

Rebecca Seawright



Breaking News

\$284 Million Allocated to East River Esplanade

Living in New York City, our parks and open spaces are our backyards. It is where we take walks, jog, play with our kids, walk our dogs and just enjoy the view. We are thrilled that \$284 million dollars has been allocated to critical work along the East River Esplanade in our neighborhood, and East Harlem for Pier 107. Now more than ever, during a pandemic, our neighbors rely on this esplanade for enjoyment. That is why we spearheaded a letter to the New York City Parks Commissioner signed by local elected officials, and Community Boards urgently asking for the Parks Department to fast track this funding and other State Capital to make desperately needed repairs. Considering the dangerous conditions caused by sinkholes, and other dilapidated conditions along the path of the East River, this funding is a matter of safety for our neighbors.

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

You may have heard about an incident on Fifth Avenue back in December by a group of teens on bikes who surrounded and attacked a vehicle with a man and his mother inside. Constituent Max Torgovnick contacted our office for help and our office responded, this week, with proposed legislation to help victims of crimes in progress identify their location by obtaining information from their phone companies.

Also known as the Kelsey Smith Act, the legislation has been signed into law in 27 other states. The legislation was named for Kelsey Smith who was abducted in broad daylight from Target department store in Overland, Kansas, in June of 2007. About three hours after Kelsey was abducted, police found her car in the Target parking lot. Her family and friends joined in the search while authorities identified a signal, or a "ping," from her mobile phone. Law enforcement officials sought "ping" records from the mobile phone provider to pinpoint her precise location. The provider complied three and a half days later. Upon receipt of the data, the police located Kelsey's body within 45 minutes. The investigation revealed that she had been sexually assaulted. Kelsey's parents, Missey and Greg Smith, have been behind a national effort to pass the legislation in their daughter's name. We look forward to advocating for its passage in New York State.

One of the biggest challenges New Yorkers have faced during the past few months is finding steady employment, and for small businesses, the challenge has been to keep a

steady revenue stream coming in to stay in business. This week, in the Assembly we passed legislation to protect workers and small businesses during the pandemic.

Join us for a virtual swearing-in ceremony on Tuesday, February 9 at 7 pm on Facebook live featuring the sensational singer Marilyn Maye, and Roosevelt Island Girl Scout Troop 3233.

Stay safe, wash your hands frequently, keep your social distance, and wear your face-covering! Please don't hesitate to reach out to our community office if we can be of assistance.

Phone: 212.288.4607

Email: SeawrightR@NYAssembly.gov

Sincerely,

Rebecca



You're Invited!

Swearing-In Ceremony for the Honorable Rebecca Seawright

Assembly Member for the 76th District

*Featuring a performance by the sensational singer
Marilyn Maye and Roosevelt Island Girl Scout Troop 3233!*



Tuesday, February 9, 2021 • 7:00 pm

[Facebook.com/RebeccaASeawright/live](https://www.facebook.com/RebeccaASeawright/live)

Event is free and open to the public.

*RSVP by calling 212-288-4607 or emailing
SeawrightR@NYAssembly.gov.*

**Seawright Bill to Cut Emergency Response Time To
Help Victims of Crimes in Progress**

As Featured On...

“Kelsey’s story is not the first time that a tragedy could have been prevented if cell phone companies had turned over their records to help find missing persons,” Seawright said. “Passing the Kelsey Smith Act will save lives.”



Watch the exclusive segment [here](#).

Patch

On Thursday, Torgovnick, who lives on the Upper East Side, appeared alongside Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright in a Zoom press conference to announce the proposed legislation.



“Passing the Kelsey Smith Act will save lives. In an abduction or an emergency, law enforcement must act quickly, which is why we need wireless carriers to cooperate,” Assembly Member Seawright said.



View full press conference [here](#).

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright announced legislation that would require wireless phone companies to immediately respond to law enforcement requests for location information from crime victims who are in jeopardy of death or serious physical harm.

“Passing the Kelsey Smith Act in New York would have enabled police to respond more immediately to the plight of a Max Torgovnick of Manhattan and his elderly mother who were attacked in their car last month by a marauding gang of teenage bikers on Fifth Avenue,” Seawright said.

Seawright said the bill is based on similar legislation passed in 27 states and named after Kelsey Smith, an 18-year-old Kansas woman abducted and killed after a mobile telephone company took more than three days to provide police with the requested location information.

