

LAWMAKERS

WOMEN OF THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE



New York State
Legislative Women's Caucus

2017



LAWMAKERS

Women of the New York State Legislature



The Legislative Women's Caucus
of New York State

2017

Table of Contents

Legislative Women’s Caucus History	7
Legislative Women’s Caucus Founders	9
Legislative Women’s Caucus Chairs	10
SECTION I: A Historical Perspective	11
<i>Women Throughout Time</i>	13
SECTION II: A Legislative Perspective	15
<i>The 1920s</i>	17
<i>The Women of the Time</i>	18
Mary Lilly	Ida Sammis
Elizabeth Gillette	Marguerite Smith
Rhoda Fox Graves	
<i>The 1930s</i>	21
<i>The Women of the Time</i>	22
Doris Byre	Jane Todd
<i>The 1940s</i>	23
<i>The Women of the Time</i>	24
Edith Cheney	Mary Gillen
Gladys Banks	Genesta Strong
Janet Hill Gordon	Elizabeth Hanniford
Mildred Frick Taylor	Maude Ten Eyck
<i>The 1950s</i>	28
<i>The Women of the Time</i>	29
Frances Marlatt	Bessie Buchanan
Dorothy Bell Lawrence	Aileen Barlow Ryan
<i>The 1960s</i>	31
<i>The Women of the Time</i>	32
Constance Cook	Constance Baker Motley
Shirley Chisholm	Dorothy Rose
Gail Hellenbrand	Rosemary Gunning
Mary Anne Krupsak	
<i>The 1970s</i>	36
<i>The Women of the Time</i>	37
Carol Bellamy	Karen Burstein
Elizabeth A. Connelly	Estella Diggs
Jean Amatucci Fox	Jeannette Gadson
Mary Goodhue	Marie Runyon
Linda Winikow	Gerdi Lipschutz
Mary Rose McGee	Olga Mendez
Carol Berman	Audre Cooke
Rhoda Jacobs	May Newburger
Antonia Rettaliata	Joan Hague Smith
Florence Sullivan	

<i>The 1980s</i>	47
<i>The Women of the Time</i>	49
Geraldine L. Daniels	Gloria Davis
Eileen Dugan	Gail Shaffer
Carol Siwek	Helene E. Weinstein
Aurelia Green	Julia Harrison
Anna Jefferson	Cynthia Jenkins
Helen Marshall	Nettie Mayersohn
Mary McPhillips	Barbara Patton
Louise Slaughter	Nancy Lorraine Hoffmann
Velmanette Montgomery	Catherine Nolan
Suzi Oppenheimer	Barbara Clark
Patricia McGee	Audrey I. Pheffer
Earlene Hooper	Cecile Singer
Ada L. Smith	
<i>The 1990s</i>	62
<i>The Women of the Time</i>	64
Nancy Calhoun	Joan Christensen
Vivian E. Cook	Deborah Glick
Susan John	Frances Sullivan
Joni Yoswein	Patricia Acampora
RoAnn Destito	Donna Ferrara
Sandra R. Galef	Eileen Hickey
Audrey Hochberg	Elizabeth Hoffman
Mary Ellen Jones	Naomi Matusow
Chloe Ann O'Neil	Mary Lou Rath
Nellie Santiago	Carmen E. Arroyo
Catherine Abate	Melinda Katz
Elizabeth Little	Debra Mazzarelli
Sandra Lee Wirth	Ann-Margaret Carrozza
Joan Millman	Adele Cohen
Kathleen Murray	Maureen O'Connell
Pauline Rhodd-Cummings	Lena Cymbrowitz
Margaret Markey	Dierdre Scozzafava
Toby A. Stavisky	Catharine M. Young

The Millennium (21st Century).....82

The Women of the Time83

Francine DelMonte	Patricia Eddington
Diane Gordon	Ruth Hassell-Thompson
Amy R. Paulin	Liz Krueger
Annette M. Robinson	Michele R. Titus
Aileen M. Gunther	Barbara S. Lifton
Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes	Teresa R. Sayward
Virginia Fields	Donna A. Lupardo
Ann Rabbitt	Naomi Rivera
Diane Savino	Sylvia Friedman
Linda B. Rosenthal	Janet Duprey
Shirley Huntley	D. Janele Hyer-Spencer
Ellen C. Jaffee	Michelle Schimel
Andrea Stewart-Cousins	Ellen Young
Inez Barron	Jane Corwin
Vanessa L. Gibson	Addie A.E. Jenne
Grace Meng	Nicole Malliotakis
Patricia Ritchie	Aravella Simotas
Claudia Tenney	Didi Barrett
Shelley Mayer	Patricia Fahy
Kathleen A. Marchione	Gabriela Rosa
Nily Rozic	Michaelle Solages
Cecilia Tkaczyk	Maritza Davila
Latoya Joyner	Rodneyse Bichotte
Pamela Harris	Pamela Hunter
Alicia Hyndman	Kimberly Jean-Pierre
Roxanne J. Persaud	Diana C. Richardson
Rebecca Seawright	Susan J. Serino
Jo Anne Simon	Latrice M. Walker
Carrie Woerner	Angela Wozniak
Alice Cancel	Jaime R. Williams
Marisol Alcantara	Carmen De La Rosa
Inez E. Dickens	Pamela Helming
Melissa L. Miller	Yuh-Line Niou
Christine Pellegrino	Stacey G. Pheffer Amato
Elaine Phillips	Monica P. Wallace
Mary Beth Walsh	Tremaine Wright



Legislative Women's Caucus New York State

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Hon. Susan J. Serino
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Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Hon. Catharine M. Young

2017



Greetings:

In celebration of 100th Anniversary of Suffrage in New York State, the Legislative Women's Caucus (LWC) is pleased to present this newly updated "Lawmakers: Women of the New York State Legislature."

"Lawmakers" reflects the progress women legislators have made in New York State. Since gaining the right to vote, more women have entered public life and have sought public office. Since this book's first publication in 1988, women continue to positively change the face of New York State government. Women hold important positions throughout federal, state, and local governments, adding a vitally important perspective.

The LWC re-published "Lawmakers" in 1998 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls, New York. In 2000 and 2003, it was re-published to honor the women of the State Legislature. I am pleased to note that a record high number of women currently serve in the Legislature with 45 in the Assembly and 14 in the Senate.

I am grateful to past LWC staff who worked on "Lawmakers." I am most thankful to current LWC staff Shirley Tranholm, Executive Director, and Whitney Griffin, Assistant Director. I would also like to thank Valencia Brown Counts and Christina Romeo from the College of Saint Rose, our Caucus Interns during the 2017 Session, for their assistance with editing.

Sincerely,

*Donna A. Lupardo
Chair, Legislative Women's Caucus*



Legislative Women's Caucus History

The Legislative Women's Caucus is an organization of women elected to the New York State Legislature. Today 59 women serve in both the Assembly and the Senate. These women represent urban, suburban and rural districts across New York State.

Through the Caucus, women state legislators work to:

- improve the representation and participation of women in all areas of government,
- support issues that affect and benefit women and families in New York State, and
- provide a network of support for women in the State Legislature.

Since its beginning in 1983, the Caucus has worked closely with women's organizations and concerned individuals across the state, as well as with the Governor, state agencies and other legislators to advocate for programs and services that benefit women and families. We are concerned with the quality of life on all fronts – taxes, health care, full employment and economic independence, education, job training, civil rights, social services and the dignity of homeless women. We work for women's full participation in government and politics. As legislators, we work together to enhance the status of women in New York.

Legislative Women's Caucus Founders



*Elizabeth
Connelly*



*Audre
Cooke*



*Geraldine L.
Daniels*



*Gloria
Davis*



*Eileen
Dugan*



*Aurelia
Greene*



*Julia
Harrison*



*Rhoda
Jacobs*



*Cynthia
Jenkins*



*Gerdi
Lipschutz*



*Helen
Marshall*



*Nettie
Mayersohn*



*Mary
McPhillips*



*May
Newburger*



*Barbara
Patton*



*Antonia
Rettaliata*



*Louise
Slaughter*



*Helene E.
Weinstein*

*Legislative
Women's Caucus
Chairs*



*May
Newburger
1983*



*Gerdi
Lipschutz
1984 – 1985*



*Barbara
Patton
1986*



*Helene E.
Weinstein
1987 – 1988*



*Geraldine L.
Daniels
1989 – 1991*



*Catherine T.
Nolan
1991 – 1993*



*Elizabeth
Connelly
1994 – 1995*



*Joan
Christensen
1996 – 1999*



*Barbara
Clark
1999 – 2001*



*Adele
Cohen
2001 – 2003*



*Aurelia
Greene
2003 – 2006*



*Patricia
Eddington
2006 – 2008*



*Michele R.
Titus
2008 – 2015*



*Donna A.
Lupardo
2015 – 2017*

SECTION I



A Historical Perspective

*A look at the progress of women in politics
from the first women's rights convention in
1848 in Seneca Falls up to 2017.*

Women Throughout Time

Political democracy is a continuous struggle to answer “the woman question.” A handful of women in the 1800s turned their daring aspirations into a major political campaign for political equality. In 1848, 100 women and men convened in Seneca Falls, New York, and, “...resolved that it is the duty of women of this country to secure for themselves their sacred right to elective franchise.” Millions of women and men enlisted to begin the women’s movement for political and social equality.

It took seventy years to secure suffrage for women. Seventy years of strategy, organizing, advocacy, and agitation to win a political voice for women. Throughout New York State, women who made history and women who didn’t enrolled as suffragists. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Carrie Chapman Catt, and others who led the spectacular events and daily work on Election Day, 1917, helped guarantee women in New York State the right to vote. Three years later in 1920, the Nation ratified the 19th Amendment, penned by Susan B. Anthony in 1875, that extended suffrage to all women in the United States.

With having the right to vote, women also found the power of public office. Prior to voting, three women had already been elected to the Colorado State Legislature. Of the three, two were from New York State — Carrie Clyde Holly, originally from New York City, and Clara Cressingham who was originally from Brooklyn, joined former Massachusetts native Frances Klock in becoming the first female State Legislators in the Nation after being elected to the Colorado House. They went down in his-

tory as beginning the era of women in politics.

In 1919, well-known suffrage leaders Ida Sammis and Mary Lilly were the first women elected to the New York State Legislature. Together they removed the invisible but real “Men Only” sign from the doors of the Assembly Chamber. The Senate sign was not removed until 1936 when Rhoda Fox Graves became New York’s first female Senator.

Since 1919, one hundred seventy-six have followed Sammis and Lilly to New York’s State Legislature. Over the years, only one to three women were elected to New York’s Legislature. During the 1970s and 1980s, the numbers of women State Legislators increased significantly and reached a mass critical enough to form the Legislative Women’s Caucus.

In the 1990s, there was a dramatic change in New York. Thirty-two of the forty-six females in the Assembly and Senate were elected since the beginning of 1990. The year of 1992 was dubbed “The Year of the Woman” when twelve women won their first elections to the State’s Legislature. In 1998 and 1999, nine more were elected and 2015 had a record breaking 55 women sworn into the New York Legislature, 12 in the State Senate and forty-three in the Assembly. Although this represented 25 percent of the 213 serving, it was a significant increase in the number of women lawmakers.

The 1990s was a decade of anniversaries commemorating women’s progress. We celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of women’s suffrage in New York and universal suffrage in the United States, as well as, the hundredth anniversary of women in State Legislatures.

Women Throughout Time

Women continue to increasingly reflect New York State's diversity. In 2007, the first Asian American woman was elected to the Legislature (Assembly). In 2012, former Assemblywoman Grace Meng was elected to the US House of Representatives, making her the first Asian American from New York to be elected to Congress. Twenty-three women of color now serve in the 2017 Legislature: Fifteen African-American, three Puerto Rican/Latina and one Asian American woman in the Assembly and three African-American women and one Latino woman in the Senate. Marisol Alcantra is the first Puerto Rican/Latino female legislator in the Senate since Senator Olga Mendez in 2004. In fact, New York was the first State to ever elect a Puerto Rican/Latina woman to its Legislature.

Today, women hold leadership positions in both Houses. Approximately twenty-five percent of Assembly leadership is comprised of women, with twenty-one percent serving as Committee Chairs in Aging, Children and Families, Education, Higher Education, Labor, and Judiciary among many others. The Senate's Agriculture, Aging, Banking, Finance, Housing and Local Government Committees are chaired by women, and, for the first time in its history, a woman heads a Conference, while another chairs the Finance Committee. History was also made in the Assembly when a woman ran for Speaker, as well as being the only State to have a former First Lady elected to the United States Congress.

Progress came to fruition by each and every step and can only continue to be made from

learning from the past. As the state that hosted the first Women's Rights Convention 169 years ago, New York has taken crucial steps to remember the roots of suffrage. At the request of the Legislative Women's Caucus, New York State recognizes March as Women's History Month. Members of both Houses join the public in commemorating women's history and championing the future of women.

In 1998, New York and the Nation celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the Declaration of Sentiments, adopted in July 1848, in Seneca Falls, New York. That anniversary fulfilled Angelina Grimke's prediction of over a hundred years ago: "women's right to vote," which was so contentious and impossible in 1848, is now "completely imbedded in public opinion that no one need say one word in its defense." Today, women who work inside and outside of government must work together for admission to all rights and privileges that belong to them as citizens of these United States. We must all work to assure that issues of importance to women are central to public policy.

In the 21st century, New York women continue to make their mark in history. In 2000, New York elected its first woman senator to Congress. The year of 2009 marked the appointment of the first Hispanic woman to the United States Supreme Court. In 2015, the first African-American woman was appointed Attorney General of the United States, and in 2017, New York State is celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Suffrage in New York State.

SECTION II



A Legislative Perspective

*A decade-by-decade look at federal and
state legislation for and about women.*

Women Test Their Political Power

The first women elected to the New York State Legislature did not waste any time in becoming fully active lawmakers. Using the power granted to women by suffrage, they immediately began to tackle the issues that were important to them and all women, including health, working conditions for women, and prohibition.

One of the first issues tackled was the Equal Rights Amendment: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged or denied by the United States or by any state on the account of sex." Alice Paul wrote the proposed amendment of the U.S. Constitution and women's organizations first submitted it to Congress in 1923.

Equal rights advocates in the 1920s urged the passage of an Equal Rights Amendment because, to them, the vote was not enough to make American women full citizens. Women would not be full citizens until legal inequalities in the laws of the country were eradicated.

The Equal Rights Amendment was introduced in Congress every year since 1923, and similar amendments were introduced in New York

and other states. In 1950 and 1953, the Amendment came close to a vote; however, serious attention would not be given to an Equal Rights Amendment until the 1970s.

Another important issue that arose was the length of a woman's work week. This issue, which was important to all women, nonetheless divided women. Some women's groups and unions lobbied for a 48 hour work week for women, shorter than the work week for men. Others opposed this special legislation for women as a disadvantage. In 1927, a law was passed to mandate a 48 hour work week for women.

New York also enacted legislation to improve the working conditions of women elevator operators. The new law reduced their work week to 54 hours over six days, granted meal breaks, and assured access to bathrooms. To women elevator operators who had to stand throughout their work shift what was most important to them was access to a chair. The law granted them a seat and from then on each elevator had to be equipped with a stool so the operator could sit down.

Mary Lilly



1919 / Assembly
D – New York County

Mary Lilly was one of the first women elected to the New York State Legislature.

While in the Assembly, Lilly introduced legislation to establish paternity of children born out-of-wedlock. Extremely concerned with the welfare of children, she introduced legislation to protect their rights. She also sponsored legislation to abolish the death penalty.

A graduate of the New York University School of Law, Lilly was the first woman to win a scholarship in a competitive exam and the first woman admitted to practice law in New York.

She was very active in women's law clubs and was the editor of two journals: *The Women's Law Journal* and the *Journal of the Society for Aid of Mental Defectives*. She also worked with women prisoners on Blackwell Island.

After not being re-elected, Lilly returned to private practice and continued her work as a community leader and organizer.

Ida Sammis



1919 / Assembly
R – Suffolk County

In 1918, Ida Sammis decided to run for the New York State Assembly. A prominent suffrage leader, she was extremely active in organizing women to fight for the right to vote. In 1911, Sammis organized the first women's suffrage club in Suffolk County and became the suffrage leader of her Assembly district. In addition to her feelings about the vote, Sammis was a strong supporter of prohibition.

This commitment led her to run successfully in a primary against an incumbent Assemblyman. In November 1918, Sammis, along with Mary Lilly, became the first women elected to the New York State Legislature.

Once in the Assembly, Sammis quickly became the first woman to sponsor a bill enacted into law. The bill extended the duck hunting season for two weeks. Focusing attention on issues that met the needs of her constituents, she introduced 15 bills of which ten became laws.

Sammis lost her bid for reelection in 1920, but continued to be active in community organizations.

Elizabeth Gillette



1920 / Assembly
D – Schenectady County

Elizabeth Gillette was the only woman state legislator who practiced medicine before and during her term in the Assembly. She was also the first woman elected from an up-state county.

As a physician, Gillette introduced legislation pertaining to the medical field, advocating that certain drugs not be sold without certification from the Farm and Market Department and fought to have the State Industrial Commission conduct medical examinations of children employed in factories.

She also worked on local projects such as constructing a well and pumping station to increase the local water supply and also secured funds to continue bridge and canal construction in her district.

After leaving political life, she worked as a physician in Schenectady County for 60 years, retiring at age 84.

Marguerite Smith



1920 – 1921 / Assembly
R – New York County

Marguerite Smith was 25 years old when she was elected to the New York State Assembly, making her the youngest woman ever to be elected to the Assembly.

One of the first concerns she dealt with was legislation for fair rent, which was particularly important to the large immigrant constituency in her district who were being taken advantage of by unscrupulous landlords.

