduction in particulate matter across all five boroughs. The reduced traffic has correlated with improved street safety. Crashes, injuries, and fatalities are down in the congestion relief zone. Congestion pricing is delivering on its promises and I am glad to say that it is here to stay.

Reforms Needed to School Aid Formulas

For decades, the state relied on outdated metrics to determine how much money to send to school districts. That finally changed last year when the state updated the Foundation Aid formula to meet today's standards. The revisions replaced obsolete 2000 Census data, outdated wage information and antiquated poverty measures with more modern and relevant indicators. These were meaningful steps toward a fairer funding system, but they didn't go far enough.

Our schools are being shortchanged on funding because the new formulas still ignore students who are homeless, in foster care, are English Language learners or have disabilities. Further, NYS is using decades-old data to account for regional costs. We need to update the formula to reflect ALL students - and use current data. NYS Senator John Liu and I introduced two bills to address these issues and modernize State Foundation Aid (A9049 and A9048).

Community Resources

- **Rent Freeze for Seniors.** SCRIE helps people 62+ stay in their homes. Once your rent is frozen, you keep paying what you were paying even if your landlord increases the rent. The landlord gets a tax credit that covers the difference. This is for people in rent-regulated units making \$50k or less/year and spending 1/3 of their income on rent. Call 311 to apply. nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/
- **Rent Freeze for People with Disabilities.** DRIE is similar to SCRIE, except it is for people 18+ who have a disability. nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/
- **Housing Connects** is a portal to apply for affordable rental lotteries. 212-863-7990. housingconnect.nyc.gov
- **The City's Tenant Helpline** can answer your housing questions, refer you to legal services, and provide case management. Call 311 and ask for the Tenant Helpline.
- **My Older Adults Resource Guide.** Learn about non-profit and government resources on housing, legal services, public benefits, health care, cultural activities, work and volunteer opportunities. Download a copy from my website or email simonj@nyassembly.gov to request a copy.
- **Mayor's Office Childcare Finder.** Search the city's new database for childcare in your neighborhood. www.nyc.gov/site/acs/early-care/findchildcare.page
- **DSNY Garbage Bins.** Buildings with 1-9 residential units have until June 2026 to purchase and use the official City DSNY Bin. www.nyc.gov/site/dsny/
- **Navigating Student Loans.** EDCAP is a non-profit that provides free, confidential counseling to help you manage repayment, reduce monthly costs, and explore forgiveness or other relief options. www.edcapny.org
- **New York City Green Markets Accept SNAP.** SNAP and EBT can be used to purchase edible items at markets all year long.
- **NYPD E-Commerce Exchange Zone.** Buying or selling items online? Conduct the exchange at an NYPD Zone. Locations are monitored 24/7 and are available at every Precinct, Transit District, and PSA. No appointment required.
- **Unclaimed Funds.** You may have unclaimed funds available to you held by NY State. Contact the NYS Office of the Comptroller to check: 800-221-9311. www.osc.ny.gov
- **NYS Department of Veterans' Services.** Veterans, service members and their families can get help with benefits, claims, housing, mental health, and more. 1-888-838-7697. Call the 24/7 VA Crisis Line at 988, ext.1. veterans.ny.gov
- **Get Help from the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings.** OATH can answer questions on summons, questions about online defenses, help with rescheduling hearings and more. www.nyc.gov
- **NY Connects.** This program connects older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers to long-term services and support. 800-342-9871. aging.ny.gov
- **Donate Books.** Donate your new and gently used books for teens and kids to the Brooklyn Book Bodega. www.brooklynbookbodega.org

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon

Reports to the People

Spring 2026

PRSR STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ALBANY, NEW YORK
PERMIT NO. 75

News and Upcoming Events

LICH Updates New developers

New developers have taken over the sites in this area. Rockrose will begin demolition of the H-Building in July; they currently don't anticipate impacts to the use of the local playgrounds. Sunlight Group and Lion's Group, a joint venture, will soon begin construction at 350 Hicks. They're working with the Parks Dept. on a safety plan to minimize disruption to the park. My office is in communication with city agencies, the developers, and local stakeholders on this issue.

Older Adult Resource Fair June 12th

Join me for our annual fair at **St. Francis College, 179 Livingston St., from 10am - 2pm.** You can get free health screenings and learn about non-profit, government, and legal resources. We will also have activities like a chair yoga class and a Town Hall on using your skills through volunteerism and work.

MTA MetroCard Van in Carroll Gardens June 29th

The MTA MetroCard Van is coming to my office, **341 Smith Street, on June 29th from 10am - 2pm.** MTA staff will be available to assist you with reduced fare applications, adding money to your OMNY card (the new MetroCard), and answering OMNY-related questions. There are reduced rates for seniors and people with lower incomes. **Visit www.nyc.gov/FairFares** to apply or stop by my office on June 29th.