



### Dear Neighbor,

This year's legislative session was a whirlwind. As you may be aware, in January, I was honored to be named Chair of the New York State Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee by Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie. Fighting for environmental conservation and combating climate change have been core values over my legislative career, and I am keenly aware of the immense responsibilities my new role entails given the challenges we face. The Environmental Conservation Committee has jurisdiction over legislation that affects State environmental policy, including bills that impact pollution prevention and control, environmental quality issues, and resource management issues. As Chair, my role is to help determine the agenda for the Committee, as well as to advocate for funding for environmental policies and initiatives through the state budget process. Despite the daunting environmental challenges that face us, I have entered the role optimistic and energized. We have all seen and felt the shifts in our climate – whether it be the unseasonably warm weather we are experiencing, or the destructive extreme weather being experienced throughout the country, the realities of climate change have made it impossible to deny. However, I believe that my colleagues understand the critical moment we are in and are ready to take decisive action to ensure that New York not only does its part, but remains a leader in the fight for our planet and our survival. Whether it be moving more aggressively toward renewable energy goals, electrifying more of our building systems and transportation, or preserving open space and protecting our pollinators, there is much to do. I am excited to continue that work.

The transition this year also means that I no longer serve as Chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee. I am proud of the work my colleagues and I accomplished in previous years advocating for New York's excellent public university systems, keeping students safe, and working to ensure that all New Yorkers have the opportunity to access higher education. I am especially proud of the bill I sponsored in 2015 that created uniform standards for sexual assault prevention on college campuses, including a standard definition for affirmative consent to sexual activity (sometimes referred to as "yes means yes") and requirements on how campuses respond to sexual assault allegations. I am also immensely proud of the work we did to expand opportunity programs (financial support for disadvantaged students), including doubling their funding since 2015. We created a new opportunity program for foster youth, increased the maximum Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award amount, and extended TAP to incarcerated individuals and part-time students. In my new role, I'm hopeful I can continue to work with our colleges and universities - 40% of state-owned buildings are part of the SUNY system, and working to make these buildings more green is a key part of any strategy to bring down our emissions.

The road ahead is challenging, but I am determined to continue working with my colleagues and with you, my constituents, to make sure New York meets that challenge.

Sincerely,

Deborah

## Update from Albany

Being named Environmental Conservation Committee Chair meant that my staff and I spent time during the 2023 session meeting with Assembly central staff and learning the ins and outs of the committee while ensuring that the important bills before us were analyzed and prioritized. We also had to contend with the fallout of the delayed passage of the state budget; budget negotiations went on for an extra month, which meant that the legislature had an extremely short amount of time to consider and debate non-budget related legislation. While we were eventually able to pass a budget and important additional legislation, these challenging circumstances meant that while we made progress on many of the most pressing issues facing New Yorkers, we will need to keep fighting next session to ensure that our constituents get the support and protections they need.

The Assembly has fought to address the housing crisis by focusing on increased tenant protections and financial support for renters over new giveaways to developers, and I'm hopeful that next session we will finally be able to pass several important measures, including my bill to allow the conversion of commercial buildings to residential housing with an affordability requirement; Good Cause, which would guarantee lease renewals for most tenants except in limited circumstances (such as non-payment or illegal activity) and protect tenants from excessive rent increases; and other critical housing bills. In the final days of session, we passed the Clean Slate Act, which will seal criminal records for certain crimes (excluding crimes like murder, sexual assault, and other serious offenses) once those convicted have completed their sentences and parole requirements without reoffending. Clean Slate is an important step in ensuring that New Yorkers who have past involvement with the criminal justice system can rebuild their lives. We also passed a bill forming a new reparations commission who will be empowered to investigate the State's relationship with and impact on the slave trade, and make recommendations for possible state action.

I was thrilled that another important bill was added to our agenda at the last minute--A.6216B will close a loophole that allows landlords to "warehouse" vacant rent-stabilized apartments in order to



*In June, I testified before the Rent Guidelines Board, urging them not to proceed with their proposed increases. While I understand that increases are welcomed by landlords with smaller properties, the majority of tenants live in buildings owned by private equity firms that are only concerned with making a profit, and we must do more to ensure affordability for all New Yorkers.*

combine them with other units and implement extremely high rent increases. This egregious practice of so-called "Frankensteining" has kept vacant rent-stabilized units from being occupied by New Yorkers who desperately need affordable housing. I was very happy to support this bill which will establish the legal regulated rent for the combination of two or more vacant apartments and clarify other provisions of the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019.

