



Dear Neighbor,

Like many of you, I spent the first few weeks of summer reeling from the drastic and deeply partisan decisions released by the Supreme Court in June. The decisions by the Court confirm what many of us had feared - that the justices appointed by Donald Trump misled Senators about their beliefs and commitment to precedent, and that they were specifically selected to form a politicized, ultra-conservative super majority.

The Court has of course been wrong before; for example, they played a critical role in upholding slavery and legal segregation. In most cases, however, the Court has evolved toward enshrining and expanding rights. The actions taken by the Court this year mark a stark departure from this evolution. The Dobbs decision overturned the Constitutional right to an abortion, stripping the right to bodily autonomy and safety from people who can become pregnant; the Vega decision stripped the right to pursue civil penalties from those who are denied Miranda warnings; the New York State Rifle and Pistol Association Inc. ruling denied New York State the right to regulate who can carry a concealed weapon, overturning a 100-year-old law; the Kennedy decision further closed the gap between church and state, allowing prayer at school functions; and the Carson decision did the same, directing even more public funds to religious private schools than they already receive by forcing states with educational voucher programs to use public funds for religious schools.

Concerningly, the Court has signaled that there is more to come. In the opinions released in the Dobbs decision, Justices argued that other Constitutional rights that have been enshrined based on the right to privacy, including the right to marry for gay couples, the right for LGBTQIA+ people to be free from criminal punishment for engaging in sex, the right to access contraception, and the right to interracial marriage, should all be reconsidered. In a move that has potentially far-

reaching consequences for our democracy, the Court has agreed to hear *Moore v. Harper*. The case considers the “independent state legislature” doctrine; supporters of this doctrine believe that the Constitution grants state legislatures exclusive control over elections and are not subject to the rulings of state supreme courts or election officials. Importantly, this was the doctrine former President Trump employed in his attempt to use state legislatures to overturn the results of the 2020 election. Four of the justices have signaled that they are sympathetic to the doctrine, and if the Court finds in its favor, state legislatures will be enabled to present their own slate of electors who can defy voting results and award electoral votes to whomever they wish. The consequences for our democracy would be dire.

These actions present a clear and urgent threat, and are frankly overwhelming; however, they are also a clarion call. In the face of an insurgent Court that is chipping away at our rights we must all find a role to play. One path is advocating for Congress and the President to take actions to rein in the Court; our government was designed so that those branches can step in and put checks on the Court’s power when it oversteps. Given that the Court may soon move to empower state legislatures in far-reaching ways, state elections are more important than ever - getting familiar with the New York State legislature is important, but you can also reach out to family and friends in other states to make sure they’re educated, involved, and voting. In the New York State Assembly, we’ve taken action to protect abortion access, enshrine LGBTQIA+ rights and other protections in the State Constitution, and strengthen voting rights and protections.

My colleagues and I are committed to preserving and expanding the rights of all New Yorkers, and I hope you will join us in the fight.

Sincerely,

Deborah

New York State's Response to SCOTUS Decisions

I was heartened to join my colleagues in an **extraordinary session of the legislature called by Governor Hochul on June 30th** during which we passed key legislation to protect New Yorkers in the face of the destructive decisions by the Supreme Court.

Gun Safety

For over a century, New York law restricted the ability to carry a concealed weapon in public. The Supreme Court’s decision in *NYSRPA v. Bruen* overturned that law, forcing the state to begin widely issuing permits for concealed carry. We passed legislation that works within the framework laid out by the Court in order to restrict where guns can be carried.

The Legislation:

- **Establishes a rigorous permitting process for concealed carry.**
- **Establishes an exhaustive list of sensitive locations where concealed carry is prohibited.** Sensitive locations include government buildings; health care facilities; anywhere children gather, and educational institutions; public transportation; polling sites; entertainment venues and casinos; protests; and Times Square.
- **Expands existing Safe Storage Laws** by requiring that all guns kept at home be safely stored if there are minors in the home.
- **Prohibits the sale of body armor to civilians.**

- **Strengthens background checks**, requiring gun dealers to contact the State Police to initiate and complete a background check before individual gun purchases.
- **Creates an ammunition database** to keep a record of all ammunition sales.

