



# Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz

## Reports to the People of Woodlawn

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Serving the communities of Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Norwood, Riverdale, Van Cortlandt Village, Wakefield, and Woodlawn

Dear Neighbor:

We approach the end of another year, and I always think this is a good time to reflect on what we have accomplished and what we aim to do. The past year has not been our easiest, but I was excited to see many of our beloved community traditions resume after COVID-related hiatuses. As with every year, I work hard to visit every part of our community and to engage with as many of our neighbors as I possibly can. I remain available in my district office, so please contact me without hesitation if you have an issue you care about.

The challenges before our state are numerous, and our work is cut out for us in the Legislature next year. But I am as excited as I've ever been to continue fighting for our community and leading on the issues we all care about. We need to continue to work to improve our criminal justice system so that New Yorkers are confident that justice will be achieved, that it will be fair, and our streets will be safe. Our climate continues to change, and we must take big steps forward to meet the moment we are in. Working people struggle to take care of themselves and their families, as we continue to work to transform our economy into one that will sustain us in the 21st Century.

It continues to be my honor and privilege to represent your voice in Albany, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Dinowitz  
Member of Assembly

### Ensure Responsible Gun Ownership in New York

There is no question that New York's ability to protect ourselves from gun violence by setting our own laws is under assault by the Supreme Court and a nationalized effort to undermine common sense gun safety policies. In the last year, we have seen the Supreme Court overturn New York's permitting system that had been in place for over a century. Then, after the Legislature and Governor stepped up to make the adjustments required by the Supreme Court, nationalized gun advocates filed lawsuits in friendly judicial jurisdictions to overturn our new laws. I believe these lawsuits will continue to be filed, and with a solid pro-gun contingent on the Supreme Court — I anticipate that we will see a noticeable increase in the number of guns in New York in coming years.

This is dangerous for New Yorkers. Although certainly there are many gun-related crimes that occur with illegal firearms (which will require continued federal action in order to combat), there are a substantial number of deaths every year from legally-owned firearms in our state. According to Everytown for Gun Safety, 53% of gun deaths are suicides — that's an average of 457 people dying and 42 more wounded by gun suicide in New York each year. Guns are the third-leading cause of death among children and teens — an average of 65 children and teens die by guns each year. In 2019, 11 women were killed by guns used by intimate partners.

These are the types of gun deaths that strong gun regulations protect against. We should not have a society where somebody can impulse-buy a deadly weapon in the heat of the moment. I have introduced new legislation which requires gun owners to purchase liability insurance, similar to what is already required for owning a car, and I will continue to work hard to ensure that New York remains at the bottom of the list when it comes to gun deaths.



### Together with Police at National Night Out

Each year, police departments across the country participate in National Night Out. This is a great event where police officers and community members can strengthen our relationships in order to better protect our neighborhoods against criminal activity.

Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured at the 47th Precinct National Night Out event.

### Sinkhole on Katonah Avenue Gets Fixed (Again)

As you may have seen, there has been a problematic and recurring sinkhole located on Katonah Avenue at East 238th Street. This sinkhole was repaired earlier this year, but it returned early this fall. My office reached out to the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and I am pleased to share that they performed emergency sewer repairs in order to provide a more permanent solution to the sinkhole.

If you notice this sinkhole return, or any other sinkholes, please notify 311 and share the reference number with my office so I can follow up with DEP.

### Woodlawn Run for a Cause

After a brief hiatus from in-person events, it was wonderful to attend the annual Woodlawn Run for a Cause this year. The event raised \$14,000 to benefit Hopes & Heroes and the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance. Congratulations to all who participated!



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured with Council Member Eric Dinowitz (right) with contestants at and volunteers for the Woodlawn Run for a Cause 2022.

## The State of Our Criminal Justice System

For many years in New York, we had a two-tiered system of justice. We had wealthy defendants freed from jail awaiting trial, while poor defendants were separated from their families and workplaces for months and years — even if they were innocent. We had defendants coerced into pleading guilty without knowing the evidence against them, simply because the time they agreed to serve was less than the time they would wait in custody for a trial. I don't believe this is a status quo that any genuine patriot who supports the American Constitution would advocate should continue.