Smith strongly advocated increasing teachers' salaries and raising the minimum wage for men, women and veterans. As for prohibition, Smith believed it should be put to a referendum so her constituents could decide.

She was also involved in numerous civic organizations and was extremely active in raising money for the effort.

Rhoda Fox Graves



1920 – 1932 / Assembly
1935 – 1948 / Senate
R – St. Lawrence County

Rhoda Fox Graves was the first woman elected to the New York State Senate as well as the first woman to preside over the Senate. During her Senate tenure, she founded the Organized Women Legislators of New York and was its first president.

While in the Legislature, she sponsored legislation for junior operator licenses; the creation of a State Publicity Bureau; a state highway snow clearance provision; legislation to benefit farmers and the St. Lawrence Seaway; to finance school buildings and to create teaching scholarships; aid the dairy industry and help dairy farmers receive better prices for their milk; and legislation authorizing the Conservation Department to issue pamphlets on New York State tourist attractions.

Rhoda Fox Graves was a member the following Senate Committees: Conservation; Highways and Parkways; Public Education; Affairs of Villages; Civil Service; Labor and Industry; Public Relief and Welfare; and Public Printing and Revision.

The 1930s

Women Fight for Economic and Pay Equity

During the Great Depression many women flocked to the political arena. However, their focus shifted from women's political rights to employment. In response to unstable economic conditions during this time, more women entered the workforce to support themselves and their families. Women's legislative priorities thus reflected the economic reality of the times and focused on work and workplace issues.

The governors of New York in the 1920s and 1930s were Alfred E. Smith and Herbert H. Lehman who both supported a Fair Minimum Wage Law for women and minors. This was sorely needed because during the 1920s and 1930s most women earned less than \$10 a week while some even made less than \$5 a week. To put women's wages into perspective, women were paid half of what men were paid.

Governor Smith, therefore, introduced a bill creating boards to fix a minimum wage for women and children working in industry. Governor Lehman, too, urged enactment of the law to both assure that women were paid

for the value of their work and to establish salaries for similar work. He was also concerned about employers using women for labor because it was cheaper than men's labor, thus forcing men from the workplace and depressing wages.

He urged women to organize the fight together for fair wages and after such fight, the Minimum Fair Wage Law was passed in 1933. As a result, women and children enjoyed higher wages and more stabilized working hours.

Governor Lehman also pushed for legislation to guarantee one day of rest for women who worked for seven days each week in the hotel and restaurant industries. He also proposed reducing the number of hours women were required to work each week. He urged the passage of a Social Security Bill in 1937, which required states to improve and extend care and assistance to a greater number of people in need of public support such as the elderly, mothers and children, the ill, and the disabled.

Doris Byrne



1934 – 1937 / Assembly
D – Bronx County

Doris Byrne, a graduate of Fordham Law School, was the first woman to serve on the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

While in the Assembly, she sponsored a bill to revoke the mandatory exemption of women from jury duty. The bill was defeated but passed decades later. She also sponsored legislation creating the Regional Power Authority which, with voter approval, would take over regional power facilities and lower utility rates. Another bill sponsored by Byrne placed a one-year statute of limitations on libel suits.

In 1937 Byrne resigned her seat to become Executive Deputy Secretary of State, the youngest woman ever to serve in an executive-level position.

Jane Todd



1935 – 1944 / Assembly
R – Westchester County

Jane Todd became involved in public affairs in 1915 when working on behalf of women's suffrage. Her activities in the suffrage movement led to her being elected to the New York State Assembly in 1935.

While a member of the Assembly, she chaired the Social Welfare Committee and was in forefront advocating for improvements in social welfare, public health and education. She sponsored legislation that would require licensing of all nurses and equal pay for equal work. A strong supporter of increasing the minimum wage, Todd also sponsored amendments to child labor laws.

She traveled the state and nation speaking on behalf of women's rights, encouraging women to be more active in government. In 1945, she was appointed Deputy State Commissioner by Governor Thomas Dewey, heading up the Department of Commerce's Office of Career Clinics for Women.

In 1955, Todd left Albany to become a consultant to the Women's Bureau under the United States Department of Labor. She returned to her post as Deputy Commissioner of the State Commerce Department in 1959 and retired in June 1960 at the age of 70.

The 1940s

Women Find Opportunity and Show Responsibility

World War II created conditions in the United States that worked to the benefit of women's issues that had been on the table since the 1920s: employment, jury service, and increased access to public office.

With men at war, women were summoned to service and they responded. As a result, women found greater economic opportunity as well as more responsibility for the economic well-being of their families.

As women went to work, wages became a priority for women's organizations once again. One major goal was enactment of an equal pay law, which was first introduced in 1946 but did not pass until 1963.

When women went to work, day care became an issue. During World War II, in 1941, Congress authorized federal funds for day care centers, which enabled many women to work, and the states followed suit. When the war

was over, however, many argued that publicly funded day care was unnecessary because fewer mothers would work and those who did would work less. They could therefore care for their children themselves. As a result, in 1946, a day care program, which was aided by both state and federal funds, was discontinued. In 1947, the Day Care Council of New York was founded to continue advocating for state support of day care.

Another reform important to women was jury duty. As of 1941, half of the states still barred women from jury duty, denying women a trial by their peers. In New York, women had been serving on juries since the 1930s. The State Senate, however, rebuffed efforts to mandate such service. In 1948, Congress first considered legislation that would put women on juries throughout the country. Ten years later, the bill passed into law.

Edith Cheney



1940 – 1944 / Assembly
R – Steuben County

Edith Cheney was first elected to the Assembly to serve the remainder of her deceased husband Guy Cheney's term and was later re-elected to office.

While in the Assembly, Cheney proposed legislation to reform the education law and increase funding for a drainage project in Steuben County. Cheney was a member of the Social Welfare, Claims, Mortgages, Real Estate and Education Committees and Legislative Committees on Price Control and Nutrition.

After leaving the Legislature in 1944, Governor Thomas E. Dewey appointed Cheney to serve as a field representative to the State's Youth Commission. She assisted the Commission in establishing 50 local recreation bureaus.

Cheney was a graduate of the Corning Conservatory of Music.

Mary Gillen



1942 – 1956 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Mary Gillen was first elected to the Assembly to serve the remainder of her deceased husband Michael Gillen's term. The first woman to be elected to the Assembly from Kings County, she was endorsed by both major parties and was re-elected in the general election of 1942 for a full term.

While in the Assembly, Gillen was a member of the Cities, Civil Service, Public Service and Social Welfare Committees and sponsored legislation to establish nursery schools and school lunch programs for needy children. She also introduced bills to regulate corporations, New York City employment agencies and medical scholarships.

Gladys Banks



1945 – 1950 / Assembly
1953 – 1955 / Assembly
R – Bronx County

Born and educated in New York City, Gladys Banks served as a Bronx County community leader for 19 years. She was also a co-leader of the 6th Assembly District for 16 years.

Gladys Banks' legislative agenda was aimed at helping the underprivileged; laws to reimburse parents of handicapped children for their medical expenses; and making discriminatory acts against blind person a misdemeanor.

While in the Assembly, Banks served on the Cities, Pensions, Public Institution, Printing and Social Welfare Committees.

Genesta Strong



1945 – 1959 / Assembly
R – Nassau County

During Genesta Strong's years in the Legislature, she introduced legislation to benefit all New Yorkers.

Among which were a bill that would allow margarine to be sold with coloring to make it look more like butter and laws licensing barbers and beauty shop owners.

The first woman ever to chair the Assembly Public Health Committee, Strong was also a founding member of the Village of Plandome, a member of the Nassau President's Association and the Long Island Federation of Women's Clubs.

After 14 years in the State Assembly, Genesta Strong was elected to the Senate but due to ill health, did not take her seat.

Janet Hill Gordon



1947 – 1958 / Assembly
1959 – 1962 / Senate
R – Chenango County

Janet Hill Gordon served eleven years in the Assembly before being elected to the Senate in 1959 where she served for three years. While in the Assembly, Gordon initiated legislation to identify the causes of divorce, as well as sponsored legislation pertaining to children, conservation, farming, and advertising law.

During her Assembly tenure, Gordon chaired the joint Legislative Committee on Matrimonial and Family Affairs. She also chaired the Law Revision Committee and served on the Conservation, General Laws, Local Finance and Penal Institutions Committees, and was a member of the Joint Legislative Committee on Imitation Food Products and the Committee on Firearms and Ammunition.

A graduate of Syracuse University and Brooklyn Law School, Janet Hill Gordon was admitted to the New York Bar in 1940; the youngest woman ever to be admitted. In 1944, she became the first woman county attorney in New York State.

Elizabeth Hanniford



1947 – 1950 / Assembly
R – Bronx County

One of Elizabeth Hanniford's most important initiatives while in the Assembly was working on legislation to create a state university. Today, the State University system has expanded to more than 63 university/college campuses across New York.

While serving in the Assembly, Hanniford also proposed legislation to protect tenants and to mandate the installation of bumpers on automobiles.

During her tenure, Hanniford was assigned to several committees including Aviation, Printed and Engrossed Bills, Public Health, and Taxation.

Mildred Frick Taylor



1947 – 1960 / Assembly
R – Wayne County

Mildred Frick Taylor, the first woman appointed to serve on the powerful Ways and Means Committee, was known in her district as one of its first feminists.

During her years in the Assembly, Taylor was responsible for creating a new Committee for the Preservation of Historic Sites, and as the committee's chair, was responsible for providing restoration funds for historical sites throughout the state, including the Erie Canal, the homes of Edgar Allen Poe, Alexander Hamilton and Theodore Roosevelt. She was also responsible for making the rose the state flower of New York.

Maude Ten Eyck



1947 – 1954 / Assembly
R – New York County

A graduate of New York University, Maude Ten Eyck was elected to the Assembly in 1947.

Ten Eyck was an active member of the New York State Assembly. A working mother, she knew first-hand the difficulties working mothers who lacked adequate day-care facilities for their children faced. She introduced legislation to expand child-care facilities throughout the State that would help working mothers.

An active supporter of equal rights for women, Ten Eyck also introduced a bill to sharply curtail the prerogative of women to avoid jury duty, just because they were women. The measure was eventually defeated in the Senate. She also drafted bills designed to relieve a nursing shortage by creating scholarships for nursing students.

The 1950s

Women Focus Attention on Domestic Relations

Economic and social conditions stabilized after the war. For women, that was good news and bad news. Unfortunately, the women's rights movement stalled. The "feminine mystique" – as it was labeled by feminist author Betty Friedan – mythologized every woman as the ideal housewife. She was no longer the capable worker of the 1940s.

Despite this rising tide of "back-to-the-kitchen" ideology, more and more women worked outside the home. It was not single mothers who increased the number of working women, for their labor participation has remained constant since the 1940s. Rather, more and more married women, including those with children, were working outside the home. This trend has continued up to the present time, pressuring public policy makers to respond to the needs of working women with families.

During the 1950s a number of special task forces and commissions studied domestic relation concerns, including the large number of New York residents going to other states for divorces. In 1953, New York passed legislation that allowed courts to grant financial support to a divorced woman whose husband had obtained a divorce in another state.

In 1956, the New York State Legislature created the Joint Legislative Commission on Matrimonial and Family Law. At that time, a number of different courts handled family law cases: Domestic Relations Court and Girls' Term Court in New York City and Children's Courts in counties outside the NYC. By 1962, the legislature had proposed and the public had accepted a state constitutional amendment that abolished these courts and established family courts in every county of the state as part of a unified court system.

At the federal level, the United States Senate considered the Equal Rights Amendment both in 1950 and 1953. Congress considered two changes to the Equal Rights Amendment both in 1950 and 1953. Both nullified all distinctions based on sex as unconstitutional except those that were "...reasonably justified by differences in physical structures or maternal function." These proposals, however, left in place protective laws which codified unequal treatment of women, thus undermining the Equal Rights Amendment itself. Two decades would pass before the ERA would again receive serious attention.

Frances Marlatt



1953 – 1960 / Assembly
R – Westchester County

When Frances Marlatt was elected to the Assembly in 1953, there were seven women in the legislature.

During her tenure, Marlatt introduced legislation to create a better system for handling divorce cases, calling not only for better but also uniform divorce laws in all states. She supported tax relief for parents who finance their children's education, greater medical deductions to the elderly and working mothers, and pushed for the creation of parks and recreation areas because she believed children were entitled to a safe play area.

Bessie Buchanan



1955 – 1962 / Assembly
D – New York County

Bessie Buchanan was the first black woman to be elected to the New York State Legislature.

Buchanan actively promoted civil rights legislation to end discrimination in private housing and in the assignment of police officers to their specific duties. She also composed a song and pushed for its adoption as the State anthem. Unfortunately the song was not adopted.

While in the Assembly, Buchanan was assigned to the Cities, Public Institutions, Printing and Social Welfare Committees. She also served on the Joint Legislative Committee on the Problems of the Aged and was designated by Governor Nelson Rockefeller as a State Delegate to the White House Conference on the Aged.

Dorothy Bell Lawrence



1959 – 1963 / Assembly
R – New York County

Upon her election to the Assembly, Dorothy Bell Lawrence became a member of the Charitable and Religious Societies, Cities, Penal Institutions, Public Health and Social Welfare Committees.

She sponsored bills to register drug addicts for legalized prescriptions, install anti-pollution devices in cars in metropolitan areas and authorize the use of seat belts. In addition, Lawrence initiated a movement to halt construction of luxury apartments in the United Nations Plaza and drafted legislation that would require voting machines in primaries. She also helped to establish the Advisory Council for the Performing and Fine Arts.

Lawrence graduated from the University of Georgia and the August Training School for Teachers.

Aileen Barlow Ryan



1959 – 1965 / Assembly
D – Bronx County

Aileen Barlow Ryan's tenure focused on issues relating to veterans, housing and health. Her committee assignments included Education, Health, Social Welfare and Relief and she chaired the Charitable and Religious Societies Committee.

Upon leaving the Assembly, Ryan served for many years as a member of the New York City Council remaining actively involved in civic undertakings.

Ryan graduated from Hunter College and attended New York Law School.

The 1960s

Women Strive to Eliminate Job Discrimination

Dominated by rapid social change, the 1960s was a very significant decade for women and minorities. Both the civil rights and women's movements aided the push for legal reform to end discrimination against African Americans and women.

The political climate was especially opportune for the women's movement and once-private concerns such as pregnancy, childcare, and domestic relations became public policy issues.

At the federal level, the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was passed, mandating equal pay for equal work. In 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts was passed, prohibiting discrimination in employment based on race, sex, or national origin and extending affirmative action programs for women. In 1966, the National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded. This marked the

emergence of a strong women's lobby on both the national and state levels and the women's movement marched on.

Taking a cue from Congress, state lawmakers began to pass anti-discrimination legislation. In 1965, New York enacted the State Human Rights Law to ban discrimination in employment on the basis of sex. This law was comprehensive, covering discrimination on the basis of marital status as well as gender in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

In addition, in 1966 Governor Nelson Rockefeller created the Women's Unit as part of the Governor's office, the first executive level office of its kind in the nation. It later was elevated to a cabinet position and renamed the Division for Women by Governor Mario Cuomo and has existed as such since.

Constance Cook



1963 – 1973 / Assembly
R – Tompkins/Tioga/
Yates Counties

Winning a five-way primary, Constance “Connie” Cook became the first woman ever to represent her district in the Assembly.

Cook’s legislation included bills to reorganize and expand the State University system; develop a community college funding formula; revise the professional licensing law; create BOCES; authorize collective bargaining rights to public employees; develop tuition assistance programs; improve public school financing and strengthen environmental laws.

She also led the fight for abortion reform by sponsoring the bill to legalize abortion in New York State, which eventually passed in the Assembly by one vote after a colleague withdrew his “nay” vote.

Assemblywoman Cook was a member of the Ways and Means; Labor and Health Committees and chaired the Education Committee.

Constance “Connie” Cook graduated from Cornell University Law School and was a Fulbright Scholar.

Constance Baker Motley



1964 – 1965 / Senate
D – New York County

Constance Baker Motley argued before the U.S. Supreme Court and won the landmark decision allowing James Meredith to attend the University of Mississippi. As principal trial attorney for the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Education Fund, Motley argued a total of ten cases before the Supreme Court.

She was the first black woman to be elected to the New York State Senate. While there Senator Baker immediately began a campaign to extend civil rights legislation and for laws creating additional low and middle income housing.

In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Senator Baker Motley Jurist for the U. S. District Court for New York’s Southern District, becoming the first black woman to sit on that bench. In 1982 she was appointed Chief Judge of the same court. In 1986 she assumed Senior Judge Statue on the United States District Court.

Constance Baker Motley received her Bachelor’s Degree from New York University and her Juris Doctor from Columbia University School of Law.

Shirley Chisholm



1965 – 1968 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Shirley Chisholm became the first black woman from Brooklyn elected to public office upon being elected to the State Assembly.

Chisholm sponsored legislation mandating universal kindergarten classes in elementary schools, preventing age discrimination in employment and establishing a work release program for prisoners.

She was a member of the Education; Health; Housing; Mental Hygiene; Social Welfare Committees and the Joint Legislative Committee on Higher Education.

In 1968, Chisholm became the first black woman to be elected to Congress, and campaigned for the presidential nomination in 1972, the first black woman to do so. Shirley Chisholm went on to write her autobiography, "Unbought and Unbossed," and "The Good Fight," the story of her 1972 presidential campaign.

She received a Bachelor's Degree from Brooklyn College and a Master's from Columbia University.

Dorothy Rose



1965 – 1968 / Assembly
D – Erie County

Dorothy Rose was the first woman from Western New York to serve in the Legislature.

While in the Assembly, Rose introduced legislation that would lessen restrictions on acceptance into the Teachers' Retirement System and also sponsored legislation to establish a minimum standard of care for inmates' custody, treatment and discipline in prisons and jails.