In the Environmental Conservation Committee, we made progress on many important pieces of legislation. I fought hard for the Extended Producer Responsibility Act, which I sponsor and would require that the companies that produce large amounts of packaging assume responsibility for ensuring it gets recycled; while the bill did not pass

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*It was an honor to lead a Joint Budget Conference Committee meeting of Environmental Conservation, Agriculture, and Housing Committee members – a key part of the state budget process.*

this year, we made significant progress and I'm hopeful it will pass next session. Similarly, our limited calendar did not allow for a full review of other important bills like the **HEAT Act and my bill with Senator Harckham to establish the Climate and Community Protection Fund**. These are critical pieces of legislation, and I will continue to work on ensuring they get full consideration next session. A number of pieces of **legislation that I sponsor**, some of which I have fought for over many years, passed in the final days of session. They include:

- **Bill A.2917, banning wildlife killing contests.** These contests are generally hosted by local bars or sportsmen's associations and award cash and prizes for the person that kills the largest number of, the heaviest, or some other metric of a specific species of animal, usually coyote, squirrel, or crow. These contests promote the senseless killing of animals purely for sport – often their bodies are disposed of in dumpsters.

- **Bill A.3226, The Birds and Bees Protection Act, prohibiting the sale, distribution, or purchasing of corn, soybean, or wheat seeds coated or treated with pesticides** with active ingredients that have been shown to be harmful to wildlife and humans, and significantly detrimental to bird and bee populations.
- **Bill A.5109-A, prohibiting the slaughter of horses for the purpose of human or animal consumption**, as well as their sale or import for such purpose. Although there are no horse slaughterhouses in New York, many horses are purchased by buyers in auctions and transported in inhumane conditions to Canada to be slaughtered. Horses are largely treated as companion animals, and since they are not intended to enter the food chain, are commonly treated with medications that are incompatible with being used for food.
- **Bill A.4601-A, which establishes protections for tens of thousands of miles of small streams in New York**, protecting wildlife, making our watersheds more resilient to flooding, and ensuring that those streams provide clean water to our drinking water supplies and beaches.
- **Bill A.6949, which reduces the red tape for certain types of geothermal wells** in order to support the development of alternative energy sources.
- **Bill A.2084, which prohibits the use of ammunition made from lead when hunting on state-owned lands** passed only in the Assembly, and I am hopeful that it will pass the Senate next session. Leaded ammunition not only taints the meat eaten by humans, but also poisons eagles and other scavengers that eat the "gut pile" remains of animals left behind in the field.

Each legislative session brings both accomplishments and frustrations, and this one was no different. **I remain committed to fighting for an equitable and just future for all New Yorkers.**

## From MetroCards to OMNY

I'm sure you are familiar with the OMNY equipment installed on subway turnstiles and other forms of public transportation. OMNY, which stands for One Metro New York, is the MTA's new fare payment system designed to unify fare payments and mobile ticketing across subway, bus, and commuter rail lines. OMNY readers allow for contactless payments via credit or debit card, smart phone, wearable devices, and OMNY cards, and will effectively mark the end of the MetroCard era. **While an exact date has not been announced, the MetroCard will likely be phased out in 2024. Making the switch will be an adjustment after 30 years of MetroCard use, and details of OMNY's rollout will continue to be announced throughout the year.** I have written to MTA Chair Janno Lieber to express concerns and inquire about how the transition to OMNY will impact those in our community who don't own smart phones, use credit or debit cards, or who are only able to or prefer to conduct cash transactions. We also want to be certain that the agency is able to clarify how these changes will impact other programs such as Fair Fares or Student MetroCards.

In July, I was pleased to partner with the MTA to present OMNY information sessions at two Greenwich House Older Adult Centers. We know there will be many questions as we make the transition from one system to another. **You can learn details by visiting the OMNY website at: [www.omny.info](http://www.omny.info), by calling OMNY customer service directly at 877-789-6669, or by visiting in person at MTA Customer Service Centers at 3 Stone Street, New York, NY, Mon.-Fri., 9:00 am-4:40 pm** or at select subway stations throughout the city. Please contact my office if we can provide any information.

## Freedom and How We Define It

In recent years, our country has witnessed astonishing attacks on individual rights with claims of restoring freedom. These attacks include restrictions on who can access medical care, as we've seen in the numerous bills passed in other states restricting abortion access since the Supreme Court overturned Roe, or those that restrict or eliminate access to gender-affirming care for transgender people; attacks on self-expression, seen in the bills criminalizing drag performances, or the banning of books and other content that explores sexuality, gender identity, and race and racism from schools and libraries; and even restrictions on who can access accurate representations of our country's history and learn from them, through bans on content in advanced placement courses or even in college curricula that explicitly addresses the role of racism in our founding and our current institutions.

