



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As the new year begins, so does the 249th Legislative Session in Albany, where we're working hard to advance initiatives that support families, protect communities, and make everyday life more affordable. At the same time, here in New York City, the City Council has opened its own new session, unanimously electing Council Member Julie Menin as Speaker which is a historic moment as she becomes the first Jewish Speaker of the Council and sets an agenda focused on unity and effective governance.



In this special report, we are providing updates on some of our legislative priorities, including statewide commitments to expand childcare and support working families, recent laws lowering the cost of critical healthcare like EpiPens and expanding paid family leave, and enhancing access to breast cancer screenings.

We also cover news for commuters transitioning to OMNY, new passports and cultural exchange opportunities for youth, and resources to help with student loan repayment.

As always, my office is here to assist you.

Phone: 212.288.4607
Email: SeawrightR@NYAssembly.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca A. Seawright".

REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT

Tune In: Governor Hochul to Deliver 2026 State of the State Address

STATE OF THE STATE 2026

**GOVERNOR
KATHY HOCHUL**

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026
AT 1:00 PM**



WATCH LIVE



GOVERNOR.NY.GOV



@GOVERNORKATHYHOCHUL



Governor Kathy Hochul will deliver her 2026 State of the State address on Tuesday, January 13 at 1:00 p.m.

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright encourages constituents to tune in and hear the Governor's vision for a safer, more affordable New York—one where every family has the opportunity to thrive. The address will highlight initiatives that strengthen communities, support working families, and build a stronger future for all New Yorkers.

Tune in: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/2026-state-state>



**Rebecca
Seawright**
ASSEMBLY MEMBER

ONE GREAT WAY TO
START
2026

SHRED-A-THON!!

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10TH

82ND STREET GREEN MARKET
BETWEEN FIRST & YORK AVE

10 AM - 1 PM

NO NOTEBOOKS, BINDINGS, OR X-RAYS

OFFICE OF NYS ASSEMBLY MEMBER REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT
1485 YORK AVENUE

212-288-4607

SEAWRIGHTR@NYASSEMBLY.GOV



Seawright Statement on the Announcement for the Expansion of Universal Childcare in New York

Governor Kathy Hochul has unveiled historic investments to expand affordable, high-quality childcare for children under five across New York State. New York State will launch free childcare for two-year-olds in NYC, strengthen the city's 3K program, and move toward universal Pre-K for all four-year-olds by the 2028–29 school year.

The statewide plan includes:

- Expanding childcare for nearly 100,000 additional children, including new programs and increased subsidies.
- Launching 2-Care in NYC to provide free childcare for two-year-olds, initially focusing on high-need areas.
- Supporting counties outside NYC to pilot innovative community care programs.
- Establishing a new Office of Child Care and Early Education to oversee implementation of universal Pre-K, 2-Care, and other programs.
- Continuing workforce support for early childhood educators and expanding the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright praised the announcement, saying:

"I commend Governor Hochul for including the expansion of free childcare for two-year-olds in her State of the State proposals and for recognizing what families across New York have long known to be true: childcare is essential infrastructure."

Today's announcement did not happen overnight. I am proud to have been part of this longstanding advocacy to pass historic state-level investments that laid the groundwork for this moment. In the New York State Assembly, we have sustained the fight to expand childcare funding, stabilize providers, broaden eligibility, and make early childhood education more accessible and affordable for working families.

Building on the success of 3-K, this proposal represents a critical next step toward a comprehensive childcare system that supports children, keeps parents, especially women, in the workforce, and strengthens our economy. I look forward to continuing to work with Governor Hochul, legislative colleagues, and our partners in New York City to ensure every child gets a strong start in life with high-quality care and education."

This investment marks a major milestone in New York's commitment to making childcare affordable, accessible, and universal for all families.

Assembly Kicks Off 249th Legislative Session



Legislative Director and Aging Committee Clerk Dylan Klein and Assembly Chair of Aging Rebecca A. Seawright

On January 7, 2026, Speaker Carl E. Heastie officially opened the 249th Legislative Session in the Assembly Chamber, welcoming members, staff, and honored guests.

In his remarks, Speaker Heastie emphasized the Assembly's continued commitment to supporting New York's families, focusing on initiatives that make everyday life more affordable and accessible. Highlights included:

- Investments in families: Expanded Empire Child Tax Credit, fully funded Foundation Aid, and Universal School Lunch program.
- Education: No tuition increases at public colleges since 2021, and continued support for SUNY and CUNY to ensure access to higher education.
- Childcare: Ongoing expansion of affordable childcare and Pre-K programs to help working families.
- Housing: Efforts to make housing more affordable through construction incentives, rent relief, and tenant protections.