She was a member of the Agriculture, Conservation, Education, Pensions and Public Assistance Committees.

Born in Buffalo, Rose received a Bachelor's Degree from D'Youville College and another from Geneseo State Teachers College.

Gail Hellenbrand



1966 – 1970 / Assembly
D – Kings County

As Assemblywoman, Gail Hellenbrand introduced bills relating to frozen food labeling; election procedures; retirement benefits for public employees; uniform education requirements for degrees and certification of X-ray technicians.

Hellenbrand served on the Agriculture; Charitable and Religious Societies; Cities; Health and Revision Committees and joint Legislative Committees on Higher Education and Problems of the Aging.

Rosemary Gunning



1969 – 1975 / Assembly
R – Queens County

Rosemary Gunning was the first woman to chair the Assembly Housing Committee. An ardent advocate for equity in housing laws, she sponsored legislation to create a Housing Court where landlords and tenants could resolve disputes.

In addition, she initiated legislation to reduce the minimum number of students necessary to establish a community school district in New York City and also sponsored a bill to create a permanent New York City Board of Education. Gunning also vigorously campaigned for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and supported the decentralization of government.

She was a member of the Aging, Child Care and Education Committees.

Gunning graduated from Law School in 1927. Retiring from the Assembly, Rosemary Gunning returned to practicing law until she was 90.

Mary Anne Krupsak



1969 – 1972 / Assembly

D – Montgomery / Albany /
Schenectady Counties

1973 – 1974 / Senate

D – Montgomery / Saratoga /
Schenectady Counties

In 1975, Mary Ann Krupsak became the first woman Lieutenant Governor of New York. Prior to that, she served both in the Assembly and the Senate.

Although Krupsak lost her first election for a seat in the Senate, she secured a nomination for the Assembly in the following election when she defeated a 20-year incumbent. In 1972 due to reapportionment her Assembly district was dissolved, but she sought and won a seat in the Senate.

While in the Assembly, she was on the Education and Governmental Operations Committees. During her tenure in the Senate, she a member of several committees including Agriculture; Consumer Protection; Civil Conservation and Recreation; Elections, and Local Government.

Krupsak earned a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Rochester, a Master's from Boston University, and a Juris Doctor Degree from the University of Chicago Law School.

The 1970s

Women Continue the Fight for Personal Freedom

Much of the push in the 1960s for reform to ban discrimination continued during the 1970s, with significant gains. In 1972, Congress passed Title IX of the Education Act which banned discrimination in public educational institutions on the basis of sex. That same year, Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment, fifty years after it was first introduced. In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Roe vs. Wade* which made abortion legal and safe.

The federal Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) took center stage. In 1972, New York ratified the ERA; one of the first states to do so. But, opposition to the women's movement organized and came out against the ERA. That opposition shocked women's advocates, but it was effective. In 1982, the ERA fell three states short of the 38 necessary for ratification.

Some states enacted their own Equal Rights Amendments. In 1974 and 1975, the New York State Assembly and Senate adopted a resolution to add the ERA to the State Constitution. Legislators voted overwhelmingly in favor of the ERA, but in 1975, New Yorkers rejected the referendum and defeated a state ERA.

During the 1970s, women state legislators began to sponsor virtually all of the bills about

women's issues. Their legislation brought changes to women's economic opportunity and civil rights.

New York was one of the first states to make abortion legal. Assemblywoman Constance Cook and Senator Clinton Dominick sponsored the bill that became law in 1970. In the Assembly, it passed by one vote. At first, the roll call showed a tie between those who supported the bill. However, Assemblyman George Michaels, who had first voted against the bill, changed his vote to support it. The bill passed and with Senate approval and the Governor's signature it became law, legalizing abortion in New York.

Other legislation prohibited sex discrimination in credit and insurance and repealed women's automatic exemption from jury duty.

In 1977, New York's first labor legislation dealing with homemakers was passed. Called the Displaced Homemakers Act, the program established counseling, training, career placement and health services to those who were widowed or divorced.

Carol Bellamy



1973 – 1977 / Senate
D – Kings/New York Counties

Carol Bellamy was elected to the New York State Senate in 1973. During that time she was a member of the Commerce and Economic Development; Conservation and Recreation; Corporations and Authorities; Finance; Housing and Taxation Committees.

Bellamy was given the highest rating by the Citizens' Union and the New York Civil Liberties Union after her first term in the Senate.

A graduate of Gettysburg College and New York University School of Law, Senator Bellamy was also a Fellow at the Institute of Politics of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Karen Burstein



1973 – 1978 / Senate
D – Nassau/Queens Counties

Karen Burstein served in all three branches of New York State government. In 1972, she became the first woman from Long Island elected to the Senate.

Senator Burstein was a strong advocate of protecting consumer's rights and promoting equal rights for women. She sponsored legislation to protect battered spouses and children and a State Bill of Rights for nursing home patients. She was a member of the Conservation and Recreation, Consumer Protection, Corporations and Authorities, Health and Judiciary Committees.

Upon leaving the Senate in 1978, Burstein was appointed to the New York State Public Service Commission. From 1980 to 1983, she was Chair and Executive Director of the New York State Consumer Protection Board. In 1983, Governor Mario Cuomo appointed her President of the New York State Civil Service Commission. And, in 1984, Karen was appointed Chair of the Temporary State Commission on Worker's Compensation and Disability. During the 1980s she also chaired the State Task Force and later State Commission on Domestic Violence, going on to become a New York City Family Court judge.

Burstein graduated from Bryn Mawr College, Fisk University and Fordham University School of Law. She is a practicing attorney.

Elizabeth A. Connelly



1973 – 2000 / Assembly
D – Richmond County/
North Shore

Before Elizabeth “Betty” Connelly retired in 2000, she was the longest serving woman in the State Legislature and the highest ranking woman in the Assembly. As Assembly Speaker Pro-Tempore, she held the highest leadership post ever held by a woman in the New York State Assembly.

During her tenure, Connelly focused on compulsive gambling; drunk driving issues; proper health care for the mentally ill and disabled; senior citizens and environmental issues. She was a guiding force for the reorganization of the state in the areas of mental health, developmental disabilities and alcohol and substance abuse.

Mrs. Connelly chaired several Assembly committees including Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the Committee on Standing Committees and Assembly Intern Committee and served as chair of the Legislative Women’s Caucus.

She also served on Corrections; Education; Environmental Conservation; Health; House Operations; Transportation; Veterans’ Affairs; and Ways and Means Committees, as well as the New York State Task Force on Implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Estella Diggs



1973 – 1980 / Senate
D – Bronx County

After her election, Estella Diggs was named Chair of the Subcommittee on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy. There, she developed food stamp programs for the elderly, school breakfast and lunch programs and other emergency food programs.

As a legislator, Diggs was responsible for the restoration of inner-city medicine funds and the creation of the Fordham University and Vermont Summer Camp programs. She was also a member of the Social Services, Housing, Mental Health, Child Care and Agriculture Committees.

Diggs graduated with degrees from Pace College, the New York Institute of Dietetics and the City College of New York.

Jean Amatucci Fox



1975 – 1978 / Assembly
D – Orange/Sullivan Counties

While in the Assembly, Jean Amatucci Fox sponsored legislation that would transfer control of New York City's water reservoirs to the state.

She served on the Aging, Agriculture, Child Care and Health Committees and chaired the Subcommittee on Health Care Delivery.

In addition, she was also a member of the Governor's Task Force on Domestic Violence and the Lieutenant Governor's Regional Task Force on the Economy and also chaired the state's Temporary Commission on Lobbying.

Jean Amatucci Fox received her Bachelor's Degree and Nursing Certificate from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

Jeannette Gadson



1975 – 1976 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Jeannette Gadson was elected to the Assembly in a 1975 special election. While in the legislature, she served on the Insurance and Social Services Committees. In 1976, Gadson resigned from her Assembly seat to run for the State Senate, but was defeated.

In January 1977, she became District Manager of Community Board #16 in Brooklyn and later went on to become Brooklyn's Deputy Borough President.

She was also a state Committeewoman and up until the time of her death in 2007, Jeannette Gadson served as the Commissioner for the Brooklyn Board of Elections.

Gadson attended New York City Community College and Brooklyn College, where she studied business administration.

Mary Goodhue



1975 – 1978 / Assembly
1979 – 1992 / Senate
R – Putnam/
Westchester Counties

Mary Goodhue brought to the Legislature more than twenty-five years of service to the state, nation and her community.

While in the Senate, Goodhue chaired the Child Care Committee and was an innovative supporter of children's rights whereby she initiated major reforms in child welfare and daycare. New York State Chief Judge Cooke appointed her to the State's Task Force on Permanency Planning for Children in Foster Care.

Goodhue was also the only woman in the Senate Majority Conference. She was a member of the Aging; Codes; Energy; Health; Investigation, Tax and Governmental Operations; and Judiciary Committees, and was Vice-Chair of the Joint Legislative Commission to Revise Tax Laws.

Goodhue graduated from Vassar College and the University of Michigan Law School.

Marie Runyon



1975 – 1976 / Assembly
D – New York County

During her tenure, Marie Runyon introduced legislation permitting prison inmates to participate in religious, educational and vocational programs. In addition, she served on the Cities, Housing and Social Services Committees.

At the national level, Runyon actively worked to advance civil liberties, civil rights and peace movements. Shortly after leaving the Assembly, Runyon established the Harlem Restoration Project to renovate City-owned buildings, employing ex-offenders to do the work and pursue other community development goals.

Born in North Carolina, Runyon graduated from Berea College and did graduate work at the Universities of Kentucky, North Carolina and Minnesota.

Linda Winikow



1975 – 1984 / Senate
D – Rockland/
Orange Counties

Linda Winikow was the Ranking Minority member of the Senate Transportation Committee and was a member of the Education; Corporations and Authorities; Ethics; Finance; Higher Education and Banks Committees. Winikow also chaired the Senate Minority Task Force on Women's Issues and served on the Task Force on Drunk Driving.

In addition, Senator Winikow served on the Special Committee on Casino Gambling and the Legislative Commission on State-Local Relations and was the first female member of the Senate Club, an organization of senior state legislators.

In 1984, Winikow resigned her Senate seat to become Vice President of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs at Orange and Rockland Utilities.

Gerdi Lipschutz



1976 – 1987 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Gerdi Lipschutz was elected to the Assembly in a 1976 special election. In 1981, she was named Secretary of the Assembly Majority Conference, and was later appointed Chair of the Steering Committee.

Lipschutz was instrumental in forming the Legislative Women's Caucus and was elected as its first chair in 1983 serving in that capacity until 1985.

She also chaired the Subcommittee on Casino Gambling and served on a number of committees: Aging; Governmental Operations; Higher Education; Housing; Tourism, Sports and Arts, and Veterans Affairs.

Assemblywoman Gerdi Lipschutz was born in Germany and emigrated to the United States in 1937. She attended New York public schools.

Mary Rose McGee



1977 – 1978 / Assembly
D – Suffolk County

Mary Rose McGee became active in politics at the age of fifteen when she distributed flyers for candidates and urged people to vote in Kansas City, Missouri. She continued her commitment by being an active member of numerous political and community groups.

McGee entered government service in 1960 when she worked in the Deputy Attorney's office. She became the first woman elected Town Clerk in Huntington, Long Island, and was reelected to this office four times. She resigned this position when she was elected to the Assembly in 1976.

During her tenure in the Assembly, Mary Rose McGee strove to protect consumers by introducing and passing legislation that required manufacturers to post unit prices, as well as the total price, on various supermarkets items. She also fought for the installation of first aid kits on school buses and state financing for the renovation of Walt Whitman's birthplace.

Olga Mendez



1978 – 2004 / Senate
R – Bronx/New York Counties

Olga Mendez's election in 1978 marked the first time that a Puerto Rican woman was elected to a state legislature.

Mendez devoted herself to supporting and promoting legislation that fought discrimination and removed barriers faced by minorities and women. In 1989, she was honored when unanimously chosen by her peers to chair the newly formed Senate Minority Puerto Rican and Hispanic Task Force.

Mendez served on numerous committees: including Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Education, Finance, Rules, Transportation and was the Ranking Minority Member of the Social Services Committee. In addition to committee assignments, Senator Mendez chaired the Senate Minority Conference and was a member of the Senate Minority Task Force on Women's Issues, Women in the Courts and Welfare Reform. Mendez joined the Senate Majority Conference in 2002.

Olga Mendez received her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Puerto Rico, Master's from the Teacher's College at Columbia University and Doctorate in Educational Psychology from Yeshiva University.

Carol Berman



1979 – 1984 / Senate
D – Nassau County

Prior to her election to the Senate, Carol Berman worked as a journalist and as an administrative aide to a Congressman and a State Assemblyman.

Senator Berman was the Ranking Minority member of the Senate Health Committee in 1979, and also a member of the Committees on Consumer Protection, Crime and Correction, Education, Local Government and Transportation.

She served on the Legislative Commission on Water Resource Needs of Long Island, the Select Committee on the Handicapped, the Subcommittee on Aviation Facilities and Services (leader of the Anti-Jet Noise Coalition, she spearheaded the fight against the operation of SST aircrafts at Kennedy Airport), and the Task Forces on Child Care, Women's Issues and the Gifted Child.

Berman is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Michigan.

Audre Cooke



1979 – 1990 / Assembly
R – Monroe County

Audre "Pinny" Cooke was elected to the New York State Assembly in a special election.

While in the Assembly, Cooke was Ranking Minority member on the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse; a member of Banks; Higher Education; Insurance and Mental Health Committees; sub-committees on Alcoholism; Special Problems of the Aging; Teenage Pregnancies and Libraries.

She served as the Vice Chair of the Assembly Minority Steering Committee, chaired the Assembly Minority Task Force on Adolescent Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and was a member of the Martin Luther King Commission on Non-Violence, receiving many awards and honors for her work, including a Public Service award from the Program of Black Church Studies and the Black Student Caucus of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School.

Cooke graduated from Ohio State University with both a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Social Administration.

Rhoda Jacobs



1979 – 2014 / Assembly
D – Kings County

As an outspoken advocate for day care, Rhoda Jacobs worked in the Assembly to provide more facilities for better quality child care. She worked for pension equity for women and equal access to apprenticeship and other training programs.

Jacobs' legislative program was directed toward social services; health care; job development; education; consumer protection in banking, insurance, and public utilities.

She chaired the Social Services Committee for 12 years and was the senior member on the Health Committee. In 2003, she was appointed Assistant Speaker, becoming the first woman to serve in that position.

In addition, Jacobs served on the Rules, Insurance and Ways and Means Committees. She also chaired the Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigation; Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy; Task Force on the Homeless; and Task Forces on AIDS, New Americans and Women's Issues.

Rhoda Jacobs was the longest serving woman member in the legislature. She graduated from Brooklyn College prior to being elected to the Assembly in 1979.

May Newburger



1979 – 1986 / Assembly
D – Nassau County

May Newburger championed the cause of women's rights throughout her 8 years in the Assembly. A leader in the areas of child sexual abuse, economic equity for women and comparable worth, child support enforcement and divorce reform, Newburger was also responsible for the landmark repeal of the law requiring rape victims to prove "earnest resistance" in fighting off their attackers.

While in the Assembly, Assemblywoman Newburger chaired the Committee on Water Resource Needs of Long Island and the Task Force on Women's Issues. In addition, she was a member of the Children and Families, Codes, Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, Environmental Conservation, and Health Committees.

Her outstanding work on women's issues earned her positions on the Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence and the New York Commission on Child Support.

Newburger received her Bachelor's Degree from Hunter College, Master's from Columbia University and had a Post-Master's Certificate from Adelphi University.

Antonia Rettaliata



1979 – 1987 / Assembly
R – Suffolk County

A member of many community organizations, Antonia “Toni” Rettaliata successfully ran for the Assembly in 1978 and unseated the incumbent.

During her five terms in the Assembly, Rettaliata served on many committees including Ways and Means, Education, Mental Health, Children and Families and the Minority Task Force on Sexual Assault. In 1982, she was appointed to chair the Minority Steering Committee.

Rettaliata resigned her Assembly seat November, 1987, upon being elected Town Supervisor of Huntington.

A lifetime resident of Long Island, Rettaliata attended Katherine Gibbs School and worked for nine years in the Suffolk County Court.

Joan Hague Smith



1979 – 1982 / Assembly
R – Warren/
Washington Counties

Joan Hague Smith served on the Environmental Conservation; Judiciary; Tourism, Sports and Arts; and Libraries Committees as well as the Legislative Commission on Toxic Waste and Hazardous Substances. She was also a member of the Task Force on Women’s Issues, and the Prison Task Force.

As a result of reapportionment, she did not return to Albany, but remained active in community affairs.

Assemblywoman Smith graduated from Tusculum College and did graduate work at Farleigh Dickinson University.

Florence Sullivan



1979 – 1982 / Assembly
R – Kings County

Florence Sullivan was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1978 and served two terms.

After an unsuccessful bid for a seat in the United States Senate, she became Special Counsel to the Regional Administrator of General Services Administration and later went to a private law practice.

Sullivan received her Master's Degree from Fordham Graduate School under a National Science Foundation Grant and her Juris Doctor Degree from St. John's School of Law.

The 1980s

The number of women serving in the New York State Legislature increased dramatically in the 1980s. With the increasing number of women, attention to women's issues also increased.

In 1981, then Assembly Speaker Stanley Fink established the Assembly Task Force on Women's Issues. In 1983, women state legislators formed the Legislative Women's Caucus. The Senate Minority also formed a Task Force on Women's Issues. The Caucus and Task Forces investigated issues important to women and advocated for legislation that benefited women.

Once inside government, women state legislators brought the different experiences of women into law and public policy. During the 1980s, the State Legislature enacted more and more laws about issues important to women: domestic relations laws, rape laws, pay equity, economic assistance for minority-owned businesses, and state appropriations for women's programs and services.