The reforms to bail and discovery that we made in recent years are significant. There is no question that their implementation has left much to be desired, and that is why the Legislature has made adjustments in each of the last two years. One of the major shortfalls of our reforms, in my opinion, was that nonviolent property crimes (such as shoplifting or stealing car parts) were not being adjudicated quickly enough and we saw a small number of people rack up a huge number of arrests. In response, we adjusted the bail rules so that someone who is arrested for a second crime before the first crime has been prosecuted can have bail imposed even if it is not a bail-eligible offense. As with any section of law, we should continue to explore areas of potential improvement as we collect more data.

However, crime is going up in New York — just like it is throughout the nation, especially in gun-friendly states. I believe this acute problem goes beyond the structure of our criminal justice system. We need more cops in our communities. In particular, we need more Neighborhood Coordination Officers so that each team can focus on a smaller section of the precinct and have the time to build deeper relationships with community members. We also need more cops available for patrol, so that nonviolent quality of life issues can be addressed before they become violent.

Let's move past the reckless calls to defund police and instead focus on what matters: restoring trust between communities and the people tasked with keeping us safe.

## The Housing Crisis Continues at the Expense of Tenants

Few would deny that New York has a housing crisis, as rents skyrocket and working-class New Yorkers are left with fewer and fewer viable options to raise their family. I am proud of the work I was able to do during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to keep people in their homes, and I continue to believe that my laws to extend the eviction moratorium and the Tenant Safe Harbor Act have saved untold thousands of lives. However, evictions have resumed — and an alarming number of tenants do not have legally-entitled counsel as they navigate the eviction process.

Compounding the housing crisis, recent media reports found that there are tens of thousands of rent stabilized apartments being withheld from the market as property owners refuse to invest in them. Keep in mind that these apartments are likely vacant because a longtime tenant moved out, and so if the property owner is claiming that they are unsafe or unsuitable for a new tenant — the conditions likely existed while they were collecting rent from the prior tenant.

I will continue to fight hard to assert the rights of tenants in New York, and I welcome your thoughts on what needs to be done to ensure that working New Yorkers are able to live affordably in our community.

## Save Our Climate for the Children

New York has taken important steps in recent years to establish one of the most ambitious sets of climate targets in the entire nation. However, we must continue to take tangible steps to meet these goals.

I have been working hard on legislation to ensure that we leave our children a planet that is habitable and on its path to sustainability. Two such bills are the landmark Climate Change Superfund Act and the Green Transit, Green Jobs Act. The Climate Change Superfund Act would raise \$40 billion from a discrete number of climate polluters who are responsible for the most greenhouse gas emissions produced in New York, and use that money to invest in climate resiliency infrastructure. The Green Transit, Green Jobs Act would transform our mass transit systems statewide by requiring all new buses to be zero-emission buses and would create contract incentives to produce those buses right here in New York, thus creating a roadmap for our green economy of the future.

These two bills will be among my top priorities in Albany this upcoming session, and I am encouraged by the incredible investment of federal infrastructure dollars that emerged from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. With help from these funds, New York has an opportunity to be on the forefront of our climate change efforts and I am proud to help lead this progress.

## Let's Talk About Climate Change

I was happy to join the Jewish Climate Action Network (JCAN) at a forum to discuss the important work that we need to do to address climate change. I spoke about my new bill to create a Climate Change Superfund in New York, which would generate \$40 billion to help fund climate resiliency projects.



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured above at a Sukkot Climate Forum hosted by JCAN (l-r): JCAN Steering Committee Member Dr. Michelle Friedman, Rabbi Haggai Resnikoff of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, and Lio Pelavin of Jewish Youth Climate Movement. Not pictured are fellow panelists Dr. Jack Gorman of GreenFaith and Victor Davila of The Point CDC.