Those who argue for restrictions on individual rights often, paradoxically, say that they are protecting rights – the rights of a fetus to be born, or the rights of parents to determine what their children learn without concerns about how other parents feel. And while these efforts have intensified over the past few years, they exemplify a tension that has always existed in how our country approaches basic freedom – that despite priding ourselves on being a nation founded on the importance of individual rights, we've protected the rights of those with power to oppress others as often as we've enshrined rights to protect individuals from oppression – we need only look to the individual rights arguments that were used to fight for the rights of white people to enslave Black people, or to live in segregated communities. The story of the puritans coming to New England focuses on how a religious group moved to what is now the United States to escape persecution; what is often gleaned over is the fact that once here, puritans strictly enforced the supremacy of the church, and banished those who believed in religious tolerance and the separation of church and state.

New Yorkers may wonder what the relevance of these issues is – many of us have grown accustomed to watching what's happening in other states with outrage but feeling secure in our knowledge that it couldn't happen here. But that's simply not true. Parents' rights activists have already organized across the city, working to gain control of community education councils, where they have an advisory role over curriculum and other important issues facing schools. Bills have been introduced in the state legislature that would restrict trans children from participating in sports, and a number of legislators have called for the overturning of my bill, the Reproductive Health Act, which codified abortion rights in New York state law. While it is unlikely that these legislative efforts will be successful, their existence is a good reminder of the importance of remaining both aware and vigilant. We are at a familiar and critical crossroads – will we protect the rights of those who wish to limit the rights of others, or will we expand freedoms for everyone? I hope you will join me in our continuing struggle to ensure that the world is more just and more equitable for us all.

## CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

Letters and testimony play an essential role in the offices of elected officials and I want to highlight some of the writing my office has produced in the past few months to share this important part of our work with you.

### Fighting for the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary

Months ago, I began asking questions that remain unanswered about proposed changes to the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary (NYEEI). In the Spring, I joined community advocates, medical professionals, and my colleagues in government to push back against a hasty effort to seemingly undermine the NYEEI and its ability to provide care for our community. One application before the NYS Public Health and Health Planning Council filed by Mount Sinai Beth Israel sought to merge with the NYEEI; that effort appears to be moving forward. **I have twice provided testimony about the importance of the NYEEI to Lower Manhattan residents, and joined my colleagues in writing to the NYS Department of Health Commissioner and to the CEO of Mount Sinai urging them to pause on any further action to merge NYEEI into Mount Sinai Beth Israel or to shift services from NYEEI to Beth Israel or other sites.** We requested to meet with Mount Sinai and are continuing to fight for answers and more avenues for community input.

### Urging the Creation of Affordable Housing at 5 World Trade Center

The Empire State Development Corporation's (EDC) plan to redevelop 5 World Trade Center proposed that the site be developed as a luxury tower, with one-third of the 1,200 apartments built to be affordable – in response to persistent community pressure to maximize the number of affordable units. It's a step forward, although I had previously testified urging the EDC to go even further to ensure as many affordable units as possible. **In a neighborhood that is overrun with luxury housing, the use of public land to build apartments that include anything but affordable housing is an abdication of our responsibility to our constituents. Any residential development at the WTC 5 site should pursue every avenue to maximize affordability.**

### Sharing Public Space Equity Concerns with the City Council

I've written many times about the ongoing quality of life issues related to the City's Open Restaurants program. While I heartily supported the initial plan as we were in the throes of the pandemic, the emergency has passed, yet downtown communities are left with persistent noise, rats, and inaccessible sidewalks. **I remain concerned about the lack of equity in allowing public space to be privatized so that only those who can afford to dine out are permitted to benefit from this giveaway to restaurants and commercial landlords. Sharing the public space in a balanced fashion with reasonable parameters has been a hallmark of our historic downtown communities. I had hoped that more consideration would be given to finding a balanced approach rather than continuing a giveaway of public space for private benefit.** In May, I wrote to the entire City Council, urging them to consider the issues that those residing in heavily commercial districts are faced with as a result of outdoor dining, and to engage in a broadened discussion of what creates the best use of public space without requiring New Yorkers to pay the price of admission to use that public space. The City Council has just voted to establish a permanent Open Restaurants program, the details of which remain to be seen.