Equitable distribution of marital assets upon divorce was first introduced in 1975. Eleven years later, in 1986, it was passed into law. The equitable distribution law was the broadest revision of the state's domestic relations laws since 1966, when New York established by statute the grounds for divorce.

The New York State Child Support Enforcement Act became law in 1985. The new law responded to federal mandates to strengthen and expand child support enforcement procedures. The state law established wage executions for non-payment of support, strengthened interstate determinations of paternity and collection procedures, and allowed courts to use hearing

examiners to expedite child support hearings.

New York also enacted legislation to focus the prosecution of rape on the offender's actions rather than on the victim. In 1982, New York repealed the "earnest resistance" requirement for rape prosecution. Although the bill had been introduced in 1972, it did not pass until 1982. Under the new law, a prosecutor need not prove that the victim "earnestly resisted" the offender in order to convict a defendant of rape. Ten days later, New York also eliminated the need for corroboration of a rape victim's testimony to convict an offender of adult rape. Corroboration also became unnecessary for conviction in other sexual assault cases including child sexual abuse.

New York was one of the first states to address breast cancer as a public health issue. The state enacted several initiatives to promote the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. State laws enacted in 1988 and 1989 mandate insurance coverage for mammography screening to promote and assure early detection of breast cancer. In 1989, New York established the Breast Cancer Detection and Education Program to extend breast cancer screening and underinsured women with limited access to health care.

Comparable worth reached state government in the 1980s. New York passed into law permanent pay adjustments for 47,000 state workers. Most of these state workers were women.

Throughout the decade, New York funded new programs to address the problems faced by women and girls. In 1984, New York's Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Services Act created a program to provide comprehensive

The 1980s

services to pregnant teens and those at risk of becoming teen parents. In 1985, the Legislative Women's Caucus successfully lobbied for the first state funds for rape crisis programs. Also, the Prenatal Care Assistance Program (PCAP) was set up in the Department of Health. Permanent public funding was established for

residential and non-residential domestic violence programs including shelters, counseling, and other services. The state also appropriated funds for economic and technical assistance to women and minority entrepreneurs.

Geraldine L. Daniels



1981 – 1992 / Assembly
D – New York County

When Speaker Melvin Miller appointed her Chair of the Social Services Committee, Geraldine Daniels became the first black woman to chair an Assembly Standing Committee and achieved another milestone in chairing the Assembly Majority Steering Committee; becoming the first black legislator to be significantly incorporated into the majority party's leadership.

An advocate for preventive health care, Daniels chaired the Subcommittee on Preventive Health Care for four years, successfully securing increased budget appropriations to address the issue.

Among her notable legislative accomplishments are renaming the Harlem State Office Building the Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building, securing an increase in social security allowances for senior citizens and securing Bundy Aid for Malcolm King College.

Daniels was also a member of the Health; Mental Health; Higher Education; Labor and Housing Committees, a former Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus and Vice Chair of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus.

Assemblywoman Daniels graduated from the New York City public school system and received an Associate's Degree from Malcolm King College and a Bachelor's Degree from Queens College.

Gloria Davis



1981 – 2003 / Assembly
D – Bronx County

Prior to her election to the Assembly, Gloria Davis was a South Bronx community leader for six years.

During her tenure she authored the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Services Act and sponsored legislation to expand treatment programs for maternal substance abuse and drug exposed infants; prohibit preventive detention and expand school breakfast programs.

In 1991, Davis became the first woman elected to chair the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus. She also chaired the New York State Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators and its annual conference in 1987-1988.

Assemblywoman Davis chaired the Assembly Majority Conference; Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition and the Office of State-Federal Relations. She served on the Ways and Means, Children and Families, Health, Housing, Social Services and Education Committees.

Gloria Davis attended Bronx Community College and Fordham University.

Eileen Dugan



1981 – 1996 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Assemblywoman Eileen Dugan represented Brooklyn's waterfront area and fought for revitalization of New York's maritime industry. She chaired the Assembly Subcommittee on Waterfront Development and used that position to bring improvements to once idle piers.

In addition, Dugan chaired the Committee on Economic Development, Commerce and Industry; Subcommittee on Displaced Homemakers; served on the Labor Commissioner's Task Force on Displaced Homemakers, becoming one of the legislature's leading voices on job training issues, and was a member of the Corporations, Governmental Employees and Labor Committees.

Born in Brooklyn, she attended local schools and the Grace Business Institute prior to beginning her career in government as a special assistant to the Comptroller of New York City.

The Assemblywoman died in November of 1996 after having been overwhelmingly re-elected to her ninth term.

Gail Shaffer



1981 – 1982 / Assembly
D – Schoharie County

Assemblywoman Shaffer championed the rights of consumers, fought for a stronger criminal justice system, advocated for public utility reform and designed measures to assist New York State's two largest industries, agriculture and tourism.

In 1982, Governor Mario Cuomo appointed her to serve as New York's Secretary of State. She later was elected to a term as National Director of the Women Executives in State Government. She founded the State Association of Women Officeholders and served three terms as President of the Center for Women in Government.

Shaffer grew up on her family's farm in the northern Catskill Mountains. Her education began in a one-room schoolhouse. She was valedictorian of her high school class; went on to receive a degree from Elmira College and studied government at the University of Paris.

Carol Siwek



1981 – 1982 / Assembly
R – Erie County

Before her election to the Assembly in 1980, Carol Siwek was an Administrative Assistant to the Majority Leader of the Erie County Legislature.

Once in the Assembly, she worked on issues relating to labor, consumer protection, cities, women, and aging, and was a strong advocate for tighter control of prescription drugs and increases in the Tuition Assistance Program.

Siwek served on many committees including Aging, Labor, Cities, and Consumer Affairs and Protection. She also co-chaired of the Statewide Task Force on Enterprise Zones.

Helene E. Weinstein



1981 – Present / Assembly
D – Kings County

Helene E. Weinstein was elected in 1980 and is the longest serving woman in the history of the Assembly and the first woman to Chair the Assembly Judiciary Committee. The 41st Assembly District includes Sheepshead Bay, Midwood, Flatlands, Canarsie and East Flatbush communities in Brooklyn.

A longtime advocate for children and families, Helene E. Weinstein sponsored NYS's landmark Family Protection and Domestic Violence Intervention Act of 1994, which significantly changed the way police and courts deal with domestic violence, and the Child Support Standards Act, and championed a law requiring judges to consider domestic violence when determining child custody and visitation cases.

She has also sponsored legislation establishing permanent funding for domestic violence shelters; making discrimination in private clubs illegal; protecting crime victims with a rape shield extension law, and mandating seatbelts on school buses.

Weinstein helped create an "address confidentiality program" for victims of domestic violence who have left their home, requiring confidentiality to protect them and their children. She has written a plethora of laws protecting children from sex offenders, shielded consumers from unfair banking and business practices; and championed the landmark "zombie property" law, improving communities by forcing lenders and banks to maintain properties vacant following foreclosures.

Weinstein previously chaired the Governmental Employees and Election Law Committees, Task Force on Women's Issues and is a former chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus. She currently serves on the Rules, Ways and Means, Aging and Codes Committees. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Economics from American University and received a Juris Doctor from New England School of Law.

Aurelia Greene



1982 – 2009 / Assembly
D – Bronx County

Aurelia Greene used her urban planning skills to negotiate on behalf of stabilized housing; effective tenant groups; quality education; employment opportunities; affordable healthcare; senior services; youth services; and economic development and worked hard for a strengthened business community.

Assemblywoman Greene was instrumental in getting the Apprenticeship Bill passed and signed into law. The bill provides funds for supplemental and related instruction to apprentices registered by the State Department of Labor. She sponsored the Bicycle Helmet bill, the Motor Vehicle Leasing Act, which was considered a landmark initiative, and the Interstate Bank Branching and ATM Safety Act.

In 2006, Greene was appointed Assembly Speaker Pro Tempore, the first African-American to hold that position. She served as Assistant Majority Leader of the New York State Assembly and chaired the Banks Committee from 1994 to 2002, the first woman ever to do so. She also chaired the Consumer Affairs and Protection Committee and Subcommittee on Adult Education; was a member of the Rules; Ways and Means; Cities; Education and Social Services Committees as well as a member of the Subcommittee on School Violence.

In 2009, she resigned her Assembly seat to become Deputy Bronx Borough President. Greene's leadership abilities and experience met the diverse needs of Bronx communities and have proven to be an invaluable asset towards improving the quality of life for Bronxites. Aurelia Greene is a graduate of Livingston College at Rutgers University.

Julia Harrison



1983 – 1986 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Julia Harrison began her political career in Queens where she was an active community leader and trade union organizer. She was also a member of hospital community advisory boards and many other medical organizations.

Much of the legislation she initiated during her tenure in the Assembly pertained to the regulation of corporations, automobiles, taxes and highways. Harrison served on the Cities, Commerce, Corporations, Mental Health and Transportation Committees.

Julia Harrison graduated from Queens College with a degree in Political Science.

Anna Jefferson



1983 – 1984 / Senate
D – Kings County

Anna Jefferson was the second black woman to serve in the Senate and was the Ranking Minority member of the Senate Child Care Committee and a member of the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus as well as a member of the Committees on Higher Education, Labor, Mental Hygiene and Addiction Control, and Social Services.

Anna Jefferson received a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and a Master's in Business Administration from New York University.

Cynthia Jenkins



1983 – 1994 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Assemblywoman Cynthia Jenkins was the first black woman elected to public office in southeast Queens. She was best known for the "Reapportionment Case" in 1982 that created several legislative seats to increase minority representation in the State Legislature and Congress.

Jenkins chaired the Assembly Subcommittees on Affirmative Action and Libraries and served on the Education, Higher Education, Social Services, and Correction Committees.

Mrs. Jenkins obtained her Bachelor's Degree in History and Political Science from the University of Louisville and a Master's Degree in Library Science from Pratt Institute and did postgraduate work at Columbia University.

Helen Marshall



1983 – 1991 / Assembly
D – Queens County

During her tenure in the Assembly, Assemblywoman Marshall's committee assignments reflected her interests and priorities. She served on the Cities, Election Law, Higher Education, Labor, and Transportation Committees and was appointed Chair of the Subcommittee on Airport Development. She led a victorious challenge to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey which reversed its plans for a major landfill in Flushing Bay.

Marshall participated in the federal redistricting case that created a more equitable reapportionment plan for Queens. As a result, Queens County was redistricted under the scrutiny of the Voting Rights Act.

Helen Marshall was a founding member and First Vice Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus. In addition, she was a member of the Assembly Task Force to study the future workforce of New York State.

Mrs. Marshall earned her Bachelor's Degree in Education from Queens College.

Nettie Mayersohn



1983 – 2011 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Nettie Mayersohn became well known for the "Baby AIDS" bill, which was signed into law in 1996. All newborns are now tested for HIV and their parents are notified about the results. She was also the prime sponsor of the HIV Partner Notification law which requires municipal health commissioners or district health offices to notify spouses and known sexual partners of any person testing positive for HIV.

Mayersohn sponsored the Victim Impact Bill, which allows crime victims to describe in court the effects a crime has on his/her life and the lives of other victims.

Nettie Mayersohn was a member of the Rules, Housing, Health, Labor, Insurance and Governmental Operations Committees.

The Assemblywoman received her Bachelor's Degree from Queens College and is a member of its Evening Honor Society.

Mary McPhillips



1983 – 1990 / Assembly
D – Orange/Rockland Counties

Because of the rural composition of her district and her involvement with agricultural concerns, Mary McPhillips was appointed to chair the Subcommittee on Agricultural Marketing in New York, which developed new ideas to improve the marketing positions of the state's farmers.

Appointed Chair of the Legislative Commission on Skills Development and Vocational Education, McPhillips was also appointed to a three-year term on the state's Conservation Corps Advisory Council which oversees and approves all legislation appropriate for parks, recreation and historic preservation.

She was a member the of Agriculture, Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Health and Mental Health Committees.

Educated at Orange County Community College in Middletown, she is also a graduate of the Infant Care Technician Program at the New York Foundling Hospital in Manhattan.

Barbara Patton



1983 – 1988 / Assembly
D – Nassau County

Barbara Patton was the first black legislator to be elected to the New York State Legislature from a suburban district.

During her tenure in the Assembly, Patton served on the Aging, Children and Families, Education, Judiciary, and Veterans' Affairs Committees. She also chaired the Assembly's Subcommittee on PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) and the Legislative Commission on Skills Development and Vocational Education.

Patton resigned her seat to accept an appointment by Governor Mario Cuomo as the Chair of the New York State Workers Compensation Board. In 1994, she joined the legislative offices of NYNEX.

Patton attended Kingsborough Community College and Hofstra University where she earned a Juris Doctor Degree.

Louise Slaughter



1983 – 1986 / Assembly
D – Monroe/Wayne Counties

In 1982, Louise Slaughter was elected to the State Assembly and proved to be an advocate for criminal justice reform, economic development, environmental protection and women's rights.

Slaughter chaired the Subcommittee on Entrepreneurship, Employee Ownership and Family-Owned Business, and the Subcommittee on Jail Overcrowding. In addition, she was a member of Environmental Conservation; Codes; Corporations, Authorities and Commissions; Tourism, and Small Business Committees.

In 1986, Louise Slaughter left the Assembly after successfully running for the United States Congress. She beat the incumbent and still serves in Congress today.

Slaughter received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the University of Kentucky.

Nancy Lorraine Hoffman



1985 – 2004 / Assembly
R – Cayuga/Madison/Oneida/
Onondaga Counties

Nancy Lorraine Hoffmann was elected to a tenth term in the New York State Senate in November 2002.

Hoffmann was appointed Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee where her major legislative goals included the encouragement of production agriculture and the preservation of our state's family farms.

In July 2000, Hoffmann's Abandoned Infant Protection Act was signed into law creating "amnesty" for parents who abandon babies in safe places. Following the 1981 deaths of three abandoned newborns in the City of Syracuse, then-City Councilor Hoffmann convened the Maternity Crisis Task Force to avert future tragedies. The Task Force recommendations served as the basis for New York's Law.

Hoffman received a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism and Political Science from Syracuse University and a Master's Degree from the University of Maryland in Information Science.

Velmanette Montgomery



1985 – Present / Senate
D – Kings County

Senator Velmanette Montgomery is recognized for her effective leadership and steadfast commitment to the people of the 25th Senate District in north and central Brooklyn. She has aggressively worked to expand access to health care services in schools and authored the law allowing certification for nurse practitioners. Her zest for criminal justice reform also led to changes in laws to protect pregnant women prisoners and furthering the development of youth diversion programs.

She is the prior Senate Majority Chair of the Children and Families Committee, and is the current Ranking Minority member of Children and Families and the Social Services Committees as well as a member of the Crime Victims, Crime and Correction; Libraries; Finance; Agriculture; Health, and Rules Committees.

Senator Montgomery is responsible for bringing the issue of home equity fraud to the forefront by exposing the tactics of unethical money lenders who prey on unsuspecting Brooklyn homeowners. Her efforts led to the creation of stringent laws protecting consumers against fraudulent lending practices. She is also credited with requiring electric utility providers to give residential consumers the option to sign up for Time-Of-Day service.

She co-sponsored the law prohibiting the ritual practice of female genital mutilation and helped frame the 2002 Women's Health and Wellness Law, which expands women's access to reproductive and other preventive health services. She has also introduced a comprehensive proposal establishing nutritional standards in schools. Senator Montgomery received her Master's Degree in Education from New York University and has studied at the University of Accra in Ghana.

Catherine Nolan



1985 – Present / Assembly
D – Queens County

In 2015, Catherine "Cathy" Nolan ran for Speaker of the Assembly, making her the first woman in New York history to do so.

The first woman to chair the Assembly Labor Committee, she was instrumental in having legislation to pass in the Assembly to raise the minimum wage; enhance whistleblower protections for healthcare workers; strengthen sweatshop enforcement; strengthen enforcement of unpaid wage violations; protect innocent bystanders involved in strikes, and to create a special fund to investigate prevailing wage violations.

Assemblywoman Nolan chairs the Education Committee. She has spearheaded efforts to achieve class size reduction, universal pre-k, middle school initiatives, improve high school graduation rates and other measures that will ultimately mean success for the more than three million school children in New York State.

She is a former chair of the Banks Committee, Legislative Women's Caucus and the Sub-committee on Women Veterans. She presently serves on the Ways and Means; Rules; Steering Committees; Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, and Veterans Committees. The Assemblywoman is also a member of the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force and Task Force on Women's Issues.

Nolan has a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from New York University.

Suzi Oppenheimer



1985 – 2012 / Senate
D – Westchester County

In 2009, Senator Oppenheimer was appointed Chair of the Senate Education Committee, having served on the committee for 24 years, and as ranking minority member for over a decade. The Senator sponsored and achieved passage of landmark education reforms, which paved the way for New York winning \$700 million in federal education funding under President Obama's "Race to the Top" Initiative.

Oppenheimer was also the Ranking Minority member on the Aging; Health; Higher Education; Environmental Conservation; Ethics; Finance; Transportation; Commerce, Economic Development; and Small Business Committees and chaired the Senate Minority Task Force on Women's Issues.

Senator Oppenheimer received her Bachelor's Degree from the Connecticut College for Women and was one of the first women to earn a Master's Degree from Columbia University's Graduate School of Business.

Barbara Clark



1987 – 2016 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Elected to the Assembly, Clark worked to ensure the quality of education in New York. She successfully converted a failing high school into four progressive magnet schools. During the early 1990s, Clark commissioned a comprehensive child care facility strategic plan and secured \$5 million to help increase both the quality and accessibility of day care in the state.

She served as Deputy Majority Whip and chaired the Aging Committee for three years and was also a member of the Children and Families, Education, and Labor Committees. She formerly chaired the Office of State/Federal Relations and was a member of the Majority Steering Committee and a former chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus.