Video footage of the attacks on the Torgovnicks shows a group of young bicyclists surrounding Torgovnick's SUV and hurling their bodies and bikes onto the vehicle. The attackers finally retreat after one propelled himself onto the hood and smashed the windshield.

Torgovnick, of the Upper East Side, was behind the wheel. His mother was making desperate calls to 911.

"When they smashed the glass, at that point, my biggest fear was, they're going to get in the car, they're going to pull me out, and I could be killed," Torgovnick said. "All I could hear was my mother crying and screaming. That's what haunts me the most."

The Kelsey Smith Act bill would require that wireless phone companies immediately respond to law enforcement requests and improve coordination between law enforcement agencies and wireless cell phone carriers during emergencies involving missing persons.

Kelsey Smith was abducted in broad daylight from Target department store in Overland, Kansas, in June of 2007. About three hours after Kelsey was abducted, police found her car in the Target parking lot.

Her family and friends joined in the search while authorities identified a signal, or a "ping," from her mobile phone. Law enforcement officials sought "ping" records from the mobile phone provider to pinpoint her precise location. The provider complied three and a half days later. Upon receipt of the data, the police located Kelsey's body within 45 minutes. The investigation revealed that she had been sexually assaulted.

Kelsey's parents, Missey and Greg Smith, have been behind a national effort to pass the legislation in their daughter's name.

"If your child was missing, would you not want law enforcement to have every tool available to find your child? The Kelsey Smith Act provides just that," they said in a statement, "We want to thank Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright for recognizing the importance of this and working with us to enact this life-saving legislation in New York."

"Kelsey's story is not the first time that a tragedy could have been prevented if cell phone companies had turned over their records to help find missing persons," said Seawright, who represents the Upper East Side, Yorkville, and Roosevelt Island. "Passing the Kelsey Smith Act will save lives. In an abduction or an emergency, law enforcement must act quickly, which is why we need wireless carriers to cooperate."

ICYMI: In Case You Missed It

Virtual Town Hall Tuesday: COVID-19 Vaccinations Information Session Part II



Watch the full Town Hall Tuesday [here](#).

Legislative Updates

Seawright Cosponsors Legislation Passed By Assembly to Support Underemployed New Yorkers

The Assembly Majority passed legislation to ensure underemployed New Yorkers can still receive the unemployment insurance benefits they've earned.

(A.2355-A)

COVID-19 has uprooted our entire lives, and for many, this has included losing their primary source of income. In challenging times like these, unemployment benefits are critical in allowing families to keep their basic needs met. That is why Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright cosponsored and voted to pass Assembly Bill 2355-A designed to protect and maintain these crucial benefits. The legislation aims to ensure that partially unemployed workers maintain access to unemployment insurance benefits.

Due to oversights in the current law, workers whose hours have been significantly reduced receive fewer unemployment benefits than they would if they were completely unemployed. This creates a situation where workers are incentivized not to seek part-time work, further stagnating the economy and negatively affecting workers' professional skills

This bill would amend state law and determine worker eligibility for benefits based on weekly earnings rather than days worked. Additionally, it proposes a new system for calculating benefits that disregards a portion of part-time earnings. This will prevent workers from turning down part-time positions due to the risk of losing their benefits.

Supporting Small Business Owners



The Assembly Majority passed legislation to ensure unemployment claims related to COVID-19 aren't used to penalize small business owners.

(A2001-A)

Seawright also cosponsored and strongly supported Assembly Bill 2001, to prevent unemployment charges caused by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic from being used to calculate an employer's experience rating.

Experience ratings are used to assess unemployment charges on employers that reflect their past unemployment claims. Due to the shutdowns caused by COVID-19 an unprecedented number of individuals have sought unemployment benefits. As a result, these businesses will be hit with a massive increase in their unemployment insurance tax rates because of the high number of unemployment claims.

Penalizing these businesses for complying with government-ordered shutdowns is both unfair and will hinder their ability to grow and rebuild. A.2001 will prevent that by excluding unemployment claims made due to COVID-19 shutdowns from the calculation of an employer's experience rating.

COVID-19 Emergency Protect Our Small Businesses Act of 2021 Passes Assembly

The Assembly Majority passed the
COVID-19 Emergency Protect Our Small Businesses Act of 2021



to provide critical relief to
small-business owners and help
New York build back stronger.

