



## Dear Neighbor,

I'm sure that you, like me, sometimes look at someone expressing a view that seems so out-of-step with your own that you wonder if the two of you are even occupying the same reality. In this era of unprecedented polarization, it can be difficult to feel like there's a common understanding of the issues that face us, even if we might disagree on what to do about them.

I believe that the loss of a shared reality is a major contributor to why some political issues feel so intractable. It is difficult to argue for sensible gun reform when some believe that many of the mass-shootings of the past decades were hoaxes; hard to summon the urgency needed to combat climate change in someone who believes a cold day means that global warming isn't real. As traditional media platforms have suffered challenges and many long-standing news outlets have shuttered, the proliferation of social media and fringe news sites has resulted in a plethora of conspiracy theories and biased reporting that masquerade as news.

A recent study found that half of American adults get at least some of their news from social media. The majority of Gen Z report getting their news from apps like Tik Tok, YouTube, and Facebook. Importantly, we know that the algorithms these apps use work not only to silo the information you receive, but also generally guide users toward more extreme views in an effort to entertain and keep you on the apps for longer periods of time. It is incredibly easy to

slip into the world of conspiracy theories and other misinformation, be guided toward more content confirming these views, and become firm in the belief that you have stumbled on some bit of truth that others just don't have access to yet. These trends affect not just our politics and governance, but also our safety - perpetrators of violence reference conspiracies like replacement theory, which they generally find online, when committing hate crimes and other violent acts.

So, what can we do? We must hold social media companies accountable, requiring them to do more to combat misinformation. We should be investing in media literacy for not only young people but also adults, ensuring that people know how to evaluate a source and do their own research to verify that what they're seeing is actually true. And, as some legacy media companies diminish their standards in order to compete online, we must continue to support and demand high quality journalism.

The polarization we are experiencing is very real, and there's much we can do to fight it. I'll continue to work with my colleagues across government to make sure that our shared values and sense of reality can continue to guide sound policy that benefits us all.

Sincerely,

Deborah

## Updates From Albany

In April, the Legislature and the Governor finalized the 2024-25 state budget. Each year's budget is uniquely challenging, and the final budget required substantial compromise from all parties involved. Although I'm disappointed by some components of this budget, there are many items that will make New York safer, cleaner, and more just.

### Environment

The **Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)** at \$400 million, advances our goals of maintaining a clean environment. In a large victory, we were able to resist \$250 million in cuts to the **Clean Water Infrastructure Act** securing a total of \$500 million to improve storm resiliency, remove lead service lines, and meet other infrastructure needs. The **Renewable Action through Project Interconnection & Deployment Act (RAPID Act)** streamlines the siting of electrical transmission infrastructure necessary to meet our aggressive renewable energy targets.

### Housing

This budget includes items to stimulate housing development and strengthen tenants' rights. A version of the **good cause eviction bill** will give many New Yorkers a right of first refusal to renew their residential leases. A pilot program has been authorized to allow for the legalization of **basement apartments**. The new **485-x housing development program**, a successor to 421-a, will provide tax breaks for residential development that includes 25% affordable housing. **Individual Apartment Improvements (IAI)** have been adjusted to allow for improvements up to \$30,000 within a 15 year period. The budget authorizes the City of New York to lift the current **floor area ratio cap** on residential buildings. We were able to limit this ill-advised change by prohibiting the cap to be exceeded in historical districts and any building that includes a loft unit, as well as ensure that any tenant displaced due to this change must be offered a comparable lease and financial compensation equal to one month's rent for every year of tenancy, up to six months' rent. To address recent concerns the budget includes a definition of squatter and includes protections against deed theft.

### Transportation

**Sammy's Law** was included in the final budget. This lifesaving law will allow New York City to lower speed limits to 20 miles per hour on roads with fewer than three lanes in one direction, subject to a

public comment period and a 60-day written notice provided to the local community board. Additionally, **toll evasion** is addressed by increasing penalties for covering or defacing a license plate. Repeat offenders will now face a 90-day registration revocation.

### Education

**School aid** was funded at a record \$35.9 billion. The **Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)** has been expanded by raising the minimum award from \$500 to \$1,000, and the maximum household income limits have been increased from \$80,000 to \$125,000 annual household income for dependent students. Part-time TAP will now be available on a less restrictive basis. These changes will make higher education more affordable for many more New Yorkers.