Equality Amendment

New York State codified the protections laid out in the *Roe v. Wade* decision with the passage of the 2019 Reproductive Health Act, legislation I sponsored and championed. **The Equality Amendment would go a step further, enshrining the right to an abortion in the New York State Constitution.**

Additionally, the amendment **expands the equal rights amendment** to include protections against discrimination on the basis of sex, ethnicity, national origin, age and disability. The Equality Amendment would protect marriage equality in New York, and protect laws designed to prevent or eliminate discrimination.

We have taken the first step in passing an initial resolution, but a second resolution must be passed once a new legislature is elected, followed by a vote by the general public. The earliest such a public vote could occur would be November 2023.

Avoiding Medical Debt

As health care costs continue to rise, an increasing number of New Yorkers find themselves saddled with medical debt. According to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Americans owed an estimated \$88 billion in medical debt in 2021, and this figure may be higher. The best way to handle medical debt is to do everything possible to avoid it in the first place. There are many consumer protections that patients should understand that will help them.

- **Understand the medical care you receive** – You have the right to receive an itemized bill detailing all the care you received from each medical visit. Be sure to request and review your itemized bill and look for charges that are duplicate, treatments that you did not receive, or any other inaccuracy that unfairly increases your bill. If you do not understand any charge on your bill, ask for clarification. Billing offices make mistakes,

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and you will not be able to spot them if you do not understand what you are being charged for. Be sure to save all bills for your records. If you believe you have been overcharged for services and the hospital will not rectify the charge, you can contact the NY Attorney General's Health Care Bureau at 1-800-428-9071.

- Understand your health insurance coverage** – If your health plan is subject to New York Law (your insurance card will say “fully insured”) you are entitled to protections to ensure quality care and fairness in billing. If you do not understand the benefits of your health plan, you should request an explanation from your insurance provider. Insurance providers are required to share a description of your benefits, including any exclusions to coverage. If you believe you have been mistakenly or unfairly denied coverage for a treatment that your benefits should cover, you are entitled to file a grievance with your insurance provider. You can also file a complaint against an insurance company by calling the Consumer Assistance Unit at the NYS Department of Financial Services at 212-480-6400.
- Ask for a discount** – If you do not have health insurance, you may be entitled to assistance from your health care provider under the Hospital Financial Assistance Law of 2007. Under this law, New Yorkers without insurance coverage and whose household income is under 300% of the federal poverty rate will be charged discounted rates on a sliding scale, depending on their income level. If you do have health insurance and/or your income is above 300% of the federal poverty rate and you will still struggle to pay your copayment or deductible, you should still ask the medical facility if there are discounts available to you. Hospitals are required to provide patients with a summary of all discounts that they may provide to patients.
- If you find yourself in medical debt, you are not alone. The following tips may assist you in dealing with your outstanding bills.
- Ask for a payment plan** – If you are unable to pay a medical bill before it is due, ask your provider if you can enter into a payment plan, allowing you to pay off your debt over time and avoid additional actions.
- Protect yourself from debt collectors** – If your debt does go to collections, you have the right to ask for proof that you are the owner of the debt. You also have the right to be free from harassment and intimidation from debt collectors, and to not be contacted at all hours of the day. The statute of limitations on collecting medical debt was recently lowered from six years to three years.
- Prioritize debt payments** – Recently enacted state legislation has capped the judgment interest rate on consumer debt, including medical debt, at two percent.

Additionally, legislation was passed by both houses of the Legislature this session that would protect individuals with medical debt from having their wages garnished or from having a lien placed on their primary residence. If Governor Hochul signs this important bill into law, those with medical debt will be afforded these protections in the future.

2022 Legislative Session Highlights

We completed the 2022 Legislative Session in early June, and I am pleased to highlight some of what we were able to achieve this year. A selection of bills on which I was glad to be the Prime Sponsor include:

Protections for Loft Residents

In July my JLWQA bill (A.9675A/S.8793A) co-sponsored with Senator Brian Kavanagh was signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul. **This new law will ensure that residents living in a Joint Live-Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQA) unit may continue to live in their homes, regardless of their status as a certified artist.** Over time, JLWQA units began to be inhabited by residents that lacked the required certification from the Department of Cultural Affairs for a number of reasons, most notably the overly strict application process that is no longer reflective of the arts. Following the City's misguided rezoning of the area, it was necessary to establish safeguards for current JLWQA tenants. This bill protects individuals who resided in a JLWQA unit as of December 15, 2021 from being penalized for not being certified as an artist.