## Bronx Science Gets New Manne Institute

The Bronx High School of Science, my alma mater, recently opened a brand new 10,000 square foot research facility for its students. The Manne Institute, which will enable students to do high-level research in a facility commensurate with universities and leading companies in the world, is a product of the single largest gift to a public school in New York's history. I continue to be a proud alumnus of Bronx Science, which offers incredible opportunities to hundreds of New York students every year regardless of their income or familial connections.



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz poses next to new lab equipment at the ribbon-cutting for the Stanley Manne Research Institute at Bronx High School of Science.

## Improper Uses of Roadway Space

It is always frustrating when people do not show the same level of appreciation for our community as we do. I have noticed an increase in the number of cases where people are misusing our roadway space, such as illegal dumping along Jerome Avenue (the Major Deegan service road through Van Cortlandt Park) and illegal car washes operating on Webster Avenue.

This type of activity is not acceptable, and I will continue to make sure such activity is getting the attention it deserves from our regulatory agencies. Please let my office know if you see problematic areas that need to be addressed (and include any 311 reference numbers you have filed).

## Project Open Arms at PS 16 in Wakefield

As New York continues to receive an influx of asylum-seeking people being bused up from states like Texas and Florida, I have been incredibly proud of how our schools have responded to the needs of new students arriving with these families. PS 16 in Wakefield has done a phenomenal job of securing the resources needed for children to succeed, and I was very proud to join Principal Latanya Gray, NYC Department of Education Chancellor David Banks, and leaders from the Bronx to announce the start of Project Open Arms. We must continue working together to ensure that people seeking asylum are able to find stability in our community while their cases are pending.



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz speaks at a press conference held at PS 16 in Wakefield regarding the launch of Project Open Arms. Pictured (l-r, standing): State Senator Jamaal T. Bailey, Council Member Eric Dinowitz, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson, Council Member Kevin Riley, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, and NYC Department of Education Chancellor David Banks.



Staff from PS 16 and local elected officials prepare gift bags to help support new students arriving who are seeking asylum with their families. Pictured left (l-r, facing the camera): PS 16 Principal Latanya Gray, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, State Senator Jamaal T. Bailey, and Council Member Eric Dinowitz.

## Honoring Our Veterans

I was honored to join a pair of Veterans Day ceremonies. Thank you to Bronx Community Board 8 and Van Cortlandt Park Alliance for keeping Herb Barret's tradition alive at Memorial Grove, and thank you to State Senator Jamaal T. Bailey for once again hosting a Veterans Day Service at Woodlawn Cemetery.



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured above at Memorial Grove in Van Cortlandt Park (l-r): Council Member Eric Dinowitz, Rabbi Ezra Seligsohn of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, Herb Barret, Cantor Daniel Pincus, Community Board 8 Member Sergio Villaverde, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Community Board 8 Chair Laura Spalter, and Stephanie Ehrlich of the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance.



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured above speaking at the Veterans Day Service held at Woodlawn Cemetery by State Senator Jamaal T. Bailey.

## Fighting for Dedicated Parks Enforcement in Van Cortlandt Park

Van Cortlandt Park is the best park in New York, hands down. It is the crown jewel of our community here in the north and northwest Bronx, and its many playgrounds, ballfields, trails, and programs are vital resources for Bronxites of all ages.

Unfortunately, it is also stuck in a jurisdictional quagmire of enforcement, as it abuts three different police precincts and is located on the opposite side of the Bronx from the dedicated Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) Command. The result is that there are problems with improper usage of the park, especially loud parties late at night on Shandler Field. These issues have gotten extremely out of hand, and I am very concerned by several shootings that have taken place over the past year. The fundamental challenge here is that all of Van Cortlandt Park is located within the 50th Precinct but Shandler Field is not easily accessible from the precinct station house. Additionally, the issues at Shandler Field often spill over onto the street, which is located in the 47th Precinct.