### Health Care

Employees in New York will be entitled to 20 hours of **paid prenatal care** per year. This budget invests \$36 million to support **abortion providers** and patients seeking an abortion. The continuation of funding for the NYS LGBT Health & Human Services Network and the Transgender and Gender Non-Binary (TGNB) Wellness and Equity Program were included. We were successful in rejecting the Governor's plan to close **Downstate Medical Center**, which provides essential hospital bed spaces and trains 1 in 10 physicians in New York City.



I was pleased to co-sponsor Sammy's Law, a critical piece of legislation which will allow the City to control its own speed limits.

## Updates From Albany *(continued)*

The state budget is lengthy and there are many policies that I have not outlined; **Tier 6** pension reform; allowing local governments to **padlock illegal cannabis storefronts**; an extension of **mayoral control**; an expansion of the **hate crime statute**; an increase in funding for **“back to basics” reading comprehension education** for students; and more.

Here is an update on my additional legislative priorities for this year:

### Protecting the Environment and Ourselves

**Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act.** Plastic packaging and waste pollutes our environment, overwhelms our landfills, and burdens New York taxpayers. **I am proud to sponsor A.5322B (S.4246B/Harckham), the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act, which requires manufacturers to finally share responsibility for their packaging waste, ensures they reduce waste, and provides necessary financial relief for local governments.** This legislation incentivizes sustainable packaging, has mandatory reductions, bans processes that produce toxic by-products, and reduces toxins in packaging. I'm so pleased that this bill was recently passed out of the Environmental Conservation committee, and I'm hopeful that we can get this critical legislation passed through both chambers this session.

**A Bigger Better Bottle Bill.** Since 1982, New York's Bottle Bill has been successful in getting New Yorkers to recycle beverage containers at redemption centers. **The time has come to expand the Bottle Bill, A.06353A, to increase the types of containers covered by the law, and to incentivize continued recycling of beverage containers by increasing the redemption rate.** This bill was recently passed out of committee, and I look forward to its passage.

**Safe Personal Care and Cosmetics Act.** There are thousands of chemicals in personal care and other consumer products, which have never been fully tested for potential impacts on human health or the environment. **My bill A.6969, the Safe Personal Care and Cosmetics Act, would regulate ingredients in personal care products and cosmetics, and restrict those chemicals known to be associated with asthma, allergies, hormone disruption, neurodevelopmental problems, infertility, and cancer.**

**Expanding the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Program.** The proliferation of electric bicycles and scooters complicates the way we traverse our streets and sidewalks. We need to ensure the safety of pedestrians while supporting alternatives means of transportation. I'm happy to co-sponsor bills that protect New Yorkers as they walk through the city. **We also have a responsibility to ensure the safe collection and disposal of the rechargeable batteries used to power these e-vehicles. I'm pleased to sponsor A.7339 which builds on previous legislation requiring rechargeable battery retailers and manufacturers to establish a system for the handling and proper disposal of rechargeable batteries** and expands the definition of “rechargeable battery” to include those used as an e-vehicle power source.

**Protecting Pregnant New Yorkers from Unscrupulous Limited-Service Pregnancy Centers.** In 2022, I was pleased to get legislation signed into law that directs the NYS Department of Health to conduct a study limited-service pregnancy centers. These centers offer services to pregnant people, but do not provide or refer for abortions. Nor are they necessarily staffed by medical professionals, and whether one wishes to continue

or terminate a pregnancy, consulting with medical professionals is vital. Although the Supreme Court has complicated how governments can regulate these centers, **my bill A.9773 requires such limited-service pregnancy centers to disclose to clients that they do not have a medical professional on staff.**

**Creating a Crash Victims Bill of Rights.** Victims of traffic crashes and their families suffer well after they experience the trauma of a crash. Physical and mental pain may remain for life, and in the case of a death, unimaginable hardship remains for the family. **Bill A.1901 will ensure certain rights for survivors of traffic violence, including fast access to all police reports free of charge, the ability for victims to provide an impact statement to any DMV proceeding against a driver's license, time off of work to provide impact statements, and more.**

**Protecting Animals from the Harms of Performing as Traveling Acts.** Animals kept to perform in traveling acts face certain harmful conditions like being held in confined spaces and being forced to demonstrate unnatural behaviors, it is critical that we do more to protect animals who have been removed from their natural habitats. A.4005 would prohibit the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation from issuing permits or licenses authorizing certain animals including primates, bears, kangaroos, wallabies, and large cats to appear in traveling acts.