Speed Cameras to Operate 24/7

In late June, I was pleased to join advocates and colleagues as Governor Hochul signed my bill A.10438 co-sponsored by Senator Andrew Gounardes, which authorizes New York City to enhance the current speed safety camera demonstration program by **allowing cameras to monitor the streets around schools 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

I'm grateful to my colleagues in the Legislature for supporting this measure, and especially to Families for Safe Streets, Transportation Alternatives, and all the tireless advocates who work so hard to address the crisis of traffic violence. This new legislation further reauthorizes this critical program until July 2025 and removes restrictions that have required the deactivation of cameras on weekends and between 10 pm and 6 am on weekdays. This expanded program took effect on August 1st.

Reproductive Health Care Transparency

This bill (A.5499) will equip the NYS Department of Health and legislators with a clearer understanding of the prevalence, services, affiliations, and other relevant information regarding limited service pregnancy centers, often known as “fake clinics” in New York. Anecdotally, we know that many of these clinics that purport to provide care to pregnant people are actually not staffed with medical professionals and are instead run by groups attempting to dissuade people from seeking abortions. This legislation will help us better understand how to best support pregnant people in getting accurate information and safe reproductive health care.

Expanding Eligibility for SCRIE and DRIE

My bill A.7986 will **expand eligibility for the SCRIE and DRIE affordable housing programs** to many tenants of former Mitchell-Lama buildings. The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) program assist eligible older and disabled New Yorkers by freezing their rent for the entirety of their tenancy.

Illuminating Discriminatory Pay Practices

Despite wage discrimination being federally prohibited since the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963, discrepancies continue to exist. According

to Census.gov, the female-to-male earnings ratio in 2022 is 83%, and the Pew Research Center reports that Black and African Americans earn on average 75% of their white counterparts in the workforce. **Bill A.5773 requires businesses that seek a contract with New York State publicly disclose wage data of their employees so that we can determine which contractors have disparities on the basis of gender, race and ethnicity.**

Removing Lead From the Environment

Lead is a highly toxic metal, but it continues to be by far the most commonly used material with which to manufacture firearm ammunition. Lead bullets fragment upon impact, leading to toxic shrapnel-laced meat and posing a danger to other wildlife as raptors and other scavengers consume it. **Bill A.5728 prohibits the use of lead ammunition when hunting on state land and land that contributes surface water to the New York City water supply.** While I was gratified that this bill passed in the Assembly, unfortunately, it did not pass in the Senate

Selection of Co-Sponsored Legislation

In addition to the passage of my own legislation, I was honored to Co-Sponsor several bills that advance a number of protections, including:

Protecting the Right to an Abortion and Providing a Safe Haven

I am so pleased that **the Legislature passed a package of bills this session to strengthen New Yorkers' rights, create more equitable access to abortion, and ensure that anti-choice states are not crossing into New York State to punish people seeking this essential care.**

Gun Safety Legislation

In the wake of the mass shootings in Uvalde and Buffalo we took action to combat gun violence and ensure that New York remains as safe as possible, including **strengthening New York's red flag law, raising the age one can legally purchase a semi-automatic rifle to 21, and creating a new task force to address social media and violent extremism.**

Protecting Voting Access for All New Yorkers

I was proud to co-sponsor the **John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York (A.6678-E)** which is named in honor of the civil rights hero and former U.S. Representative. This legislation will ensure that all eligible New York voters, regardless of race, language or address, will have the access to freely exercise their right to vote and make their voices heard.

Holding Social Media Platforms Accountable

A.7865 – requires social media networks to provide a clearly accessible mechanism for users to report hateful content online. It also would establish a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 per day for companies that knowingly fail to comply with this statute. Violent hate speech is unacceptable and has no place in our communities – nor on online platforms.