In response, Council Member Eric Dinowitz and I have written a letter to the NYC Parks Department requesting that they establish a dedicated PEP Command in Van Cortlandt Park. This would bring our beloved park into a level of enforcement capacity similar to Prospect Park in Brooklyn. I believe that a dedicated PEP Command would enable PEP officers to stay in Van Cortlandt Park later into the evening (currently they have to return to Pelham Bay Park, which means they must leave well in advance of the end of their tour). With PEP officers available for more hours, they should be better able to monitor the eastern park of the park and marshal additional police resources when needed. Additionally, I believe it would lay important groundwork to expand PEP capacity to cover all hours of the day, which would hopefully curtail the problematic noise problems for neighbors.

## Fighting for Family Court Reforms With Kyra's Champions

One of the most heartbreaking parts of being a legislator is hearing the horror stories that families go through as they proceed through divorce in family court. There has been a clear problem with the part of this family court process involving forensic custody evaluators. Far too many children have died after a parent with documented histories of violence is granted visitation or custody, and I passed legislation this year to standardize the forensic custody evaluator profession. Earlier this year, I rallied with Jacqueline Franchetti to advocate for Kyra's Law, which is named after her young daughter who was killed by a partner who never should have had custody.

Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured with Jacqueline Franchetti, State Senators Anna Kaplan and Anthony Palumbo, and advocates for Kyra's Law and other family court reforms.



## Helping Neighbors Shred Secure Documents

I was delighted to offer six total shredding events in our community this year, including two additional events this fall. Over the course of the year, we brought shredding services to every corner of the district and I look forward to more events next year!



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured above with Council Member Eric Dinowitz at a free paper shredding event held this fall.



## Visiting Our Community's Schools

This fall, I have been working hard to tour every school in our community. I am incredibly proud of the work they are doing throughout every neighborhood, and I will continue to fight hard to ensure that we continue to fully fund schools in the Bronx through Foundation Aid obligations. We have lots more work to do, especially to implement the class size reduction bill that was passed this year, and it is always valuable to have strong relationships with teachers, administration, staff, and families at each school.



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured above with Principal Ellen O'Brien at PS 19 The Judith K. Weiss Woodlawn School.

## Having Fun at Indian Field in Van Cortlandt Park

It was a treat to attend Family Fun Day at Indian Field in Van Cortlandt Park. There were lots of great games and neighbors around, and it was a great opportunity to show off what makes Van Cortlandt Park the best park in New York.



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz chats with Kim Furetti, President of Women of Woodlawn, about what else the Indian Field space could use to improve.



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz throws a bocce ball at the recently cleaned up bocce courts, thanks to hard work from volunteers with the Women of Woodlawn.

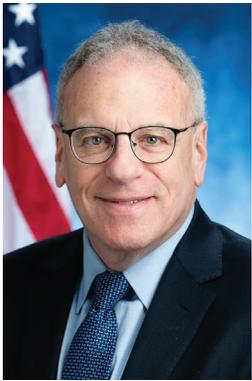


Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz and Council Member Eric Dinowitz pose with staff from NYC Department of Transportation operating a bike helmet fitting and giveaway event at Family Fun Day in Van Cortlandt Park



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz shows off a book on rainforests at a table from Bronx Bound Books set up along Van Cortlandt Park East at Family Fun Day. Council Member Eric Dinowitz reads a different book.

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**Jeffrey  
Dinowitz**

Winter 2022-23

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## Woodlawn Playground Basketball Courts

After a very short four months, I am excited to share that the basketball courts at Woodlawn Playground are finished with their renovation! This expedient project was supported by the Courts of Dreams organization, which partners with retired NBA players to help raise money for renovated outdoor basketball courts in New York City. Kudos to the volunteers who helped raise this money, and to the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance for helping to get this project finished so quickly.



Pictured left (l-r): Community Board 12 District Manager George Torres, Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, volunteers with Courts of Dreams, former New York Knick John Stark, Council Member Eric Dinowitz, NYC Parks Bronx Borough Commissioner Jessenia Aponte, Van Cortlandt Park Alliance Deputy Director Christina Taylor, and Van Cortlandt Park Alliance Executive Director Stephanie Ehrlich.