Clark was the Assembly's representative to the Education Commission of the States where she served on the Steering Committee from 2008 to 2012.

Patricia McGee



1987 – 1998 / Assembly
1999 – 2005 / Senate
R – Allegany/
Cattaraugus Counties

Throughout Patricia McGee's career as a public official she proved to be a strong leader and voice for the people she represented. She was a Cattaraugus County Legislator for ten years and was elected as the county's first woman majority leader.

McGee chaired the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and the Majority Joint Conference Committee. While in the Assembly, she was a member of the Rules; Environmental Conservation; Higher Education and Transportation (Ranking Minority) Committees; Legislative Commissions on Rural Resources and Toxic Substances and Hazardous Wastes; Minority Task Forces on Economic Development and on SUNY, and a former Vice Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus.

A graduate of Alfred State College, McGee is an experienced administrator in the field of education.

Audrey I. Pheffer



1987 – 2010 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Audrey I. Pheffer was elected to the Assembly in a special election in 1987. Very proud of her work to increase education funds, her main interests were crime, education, senior citizens, and economic development. She chaired the Assembly Consumer Affairs and Protection Committee, Election Law Committee and Subcommittee on Outreach and Oversight of Senior Citizen Programs.

Pheffer was a member of the Aging; Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; Agriculture; Government Employees; Higher Education; Social Services; Veterans Affairs and Tourism Committees. In addition, she previously served as Secretary of the Legislative Women's Caucus and a member of the National Order of Women Legislators and as President for a year.

In 2011, she resigned after being elected Queens County Clerk. She is the Ex-Officio Clerk of the New York Supreme Court and Commissioner of Jurors of Queens.

Pheffer graduated from Queens College.

Earlene Hooper



1988 – Present / Assembly
D – Nassau County

The election of Earlene Hooper in 1988 made her the only minority representative in the Legislature from Long Island, and she is the only black woman to represent a suburban district for 19 years in New York State. In addition, as the first woman Deputy Speaker, Hooper is the highest ranking woman in the New York State Legislature.

Her legislative priorities include: increased state funding for local school districts; drug rehabilitation programs and stricter enforcement of drug laws; safe, affordable housing for all New Yorkers; the environment and economic development efforts. Her role as Deputy Speaker gives Assemblywoman Hooper the passion she possesses to assure equitable representation and participation of minorities' share in state business opportunities.

Since her election to the Assembly, Hooper served on many committees including Education, Housing, Labor, Economic Development and Commerce. She also served on the Assembly Task Force on Women's Issues, and is a member of the New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus. From 1997-2002 she was Assistant Majority Whip and in 2003, the Speaker appointed Assemblywoman Hooper Majority Whip. She served in that capacity until being appointed Deputy Speaker.

Assemblywoman Hooper graduated from Norfolk State College with a Bachelor's Degree in English and received her Master's Degree in Social Work from Adelphi University, and her Doctorate Degree from Five Towns College. She is an adjunct professor at Adelphi University's Graduate School of Social Work.

Cecile Singer



1989 – 1994 / Assembly
R – Westchester County

As an Assemblywoman, Cecile Singer was responsible for the Assembly Minority's floor operations and its Social Services and Judiciary Committees legislative programs. She developed legislation for permanency planning for children and service plans for troubled families.

Singer also introduced legislation mandating smoke detectors in co-ops and condominiums, as well as legislation that replaced the conservatorship statute with a law offering greater protection to senior citizens.

Cecile Singer served on many committees including Judiciary and Education. In addition, she was the Ranking Minority member of the Children and Families Committee, the Subcommittee on Family Law and also a member of the Task Force on Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Hospitals, and Crime Victims.

Cecile Singer is a graduate of Queens College.

Ada L. Smith



1989 – 2006 / Senate
D – Queens County

In 2004, Ada L. Smith was appointed to the position of Assistant Minority Leader for Policy and Administration. Her strong public policy and legislative background led to the natural progression of securing this important leadership post.

As one of only three African-American female members of the Senate, Ada L. Smith worked to advance equal opportunity for all New Yorkers, with particular emphasis on improving New York's educational system; expanding access to quality health care; enhancing services for the elderly and disabled; and developing a more equitable tax policy to benefit New York's working people and families.

Senator Smith served as the Senate Minority Conference Whip and Minority Conference Chair, as well as being the Ranking Minority member on the Senate Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committees. She was also a member of Committees on Banks; Codes; Finance; Insurance; Rules and Transportation.

She received her degrees from Baruch College (CUNY) and is a Trustee and Life Director of the Baruch College Fund. She was also served as the first female and only African-American president of the Baruch College Alumni Association.

The 1990s

In the 1990s, women state legislators, women voters and women advocates kept government focused on the needs and interests of women in New York. The legislature enacted new interventions for domestic and family violence as well as sought to redress discrimination against women by managed care and insurance companies.

In 1994, the Assembly and Senate unanimously passed the landmark Family Protection and Domestic Violence Act of 1994. Sponsored by Assemblywoman Helene E. Weinstein and Senator Stephen Saland, this omnibus plan represented the most significant reform of laws governing domestic violence since the 1970s.

The 1994 law dramatically changed police and court procedures for domestic violence. For the first time, police must make arrests in domestic violence cases. The law also established concurrent family and criminal court jurisdiction over family offenses, created a statewide registry of orders of protection and mandated training programs for the police, judges, and district attorneys.

Another priority for the decade was women's health and health care. The Legislative Women's Caucus encouraged the Legislature to restore money for women's preventive health services including breast cancer detection and education programs, prenatal care, and nutritional programs for elderly. Women state legislators also supported legislation that mandated health insurance for cervical cytology screening and defeated legislation that would exempt small businesses from health insurance mandates for services to women.

Finance-driven health care of the 1990s raised repeated concerns about discrimination against women. Several new laws about access to gynecology, obstetrics, and breast cancer treatment took major steps to assure women access to the health care that they need. They settled the competition between dollars and health care in favor of the best healthcare for women.

"Drive Through Deliveries" rallied the legislature to establish minimum in-patient hospital stays for childbirth. Mothers may now stay in a hospital at least 48 hours after childbirth without complications and 96 hours after delivery by cesarean section. The new law also gave to women who choose to leave a hospital before the allowable minimum at least one home health care visit to ensure the continued success of both mother and child.

In the 1990s, concern was expressed about "Drive Through Mastectomies." In response, the State Legislature passed the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1997. The law returned to patients and their physician's decisions about hospital stays for mastectomies and breast reconstructive surgery. It also required insurance and managed care programs to pay for a second opinion about the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. This law was hailed as another step toward eliminating the discrimination that women face when they seek health care.

In 1994, the Legislative Women's Caucus and the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children secured state funds for child care centers in the courts. The children's centers provide a safe, supervised, and supportive sanctuary for children who must accompany their parents to court. The centers link families

The 1990s

and their children to vital services, such as early childhood health, education, and nutritional programs critical to children's welfare.

During the 1990s, the political power of women grew. Thirty-six women were newly elected to the New York State Assembly and Senate since

the 1990 elections. The gender gap at the polls became headline news. The challenge now was how to translate that newly gained electoral power into legislative action that would benefit women moving into the next millennium.

Nancy Calhoun



1991 – 2012 / Assembly
R – Orange/Rockland Counties

Prior to her election to the Assembly, Nancy Calhoun was Town Supervisor of Blooming Grove, as well as town councilwoman, Assessors Clerk and Washingtonville School District Tax Collector.

While in the Assembly, Calhoun sponsored legislation on real property school tax reform and local government issues such as mandate relief. She was the Ranking Minority member on the Committee on Standing Committees and a member of the Insurance, Labor, Real Property Taxation, and Rules Committees and the Legislative Commission on State-Local Relations, and a former Second Vice Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus.

A graduate of Clarkstown High School, she attended Empire State College, majoring in Public and Business Administration.

Joan Christensen



1991 – 2010 / Assembly
D – Onondaga County

Concerned about issues that affect women in New York, Christensen chaired the Assembly Task Force on Women's Issues and twice chaired the Legislative Women's Caucus. Christensen co-chaired the Administrative Regulations Review Commission, a legislative panel that oversees the regulatory activities of state agencies from 1996 to 2000.

Her legislative agenda reflected her efforts to improve New York's business climate, providing tax relief to both businesses and working families and ensuring quality education for the youth of the state.

Christensen was a member of the Aging, Housing, Higher Education, Labor, Real Property Taxation and Small Business Committees. She also served on the Assembly Task Force on Workers' Compensation Reform.

Vivian E. Cook



1991 – Present / Assembly
D – Queens County

Vivian E. Cook's civic role began more than 30 years ago when the expansion of Kennedy Airport threatened her community.

Cook, an activist for community improvement, secured funding for various building and reconstruction projects including parks, tennis courts and recreational buildings in her district. She has helped community housing programs that provide residents with affordable homes and has also obtained improved benefits, housing and medical services for senior citizens and is the founder of the Rockaway Boulevard Local Development Corporation.

Assemblywoman Cook is a former Chair of the Assembly Task Force on Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy and former Chair of the Majority Conference and is the current Chair of the Committee on Standing Committees. Cook also serves on a number of committees including Codes; Corporations, Authorities and Commissions; Housing; Insurance; Rules; Ways and Means; and the Majority Steering Committee. The Assemblywoman is also a member of the Criminal Justice Task Force, Task Force on Women's Issues, NYS Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus, and Secretary of the NYS Legislative Women's Caucus.

Cook graduated from DeFrans Business Institute and resides in Jamaica Queens, New York.

Deborah Glick



1991 – Present / Assembly
D – New York County

As a representative of Lower Manhattan, Deborah Glick's legislative priorities focus on civil rights, reproductive freedom, environmental improvement and the arts. A strong advocate for tenants' rights, Glick won renewal of the Loft Law which brings formerly commercial buildings up to residential code and protects current tenants, many of them artists, from eviction. She is a vocal proponent for the arts, consistently advocating for increases in funding for the arts statewide.

Deborah Glick is the first openly LGBT member of the State Legislature. She was instrumental to the Assembly's passage of the lesbian and gay anti-discrimination bill and has been a leader in the fight for marriage equality.

Glick chairs the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, which oversees all private and public higher education institutions, financial assistance for students, and professional licensing. She also serves on the Ways and Means, Rules and Environmental Conservation Committees. Glick previously served as the chair of Assembly Social Services committee.

Glick graduated with a Bachelor's Degree from Queens College and a Masters of Business Administration from Fordham University.

Susan John



1991 – 2010 / Assembly
D – Monroe County

Susan John successfully advocated for funding for programs and services that benefited women: domestic violence shelters, breast cancer awareness education, rape crisis centers, family support services, early detection childhood programs and teen pregnancy prevention.

In addition, John sponsored many bills that became laws: protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public, requiring insurance companies to reimburse for pap smears and requiring disclosure of the potential hazards of breast implants. She also authored New York State's Anti-Stalking Law, the Health Care Clinic Anti-Violence Act, the School Safety Act, and the NYS Fair Pay Act.

John chaired the Committee on Labor, previously chaired the Majority Steering Committee and was a member of the Governmental Operations and Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Committees. She was also a former chair of the Legislative Commission on Solid Waste Management.

She earned her bachelor's degree from George Washington University and Juris Doctor from Syracuse Law School.

Frances Sullivan



1991 – 2002 / Assembly
R – Oswego County

During her tenure, Frances Sullivan co-chaired the Assembly Minority Task Force on the Future of SUNY and served as a member of the task forces on Economic Development and Life Care Communities. In her district she earned a reputation for outstanding constituent service.

In 1995, Sullivan was appointed secretary of the Minority Conference by Assembly Minority Leader Thomas M. Reynolds. She also served as Vice Chair of the Assembly Minority Steering Committee. In addition to her leadership role, Sullivan served on many committees including Agriculture, Education, Transportation, and Veterans' Affairs.

She received her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from Keuka College.

Joni Yoswein



1992 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Joni A Yoswein was elected to the 44th Assembly District in 1992. She proudly served the Brooklyn communities of Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Kensington and Flatbush. Prior to her election, Joni served as Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the NYS Assembly and was Director of Communications for the Assembly Majority. She was the first female Chief of Staff in the history of the body.

Once elected to the Assembly, Ms. Yoswein assumed leadership roles on issues including voter access, especially access on college campuses, displaced homemaker initiatives and NYC recycling programs. As a freshman legislator, she authored three bills that were signed into law.

Joni designed the innovative board game “How A Bill Becomes A Law,” which was reviewed in the National Council of State Legislature’s magazine and has since been copyrighted and made available to elementary schools throughout the United States.

Joni A Yoswein currently serves as the CEO/Founder of Yoswein New York, Inc. (YNY), a boutique public affairs firm in NYC. In 2016, she was awarded a Corporate Social Responsibility Award by City & State Reports for YNY’s philanthropic leadership and contributions to numerous community-based organizations and programs.

Prior to founding YNY, Joni A Yoswein served as Assistant Commissioner for the New York City Department of Aging, where she was responsible for overseeing senior centers and home care agencies funded by NYC. She is a graduate of the State University of NY at Albany and lives in Brooklyn Heights with her husband Glenn Van Bramer.

Patricia Acampora



1993 – 2005 / Assembly
R – Suffolk County

Patricia Acampora was elected to the New York State Assembly, where she served for 12 years.

While in the Assembly, Acampora sponsored the Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act, legalization of the death penalty, the Worker’s Compensation Reform Act, Megan’s Law and Pesticide Notification legislation while also actively advocating for crime reform legislation.

Acampora was Vice Chair of Joint Conference Committee, Ranking Minority of the Labor Committee, and a member of the Consumer Affairs and Protection and the Governmental Employees Committees. She is the first woman to serve as President of the New York Conference of Italian-American State Legislators since the bipartisan conference began nearly three decades ago.

In 2015, she was appointed Commissioner of the New York State Public Service Commission.

RoAnn Destito



1993 – 2011 / Assembly
D – Oneida County

RoAnn Destito's desire to make her community a better and safer place was important during her tenure in the Assembly. She sponsored legislation creating a new anti-crime program, coordinating police services to better protect senior citizens.

In addition, she built on her record of protecting children by authoring New York's first "Cyberporn" law. Passed in 1996, it made sexual communication with minors via on-line computer networks a crime.

Destito was the Chair of the Assembly Governmental Operations Committee and chaired the Assembly Subcommittees on Women Veterans and Displaced Homemakers. She made history when she was appointed to the first joint Assembly-Senate Conference Committee charged with developing legislation to increase speed limits on certain highways in New York. Destito made history again when she became the first woman to become Commissioner of the Office of General Services.

After graduating from Utica Catholic Academy, Destito earned her Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Relations at LeMoyne College.

Donna Ferrara



1993 – 2005 / Assembly
R – Nassau County

During her tenure in the Assembly, Donna Ferrara was responsible for landmark legislation prohibiting discrimination by insurance companies against breast cancer victims. In addition, Ferrara had legislation that would pave the way for insurance coverage of the Computer Aided Detection device to be used as part of routine mammograms. She also had the distinction of being ranked first among all 211 legislators by the Environmental Advocates Group for exceptional voting on environmental issues.

Ferrara is a former Ranking Minority member of the Insurance and the Libraries and Education Technology Committees and also served on the Judiciary Committee. In 2005, she was appointed to the New York State Workers Compensation Board.

Ferrara received her Bachelor's Degree from the State University of New York at Albany and her Law Degree from St. John's University School of Law.

Sandra R. Galef



1993 – Present / Assembly
D – Westchester/
Putnam Counties

In 1992 Assemblywoman Galef was elected to the NYS Assembly. Her district covers the Towns of Cortlandt, Ossining, Kent, Philipstown, and the City of Peekskill.

Sandy Galef chairs the Assembly Committee on Real Property Taxation and is a member of the committees on Health; Corporations, Authorities and Commissions; Election Law; Governmental Operations; and Rules, as well as the Steering Committee. She formerly chaired the Libraries and Education Technology Committee and is presently on the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council.

Assemblywoman Galef's legislative priorities have included: an on-time state budget, state mandate reform, ethics reform, and election and campaign finance reform. Her most important legislative accomplishment has been facilitating an open discussion of state government reform and advancing legislation to institutionalize these major reforms.

Prior to becoming a member of the New York State Assembly, Galef served as a Westchester County Legislator for thirteen years, eight of them as minority leader of the Board of Legislators. She also served as president of the New York State Association of Counties and as Chair of the Welfare and Medicaid Steering Committee.

On the national level, Assemblywoman Galef served as chair of the Labor and Employee Benefits Steering Committee for the National Association of Counties and was awarded a fellowship for the Eastern Leadership Academy at the University of Pennsylvania Fels Institute of Government from the Council of State Governments.

Sandy Galef graduated from Purdue University and received a Master's Degree in Education at the University of Virginia.

Eileen Hickey



1993 – 1994 / Assembly
D – Dutchess/Greene/
Columbia Counties

Active in her community, Eileen Hickey established a reputation as an advocate for many groups, particularly veterans. She spoke out about the needs of incarcerated veterans and championed services for them. She worked closely with the Veterans Self-Help Project at Greenhaven Correctional Facility.

Hickey volunteered extensively. As a registered nurse, she made notable contributions to public health with her work with the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association. In addition, she co-founded the Dutchess County Council for Women. Hickey was also an active member of the Junior League.

Hickey was not re-elected to her Assembly seat but went on to direct public information services for the Senate Minority Leader until her untimely death in 1999. She also served on the Board of Directors of Val-Kil, the only national site dedicated to the memory of a former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

Audrey Hochberg



1993 – 2000 / Assembly
D – Westchester County

Among the bills that Audrey Hochberg introduced during her Assembly tenure was the Airbag Anti-Theft and Safety Act. She fought to lower the interest rates that municipalities and school districts must pay on certiorari refunds, provide resident permit parking in Eastchester and Pelham, reform the supporting deposition procedure and permit local police departments to operate gun amnesty programs.