Looking Ahead to 2023

While we were able to accomplish a great deal, there were some disappointments as there are every Session. **I co-sponsored and advocated for such critical bills as Good Cause Eviction, the Clean State Act, and the Basement Apartments Safe for Everyone (BASE) Bill.** I am confident that the momentum we built this year will continue into next year's Session, and I will keep fighting for the passage of these and many other bills.



An exciting groundbreaking ceremony to launch the creation of the Stonewall National Monument Visitors Center.

Marijuana Use and Sales

In March of 2021, the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act, or the MRTA, became law. The MRTA legalized the use of marijuana products for adults over the age of 21, created a framework for the cannabis market, and addressed longstanding cannabis-related racial justice disparities by expanding opportunities for sealing and expunging prior cannabis criminal charges. Although this law has been on the books for over a year, understanding the law and its time frame and implementation can be confusing. Here are answers to some common questions that my office has received:

When will cannabis be legal in New York?

Cannabis is currently legal to possess in New York. Although possession is legal, there are currently no legal retail stores open for business. The first retail stores are expected to open in late 2022 or early 2023.

What are the various licenses available for participating in the cannabis industry?

The Cannabis Control Board, in partnership with the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) will license retail dispensaries, on-site consumption locations, cultivators, processors, and distributors. The application process for conditional cultivators and processors has already begun,

and applications for conditional retail dispensaries will open in the coming months. The Cannabis Control Board and OCM will continue to issue regulations for all license types as time goes on.

Will residents have any say in what cannabis businesses can operate in their neighborhood?

Yes. Aspiring applicants for a retail dispensary license or on-site consumption license must notify the local community board of their intent to seek a license between 30 and 270 days before filing their application with OCM. The community board may express their opinion for or against the granting of a license to the applicant; the opinion will become part of the record that OCM uses to make its recommendation, and that the Cannabis Control Board will use to grant or deny the application. The Cannabis Control Board will be required to respond to the community board in writing to explain how their opinion was considered in the decision-making process.

My office is available to answer any questions, and more information can be found on the Office of Cannabis Management's website at <https://cannabis.ny.gov>

What to know about the Environmental Bond Act Referendum 2022

On the ballot in November, New Yorkers will have the opportunity to vote on an environmental bond act for the first time in over 25 years. In 2020, an environmental bond act was pulled from the November ballot because of financial concerns associated with the pandemic. The Legislature and Governor increased the amount of the environmental bond act from 2020 to a total of \$4.2 billion and renamed it the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Green Jobs Bond Act. Bond acts authorize the state comptroller to take on debt by selling state bonds up to a certain amount for a specific purpose. Within the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Green Jobs Bond Act of 2022 there are different categories for funding, which are outlined below.

2022 Final Bond Act Allocations

2022 Final Bond Act Allocations	
Total Funding At least 35% of the total funding must be spent in disadvantaged communities, with a goal of reaching 40%.	\$4.2 billion
Account	
Climate Change Mitigation (including \$ for electrifying school buses)	\$1.5 billion
Restoration and Flood Risk Reduction	\$1.1 billion
Open Space Land Conservation and Recreation	\$650 million
Water Quality Improvement and Resilient Infrastructure	\$650 million
Unallocated	\$300 million

Other ballot measures to expect in the 2022 General Election

In December of 2021, the Racial Justice Commission recommended three proposals to submit to New York City voters. These proposals are amendments to the New York City Charter and are based on a comprehensive report done by the Commission. A quick synopsis from the Racial Justice Commission of each charter amendment proposal is below; the full text of the ballot proposals and the report are on their website.

Proposal 1: Add a Statement of Values to Guide Government

Summary: The Commission's first proposal is to add a preamble to the NYC Charter (it does not currently have one). Adding a preamble would allow New Yorkers to adopt a vision and statement of foundational values intended to guide City government in fulfilling its duties.

Proposal 2: Establish a Racial Equity Office, Plan, and Commission

Summary: The Commission's second proposal is to create an Office of Racial Equity, require Racial Equity Plans, and form a Commission on Racial Equity.

Proposal 3: Measure the True Cost of Living

Summary: This proposal would amend the City Charter to require the City to create a True Cost of Living measure to track the actual cost of meeting essential needs.



