



Assembly Member REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT

DISTRICT OFFICE: 1485 York Avenue (Between 78 & 79 Streets) • New York, NY 10075 • 212-288-4607

ALBANY OFFICE: Room 650, Legislative Office Building • Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-5676

EMAIL: seawright@nyassembly.gov • **WEBSITE:** <http://nyassembly.gov/mem/Rebecca-A-Seawright>

2018 SPECIAL REPORT

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We had a very productive legislative session in Albany this year. I want to share with you this year's legislative successes important for the quality of life in our district and the state as a whole. I am especially proud of the work done to advance legislation that promotes equal rights for women and the LGBTQ community, increased transparency of the number of women holding leadership and policy-making decisions in government, and mandating the state Department of Health to undertake studies in relation to the marine transfer station to protect our health and wellbeing.

While I am pleased with the progress we have made this year, I must comment on the work that remains to be done. As stated in more detail below, we must tackle the issue of educational equity in our city's specialized high schools, but it must be done in a way that allows all stakeholders to provide input and shape the outcome of their children's educational future. The Supreme Court recently struck down a ban on nationwide sports betting and the Legislature did not pass any legislation moving towards legalization in New York, an issue that will have to be considered thoughtfully during the next session. While bail reform has stalled in the Senate, both houses were able to approve a new commission to investigate misconduct by prosecutors to increase accountability in the courts which has been signed by the Governor. Finally, it is tragic that the Senate has not moved on many efforts to increase school safety in the wake of terrible shootings in Parkland, Florida and Santa Fe, Texas. In the Assembly, we passed bills banning bump stocks, extending the waiting period from 3 days to 10 days for gun buyers to allow for a complete background check, and empowering school administrators to block at-risk youth from purchasing guns. It is shameful that the Senate did not pass this critical legislation and it is absolutely essential we do better during next year's session.

As always, our office is just a call, email or visit away.

Best Wishes,

Rebecca A. Seawright



Honoring the Life and Legacy of Edie Windsor

Rebecca partnered with Senator Brad Hoylman and held a press conference honoring the life and legacy of Edie Windsor, civil rights champion and lead plaintiff in the Supreme Court Case US v. Windsor. Rebecca urged the Legislature to live up to Edie's legacy and continue passing legislation guaranteeing equal rights and protections to the LGBTQ community. As a result of Rebecca's commitment to Edie's legacy and equal rights, she voted in favor and the Assembly passed the following bills:

- **Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA – A3358)** – this bill adds “gender identity or expression” to the language of the existing NYS Human Rights Law that protects against discrimination in the areas of employment, healthcare, housing, public transportation, public accommodations and credit.
- **Banning Conversion Therapy (A03977)** – this bill prohibits mental health professionals from practicing conversion therapy with patients under the age of 18, with the purpose of changing their sexual orientation.

Seawright Supports Separated Children Accountability Response Act

Assembly Member Seawright announced her support for the Separated Children Accountability Response Act (SCAR Act) to create a public reporting system requiring a reoccurring 15-day accounting of forcibly separated refugee children held within state-contracted facilities.



Marine Transfer Station and Air Quality

When Rebecca was elected to office four years ago, she vowed to fight to protect this neighborhood against the effects of a new marine transfer station on East 91st Street. She secured two significant victories in this fight during this year's legislative session:

- Included in the FY19 Budget was a provision directing the NYS Department of Health to study the high burden of asthma in Brooklyn and Manhattan and provide recommendations on how to address this public health concern
- She sponsored legislation directing the Commission of the State Department of Environmental Conservation to implement rules and regulations that require the placement of air monitoring equipment at waste/marine transfer stations statewide



CB8 Chairwoman Alida Camp, CB8 Members Craig Lader and Tricia Shimamura, Friends of the East River Esplanade's Jennifer Ratner, Council Member Ben Kallos, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright and CB8 District Manager Will Brightbill at the launch of the Soundview Route.

Tough slog to a fast ferry

Seawright Calls for Full Access to East 90th Street Ferry Landing -- Soundview Route Started on August 15

“It is outrageous that there is still no accessible path to the 90th Street Ferry. This is not only an urgent need but a basic requirement. That is what I told NYC EDC President, James Patchett, at the launch date and we will continue to press for a fully accessible path until this matter is rectified,” said Seawright.

As printed in Our Town

The Path Towards Equality for All, Once and for All

Rebecca has been a tireless advocate for the rights of women during her time in the Assembly and beforehand, as a community activist. Upon her election, she has fought for an Equal Rights Amendment Bill to change the New York State Constitution, and enshrine equal rights for women into law. This year, Assembly Bill A7990 passed in the Assembly and is awaiting passage in the Senate, bringing equal rights one step closer to being fully realized.

Additionally, she sponsored and successfully spearheaded the passage of the Women's Website Bill (A5487), which requires the creation of a public database showing female representation in policy-making positions.