**Removing Unnecessary Sidewalk Sheds.** Sidewalk sheds, or scaffolds, are becoming permanent fixtures in our community, adversely affecting the quality of life of a neighborhood as they collect trash, become unsafe in extreme weather, and are an eyesore. A.1957 will ensure that no sidewalk shed permit will be renewed unless it is being used as part of an ongoing construction project.

### Assembly Passage of Notable Bills

**Bird Friendly Wind Turbines.** I'm pleased to report the passage in the Assembly of A.1903A, my Bird Friendly Wind Turbines bill, to make energy generating wind turbines less dangerous to birds. The bill requires wind energy facilities to paint turbine blades in a way that minimizes collisions with birds. Promising research shows that painting a single turbine blade black reduces strikes by over 70%. This legislation will require the Office of Renewable Energy Siting to adopt standards for coloring blades that will drastically reduce bird mortality.

**Holding Hospitals Accountable.** I was pleased to co-sponsor and support the Assembly passage of A.1633A/Simon, the Local Input in Community Healthcare Act. We have seen the detrimental impact hospital closures have on communities in New York City and around the State. Far too often, we have seen closures occur with little opportunity for communities to weigh in on such consequential actions. In Lower Manhattan, not only did we lose St. Vincent's Hospital in 2010 after a hard-fought battle, we seem on the verge of losing another vital community hospital as Mount Sinai races through a hasty and thoughtless effort to close Beth Israel Hospital despite outcry from community members, hospital staff, and a unified coalition of city, state, and federal elected officials. **The Local Input in Community Healthcare Act will strengthen regulations that guide New York State's hospital closure process, and requires greater transparency, public notification, and robust community engagement when a hospital system seeks to close a general hospital or a unit that offers emergency, maternity, mental health, or substance use services.**

For several months, I have joined colleagues and the downtown community in pushing back against Mount Sinai's efforts to close the Beth Israel Hospital campus. While I was pleased that the NYS Dept of Health rejected their closure plan for now, the fight continues. I will keep pressing for access to quality medical care for residents in Lower Manhattan.

SAVE OUR COMMUNITY HOSPITAL!



Earlier this Spring, I was thrilled to nominate the Village Vanguard for inclusion in New York State's Historic Business Preservation Registry, and celebrate Deborah Gordon, operator and daughter of the founder, Max Gordon. Since opening its doors in 1935, this iconic venue has had a rich history of serving the local community by celebrating poets, artists, musicians, and more.

## 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 work with you.

### Vital to New York City's History – Merchant's House at Risk!

**As relentless development reshapes the city, the Merchant's House Museum is a significant landmark allowing visitors a rare glimpse at the city's history.** After the 1965 passage of the Landmarks Preservation Law, it was the first site to receive a landmark designation in Manhattan. It was deeply distressing that the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) recently approved a new development adjacent to Merchant's House, despite public outcry and strong opposition. Preservation architects and engineers agree that this construction will cause irreversible damage to Merchant's House, and could lead to a complete collapse of the museum. Merchant's House is owned by the City of New York, and it is up to the city to protect it. **I wrote to NYC Department of Buildings Commissioner James S. Oddo and NYC Department of Parks Commissioner Sue Donoghue urging them to meet with Merchant's House staff and engineers in order to understand the potential impacts of construction, and to deny any permits for demolition, excavation, or construction until there is a plan ensuring that Merchant's House will be preserved intact.**

### Opposing 5G Towers in Historic Districts

You have likely seen news of the city's plan to install LinkNYC 5G towers throughout the boroughs. I've joined colleagues in writing to the Mayor's Office and the NYS Historic Preservation Office to convey that due to their size and design these **32-foot-tall 5G towers should not be sited close enough to visually impact historic districts or individual landmarks in the Greenwich Village Historic District and the Gansevoort Market Historic District.** So far our advocacy has been successful and plans to install the towers have been put on hold.