She also helped pass a bill that closed a legal loophole allowing scofflaws to escape prosecution for driving offenses. In addition, Hochberg introduced the first comprehensive workers' compensation reform bill in the Assembly and was instrumental in the removal of the tolls on the Hutchinson and Saw Mill River Parkways.

Hochberg chaired the Subcommittee on Adult Education and was a member of the Committees on Education; Transportation; Consumer Affairs; Economic Development; Commerce; Local Government and Energy.

Hochberg graduated from Radcliffe College with a Bachelor's Degree in Economics.

Elizabeth Hoffman



1993 – 1995 / Assembly
R – Niagara/Orleans Counties

Elizabeth Hoffman has an extensive political background having earned the distinction of being North Tonawanda's first woman Alderman and subsequently became the city's first woman mayor.

Assemblywoman Hoffman brought the plight of women with ovarian cancer to the attention of the Legislature. She introduced a bill mandating that health insurance cover the diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancer, and worked hard to educate legislators and the public about the disease, its diagnosis and treatment options.

Hoffman was honored as "Mayor of the Year" in 1987 by the Niagara taxpayers and "Mother of the Year" by the March of Dimes. She has also been listed in "Who's Who of Outstanding American Women."

Hoffman resigned her Assembly seat and ran unsuccessfully for the state Senate.

Mary Ellen Jones



1993 – 1996 / Senate
D – Monroe County

Mary Ellen Jones began her political career with an upset victory for a seat in the Monroe County Legislature in 1991. Upon her election to the Senate, Jones made legislative reform one of her top priorities. She co-sponsored legislation to force the Legislature to itemize the state budget, impose stricter limits on publicly funded mass mailings and eliminate salary stipends for leadership positions.

Further priorities included crime, education, children and jobs. She fought for the rights of crime victims by sponsoring legislation to end frivolous lawsuits and to give victims and their families the right to speak at sentencing. As a member of the Job Training Partnership Council, she also worked to promote and enhance the state's job training efforts.

Jones was the Ranking Minority member of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee. She also served on the Consumer Protection; Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections; Education; Finance, Local Government, and Transportation Committees.

Jones received her Bachelor's and Master's degree from the University of Rochester.

Naomi Matusow



1993 – 2002 / Assembly
D – Westchester County

Naomi Matusow focused her legislative agenda on education, crime and taxation issues. One of her most important legislative initiatives was to have assault weapons banned.

Matusow served on many standing committees including Environmental Conservation; Economic Development; Transportation; Consumer Affairs; Tourism; Local Governments and the Steering Committee. She also chaired the Women's Business Development Sub-Committee and the Hudson Valley Task Force.

Matusow received her Bachelor's Degree from Vanderbilt University, Master's Degree from New York University and her Law Degree from Pace University.

Chloe Ann O'Neil



1993 – 1998 / Assembly
R – St. Lawrence/
Lewis Counties

Chloe Ann O'Neil served on the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources and was the Ranking Minority member of the Tourism Committee and a member of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; Education; Higher Education; and Labor Committees. She was also a member of the Sub-Committees on Libraries and Firefighters along with the Minority Task Forces for the Future of the State University of New York, Skills Development and Vocational Education as well as Health and Hospital Crisis.

O'Neil received her Bachelor's and Master's Degree from State University of New York at Potsdam.

Mary Lou Rath



1993 – 2002 / Senate
R – Erie/Genesee Counties

Mary Lou Rath began her public career in 1979 as an Erie County legislator, where she helped to establish the Commission on the Status of Women.

Rath chaired the Senate Standing Committee on Children and Families drawing upon her extensive background in children and family issues. She sponsored forums in Western New York focusing on violence as a public health issue worked to create a program to help small businesses identify and provide help for those in abusive relationships.

With a top priority of broadening women's access to quality health care, Rath sponsored legislation that established the New York State Osteoporosis Prevention Program and led to the creation of five educational centers. In 1998, she founded the Senate's Women of Distinction Program, which honors women throughout New York State. The Senator was also a prime sponsor of the Women's Health Law, which expanded insurance coverage for prevention, health issues, early detection and treatment of breast and cervical cancer, osteoporosis, and other health needs.

In addition to serving on the Senate standing Committees on Health and Higher Education, Rath co-chaired the Senate's Health and Wellness Task Force.

Nellie Santiago



1993 – 2002 / Senate
D – Kings County

Nellie Santiago was dedicated to the economic revitalization of Brooklyn communities. As the Ranking Minority member of the Senate Banks Committee, she worked hard to build constructive partnerships between the banking industry and the communities of her district through new programs by which banks could locate and invest in promising small businesses and economic development opportunities.

Santiago sat on the Rules; Finance; Higher Education; Commerce; Economic Development and Small Business; Agriculture; and Tourism and Sports Development Committees and chaired the Senate Minority Conference Policy Committee.

She earned a Bachelor's Degree from Hunter College, Master's from Columbia University and a Doctorate Degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Carmen E. Arroyo



1994 – Present / Assembly
D – Bronx County

In a special election in 1994, Carmen E. Arroyo became the first Puerto Rican/Hispanic woman elected to the Assembly. She is also the first Puerto Rican woman elected to any United States State Assembly.

Arroyo has developed many priorities, including women's issues, AIDS education, bilingual education, employment, crime, youth, single mothers, social welfare and domestic violence.

Her legislative initiatives include a bill to hold companies that distribute blood accountable for the distribution of contaminated blood products, and one that would require every mental health facility to have multilingual personnel available, and for school districts with 10 percent or more pupils with limited English proficiency to develop a plan meeting their educational needs.

She previously chaired the Subcommittee on Bilingual Education and currently serves on the Aging, Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Children and Families, and Education Committees. Assemblywoman Arroyo is also a member of the NYS Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force, NYS Legislature's Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Caucus, Legislative Women's Caucus and the National Order of Women Legislators.

Catherine Abate



1995 – 1998 / Senate
D – New York County

While in the Senate, Catherine Abate sponsored legislation that would protect communities and assist crime victims. She authored several reports on domestic violence; telecommunications; community empowerment; prison overcrowding; the state budget; support for the arts, women's rights and park development. In addition, she took a leadership role in issues such as job development, quality health care, AIDS drug funding, human rights, and environmental and consumer protection.

Abate served on several standing committees, including Investigations; Taxation and Government Operations (Ranking Minority); Crime Victims; Crime and Corrections (Acting Ranking Minority); Codes; Consumer Protection; Ethics; Health; Judiciary and Labor.

In addition to those assignments, Abate served on several Senate Minority Task Forces, including Criminal Justice, Education, Welfare Reform, Women's Issues, Banking and Community Reinvestment.

A cum laude graduate of Vassar College, Abate received her law degree from Boston University Law School.

Melinda Katz



1995 – 1998 / Assembly
D – Queens County

During her tenure in the Assembly, Melinda Katz authored a number of bills, among which are: giving women direct access to gynecological services; fighting sexual abuse of children; raising the penalties for auto theft; reforming the election law with regard to designating and nominating candidates; and increasing the income level for senior citizens to qualify for a tax exemption.

Katz served on the Health, Judiciary, Environmental Conservation, and Children and Families Committees and chaired the Subcommittee on Urban Health.

Katz attended New York City public schools. She received a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Massachusetts and earned her Juris Doctor Degree at St. John University's School of Law.

Elizabeth Little



1995 – 2002 / Assembly
R – Warren/Essex/Hamilton/
Franklin Counties
2003 – Present / Senate
R – Clinton/Essex/Franklin/
St. Lawrence/Warren/
Washington Counties

Elizabeth “Betty” Little was elected to represent the 45th Senate District in 2002 after serving in the Assembly for seven years.

Little was recently appointed chair of the Senate Housing, Construction and Community Development Committee. Little, who was a realtor prior to winning state elective office, sponsored a measure creating the Adirondack Community Housing Trust to help provide affordable housing stock for year-round, income qualifying Adirondack residents.

She previously chaired the Senate Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation Committee and was instrumental in winning significant increases in the State Budget in support of state and local tourism marketing programming. She also sponsored and won approval of the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission to help ensure the upcoming 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote in New York State is celebrated and commemorated statewide.

Born in Glens Falls, she is a graduate of St. Mary’s Academy and the College of St. Rose with a degree in Elementary Education. Little was a public school teacher and is the mother of six children and grandmother of 17.

Debra Mazzarelli



1995 – 2000 / Assembly
D – Suffolk County

“Practicing Politics with a Purpose” was Debra Mazzarelli’s motto. Upon her election to the Assembly, Mazzarelli fought to increase education funding, cut taxes, create jobs and protect health care for senior citizens. She also backed a 1996 law to study the link between pesticide use and breast cancer on Long Island.

In 1997 Mazzarelli announced that she was joining the Majority Conference in the Assembly. She based her decision on the fact that the Majority in the Assembly was fighting for the same values that are important to her and the working, middle class families she represents.

Born and raised in Suffolk County, Mazzarelli was a high school salutatorian and college scholarship winner who earned a Bachelor’s Degree at St. Joseph College.

Sandra Lee Wirth



1995 – 2006 / Assembly
R – Erie County

Sandra Lee Wirth was known as a “Citizen’s Legislator” because of her sponsorship and support of numerous government reform measures and her belief that elected officials are, first and foremost, public servants.

Wirth was the Ranking Minority Member of the Assembly Real Property Taxation Committee, and a member of the Codes, Insurance, Rules and Aging Committees. She also served as a Member of the Administrative Regulations Review Commission, and the Legislative Commission on Skills Development and Career Education.

Wirth is a strong supporter of the “Call Home Free” Program and the National Crime Prevention Council’s “National Night Out” Program, and the D.A.R.E. Program in her district schools.

Ann-Margaret Carrozza



1997 – 2010 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Ann-Margaret Carrozza, elected to the Assembly in 1997, served as the Deputy Majority Whip and on the Aging, Banks, Government Employees, and Insurance Committees. In addition, she chaired the EPTL Task Force on Trust Reform and the State and Federal Relations Committee.

Carrozza was the prime sponsor of legislation that focused on health law issues, trusts and estates, and senior citizens’ rights. She authored Chapter 475 of the laws of 2002 which allows retired physicians to donate time to provide primary and preventative care to the uninsured working poor. She also worked on strengthening child support enforcement measures thereby reducing families’ reliance on public assistance.

A practicing attorney, Carrozza received her Juris Doctor Degree from Hofstra University.

Joan Millman



1997 – 2014 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Assemblywoman Joan Millman has served as the Chair of the Assembly Committee on Aging, the Assembly Committee on Government Administration and the Assembly Task Force on Women's Issues. She was also a sitting member of the Assembly Ways and Means; Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; Corporations; and Transportation Committees. During her career at the Assembly she authored 85 bills; 58 of which were signed into law.

In 2005, the Assembly passed Billy's Law, named for a severely disabled child who was abused and neglected at the treatment facility where he lived in New Jersey. Prior to Billy's Law, out-of-state facilities attended by New York State children were not carefully inspected. Now, teams from the Office of People with Development Disabilities, the Education Department, and the Office of Children and Family Services regularly evaluate programs that serve children from New York. She was also a teacher and a librarian whose advocacy for both seniors and children has made a difference in the lives of many.

Millman graduated from Brooklyn College with a Bachelor's Degree. She earned her Master's Degree in Library Science from Pratt Institute and attained a Professional Diploma from Long Island University. She holds several professional licenses and certificates. In 2014, Joan Millman retired from the New York State Assembly after a career dedicated to the communities she served in Brooklyn.

Adele Cohen



1998 – 2006 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Adele Cohen was first elected in 1998 in a special election to fill a vacant seat which she again won in the general election in November. As Assemblywoman, she served on the Aging, Agriculture, Cities, Energy and Insurance Committees.

Fulfilling a lifelong goal, Cohen entered New York Law School, attending classes at night while supporting her children and herself, working during the day as a paralegal. She graduated at the age of 45 and was chosen by popular election of the faculty and student body to deliver the commencement address - the first time in the history of the school that an evening student was accorded that honor.

She is a former chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus.

Kathleen Murray



1998 – 2001 / Assembly
R – Nassau County

Kathleen “Kate” Murray, an Assistant Attorney General with extensive criminal justice experience, was first elected to the Assembly in a 1998 special election to fill a vacant seat which she again won in the general election in November. She became the first woman elected to represent the 19th Assembly District.

Murray was one of the growing numbers of women in the State Legislature who used their knowledge and experience to promote issues of importance to women as well as all New Yorkers. She was the Ranking Minority member on the Housing Committee and served on the Corporations and Codes Committees.

As Assistant Attorney General, Murray was the Deputy Section Chief of the Criminal Justice Section where she handled prisoner litigation proceedings in New York City and Westchester. Prior to that, she served as an Advocate for the Suffolk University Battered Women’s Advocacy Project where she represented victims of domestic violence.

Kathleen Murray is a graduate of Boston College and Suffolk University Law School.

Maureen O’Connell



1998 – 2005 / Assembly
R – Nassau County

Elected in a 1998 special election, Maureen O’Connell ran again and won in the November general election. She became the first woman to represent the 17th Assembly District. While in the Assembly she was the Ranking Minority member of the Health Committee and member of the committees for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Election Law and Judiciary and chaired the Task Force on the Critical Shortage of Nurses. She was a strong advocate of legislation to improve access to quality health care and enhanced protections of patients in the healthcare setting.

Maureen O’Connell earned degrees in Nursing, Health Care Administration and Law. As a registered nurse, she designed and implemented the H.O.M.E. pilot program for the home-based management of oncology patients at North Shore University Hospital. In law school O’Connell received the American Jurisprudence Award in Insurance Law.

Pauline Rhodd-Cummings



1998 – 2002 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Pauline Rhodd-Cummings was elected in a March, 1998 special election and again in the November general election. Rhodd-Cummings' long-term goals included better public transportation in her district, a "good neighbor" relationship with Kennedy airport, job creation and increased tourism in the Rockaways.

A long-time resident of Far Rockaway, Rhodd-Cummings roots are derived from her native Jamaica, West-Indies. Within one week of her election, she successfully had an issue pertaining to immigrant communities restored to the Assembly's agenda. Rhodd-Cummings also introduced legislation that would allow city housing residents to participate in housing board decisions.

She was a member of Agriculture, Children and Families, Corporations, Election Law and Small Business Committees.

Lena Cymbrowitz



1999 – 2000 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Lena Cymbrowitz was elected to the Assembly in 1999. She served on the Committees for Health, Insurance, Agriculture, Social Services, and Children and Families.

Prior to her election, Cymbrowitz was involved in fundraising and marketing and was active in the New York Association of New Americans and the United Jewish Appeal Federation with regard to immigration and resettlement programs. She directed the Project Machson program for Metropolitan New York's Coordinating Council on Jewish Poverty which provides food, furniture and clothing to the poor and elderly. Cymbrowitz was on the Jewish Community Council Board of Greater Coney Island, the Holocaust Committee, and Treasurer of the Shorefront Jewish Community Council and chaired the 60th Precinct Youth Council. She was also a member of the Sephardic Voters League and was associated with Sephardic Friends of Maimonides Medical Center.

Cymbrowitz earned a Bachelor's Degree in English literature. She passed away in 2000 before completing her first term.

Margaret Markey



1999 – 2016 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Margaret Markey was first elected to the New York State Assembly in 1998 to represent the 30th Assembly District. Her aim was to protect consumers and improve the quality of life for Queens' residents and all New Yorkers.

She was a member of the Rules; Ways and Means; Labor; and Racing and Wagering Committees and chaired the Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development Committee.

Markey's legislative priorities focused on consumer protection and reforming child sexual abuse laws, the latter having received wide media attention in recent years as a result of child abuse scandals that have been revealed in religious, educational and sports organizations where institutions have deliberately and systematically covered up cases of child sexual abuse.

She is a graduate of the Berkeley Business School.

Dierdre Scozzafava



1999 – 2010 / Assembly
R – Lewis/St. Lawrence/
Oswego/Jefferson Counties

Dierdre "Dede" Scozzafava dedicated much of her life to community service both as a Village of Gouverneur Trustee and Mayor of the Village of Gouverneur prior to her election to the Assembly.

Scozzafava was the first woman to serve as Assembly Minority Leader Pro Tempore and served on the Committees on Ethics and Guidance; Education; Codes; and Transportation (Ranking Minority); as well as the Legislative Commission on Critical Transportation Choices and the Task Force on Integrative Medicine and Agriculture. In 2010, she was appointed New York Department of State's Deputy Secretary for Local Government.

She has a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Business Administration and Management.

Toby A. Stavisky



1999 – Present / Senate
D – Queens County

Toby A. Stavisky, was the first woman from Queens County to be elected to the State Senate and the first woman Chair of the Senate Committee on Higher Education.

A native New Yorker who was raised on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, she attended New York City public schools before graduating from Bronx High School of Science and Syracuse University, which she attended on an academic scholarship. The Senator completed graduate school at Hunter and Queens Colleges.

In 2009-10 she chaired the Committee on Higher Education. Currently, Senator Stavisky holds a leadership position in the Senate as Vice Chairwoman of the Minority Conference and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Higher Education.

Catharine M. Young



1999 – 2005 / Assembly
2005 – Present / Senate
R – Allegany/Cattaraugus/
Chautauqua/
Livingston Counties

Catharine “Cathy” M. Young has an established record of civic, professional and volunteer achievements.

Senator Young chairs the Senate Standing Committee on Finance, the first woman to hold the influential leadership position. As a strong voice for tax relief, jobs and economic growth, and accountable, responsible government, Senator Young has become recognized as a friend of the taxpayer and an outspoken advocate for middle-class families across the state.

She formerly chaired, and remains active on, the Housing Committee, and is a member of the Standing Committees on Transportation and State-Native American Relations. In addition, Senator Young is also a member of the Joint Task Force on Heroin, the Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus, and the Legislative Women’s Caucus. As a member of the State Assembly, she was appointed chair of the Minority Steering Committee, and served as the Ranking Minority Member on the Housing Committee.