Admissions Fairness and the Specialized High School Admissions Test

Assembly Bill A10427A was introduced which would abolish the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT). The Assembly was only given two business days to review, discuss and debate the legislation, clearly an inadequate amount of time, given the monumental changes the legislation would bring about. With such little time to discuss, Rebecca voted “no” on this legislation in order to give educators, students, teachers, and alumni more time to provide input before rushing into any decision. As a Member of the Assembly Education Committee, Rebecca is committed to addressing injustices in the public schools system and is looking forward to doing so in a thoughtful manner.

Information on a public forum with Community Board 8 Education Committee is forthcoming.



Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts Executive Director Rachel Levy visits Assembly Member Seawright at the Capitol.

Protecting the Character of Our Neighborhood

We continue to face pressure from developers looking to exploit our increased transit access and build even taller buildings at the expense of the character of our neighborhood. Rebecca has been a leading voice against overdevelopment in our neighborhood. Here are just a few ways Rebecca has fought overdevelopment this year:

- Continues to oppose legislation uncapping Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in NYC: in 2016, Rebecca successfully opposed this legislation that would increase density in her district. She opposes a similar proposal that has made its way in the Senate this year.
- Co-sponsored an Overdevelopment Forum with Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Council Member Ben Kallos, and Senator Liz Krueger educating residents on ways they can fight back against developers exploiting loopholes
- Supports the Community Board 8 resolution for a 210-foot height cap on all new development in the district

Seawright and Krueger Host Forum: “What to Do With All That Stuff”

All of us can say that we have a special relationship with things, sometimes they are things that we cannot part with. For some people, the relationship to items becomes an unhealthy obsession. We hear from constituents every day that their stuff is getting in the way both literally, as they are unable to navigate the inside of their apartment and figuratively, as they are emotionally unable to detach from their belongings for fear and anxiety. Often times, residents who are struggling with clutter or too much “stuff” present themselves to us at the district community office as someone who is facing a notice to cure or eviction.



Funding Community Programs

In addition to fighting to maintain and increase spending on a number of essential programs and services for our community, Rebecca secured over \$1 million in grant funding for critical community programs and partners in the district:

- \$625,000 awarded to all three New York Public Library branches in the 76th District to upgrade wiring/electricity and improve facilities
- An additional \$250,000 awarded to both Yorkville Middle School and PS 158 to fund security cameras for their buildings; this funding brings the total grant to \$500,000
- \$125,000 to PS 183 to fund the renovation of the faculty resource and literacy room
- Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Yorkville Community School and PS 183 all received \$25,000, to be used at the discretion of each school's principal
- \$20,000 was awarded to the Neighborhood House at Holy Trinity to be used towards social services they provide through their shelter and meal programs
- \$5,000 was awarded to the National Chorale for their after-school music programs provided to students in the district at no charge



Seawright with Joyce Bahr, President of the Unsealed Initiative and constituent at the Unsealed Initiative Press Conference held in the back of Assembly Chambers on Tuesday, June 5, 2018.

Seawright is proud to have worked with Joyce Bahr, President of the Unsealed Initiative, to cosponsor and support Assembly Bill 9959B which will strengthen the rights of adoptees and their biological parents.

Seawright Helps to Pass Legislation to Strengthen Rent Protections and Combat Unfair Practices by Landlords

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright announced she helped pass a package of legislation that strengthens rent protections and combats unfair housing practices to increase access to affordable housing for all New Yorkers.

Combating landlord harassment

In order to protect tenants against predatory landlords, Assembly Member Seawright voted in support of the Tenant Protection Act of 2018, which increases penalties for landlords who try to force out rent-regulated tenants by expanding the definition of felony harassment and creating a misdemeanor harassment charge (A7992-A). Under current law, a landlord must cause a tenant physical injury to meet the standard for felony harassment.

And to remove financial incentives that reward landlords who force out rent-regulated tenants, Seawright helped pass a bill that eliminates vacancy decontrol provisions, which allow apartments with a legal maximum rent in excess of \$2,733 that become vacant to be removed from the protections of the rent regulation laws (A433). Additionally, it would allow certain units that were deregulated pursuant to vacancy decontrol to become reregulated.

The legislative package also includes a measure that eliminates the 20 percent rent increase – known as a vacancy bonus – which landlords can charge when the rent of a rent-stabilized apartment rises above \$2,700 a month and becomes vacant (A9815). This critical measure removes an incentive for landlords to force out rent-regulated tenants to increase profits and helps slow the pace of deregulation, noted Seawright.

“Forcing out rent-regulated tenants is far too common because of the potential benefit to an owner’s bottom line. That’s why we must eliminate incentives that reward landlords for their predatory practices and ensure that this type of harassment doesn’t go unpunished,” said Seawright.

