

HISTORIC WINS IN THE 2024/2025 BUDGET

Building and Preserving Affordable Housing and Supporting the Most Vulnerable New Yorkers

This year, New York City took an incredible step toward addressing the housing affordability crisis by enacting the City of Yes to begin to tackle the root of the crisis. In tandem, on the state level, our budget has allocated a historic \$1 billion for New York City's City of Yes for Housing Opportunity Program including:

- **\$500 million** for new construction and preservation of affordable housing
- **\$200 million** for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)
- **\$80 million** for Mitchell-Lama Preservation
- **\$30 million** for supportive housing for adults, youths or young adults exiting the justice system.

Acknowledging that the root of the homeless crisis is a lack of housing, we invested \$50 million to establish the Housing Access Voucher Program, a rental assistance program that would help individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to secure permanent housing and transition out of shelters or unsustainable housing situations.

This budget makes tremendous strides toward ending the housing crisis here in New York, but we have far to go. The West Side on its own can not solve this crisis. We must create a State of Yes so that our neighbors on Long Island, in the Hudson Valley, the outer boroughs, and everywhere in the state do their fair share to build the affordable housing we need.

Investing in an Education and Child Care System That Serves All New Yorkers

Our children are our future. For far too long we have failed to invest in them or their caregivers. We've made incredible strides over the years, such as expanding pre-k seats, and we have continued investing in our future in this year's budget.

We made critical investments in education in New York State, including \$37.6 billion in funding to the General Support for Public Schools, a \$1.7 billion increase from the 2024-25 school year. The enacted budget includes \$26.4 billion in funding for Foundation Aid, a \$1.4 billion increase over FY 2024-2025.

Going farther, we are investing in the things students need to succeed. Because no one can learn on an empty stomach, this budget provides \$340 million for expanded universal school meals, a \$120 million expansion to ensure all children can thrive within the classroom without worrying

where their next meal will come from.

With the changing landscape brought by the proliferation of smart devices, we have also enacted a "bell to bell" restriction of smartphones or other internet-enabled personal devices in K-12 schools across the state. This total restriction ensures schools are distraction-free zones where students can focus on learning and socializing with their classmates during class, lunch and study periods. The budget also includes \$13.5 million to support the purchase of storage devices to help implement the policies.

For the youngest in our state, we are investing \$2.2 billion in childcare, including \$400 million to ensure that localities have the resources to keep child care subsidy enrollment open. While this and all of our investments are critical, I will continue to push harder for policies such as universal childcare.

Making our Communities Safer and Connecting People to Mental Healthcare

I walk the streets of Manhattan every day. I see with my own eyes the lives, families and communities that have been devastated by the intersection of addiction, homelessness, and mental health crises on our streets. That is why I have

been pushing for reforms to our laws, such as involuntary commitment. After months of advocating with the Governor and my colleagues, we expanded involuntary commitment laws while protecting constitutionally guaranteed civil rights.

If an individual poses a substantial risk of physical harm, or cannot provide for their own basic needs, action must be taken to keep the public and the individual suffering from mental illness safe.

We also invested \$8 million in additional funds for Daniel's Law Pilot Programs, which aim to equip localities with the tools they need to establish a behavioral health-led response to mental health crises in the community.



Assemblymember Simone gathered with advocates and business leaders in the State Capitol calling for Albany to make the mental health, homeless and substance abuse crises a priority.

Building More Public Green Space on the West Side

Last year, I passed legislation (A.10224) to move Pier 76 closer to becoming a new open green space at Hudson River Park. The pier requires a full rebuild as the piles that support

it are deteriorating. In this year's budget we secured \$85 million to fund that rebuild, bringing significant new green space to the west side even closer to fruition!

COMMUNITY NEWS

A New Penn Vision

Our community surrounding Penn Station has been mired in stagnation for years. Block 780 has faced imminent destruction this entire time. I brought forth a vision to revitalize our community by increasing the amount of affordable housing and greenspace created during this project. My vision focuses on the following:

- Thousands of new, mixed-income and affordable housing units.
- A new public park comparable in size to Bryant Park's open lawn.
- Improved public safety efforts.
- A thriving 24/7 live, work, play area.
- No longer relying on eminent domain to renovate Penn Station, and protecting Block 780.
- Better pedestrian flow from Herald Square to Penn Station.

This vision is already gaining traction. Within two weeks of unveiling it, Governor Kathy Hochul made it clear to the public that she agrees that Block 780 must be spared from destruction.

New York used to do big and bold things, we must do that here. Amending the Penn GPP would have substantial benefits. My vision isn't prescribing one fixed solution, but rather for the State to come back to the community and work with us on a better plan.



Assemblymember Tony Simone discussing the future of Penn Station with Andy Byford.

Protecting Our Immigrants From The Federal Agenda

Across our state and nation, ICE has used masked tactics to sow fear and paranoia in immigrant and minority communities. Intensifying raids are putting citizens and noncitizens alike at risk of being abducted by masked police. People are being taken off our streets and disappeared to extra-national concentration camps without due process. In response to these tactics I have introduced bill (A.8908), The MELT Act, which will ensure that ICE and all those who have the power to enforce our laws are held accountable to the people. This bill will help to protect the rights of all people in New York and hinder the proliferation of an unmarked police state. I unequivocally support the comprehensive immigration reforms that were rejected by the Trump Administration. The immigration system is broken, but the current state of mass deportations and camps are overt human rights violations.