### Holding Automobile Companies Accountable

In recent years, I've been heartened by the significant growth in the development of hybrid and electric vehicles. **While the transition away from fossil fuels is a critical piece of our fight to save the planet, I am also concerned about the negative societal and environmental impacts of cobalt mining.** There has been research and innovation by automobile companies seeking ways to build cobalt-free batteries for hybrid and electric cars, but the majority of these vehicles continue to rely on the mineral, which is used in the lithium-ion batteries that provide range and durability for drivers. As reported by National Public Radio in February 2023, conditions in many of the cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which provide the majority of the world's cobalt supply, are extremely dangerous. Cobalt mining is especially fraught for both workers and the planet. Extensive use of child labor in these mines, as well as injuries due to accidents, overexertion, and exposure to toxic chemicals and gasses have been documented by the Wilson Center and the Council on Foreign Relations. Many mine workers labor under the threat of violence from their employers, and wages are generally low. Mines often pollute the surrounding area, producing pollution that contaminates local water bodies, as well as dust that leads to breathing problems for surrounding communities.

As consumer demand for electric vehicles grows, the demand for cobalt increases, and automobile companies have a responsibility to ensure that the mines from which they source this mineral are procuring cobalt ethically. This includes making sure that no child labor is being used, that working conditions are safe and wages are sufficient, and that workers are not being coerced through threats of violence. It may also mean shifting away from dependence on cobalt and investing in the development of other types of batteries. **I recently wrote to over a dozen automobile manufacturers to clarify their company policies and ask what steps they are taking to ensure ethical mining practices.** Americans want to be certain that the products they are using, especially large ticket items are not creating ancillary environmental problems or are associated with poor labor standards.



*A pleasure to visit with student gardeners on the green roof of 75 Morton, a terrific public middle school in the district, the creation of which I was proud to be a part of over a decade ago.*



*I was thrilled to welcome climate justice leader and defender of democracy, Tennessee Representative Justin J. Pearson, to the NYS Assembly in May.*

## Alert: AI Family Emergency Scams

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is concerned about a **new scheme using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to clone people's voices for use in telephone scams**. A scammer can take a short audio clip of your loved one speaking, from any content posted online or recorded over the phone, and then use AI to replicate the voice. When the scammer calls you, asking for money to deal with a fake emergency, they will sound just like your loved one. If you receive such a call, don't trust the voice alone.

- Use a phone number you know is theirs to call the person who supposedly contacted you and verify the story.
- Some families use a specific fact, or code word or phrase that only they would know in order to verify each other's identity.
- Scammers usually ask you to pay or send money in ways that make it hard to get your money back. If the caller says to wire money, send cryptocurrency, or buy gift cards and give them the card numbers and PINs, those could be signs of a scam.

To report scams or identity theft, or to file a complaint, please contact: Office of the NYS Attorney General, Consumer Frauds Bureau at 1-800-771-7755, or the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-382-4357.

## NYC Department of Buildings Information for Tenants

My office often hears from tenants who are experiencing unpleasant or even potentially harmful construction-related issues in their buildings. For those who have questions about tenant protections as they pertain to topics managed by the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) – construction, renovations, gas service, elevator outages, etc. – you can learn more about your rights by visiting: [www.nyc.gov/site/buildings/tenant/tenant.page](http://www.nyc.gov/site/buildings/tenant/tenant.page). Please note, the DOB also hosts Buildings After Hours, weekly informational sessions for residents to meet with DOB representatives, every Tuesday from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm in each borough office. The Manhattan Borough Office is located at 280 Broadway, 1st Floor.



*In April, it was great to join youth climate activists from NY Renews, TREEage, Fridays for Future NYC, and Sixth Street Community Center to celebrate Earth Day and call for climate justice for young people in New York State.*

## A Call for Volunteers!

Are you interested in connecting with others in the community by sharing resources, talents, and time? My office is updating our list of volunteers who can assist us with special projects or who would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities in the neighborhood. Please be in touch with your name, address, contact information, general availability, and any particular topics of interest or expertise.

853 Broadway, Suite 2007, New York, NY 10003

Deborah Glick's



## NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

ASSEMBLYMEMBER  
66<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT  
NEW YORK CITY

*HOW TO REACH US:*  
Call 212-674-5153 or  
email [glickd@nyassembly.gov](mailto:glickd@nyassembly.gov)

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## We're Here to Assist!

A reminder that the staff in my District Office provides a range of services to constituents, including:

- mitigation of quality of life and public safety concerns
- assistance with applying for meal delivery and food programs, financial benefits, and rent and utility assistance programs
- connections to supports for older adults
- legal aid and tenants' rights resources
- advocacy with City and State agencies

**Contact us by email: [glickd@nyassembly.gov](mailto:glickd@nyassembly.gov)  
or by phone: 212-674-5153**

## Shred Event!

**Thursday, September 21st**  
**1:00 to 4:00 pm**  
**539 LaGuardia Place**  
**(between West 3rd and Bleecker Streets)**

Join me for a Free Shred Event in partnership with the NYC Department of Sanitation. Safely disposing of sensitive documents helps protect your identity. No need to remove staples or paper clips, but please do not bring plastic or documents in heavy metal clips.