Helping tenants challenge unfair landlord practices in court

In addition, the Assembly passed a bill that requires the owner of a rent-regulated unit to comply with an order issued more than four years before an overcharge complaint if the order has not been withdrawn, and allow for the examination of a unit’s rental history beyond four years in the cases involving fraud (A4003).

To help tenants challenge unfair rent increases, the Assembly legislation includes a measure allowing a court or the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) to consider any year that a landlord failed to file an annual rent regulation statement when a tenant challenges their rent (A9816). Currently, a court or DHCR can only consider years within the four-year statute of limitations.

“We must ensure that tenants have access to all the relevant information they need when challenging a rent increase or other potential overcharge,” said Seawright. “This legislation empowers residents and prevents unscrupulous landlords from hiding past and current misdeeds.”

LEGAL CLINIC

The results of our recent Community Survey confirmed housing issues are of paramount concern. We heard you and we listened. That is why we have set up a Housing Legal Clinic. **Every other Tuesday, beginning at 4 pm**, experienced housing court attorney Bob Grimbale of the Law Firm Grimbale & LoGuidice will provide individual pro bono consults and housing related, landlord-tenant issues. Please contact our office to schedule an appointment.

Seawright Condemns the Behavior of Dirty Doorman

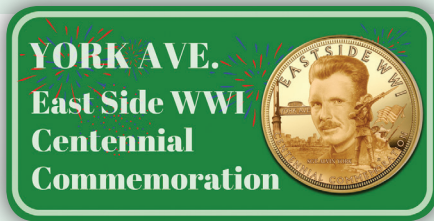
Six women in Tudor City have come forward to report unwanted lewd pictures from their doorman in June and July. The NYPD had closed all of their cases because the doorman’s actions were offensive but not technically an arrestable offense. Assembly Member Seawright was disturbed to hear the treatment of the victims by law enforcement officials and published the above letter to the editor of The Post.

She said *“residents must feel safe in their homes and not subjected to unwanted sexual communications from the very staff members hired to protect them.”*

As a result, she has been invited by Assembly Member Braunstein to cosponsor his legislation to extend the same protections for telephone users against aggravated harassment to those who may also be using electronic communications such as text or email.

In follow-up, experts in the field of revenge porn have reported that the app “TextMe” used to harass has been subpoenaed in the past. Former prosecutors have also noted that individuals sending unwanted pics may be identified by their tattoos.

SPOTLIGHT ON EVENTS



Co-Chairs
**Assembly Member Seawright
and Howard Teich**

Visit our website! www.eastsidewwicentennial.org

Featured Event! Guest of Honor Col. Gerald York will be in attendance!

Screening of Sgt. York Film With Gary Cooper, Lycée Français De New York
505 E 75th St. (York/First Avenue) • **Thursday, October 18 • 6:00 p.m.**

**THE BREAKING OF
THE HINDENBURG LINE DINNER**
Saturday, October 13 • 6:00 p.m.

The Armory, Board Of Officers Room
1st Floor, 643 Park Ave.

**LECTURE “FEEDING THE FIGHT:
Food, Policy, And Propaganda”**

Monday, October 22 • 6:00 p.m.
Webster Library, 1465 York Ave. (77/78 Streets)

WEBSTER LIBRARY FILM FESTIVAL
1465 York Ave. (77/78 Streets)
Saturdays at 2:00 p.m.

September 22: Good Morning, Babylon

October 6: The Good Soldier Schweik

October 20: Men of Bronze

November 3: And Quiet Flows the Don

November 17: Hearts of the World

December 1: Over There 1914-1918

Gracie Square Art Show:
Celebrating 46 Years of Art in the Park
September 8 and 9
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. [Rain or Shine]
East End Avenue, 84th Street - 88th St.
Free Admission
www.GracieSquareArtShow.com

College Affordability and Excelsior Scholarship Forum
Thursday, October 11
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Eleanor Roosevelt High School Auditorium
411 E 76th St., York & First Ave.

Community Office of Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright
1485 York Avenue, New York, NY 10075

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Seawright Announces Affordability Package for Westview Residents

Roosevelt Island's Westview Residential Building Exits Mitchell-Lama Program with Protections for Residents



Assembly Member Seawright announced her continued support of residents following an agreement that will preserve 55% of Roosevelt Island Westview's 361-apartment affordable housing development, for middle-class residents for the next 30 years.

Stakeholders on Roosevelt Island lauded Seawright's leadership in keeping lines of communication open and pushing for holistic and fair negotiations between Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIO), and Empire State Development (ESD) agencies.

Opher Pail, Co-Chair, Westview Task Force, Inc. said, "This affordability plan is great news for Roosevelt Island. All Westview residents will be able to continue living in their homes. Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright relentlessly and effectively advocated on behalf of Westview tenants for a deal that will provide security for residents for years to come."