The Speaker also highlighted the challenges posed by federal cuts to healthcare, SNAP benefits, and education programs, pledging that New York will continue to protect families, support hospitals, and safeguard the environment in the face of these pressures.

Speaker Heastie closed by stressing the Assembly's commitment to working collaboratively across parties and with local and state leaders to build communities where every New Yorker has the tools and opportunity to thrive. He also welcomed the graduate intern class of 2026, acknowledging their role in supporting the work of the Assembly.

The 249th Legislative Session is now underway, with priorities centered on family support, education, healthcare, housing, and environmental protection.

Seawright Cosponsored and Strongly Supports Expanded Access to Breast Cancer Screenings

**A new law requires insurance
companies to cover additional**

Breast Cancer Screenings

**for high-risk patients. The Assembly
Majority is expanding access to lifesaving
care and putting women's health first.**



Early detection is one of the most powerful tools in the fight against breast cancer. Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright was a cosponsor of a new law, Ch. 424 of 2024, which requires insurance companies to cover additional breast cancer screenings when medically necessary, removing financial barriers for high-risk patients.

Previously, Assembly Member Seawright was the lead sponsor of landmark legislation that allowed 3D mammography for women without cost-sharing, a law that became a model for the nation. These efforts reflect her ongoing commitment to ensuring that women in New York have access to critical preventive care.

Lowering Costs for EpiPens Law

New law guarantees insurance coverage for EpiPens and caps annual costs at \$100. *The Assembly Majority is increasing access to emergency medication to keep New Yorkers safe and healthy.*



When an allergic reaction strikes, every second counts. That's why I helped pass a new law that mandates insurance coverage for EpiPens and caps costs at \$100 per year (Ch. 553 of 2024). Emergency medication should always be a right for all, not a luxury for some.

Expanded Paid Family Leave Law



New York has led the charge in providing paid family leave, allowing workers to take time off to care for their loved ones. Unfortunately, construction workers often miss out on benefits due to unpredictable schedules and short layoffs. That's why I helped pass a new law that extends paid family leave to construction workers if they were employed for at least 26 of the last 39 weeks (Ch. 651 of 2025). This law recognizes the realities of the trades industry and ensures workers can access the benefits they've earned.

Consider Our Office *YOUR* Resource

MTA Customer Service Centers Offer Free OMNY Cards for MetroCard Transfers

The MTA has launched a transition to OMNY, New York City's tap-and-go transit payment system, and is providing an opportunity for riders to switch from MetroCard balances to OMNY cards at Customer Service Centers (CSCs) throughout Manhattan.

Key highlights:

- The first 400 full-fare customers at each CSC who transfer their MetroCard balances will receive a free OMNY card.
- Participating Manhattan locations include:
 - 96th Street (1, 2, 3)
 - 168th Street (A, C, 1)
 - 59th Street–Columbus Circle (A, B, C, D, 1)
 - 14th Street–Union Square (4, 5, 6, N, Q, R, W, L)
- OMNY cards will be loaded with any remaining MetroCard balances, but will not include preloaded trips.

Customer Service Centers are designed to bring enhanced accessibility, OMNY technology, and improved customer experience closer to where riders live. Station agents at CSCs:

- Assist with Reduced-Fare MetroCard transitions, including applications for first-time users.
- Provide information on submitting complaints, travel updates, and wayfinding.
- Are specially trained on OMNY equipment and dedicated customer service functions.

Most CSCs are open 24/7, with the exception of St. George (Monday–Friday, 5:30 AM–9:00 PM). This initiative makes it easier for riders to transition to the OMNY system while maintaining their existing MetroCard balances and accessing enhanced customer services locally.



METROCARD/OMNY BUS

**STOPS HERE
(79/YORK):**

WED. 1/21, 2/4

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**REFILL YOUR
METROCARD/OMNY
CARD**

**APPLY FOR
REDUCED FARE**



[Download the NYC Parking Calendar](#)

NYC Launches Free Passport and International Exchange Program for Youth



The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) has launched a new initiative to help young people ages 15–18 in DYCD-funded programs obtain free passports and participate in international cultural exchange opportunities next spring and summer.

Key details:

Passport support: Tucks Travels will assist up to 110 students in completing passport applications at no cost.

Cultural exchange: Take Action Global (TAG) will lead structured trips for over 140 youth, including immersive experiences, civic learning, and global awareness programs.

Priority: First-time travelers and families from underserved communities.

The program removes financial and administrative barriers, giving NYC youth the opportunity to explore the world, gain new perspectives, and build confidence. DYCD Commissioner Keith Howard emphasized that these opportunities expand horizons beyond students' neighborhoods, preparing them to thrive as global citizens.

For more information, visit [DYCD NYC](#).

Struggling with Student Loans?