I was pleased to join colleagues as the Governor signed a package of bills to protect abortion access, including my bill requiring the NYS Department of Health to study the extent of and impact of "fake clinics" that purport to offer reproductive health care.



It was an honor to celebrate Greenwich House's opening of an older adult center at Westbeth Artists Housing—a terrific partnership between two vital community resources.

CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

Letters and testimony play an essential role in the offices of elected officials and I want to highlight some of the writing my office has produced in the past few months to share this important part of our work with you.

The Politicization of the Supreme Court

In April, I wrote to Chief Justice John Roberts to express my deep concerns about the politicization of the Supreme Court. Given the involvement of his wife, Ginni, in efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, it is outrageous that Justice Thomas has refused to recuse himself from cases related to the 2020 election. I wrote that it is further disturbing that settled precedents appear to be entirely irrelevant to this court. Current rulings – or lack of action – seem based on highly partisan political positions. Americans who have previously believed that the Court would rely upon past precedents now see that the influence of religious extremists is more important in deliberations than our Constitution. I urged Chief Justice Roberts to take those concerns seriously and restore the Court's legitimacy.

Addressing Disparities in Criminal Investigations

Earlier this year, I wrote to Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg to share with him comments from numerous constituents who were concerned about the status of his office's investigation of former President Trump and the Trump Organization after the resignation of two leading prosecutors. I reiterated the historic disparities in how vigorously our criminal justice system has pursued charges for low-level crimes while those who commit white-collar crimes and fraud at the highest levels often go relatively unscathed, and commended DA Bragg for his stated commitment to address these disparities. I hope that he will continue a rigorous and complete process and is transparent with the public when appropriate.

Seeking Answers About Permanent Open Restaurants

In June, I wrote to NYC Department of Transportation Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez with questions about the upcoming implementation of the City's permanent open restaurants program, which is to take effect this Fall. It's my understanding that in September 2022, the current roadbed dining structures are to be removed. I shared a range of community concerns about safety, sanitation, and the use of public space, and sought to understand how the Department of Transportation will enforce the removal of dining structures and other regulations and seek community input for the new program.

Caring for our Furry Friends

Animal companions have been wonderful in helping us cope with the Covid-19 pandemic and other stressors, and many New Yorkers adopted pets for the first time during the last two years. A reminder that having a pet in our homes is a commitment to care for the animal and manage their safety and health. **It's especially important to be mindful of dogs' experiences outside, particularly during times of extreme heat or cold.** Some dogs' paw pads may be sensitive to very cold temperatures, or icy conditions and irritation from salted sidewalks during winter, and extremely hot surfaces when walking during summer heatwaves. You may wish to seek appropriate seasonal footwear to protect their paws. It is also important to provide plenty of clean drinking water, even while out walking with your dog. And it is critical that dogs not be left tied up outside for extended periods, especially in extreme heat. For more information about how to care for animal companions, please visit: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/animals/companion-animals>.

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Deborah Glick's



NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

ASSEMBLYMEMBER
66TH DISTRICT
NEW YORK CITY

HOW TO REACH US:
Call 212-674-5153 or
email glickd@nyassembly.gov

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We're Here to Assist!

A reminder that the staff in my District Office provides a range of services to constituents, including:

- assistance with applying for meal delivery and food programs, financial benefits, and rent and utility assistance programs
- connections to supports for older adults
- legal aid and tenants' rights resources
- advocacy with City and State agencies

Contact us by email:
glickd@nyassembly.gov or phone:
212-674-5153

Town Hall on Protecting Democracy

Monday, October 3
6:30 to 8:30 pm

The Great Hall at Cooper Union
Free and Open to the Public

Join me in conversation with **Maya Wiley**, President and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and **Lizz Winstead**, Founder and Chief Creative Officer of Abortion Access Front, about threats our democracy is facing and how we can all take action. Register here: www.cooper.edu/protectingdemocracy

Fall Shred Event!

Thursday, October 20
1:00 to 4:00 pm

Location TBD

We are happy to present a Free Shred Event in the district. We will be joined by Red Cross volunteers who can help you sign up for a Free smoke alarm installation, and staff from Cooper Square Committee who will provide information to ensure the safety and stability of your homes.