The Assembly also passed the COVID-19 Emergency Protect Our Small Businesses Act, cosponsored by Seawright to extend critical eviction and foreclosure protections for small businesses statewide through May 1 (A.3207). Like other eviction or foreclosure prevention legislation that the Assembly Majority passed in 2020, applicants must have experienced a financial hardship caused by COVID-19 to qualify.

A.3207 simply extends the protections provided to tenants and homeowners to include small business commercial tenants and small business landlords. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Assembly has worked hard to deliver for struggling New Yorkers. Seawright is committed to the protection of the rights of workers and small business owners in the face of this difficult and unprecedented situation with the help of sustained federal relief.

COVID-19 Vaccination Information

Over seven million New Yorkers are now eligible for the vaccine. Eligible groups include doctors, nurses and health care workers, people age 65 and over, first responders, teachers, public transit workers, grocery store workers, and public safety workers.

[Visit the New York State Vaccine Site Locator](#)

Call 1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829)

or

[Visit the New York City Vaccine Site Locator](#)

Call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692)

New York State and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital launched a new vaccination site for eligible New Yorkers in Washington Heights. This new site, at Fort Washington Armory in Upper Manhattan, was made possible thanks to a partnership with Weill Cornell Medicine and Columbia University Irving Medical Center. The site is offering vaccinations to New Yorkers age 65 and up and appointments can be scheduled online through the NewYork-Presbyterian [Connect Online Patient Portal](#). Appointments are required.

[Sign up here to receive the latest information on the COVID19 vaccine.](#)

COVID-19 Updates and Resources

Renters Hardship Declaration

As a result of the rent relief legislation, cosponsored by Seawright and signed into law, renters who have lost income, are unable to pay increased costs or are unable to move without significant risk to their health or the health of a family member, can declare hardship and protect themselves against eviction until May 1, 2021. Tenants should sign and deliver to their landlord a hardship declaration form.

If you're behind on rent or at increased health risk from COVID-19, fill out the hardship declaration form and get protected from eviction.

COVID-19 Rent Relief Extension Program

The COVID Rent Relief Extension Program will provide eligible households with a one-time rental subsidy that will be sent directly to the household's landlord. Applicants will not need to repay this assistance. The Covid Rent Relief Extension Program is not first-come, first-served. Applications will be accepted throughout the application period. HCR will prioritize eligible households with the "greatest economic and social need."

[Apply here for rent relief through February 1, 2021.](#)

Rebecca Seawright



Freeze Your Rent Clinic

Wed., March 3
2:00pm–3:00pm

The NYC Rent Freeze Program, which includes the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Program and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) Program, helps those eligible stay in affordable housing by freezing their rent.

Homeowners Benefits Clinic

Wed., March 10
2:00pm–3:00pm

The City of New York offers tax exemptions and abatements for seniors, veterans, clergy members, people with disabilities, and other homeowners. These benefits can lower your property tax bill.

Email SeawrightR@NYAssembly.gov or call 212-288-4607 to RSVP



Aid for Small Businesses

Small Business Relief



New York State is offering grant and loan programs and other assistance for small businesses affected by COVID-19.

Visit esd.ny.gov/covid-19-business-resources to learn more.

SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

Through the Economic Aid Act, you may qualify for 2.5x to 3.5x your average monthly payroll in a 100% forgivable, zero-fee loan.

SBA funding is one of the preeminent SBA loan packagers in the country. Over the prior ten-year period, we've facilitated over \$2 billion in loans, helped thousands of clients during the first round of the Paycheck Protection Program ("PPP"), and have facilitated many thousands more in the first 10 days of the second round.

You have access to PPP funds through SBA funding's exclusive partnership with a service provider offering the most streamlined solution available. This portal will also make it easier for you when you're ready to apply for forgiveness.

- Program Highlights: Receive 2.5x your average monthly payroll costs in the one year prior to the loan or the calendar year (up to \$2 million). Hospitality businesses may qualify for 3.5x
- PPP is a 100% forgivable loan if you follow the guidelines
- Borrowers pay no fees

[Click here, add your basic contact information and be directed to the application.](#)

New York Forward Loan Fund (NYFLF)

The New York Forward Loan Fund (NYFLF) is a new economic recovery loan program aimed at supporting New York State small businesses, nonprofits, and small residential landlords as they reopen after the COVID-19 outbreak and NYS on "PAUSE." The NYFLF targets the state's small businesses with 50 or fewer full-time equivalent (FTE) employees (90% of all businesses), nonprofits and small residential landlords who have seen a loss of rental income. The NYFLF is specifically timed to support businesses and organizations as they proceed to reopen and have upfront expenses to comply with guidelines (e.g., inventory, marketing, refitting for new social distancing guidelines) under the New York Forward Plan.