EDCAP, funded by New York State, provides free, confidential, and unbiased counseling to help borrowers manage repayment, reduce monthly costs, avoid default, stop collections, and explore forgiveness or other relief options.

Learn more: edcapny.org | Call: 888-614-5004 | [Book an Appointment](#)

**ASSEMBLY MEMBER
REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT**



HOUSING LEGAL CLINIC

EVERY OTHER TUESDAY

**EVERY OTHER TUESDAY
AT 3:30 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**

**A VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY WILL
HOST A ONE -ON-ONE SESSION
WITH ATTENDEES.**

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!

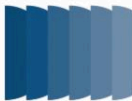


**SCAN ME TO
RSVP!**

**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.

25
Years



Auschwitz
Jewish Center
Foundation

Government Advocacy Fellowship



**be INSPIRED to assume
RESPONSIBILITY
for the future**

Applications are now open for the Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation's 2026 Summer Government Advocacy Fellowship. Students selected for this highly competitive program will be introduced to the mechanics of the state and municipal government, politics, grassroots activism and advocacy. The program is based in New York City and open to all college and graduate-level students.

AJCF Government Advocacy fellows will:

- ▶ Step directly into the arena of real policymaking through coveted internship placements with local and state legislators and high-impact government agencies, where participants contribute to meaningful, real-time work.
- ▶ Take part in an intensive weekly seminar series featuring elected officials, top lobbyists, coalition architects, civil rights advocates, and leading voices from the Jewish community, crafted to give participants the strategic toolkit of a modern advocate.
- ▶ Benefit from exclusive, one-on-one mentorship with senior decision-makers shaping today's most pressing policy debates. Fellows gain insider access, career guidance, and the kind of professional network that accelerates leadership.
- ▶ Receive a \$1,500 completion stipend, recognizing the commitment, excellence, and impact demonstrated throughout the fellowship.

Apply NOW - space is limited and admissions will be considered on a rolling basis through February 15th

DEADLINE TO APPLY: FEBRUARY 15, 2026



Please email GAF@AJCFUS.org for more information, program questions or to submit your application.

Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation
599 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10019
212.580.0200
www.AJCFUS.org/GAF/

Upcoming Events



HEALTH ADVOCATES
FOR OLDER PEOPLE

*Are you interested in connecting with others?
Do you want to make a difference in your community?*

Volunteer with us!

Volunteers play essential roles supporting our organization.
We especially welcome volunteers age 60+



Upcoming Volunteer Orientation Sessions

Tuesday, January 13th or February 10th at 12:00 pm on Zoom

Thursday, January 22nd or February 26th at 3pm at
Church of the Holy Trinity, 341 East 87th Street

To learn more, visit hafop.org/how-to-volunteer
and fill out our volunteer interest form.

Questions? Contact Kelly Mill at kmill@hafop.org or 212-980-1700, ext. 205

Health Advocates for Older People

420 Lexington Ave., suite 1402 | New York, NY 10170 | 212-980-1700 | www.hafop.org



Give a **little** time.
Make a **BIG** impact.



Deliver Joy to an Older Neighbor!

Volunteer for DOROT's Winter Package Delivery

Sunday, January 25, 2026

When you volunteer to deliver a care package and connect with an older neighbor for a visit or call, you can make their day—and yours!

Pre-registration and valid U.S. government-issued photo ID are required.

How it works:

- 1 Register at dorotusa.org/winter
- 2 Pick up a package and get matched with an older adult
- 3 Deliver the package to the home of an older adult in Westchester
- 4 Connect for a friendly visit

Sunday, January 25
10:00 AM - 12:30 PM



171 W 85th Street • New York, NY 10024 • dorotusa.org

We are grateful to the Sunshine Foundation for their support of DOROT's Winter Package Delivery. Thank you to Moise Safra Center for hosting DOROT's East Side Package Delivery.

Construction Advisories

Roosevelt Island Parking and Streets Division (PSD) reports that there will be temporary street parking restrictions due to ongoing construction along Main Street.

Details are as follows:

- Location: Main Street, from 513 to 543 Main Street
- Dates & Times: Monday, January 12, 2026 at 7:00 PM through Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM
- Parking Restrictions: "No Parking" will be enforced along the affected stretch.
- Pedestrian Access: A temporary crosswalk will be installed outside 506 Main Street to maintain safe pedestrian access when the 540 Main Street crosswalk is closed.

PSD has posted signage in all impacted areas. Residents and visitors are strongly encouraged to check posted signs before parking, including those with handicapped placards, to avoid towing.

For overnight parking, Motorgate Garage remains open and available to accommodate additional vehicles.

In Case You Missed It: Past Editions of the Community Report

[Community Update: A year in Review](#)

[Community Update: December 19, 2025](#)

[Community Update: December 12, 2025](#)

[Community Update: December 5, 2025](#)

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