Born and raised in Western New York, she grew up on a third-generation dairy and crops farm in Livingston County before attending SUNY Fredonia and graduating magna cum laude from St. Bonaventure University with a bachelor’s degree in Mass Communication.

The Millennium (21st Century)

The new millennium brought many new opportunities for women. Women were elected and appointed to many political leadership positions throughout the state. In terms of legislation, women saw significant progress in gaining equality. The 2016 Legislature was comprised of the highest proportion of women in the history of New York State Legislature.

Women now hold multiple committee chair positions in both the Assembly and the Senate. In 2012, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins became the first female legislator to serve as a party Conference Leader. About 22 percent of Assembly committees and about 21 percent of Senate committees are chaired by women.

The women of the Legislature additionally exemplify the diversity of New York State. In 2015, the New York State Legislature had the third highest percentage of female legislators of color in the United States.

The women of the New York State Legislature worked to expand the opportunities for Minority and Women Business Enterprises (MWBE), providing more opportunities for women to become active and successful in the business world.

In 2000, New Yorkers elected their first female U.S. Senator, Hillary Clinton, who was also the first former First Lady to be elected into a public office. In 2013, the City of Albany elected their first female mayor, Kathy Sheehan. The New York City Council also elected a female as speaker of the Council, Christine Quinn succeeded by the first Latina speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito.

In 2015, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed numerous pieces of legislation into law to further protect and advance women's equality in New York State. They will help accomplish pay equity, tighten human trafficking laws, protect victims of domestic violence, and put an end to pregnancy discrimination in the workplace.

In 2016, the New York State Legislature passed a budget that included Paid Family Leave as well as an increased minimum wage, both policy areas that disproportionately affect women. Governor Cuomo additionally launched numerous breast cancer prevention and treatment initiatives to make healthcare more accessible to New York women by requiring extended hours for breast cancer screening, to benefit working mothers, and increase funding for cancer-related research.

During the first 17 years of the new millennium women saw monumental successes in politics and policy in New York State. The proportion of women serving not only in the New York State Legislature, but the participation in other state and federal legislatures increased. For example, there were a significant number of first woman mayors throughout New York State. We also saw the growing number of women holding positions of power in the private sector continuously increase throughout the first decade and a half of the 2000s. Additionally, women have seen vast improvements in legislative action to aid the fight for equality

Francine DelMonte



2001 – 2010 / Assembly
D – Niagara County

Prior to her election to the Assembly, Francine DelMonte served 20 years as chief of staff to the late Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere and as staff aide to Assembly Majority Leader Paul A. Tokasz. She unseated a freshman incumbent in her second bid for the seat.

DelMonte represented the city of Niagara Falls. Her district is home to the mighty Niagara Falls, the second most visited tourist site in New York State. Niagara Falls supplies the water necessary to produce hydroelectric power at the Niagara Power Plant, one of the Nation's largest hydropower plants. DelMonte introduced legislation that aided Niagara Falls, New York in becoming a larger tourist attraction. Among which are the Niagara Wine Trail promoting the wine region and the Underground Railroad Heritage Commission whereby students and others would learn the part Niagara played during the Civil War. She was also instrumental in obtaining funds for Niagara Community College to get a Culinary Arts School, a new terminal for the airport as well as the Niagara International Airport.

DelMonte served on a number of Assembly committees including, Agriculture, Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce and Industry, Racing and Wagering and Tourism.

Patricia Eddington



2001 – 2009 / Assembly
D – Suffolk County

Patricia Eddington devoted her professional life to educating and helping others. She fought diligently for State aid for local schools and for the TAP program to ensure that college students could afford the education they need to be competitive in today's job market. She was also a strong supporter of improving the STAR program.

Eddington chaired the Assembly Sub-Committee for Women Veterans, was a former chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus and served on the Education; Health; Higher Education; Labor, and Libraries and Education Technology Committees. She resigned from the Assembly after being elected Town Clerk of Brookhaven in 2009.

Patricia Eddington graduated from SUNY Stony Brook with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and a Master's in Social Work.

Diane Gordon



2001 – 2008 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Prior to entering the Assembly, Diane Gordon was a long-time activist in her Brooklyn community. She founded the Save Our Home Organization of East New York, which helped homeowners and businesses remain in the community as rehabilitation was taking place.

Gordon was always ready to address her district's concerns, to include funding for research, education, and treatment for HIV/AIDS, to improve education for children and housing for senior citizens, and to meet the future concerns and challenges that arise in a thriving and growing community.

Gordon has a Bachelor's Degree from New York City Technical College and is certified by the American Business Institute in Business Mathematics.

Ruth Hassell-Thompson



2001 – 2016 / Senate
D – Bronx/Westchester Counties

Elected to the New York State Senate in 2000, Ruth Hassell-Thompson brought years of public service and community involvement to the Senate. She was the Ranking Minority Member on the Senate Banks and Consumer Protection Committees, and served on many standing committees including: Civil Service and Pensions; Environmental Conservation; Housing, Construction and Community Development; Local Government; Tourism, Recreation and Sports Development, and Transportation.

She is well known for her expertise on minority business needs in the Northeast, and has launched numerous workshops and seminars on business development.

Senator Hassell-Thompson resigned at the end of the 2016 legislative session to become Governor Cuomo's Special Advisor for Policy and Community affairs for New York State Homes and Community Renewal.

She is the recipient of two Honorary Doctorate Degrees from Mercy College and an alumna of Bronx Community College.

Amy R. Paulin



2001 – Present / Assembly
D – Westchester County

Amy R. Paulin is renowned throughout Westchester County as a leading advocate and force for change with an extensive record of community service and ability to work effectively with a wide range of organizations.

Prior to her election to the Assembly, Paulin was the Executive Director of My Sisters' Place, a comprehensive agency serving battered women. Paulin has proven her commitment to the women and children of the 88th District by helping to establish a Domestic Violence Council and obtaining vital funding for daycare and neighborhood health centers.

Amy has 193 bills signed into law. Two of her most important legislative accomplishments are a bill that eliminated the statute of limitations for rape and a comprehensive human trafficking bill.

She is the Chair of the Committee on Energy and currently serves on the Education, Health, Higher Education, and Rules committees and the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force.

Amy is a graduate of SUNY at Albany and holds a Master's degree and has completed doctoral course work in Criminal Justice SUNY Albany.

Liz Krueger



2002 – Present / Senate
D – New York County

First elected to the New York State Senate in a special election in February 2002, Liz Krueger is currently the Ranking Member of Senate Finance Committee. She is also a member of six other committees: Codes; Elections; Higher Education; Housing, Construction and Community Development; Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities; and Rules.

Senator Krueger has dedicated her career to issues relating to poverty, and she is a nationally recognized expert on the problems of hunger, homelessness, and the lack of affordable housing, healthcare, and job training.

Senator Krueger is a founding Co-Chair of the New York State Bipartisan Legislative Pro-Choice Caucus, and has led on women's health and reproductive choice since her first term in the Senate, when she was a leader in the successful fight to pass the Women's Health and Wellness Act. She currently sponsors the Reproductive Health Act, which would protect women's freedom of reproductive choice in New York State.

A graduate of Northwestern University with a Bachelor's degree in Social Policy and Human Development, Senator Krueger also holds a Master's degree from the University of Chicago's Harris Graduate School of Public Policy.

Annette M. Robinson



2002 – 2016 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Assemblywoman Robinson brought to Albany a deep concern for the well-being of New York’s families and a strong commitment to economic development and community service. These principles are reflected not only in her political advocacy and legislative agenda – which centered on protecting children and families, creating jobs and helping lift New Yorkers out of poverty – but also in her personal life.

She was Chair of the Committee on Banks and was a member of the Aging; Children and Families; Housing; Small Business; Oversight, Analysis and Investigation, and Real Property Taxation. She was the former Chair of Subcommittee on Retention of Homeownership and Stabilization of Affordable Housing.

Assemblywoman Robinson received both her Bachelor of Science and Master’s Degree from New Hampshire College.

Michele R. Titus



2002 – Present / Assembly
D – Queens County

Michele R. Titus was first elected in 2002 in a special election to fill the seat of the late Pauline Rodd-Cummings and won the seat again in the general election in November. She chairs the Labor Committee and is the former Chair of the Social Services Committee. She serves on the Committees for Children and Families, Codes, Judiciary, Local Governments and Small Business.

The New York State Legislature is familiar to Titus. After law school, she served as Chief of Staff to State Senator Ada L. Smith and then as Executive Director of the New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus.

Legislation authored by Titus demonstrates her dedication to protecting the stability of her community. She has introduced and supported policies that would mandate after-school programs in every public school, expand early childhood education, provide access to quality healthcare, improve transportation, and enforce environmental protections and lower senior prescription costs.

A lifelong resident of Queens, she graduated from State University of New York at Binghamton with a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science and a Juris Doctor Degree from Albany Law School.

Aileen M. Gunther



2003 – Present / Assembly
D – Sullivan/Orange Counties

Aileen M. Gunther was elected to the NYS Assembly in 2003 after the untimely death of her husband, Jake. Aileen spent most of her youth in Orange County. After marrying Jake, they decided to raise their three children in Sullivan County.

Aileen received her nursing degree, and spent many years working at Catskill Regional Medical Center.

Assemblywoman Gunther chairs the Assembly Committee on Mental Health and serves on the following committees: Agriculture, Environmental Conservation, Health and Racing and Wagering.

She is a fierce advocate for the people she represents. She fights for increased funding for our schools, fire departments, and access to health care for all New Yorkers. Aileen worked with Governor Cuomo to lower middle class taxes, close a \$15 billion deficit, and to reduce state spending. In 2011, Aileen helped pass much-needed ethics reform to restore public trust in state government.

For these reasons, Aileen was voted the best politician in the area by *The River Reporter*. Aileen continues to fight for her constituents, and will work to ensure that the Sullivan and Orange county area remains a great place to call home.

Barbara S. Lifton



2003 – Present / Assembly
D – Cortland/Tompkins Counties

Barbara S. Lifton represents the 125th Assembly District, which includes all of Tompkins County, the City of Cortland and the towns of Cortlandville, Virgil, Harford and Lapeer in Cortland County. Ms. Lifton was first elected in 2002.

Assemblywoman Lifton was a leader in the effort to make sure New York had the best, most secure, accurate and reliable voting machines possible after the federal government passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). As a former teacher, Lifton makes education a priority, both PreK-12, as well as higher education. She has led on issues of importance to women and families, including daycare, healthcare and the licensing of midwives.

Starting in 2008, she devoted much of her time to legislation and advocacy dealing with the prohibition of high volume hydrofracking (HVHF). She authored eleven bills, filed amicus briefs in all three courts on the Dryden Home Rule case, and testified and submitted comments to the DEC and EPA. In 2011, she was named Legislator of the Year by Environmental Advocates of New York. She was very pleased when NYS became the first state to issue a findings that prohibited hydro-fracking in New York.

Assemblywoman Lifton serves on five standing committees in the Assembly – Agriculture, Education, Election Law, Environmental Conservation and Higher Education. She is the Chair of the Assembly Majority Steering Committee. In 2015, she was named to the newly-formed Assembly Work Group on Climate Change.

Assemblywoman Lifton resides in Ithaca. She is the mother of two and grandmother of five.

Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes



2003 – Present / Assembly
D – Erie County

Assembly Member Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes has faithfully served New York State's 141st Assembly district since 2003. An advocate with clear and principled service, she puts policy before politics. Crystal fearlessly fights for diversity, specifically in making sure Minority and Women Owned Businesses have a fair chance in obtaining state contracts. Beyond diversity and MWBEs, her passions include education and healthcare.

She chairs the Committee on Governmental Operations, which maintains oversight on ethics reform and FOIL requests; state police; homeland security; disaster and emergency preparedness; MWBE; crime victims; human rights and military and naval affairs. The Assemblywoman sits on the following committees: Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; Environmental Conservation; Higher Education and Insurance Committees. Additional memberships include the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus and the Legislative Women's Caucus.

A graduate of Buffalo Public Schools and Buffalo State College, she earned a Master's Degree in Student Personnel Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education.

Teresa R. Sayward



2002 – 2012 / Assembly
R – Essex/Hamilton/Warren/
Saratoga Counties

Prior to her 2002 election to the Assembly, Teresa Sayward was Town Supervisor for Willsboro, New York and also served on the Board of Supervisors for Essex County.

Sayward favored lowering health care and workers' compensation costs, local property taxes, and argued for extensive state budget cuts. She supported Governor David Paterson's 2009 proposal to legalize same-sex marriage in New York because she viewed gay marriage as a civil rights issue. The Assemblywoman gave an emotional speech in the Assembly that helped pass the marriage equality bill.

Virginia Fields



2004 – 2010 / Assembly
D – Suffolk County

During her tenure, Virginia “Ginny” Fields sponsored legislation that would allow firefighters to serve in more than one district; enact a three-year temporary spending freeze; create stricter penalties for public officials who commit felonies; create more transparency in school finances; regulate Sober Homes and eliminate E-ZPass administrative fees. She also had legislation regarding pool safety, prohibiting sales and distribution of dangerous toys and other dangerous items to make New York’s product recall laws stronger so that children are protected.

Assemblywoman Fields was a tireless advocate for her constituents and Suffolk County small businesses. She successfully argued against a proposal to sell wine in supermarkets which could cause many small liquor stores to close. She introduced legislation that would provide oversight over LIPA and was a strong proponent of reforming the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

Donna A. Lupardo



2005 – Present / Assembly
D – Broome County

Donna A. Lupardo was elected in 2004 to the State Assembly representing the City of Binghamton and the Towns of Union and Vestal, becoming the first woman to represent Broome County in the New York State Legislature. She distinguished herself as a strong champion for the Southern Tier, promoting local schools and colleges, human services, innovative approaches to economic recovery, and local food systems. She has advanced numerous environmental and public safety measures such as the Work Zone Safety Act and the Lead Free Schools Act, along with championing industrial hemp as a new agricultural commodity.

Assemblywoman Lupardo chaired the Assembly Committee on Children and Families for four years before being appointed to serve as Chair of the Aging Committee in 2017. She served as Chair of the Legislative Women’s Caucus, representing 58 women legislators in the Assembly and Senate from both political parties. During Lupardo’s tenure as chair, the Legislative Women’s Caucus focused the majority of its efforts on advocating for early learning, child care, and afterschool activities.

The Assemblywoman is a past President of the NYS Conference of Italian-American Legislators. She has also chaired the New York Legislative Aviation Caucus for many years, bringing attention to the aviation industry and helping to pass the Aviation Jobs Act. She is a strong advocate for other transportation interests including those affecting freight rail, trucking, motorcycles, and automobiles. Assemblywoman Lupardo has a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Wagner College and a Master Degree from Binghamton University.

Ann Rabbitt



2005 – 2013 / Assembly
R – Orange/Rockland Counties

Elected in 2004, Ann “Annie” Rabbitt brought a wealth of local government experience to the Assembly. She served as a Village Trustee and Deputy Mayor of Greenwood Lake. As a former Councilwoman and Deputy Supervisor, Assemblywoman Rabbitt was responsible for supervising maintenance of 103 square miles of infrastructure.

She was a staunch supporter of veterans’ issues, small businesses, families with autistic children and the disabled. Rabbitt’s committee assignments were: Local Government (Ranking Minority); Environmental Conservation; Housing; Consumer Affairs and Protection; Small Business; and Tourism, Arts and Sports Development.

In 2013, Annie Rabbitt resigned her Assembly seat after being elected County Clerk of Orange County.

Naomi Rivera



2005 – 2012 / Assembly
D – Bronx County

Naomi Rivera represented the 80th Assembly District which is comprised of the Allerton; Eastchester Gardens; Morris Park; Norwood; Pelham Bay; Pelham Parkway; Van Cortlandt Village and Van Ness neighborhoods.

Rivera championed her district prior to being elected. She was an outspoken advocate of women and children’s issues. As the Co-Chair of the Bronx Domestic Violence Advisory Council, she helped to lead the borough’s fight to empower victims. The creator of DiVA (Domestic Violence Awareness) Assemblywoman Rivera also orchestrated “Walk With Me,” a march against domestic violence.

Her committee assignments included: Children and Families; Health; Real Property Taxation; and Tourism, Arts, Sports and Development.

Diane Savino



2005 – Present / Senate
D – Kings/Richmond Counties

Senator Savino has authored numerous laws protecting hard-working New Yorkers, among which are: the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights (first in the nation), Prompt Pay Bill, Wage Theft Prevention Act and, another national first, The New York State Commercial Goods Transportation Industry Fair Play Act.

Senator Savino currently serves as Vice Chair of Finance and Vice Chair of Codes, Banks (Chair – 2015-16 Sessions) Labor (Chair – 2013-14 Sessions), Children and Families (Chair, 2011-12 Sessions), Civil Service and Pensions (Chair, 2009-10 Sessions), Codes, Ethics, Insurance, Judiciary and Rules.

She received her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology with a minor in Sociology from St. John's University and has a degree in Industrial and Labor Relations from Cornell University.

Senator Savino began her career in public service as a caseworker for New York City's Child Welfare Administration, providing direct assistance to abused and neglected children. An active member of her local labor union, the Social Service Employees Union, Local 371, DC 37 of AFSCME, she quickly rose through the ranks to become the Vice President for Political Action & Legislative Affairs, where she became one of the most respected labor leaders in New York State.

As a labor official, she actively and successfully campaigned for an increase in the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.15 an hour—the first raise for New Yorkers in over a decade. Senator Savino also played an integral role in raising the minimum wage in NYS to \$15.00 in the 2016 legislative session.