### Demanding Lead-Free Venison in Food Bank Donations

The NYS Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation partnered with the Venison Donation Coalition and Feeding New York State to facilitate the donation of hunted venison to New York's food banks. However, **there is no requirement for donated venison to be lead-free nor a process to check the meat for lead fragments from ammunition.** Lead exposure, especially through ingestion, is extremely dangerous. **I wrote to NYS Health Commissioner James V. McDonald about whether more robust health protections will be established.** As food bank users are largely from low-income backgrounds, this is not only a health issue, but an environmental justice issue. I urged Commissioner McDonald to take swift action to protect some of our most vulnerable New Yorkers.

### Questioning Prescription Drugs' Marketing Costs

Senator Bernie Sanders recently led the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) in a hearing questioning CEOs of major prescription drug companies about the high costs of their medicines. While I appreciate the prioritization of the topic, a significant contributing factor not discussed is the impact of increased cost of direct-to-consumer marketing for prescription drugs. **In the mid-1990s, the Food and Drug Administration relaxed regulations on drug advertisements, leading to an exponential growth in prescription drug ads.** The United States is one of two countries that allows unlimited prescription drug advertising to consumers. **This marketing takes up ever-increasing amounts of drug makers' budgets. They've gone from spending \$2 billion on ads in 1997 to \$10 billion in 2016, with the budgets for some drug advertisements being as much or even greater than the costs of research and medication development.** These ads encourage patients to request medications from their doctors that they may not fully understand nor need; and increase the price for many who depend on these medications. I recently wrote to Senator Sanders, advocating for the HELP committee to explore policies to potentially minimize the impact of direct-to-consumer advertising.

## The Fight for Reproductive Health Care Access Continues

In February, the Alabama State Supreme Court shocked the country with their decision designating fertilized embryos as "extrauterine children" and casting doubt on the legality of in vitro-fertilization (IVF) services. The decision shattered the separation of church and state arguing that life begins at conception because, according to the court case, Christians are in agreement that God deems it so. In the wake of this deeply unpopular decision, many anti-abortion legislators scrambled to affirm their support for IVF and the Alabama State legislature moved quickly to pass legislation protecting IVF providers from legal liability.

The decision in Alabama makes one thing starkly clear: in our post-Dobbs America, with no constitutional protections for abortion, all reproductive health care is under attack. The appointment of more religious and conservative judges to the Supreme Court has left these critical health services, and the lives of pregnant people, extremely vulnerable.

I've been an advocate for reproductive health access for decades. Yet, even I have been astounded by the breadth of attacks on different facets of reproductive health. Anti-choice activists are moving to re-define any family planning activity as a potential abortion, and in states where restrictive abortion laws have already passed, they are working to chip away at the few exceptions (such as fetal abnormalities or the health of the pregnant person) that exist. At least 16 states have introduced so-called "fetal personhood" bills, which would enshrine an embryo with the rights of a person from conception. These bills would endanger not only IVF services, as the disposal of any embryo could constitute homicide; they would endanger pregnant people, potentially criminalizing the choices they make about their bodies as well as miscarriages. Anti-choice activists are also waging an information war. A recent Washington Post article detailed a trend

of young people discontinuing their birth control use due to rampant misinformation campaigns on social media that distort potential side effects. Anti-choice organizations have cast doubt on the reliability of prenatal testing, arguing that the tests are inaccurate and that pregnant people are too traumatized when they discover fetal abnormalities to make decisions for themselves and their families. They have gone so far as to argue that pregnant people are better off giving birth to a baby and watching it die than they are if they get an abortion. In the name of saving the "unborn" activists are callously disregarding the lives of pregnant people, as well as the suffering of babies born with fatal conditions who may live hours or days only knowing pain.

That is why we must fight legislation that would restrict access to reproductive health services and anti-abortion misinformation campaigns. The right to abortion is protected in New York State, but we must go further. I am sponsoring or co-sponsoring bills that would strengthen access, **including a bill to increase funding for abortion providers and those who help facilitate abortion care (A.361B); a bill requiring comprehensive sexual education in schools (A.4604); and a bill requiring any hospitals receiving state funds to train residents in abortion care and family planning support (A.1917).** Voters will have the ability to weigh in on the Equal Rights Amendment in November, which would amend the State Constitution to prohibit discrimination based on sex (among other categories), including pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes. Locally, you can volunteer with Planned Parenthood in Lower Manhattan, or even just show up to be a friendly face among the anti-abortion protestors who often gather outside the clinic.

We all have a role to play in ensuring that reproductive health services remain accessible. I hope you'll join me in fighting for these essential rights.