[More information can be found here.](#)

Budget Proposal for Small Business Relief

The **Pandemic Recovery and Restart Program** is a \$130 million proposal to help small businesses that were most impacted by COVID to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Program would establish three new tax credits and expand a fourth tax credit to help small businesses, arts and theatrical industries, restaurants, and other businesses to bring

back jobs and help the economy recover faster.

[Read more about the Governor's proposal here.](#)

Raising the New York State Bar Restaurant Recovery Fund



The Raising the NYS Bar Restaurant Recovery Fund **provides restaurants and bars with up to \$5,000 in reimbursements for improvements or equipment** that helped them comply with COVID-19 restrictions. These expenditures must have been made on or after September 1, 2020.

To qualify, an establishment must:

- be a small, New York-based restaurant or bar that has been financially impacted by COVID-19
- have been in operation on or before March 1, 2019
- agree to comply with all state and local reopening guidelines

Apply here: nysrestaurantrecovery.fluxx.io/user_sessions/new

For more information, visit: esd.ny.gov/raising-nys-bar-restaurant-recovery-fund



Resources

- **Ritual ONE with PayPal** allows businesses to easily offer commission-free digital ordering. Businesses can receive Ritual for free through March 31, 2021, and access \$1 million in customer discounts.
- **Square** provides free education webinars and dedicated office hours to help business owners quickly launch a free e-commerce website.
- **Shopify**, an all-in-one commerce platform, is offering a 90-day free trial.
- **Etsy** is a marketplace that offers a variety of services that help sellers run their businesses, including payments, shipping and educational resources.
- **Clearbanc** is providing New York-based businesses with free valuation consultation and exclusive discounts.

To learn more visit:
esd.ny.gov/empire-state-digital

Health Insurance Open Enrollment

Open enrollment for uninsured New Yorkers is extended through March 31. As part of the State's ongoing response to the pandemic, the open enrollment period for uninsured New Yorkers is extended through March 31, 2021. New Yorkers can apply for coverage through the NY State of Health, New York's Official Health Plan Marketplace, or directly through insurers. Learn more *here*.

Roosevelt Island COVID-19 Rapid Testing Site



Roosevelt Island COVID-19 Rapid Testing Site

WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY
9 AM - 5 PM
524 MAIN STREET

Pre-registration is required! 3 ways to register:

- Visit rioc.ny.gov/556
- Call 212-702-0864
- Scan our QR Code



Roosevelt Island
Operating Corporation

ASSEMBLY MEMBER

REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT



HOUSING LEGAL CLINIC

TUES. FEBRUARY 2

EVERY OTHER TUESDAY
AT 4:00 PM ATTORNEYS FROM
THE LAW OFFICES OF GRIMBLE
& LOGUIDICE, LLC WILL
PROVIDE ADVICE ON HOUSING-
RELATED MATTERS AT NO-COST
FOR CONSTITUENTS OF THE
76TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Get help navigating the housing court process, responding to notices, dealing with threat of eviction, getting repairs from negligent landlords, and advocating for your rights as a tenant in New York City!

**DUE TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS, A
VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY WILL
HOST A ONE -ON-ONE PHONE
SESSION WITH ATTENDEES.**



**SCAN ME TO
RSVP!**

RSVP REQUIRED:

CALL: 212-288-4607

EMAIL: SEAWRIGHTR@NYASSEMBLY.GOV

The legal clinic is solely to provide guidance and advice from attorney's experienced in landlord-tenant law. The clinic does not guarantee a desired outcome and does not establish an attorney-client relationship. Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright does not represent or advise constituents in any legal matters.

RSVP to the Legal Clinic on 2/2

**ASSEMBLY MEMBER
REBECCA SEAWRIGHT**



**PROTECTIVE
FACE MASK
GIVEAWAY**



**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2021
12:00PM-2:00PM**

**COMMUNITY OFFICE
1485 YORK AVENUE
(78/79 STREET)**

SCAN ME TO RSVP!

**OFFICE OF ASSEMBLY MEMBER
REBECCA SEAWRIGHT**
PHONE: 212.288.4607
EMAIL:
SEAWRIGHTR@NYASSEMBLY.GOV



RSVP to the Face Covering Giveaway on 1/28

[View as Webpage](#)



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