Congestion Pricing Went Live

Congestion pricing was developed as a crucial solution to multiple crises in our city and in the time since the cameras went live it has more than achieved its mission. Our subway system is crumbling. Congestion pricing has unlocked \$15 billion to fix it. Our streets are cleaner and safer because of the traffic reduction, with 67,000 less cars entering Manhattan each day, travel time down 8%, 14% less crashes, and 45% less vehicle noise complaints. More New Yorkers are choosing public transit too: ridership is up 7% on the subway, 12% on the bus, 8% on the Long Island Rail Road, and 6% on the Metro North. Congestion pricing is finally here and it is exceeding expectations.

However, I maintain my support for a residential exemption. I do not believe residents should be charged for simply living in the zone. I will continue my push for a residential exemption.



Assemblymember Simone with Governor Hochul sharing the early impacts of Congestion Pricing.

Easter Egg Hunt

This year we had our first annual Easter Egg Hunt. Hundreds of parents, caregivers, and kids from across the west side for a morning of laughs, eggs, and candy! To all the little egg hunters who asked... the egg hunt will return bigger and better next year!! Reach out to make sure you are on the email list and follow on social media to ensure you don't miss our next great event.



Assemblymember Simone greeting parents at the first annual West Side Easter Egg Hunt.

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

Ballot Dropbox Bill Passed and Signed into Law!

With a long record of attacks on democracy coming from Donald Trump and the weaponization of the federal government, such as the current effort to dismantle the Post Office, it is more important now than ever to ensure all New Yorkers can safely and securely vote.

My pro-democracy bill (A.1014) has been adopted by the Assembly and signed into law! This bill makes it possible for early and absentee ballots to be returned at secure ballot drop-boxes.

Protecting the Freedom to Read

Access to a wide curriculum of reading materials in our schools is essential for our students. That is why I led a rally to support my bill the Freedom to Read Act (A.7777) to defend every student's freedom to read, think and grow!

NYS must never allow book bans!

Standing Up for Trans Youth

In February, we gathered to demand NYU Langone immediately reverse its decision to support the federal government’s invasive medical policies into our doctors offices.

NYU Langone unnecessarily submitted to executive orders that are at odds with the very Hippocratic Oath they have pledged to uphold.

Since then, NYU has said they have resumed gender affirming care for patients under the age of 19. Along with my partners in government we will hold them to account. If you see any attack on our LGBTQ+ community please reach out to my office.



Assemblymember Simone Speaking at Rally in Support of the Freedom to Read Act (Photo Credit Amber Yang / NYCLU).



Assemblymember Simone in Albany Speaking at a Rally Defending Transgender Youth in New York State.



Gifts From the West Side Community Collected for Assemblymember Simone's First Annual Toy Drive. Gifts were given to residents of Elliott-Chelsea Houses and to Hudson Guild.



Assemblymember Simone Reading Names at World Aids Day Memorial.



Assemblymember Simone Speaking At City Hall to Strengthen the City Charter Revision Process.



Assemblymember Simone serving residents at the annual Penn South Co-Op BBQ with City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams. In partnership with our local Senator they announced a 50% tax savings, worth an estimated \$2 million for Penn South!

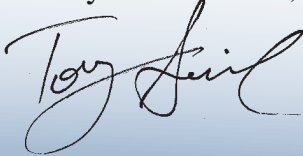
Dear Neighbor,

I am happy to report that the state legislature has finished the legislative session for 2025. This year's state budget contains significant gains towards affordability, a stronger mental health system, strengthening public safety and protecting our environment. A final budget is a reflection of our values and priorities, representing the wide diversity of people and places in New York State. This budget is the result of over three months of legislative hearings, public input and tough negotiations. The devastating cuts from the Federal Government will continue to complicate matters and I will be sharing updates as New York responds. Below are some of the highlights of this year's budget I want to share with you. In this newsletter, you can read more about what we accomplished this year. I am proud to have delivered substantial wins for my constituents.

Over the years, I have called out a number of issues threatening our neighborhoods such as the affordable housing crisis, public safety, the lack of serious mental healthcare, threats to the LGBTQ+ community, and the destruction of our environment. While I am proud of the progress we've made on these issues in this year's budget and legislative victories, these changes are not nearly enough and I will continue to fervently work towards permanent solutions.

My community office at 214 West 29th Street, Suite 1401, 212-807-7900, Simonet@nyassembly.gov is here to help you in any way we can. Please contact us if you're having a problem with a government agency, your landlord, a utility, or if you have concerns about the neighborhood. If your block association or another group needs my assistance or would like me to come to a meeting, please contact my office. And, to help me legislate most effectively, it's important for me to hear from you, so never hesitate to voice your opinion on legislation.

Thank you! In service,



Assemblymember Simone speaking on the Assembly floor



Assemblymember
Tony Simone

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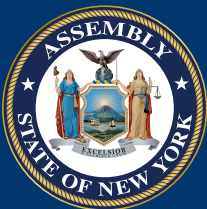
Community Office

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Budget and Community Update
FALL 2025

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Sincerely yours,



Tony Simone