## Connecting With Nature in New York City

There are many opportunities for New Yorkers to engage with nature close to home. Here are a few:

- The **Liz Christy Garden** was the first community garden in New York City and has grown to include a pond, a wildflower habitat, a grape arbor, fruit trees, vegetable, berry and herb gardens, and hundreds of varieties of flowers. [www.lizchristygarden.us](http://www.lizchristygarden.us).
- **Hudson River Park's Estuarine Sanctuary** is a dynamic habitat to over 85 species of fish and serves as a migration corridor for birds. Learn more at [www.hudsonriverpark.org](http://www.hudsonriverpark.org). New this year is the Pier 26 Science Playground featuring structures shaped as two endangered sturgeon species that are native to the Hudson River.
- **The High Line** shares information about the relationships between insects and plants through horticulture programming and their free brochure featuring insects that are known to inhabit the park: [www.thehighline.org/celebrating-insects](http://www.thehighline.org/celebrating-insects).
- New York City's location within the **Atlantic Flyway** presents birdwatchers the opportunity to view birds as they migrate. Visit [www.nycgovparks.org/learn/wildlife-in-new-york-city/spring-and-fall-migration](http://www.nycgovparks.org/learn/wildlife-in-new-york-city/spring-and-fall-migration). Battery Park City is part of the **New York State Birding Trail**. Visit [www.dec.ny.gov/nature/animals-fish-plants/birds/birding](http://www.dec.ny.gov/nature/animals-fish-plants/birds/birding).
- The **New York City Parks Department** shares a list of budding flowers and trees at [www.nycgovparks.org/highlights/signs-of-spring-in-nyc-parks](http://www.nycgovparks.org/highlights/signs-of-spring-in-nyc-parks), and information on how to join wildlife-viewing tours and lectures at [www.nycgovparks.org/events/wildlife](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/wildlife).
- We have many wonderful State Parks, several of which are within New York City, including **Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve** in Staten Island, and a bird habitat in **Bayswater Point State Park** in Queens. Learn more here: [www.parks.ny.gov/regions/new-york-city/default.aspx](http://www.parks.ny.gov/regions/new-york-city/default.aspx).
- The **Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge**, which is part of the National Park Service's Gateway National Recreation Area NY, NJ, is

accessible by subway and close to JFK airport, but feels worlds away. Learn more here: <https://www.nps.gov/gate/learn/historyculture/jamaica-bay-wildlife-refuge.htm>

- **New York State Veterans and Gold Star Families have free access to New York State parks, campgrounds, day use areas, historic sites, and recreation areas through the expansion of the Lifetime Liberty Pass Program.** Learn more here: [www.parks.ny.gov/admission/lifetime-liberty-pass.aspx](http://www.parks.ny.gov/admission/lifetime-liberty-pass.aspx)



*It was great to join friends and colleagues at Manhattan Youth for their annual celebration of older adults and those working as caregivers, a wonderful opportunity to honor those who contribute so much to our community.*

### Join Our Email Newsletter List!

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853 Broadway, Suite 2007, New York, NY 10003

Deborah Glick's

## NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

ASSEMBLYMEMBER  
66<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT  
NEW YORK CITY

*HOW TO REACH US:*

*Call 212-674-5153 or*

*email [glickd@nyassembly.gov](mailto:glickd@nyassembly.gov)*



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### Resources for Tenants

We often hear from tenants who are experiencing unpleasant or even potentially harmful issues in their buildings. To learn about tenant rights and protections, and landlords' rights and responsibilities, the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) has created an ABCs of Housing Tenants' Guide and ABCs of Housing Owners' Guide, both found online here: [www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/abcs-of-housing.page](http://www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/abcs-of-housing.page)

If you are a tenant in a Rent Stabilized unit, the NYS Department of Homes and Community Renewal (DHCR), provides information about rent regulations, tenants' rights, and how to file a complaint, among other things, by visiting: [www.hcr.ny.gov/tenants](http://www.hcr.ny.gov/tenants).

My office can assist in contacting those agencies or connecting you to other tenants' rights resources. Contact us by email: [glickd@nyassembly.gov](mailto:glickd@nyassembly.gov) or phone: 212-674-5153.



*I was pleased to speak during NY is Not Disposable Advocacy Day in the Capitol in support of my Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act and Bigger Better Bottle Bill. Photo credit: Judith Enck*