Sylvia Friedman



2006 / Assembly
D – New York County

Sylvia Friedman was elected on February 28, 2006, to fill the unexpired term of resigning Assemblyman Steven Sanders. She served for a period of ten months representing the East Village and Lower East Side of Manhattan.

A longtime community activist whose main focus was housing and homeless issues prior to being elected, Sylvia championed the rights of people with disabilities believing that they are entitled to the same rights as everyone else.

Her first week in the Assembly, Friedman voted for Timothy's Law, which provides parity in medical insurance for mental illness.

She was a member of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse; Election Law; Housing and Social Services Committees.

Linda B. Rosenthal



2006 – Present / Assembly
D – New York County

Since her election in 2006, Linda B. Rosenthal has passed more than 75 laws that have helped to improve the lives of all New Yorkers: abolishing the tax on feminine hygiene products; protecting New York City's housing stock by banning advertisement of illegal hotels; requiring doctors to undergo training in prescribing addictive substances; extending orders of protection to companion animals whose abuse often serves as a warning sign; and prohibiting the sale of electronic cigarettes and liquid nicotine to minors.

Rosenthal has established herself as a leading advocate on affordable housing, domestic violence issues, consumer protection, environmental issues and animal cruelty.

She chairs the Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and is a member of the following Assembly Committees: Agriculture; Education; Housing; Health; and Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development.

Assemblymember Rosenthal received a B.A. degree in History from the University of Rochester.

Janet Duprey



2007 – 2016 / Assembly
R – Clinton/Franklin/
St. Lawrence Counties

Janet L. Duprey was re-elected in November 2012 to represent the newly-formed 115th Assembly District, which includes all of Clinton and Franklin Counties as well as four towns in St. Lawrence County. During her first three terms in the Assembly, she represented the 114th District, which included one town in Essex County.

During her time in the Assembly, Janet was tireless in her efforts to assist constituents throughout her district, which covered more than 3,000 square miles. She traveled to every part of the district to assist individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations, local governments and school districts. Duprey remained committed to working in a bipartisan manner to improve the quality of life in the North Country.

Duprey was a member of the Committees on Correction; Health; Governmental Operations; Higher Education; Rules; Ways and Means, and the Subcommittee on Autism.

Shirley Huntley



2007 – 2012 / Senate
D – Queens County

Senator Shirley Huntley represented the 10th Senatorial District which included parts of Queens County: Jamaica; South Jamaica; Springfield Gardens; Laurelton; South Ozone Park; Kew Gardens; Broad Channel and Lindenwood.

Senator Huntley's legislation included a chemical dependence treatment bill of rights to be posted in a conspicuous place in all treatment facilities, the discharge of residents of a community residence, one establishing the sickle cell treatment act of 2012 and the "public internet access safety act."

She was the Ranking Minority Member of the Investigations and Government Operations Committee; she also served on the Education; Higher Education; Mental Health; Developmental Disabilities and Transportation Committees.

D. Janele Hyer-Spencer



2007 – 2010 / Assembly
D – Kings/Richmond Counties

Assemblywoman Janele Hyer-Spencer represented the 60th Assembly District which encompasses parts of Staten Island and Brooklyn.

Elected in November 2006, Janele was committed to ensuring that New York City schools received their fair share of funding; protecting access to affordable quality health care for families and seniors, and fought for stronger and safer neighborhoods.

She was a member of the Aging; Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Energy; Judiciary and Transportation Committees.

Hyer-Spencer has both a Law Degree and a Masters of Arts in Social Science/Public Policy from City University of New York. She has also studied towards a Masters of Social Work in Social Welfare Policy and Administration.

Ellen C. Jaffee



2007 – Present / Assembly
D – Rockland County

Assemblymember Ellen C. Jaffee (D-Suffern) was first elected to the NYS Assembly in 2006. She represents the 97th Assembly District. Assemblymember Jaffee Chairs the Children and Families Committee and sits on several other committees including Education, Environmental Conservation, Health, and Mental Health.

As former Chair of the Assembly Task Force on Women's Issues, Assemblymember Jaffee hosted hearings on homelessness among women veterans, chaired round table discussions on several topics including speedy anti HIV/AIDS treatment for victims of sexual assault and to press for access to treatment and services for women with addictions.

Assemblymember Jaffee has a strong legislative record including full equality for women, pay equity, reproductive rights, high-quality, affordable child care, and quality education from early childhood through college. Her standout bills include New York's landmark Breast Density Inform Law, the most comprehensive in the nation, helping to increase early detection standards in breast cancer screening.

Assemblymember Jaffee has stood up for middle-class and working families, fighting to increase the state's minimum wage, ensure paid family leave, affordable healthcare, well water safety, environmental protection, sustainable communities, and social justice.

Assemblymember Jaffee's accomplishments include expanding workforce assistance and training programs for women, securing funds for Rockland's public schools; getting state oversight of the East Ramapo School District; and bringing state leaders to meet with residents of Rockland's river villages to discuss the impacts of construction of the new Tappan Zee Bridge.

Assemblymember Jaffee earned her B.A. in Education from Brooklyn College and her M.S. in Special Education from Fordham University.

Michelle Schimel



2007 – 2016 / Assembly
D – Nassau County

Michelle Schimel represented the 16th Assembly District the New York State Legislature.

A full time legislator, Michelle built a reputation for being one of the most effective and productive members of the New York State Assembly. She was appointed Chair of the Majority Conference, was a member of the Governmental Operations; Local Governments; Environmental Conservation; Transportation, and Veterans' Affairs Committees.

A leader on anti-crime initiatives, Michelle was elected Co-Chair of State Legislators Against Illegal Guns, a bicameral, bipartisan coalition of over fifty current and former members of the State Assembly and Senate and, was also outspoken in her opposition to hydrofracking.

Following the horrific mass shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, Michelle worked getting support among state legislators for an eight-point plan to reduce gun violence. Many of the measures were included in the NY SAFE Act, which has been hailed as one of the toughest gun-safety laws in the country.

She is an alumna of the University of Pennsylvania.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins



2007 – Present / Senate
D – Westchester County

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins has been a trailblazer during her time in public service. In December 2012, Andrea Stewart-Cousins was elected by her colleagues to serve as Leader of the Senate Minority Conference, becoming the first woman in New York State history to lead a legislative conference.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins has advocated for initiatives to augment the state's economy, empower local governments, improve public education, reform state government and protect New Yorkers' rights and health. She is a strong voice for all New Yorkers.

Senator Stewart-Cousins was instrumental in passing the NY-SAFE Act to help reduce gun violence; ensure marriage equality; led efforts to increase minimum wage; clean up state government; implement stronger campaign finance reform and ensure women's rights and health are protected under state law.

She earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Pace University, teaching credentials in Business Education from Lehman College and her Masters of Public Administration from Pace University. Senator Stewart-Cousins is also a proud member of Pi Alpha Alpha - a Public Administration Honor Society.

Ellen Young



2007 – 2008 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Ellen Young was elected in 2006 to represent the 22nd Assembly District. She was the first Asian woman to be elected to the New York State Legislature.

Ellen Young had a more substantial record than most first-term Assembly members by having five bills passed and signed into law; one which was a measure to extend senior citizen services. She became the first Asian American to do so.

Assemblywoman Young was also granted the special honor of presiding over the Assembly as Speaker Pro-Tempore.

She is a graduate of Takming Administration College of Taipei, Taiwan.

Inez Barron



2009 – 2013 / Assembly
D – Kings County

Inez Barron was elected to the Assembly in November, 2008 following a distinguished career of public service.

Inez's service to the communities of East New York, Brownsville and Carnarsie continued while in the Assembly. She represented her district with emphasis on education, health care, economic development, housing and environmental justice.

She served on the Aging; Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; Children and Families; Higher Education; Housing and Social Services Committees.

She is a graduate of Hunter College of the City University of New York with a Bachelor of Science in Physiology and Bank Street College of Education with a Master in Reading and Special Education. She resigned her Assembly seat after being elected to New York City Council 2013.

Jane Corwin



2009 – 2016 / Assembly
R – Erie/Niagara/
Orleans Counties

Jane Lewis Corwin was elected to the New York State Assembly representing what is now the 144th Assembly District.

When elected, Jane stood firm in her message of fiscal conservatism, accountability for lawmakers, and focused on growing our upstate economy by supporting small businesses.

She was the Minority Leader Pro Tempore and served as the Ranking Minority member of the Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee, and a member of the Environmental Conservation, Mental Health, and Education Committees.

The Assemblywoman understood that lowering taxes on citizens and businesses would put more money back into the economy allowing for economic growth, better jobs with upward mobility, and long-term economic stability. She recognized that her constituents wanted less government intrusion in their lives and a realistic approach to state spending.

Corwin received her undergraduate degree from the State University of New York at Albany and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Pace University.

Vanessa L. Gibson



2009 – 2013 / Assembly
D – Bronx County

Vanessa L. Gibson was elected in 2009 in a special election to fill the seat of former Assemblywoman Aurelia Greene and won the seat again in the general election in November. While in the Assembly, Vanessa Gibson advocated for stronger tenant protection and rent regulations; supported the construction of housing projects; securing funds for foreclosure prevention assistance; protecting CUNY/SUNY funding for childcare and the Nurse Family Partnership; fought for increased education funds and enhance access to quality affordable healthcare.

Gibson was a member of the following committees: Banks; Children and Families; Corporations, Authorities and Commissions; Housing; Small Business; Social Services; a member of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus and the Legislative Women's Caucus.

She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from SUNY Albany and Master's Degree in Policy Analysis & Evaluation from Baruch College. She resigned her Assembly seat after being elected to the New York City Council in 2013.

Addie A.E. Jenne



2009 – Present / Assembly
D – Jefferson/
St. Lawrence Counties

Addie A.E. Jenne represents the 116th Assembly District, also known as the "River District." The district follows the shore of the majestic St. Lawrence River from the northeast corner of Lake Ontario to the manufacturing town of Massena and borders Fort Drum and the mighty Black River to the east.

Ms. Jenne was formerly an attorney at Conboy, McKay, Bachman & Kendall, LLP, where she concentrated her practice in the areas of Trust and Estate Administration, Real Estate, Guardianships, Elder Law and Estate Planning. She served on the Jefferson County Board of Legislators from 2006 until becoming a member of the Assembly in 2009. She was a member of the county's Planning and Development Committee, Health and Human Services Committees and Technology Ad Hoc Committee.

Jenne chairs the Task Force on Food, Farm & Nutrition Policy; is a member of the Agriculture; Corporations, Authorities and Commissions; Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce and Industry; Energy; Local Governments and Veterans' Affairs Committees. She is also a member of the Legislative Women's Caucus.

Ms. Jenne was born in Watertown, New York, raised in Philadelphia, New York and now resides in Theresa, New York. She has a beautiful son Aaron and daughter Cora. Ms. Jenne is the seventh generation of her family to reside in the North Country.

Grace Meng



2009 – 2012 / Assembly
D – Queens County

Elected in 2008, Grace Meng was the youngest Asian American ever elected to the New York State Legislature.

Assemblywoman Meng emerged as an advocate for families, senior citizens and children. She introduced over 35 bills during her first session and had one signed into law extending unemployment benefits to 56,000 New Yorkers during hard economic times. A second bill giving new incentives for property owners to commit to providing affordable housing was also signed into law.

Meng was a member of the Committees on Aging; Banks; Labor; Libraries and Education Technology; Real Property Taxation, and Small Business.

In 2012, Meng was elected to the US House of Representatives, making her the first Asian American elected to Congress from New York.

She graduated from the University of Michigan and earned her Juris Doctor Degree from Yeshiva University's Benjamin Cardozo School of Law.

Nicole Malliotakis



2011 – Present / Assembly
R – Richmond/Kings Counties

Nicole Malliotakis was elected to the New York State Assembly in November, 2010, defeating a two-term incumbent, and represents a district spanning the boroughs of Brooklyn and Staten Island. She was the first Hispanic-American to be elected from Richmond County.

Recovery from Hurricane Sandy has become a hallmark of her tenure as an elected official. Nicole's district, which encompasses the Eastern Shore of Staten Island, was among the hardest hit by the October 2012 storm. In addition, she has successfully fought to restore and expand transit service in both Brooklyn and Staten Island, improve programs for senior citizens, and reform education in New York State. She has worked to improve New York's economic climate and reduce the tax burden on small businesses and residents and is a passionate advocate for animal rights and strengthening animal cruelty laws.

She serves as Secretary to the Minority Conference and Ranking Minority member on the Governmental Employees Committee. She also a member of the Banks, Corporation, Authorities and Commissions, Transportation and Ways and Means Committees.

Assemblywoman Malliotakis earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communication from Seton Hall University and Master's Degree in Business Administration from Wagner College.

Patricia Ritchie



2011 – Present / Senate
R – Jefferson/Oswego/
St. Lawrence Counties

Patricia Ritchie was elected to the State Senate in 2010, and serves as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, as well as Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Libraries. In 2015, she was named Deputy Majority Leader for Senate and Assembly Relations, a position that strengthens her ability to represent her Central and Northern New York constituents, as well as lead on issues that are important to all New Yorkers.

Serving as Agriculture Committee Chair since 2011, she has worked to strengthen family farms by cutting taxes and red tape. To encourage a new generation of family farmers, she proposed the “Young Farmers NY” program, enacted in 2014, which includes grants and other incentives to support aspiring farmers. And, she has led the fight to stop budget cuts for vital agriculture programs, including those that support hardworking farmers and help to connect consumers with more locally grown, fresh foods.

Senator Ritchie received an Associate’s Degree in Social work from Mater Dei College and a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology from SUNY Potsdam.

Aravella Simotas



2011 – Present / Assembly
D – Queens County

Aravella Simotas, a lifelong resident of Astoria, Queens, represents New York’s 36th Assembly District in Western Queens. In 2010 she became the first woman elected from her district.

Simotas’ interest in public service and civic affairs began in high school where she organized fundraising events for local charities. When Simotas was in law school, she worked with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and local elected officials who successfully fought the construction of more power plants in Western Queens, a neighborhood already suffering from the effects of existing power plants.

Simotas has established a reputation as a dedicated and effective legislator, sponsoring legislation that promotes common-sense policies aimed at revitalizing New York’s economy, protecting neglected consumers, strengthening our criminal justice system and protecting victims of sex crimes. In 2017, the governor signed legislation she sponsored into a law which mandates the speedy processing of rape kits throughout the state and will prevent future backlogs of untested kits.

She is also an outspoken advocate for seniors, students, and working families, fighting to improve schools, keep senior centers funded, make Astoria streets safer and holding City and State agencies accountable when they fail to meet their obligations to Astoria’s residents.

A proud graduate of the New York City public school system, Simotas attended Public School 17, Junior High School 126 and William C. Bryant High School in Astoria before receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Philosophy, summa cum laude, from Fordham University, and Law Degree from Fordham Law School.

Claudia Tenney



2011 – 2016 / Assembly
R – Delaware/Herkimer/
Oneida/Orange/Otsego/
Sullivan/Ulster Counties

No stranger to the Assembly, Claudia was Chief of Staff and legal Counsel to former Assemblyman David Townsend. The foremost example of Claudia's dedication to principles of fairness and equality was her ongoing effort to resolve issues between the Oneida Nation, local governments and private citizens.

Claudia brought suit against both the state and federal governments on behalf of the people of Central New York, the Mohawk Valley and a full-blooded Oneida Indian in order to preserve the rights afforded to private citizens and Oneidas who have been disenfranchised by inequities caused by a lack of federal and state oversight.

Claudia graduated from Colgate University and the Taft College of Law at the University of Cincinnati. She was elected to US House of Representatives in 2016.

Didi Barrett



2012 – Present / Assembly
D – Columbia/
Dutchess Counties

Didi Barrett was first elected to the New York State Assembly in a special election in March 2012 and has subsequently been re-elected in 2012, 2014, and 2016.

As a member of the Assembly, she serves as the Chair of the Task Force on People with Disabilities, the Vice Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus, and Chair of the Subcommittee on Regional Tourism. In addition, she serves on the Committees on Agriculture; Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce & Industry; Environmental Conservation; Mental Health; Tourism, Parks, Arts & Sports Development; and Veterans Affairs.

Didi is passionate about the agricultural, natural, historical and cultural resources of the Hudson Valley and their critical importance as economic engines and job generators.

A longtime advocate for women and girls, she spearheaded the creation of the Dutchess Girls Collaborative to support local girls and young women. She is formerly a trustee of the Anderson Foundation for Autism, board member of the Millbrook Education Foundation and consultant to the Hudson Valley resident professional theater company Half Moon Theatre. She writes a blog, *Diner Dialogues: Talk of the Hudson Valley*.

Didi's other affiliations have included Girls Incorporated of NYC (founding chair); New York Women's Foundation, Planned Parenthood of NYC, the Women's Campaign Forum and NARAL Pro-Choice New York (former board member) and the American Folk Art Museum (trustee emeritus).

Shelley Mayer



2012 – Present / Assembly
D – Westchester County

Shelley Mayer was elected to the New York State Assembly in a special election on March 20, 2012 and subsequently re-elected in November 2012, 2014, and 2016 from the 90th District (Yonkers).

Prior to her election, Shelley was a Senior Counsel at the National State Attorney General Program at Columbia Law School, where she focused on health care and labor law rights. From 1982 to 1994, Shelley served as an Assistant Attorney General in the office of New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams. She served in the Civil Rights Bureau, as Chief of the Westchester Regional Office, as the legislative liaison for the Attorney General and ultimately as a senior advisor to the Attorney General. As an Assistant Attorney General, Shelley fought to protect civil rights for New Yorkers and to broaden laws protecting consumers and tenants.

Assemblywoman Mayer chairs the Assembly Task Force on Women's Issues and formerly chaired the Assembly Education Committee's Subcommittee on Students with Special Needs. She also serves as a member of the Social Services, Children and Families, Cities, Education, Health, and Labor Committees, as well as the Legislative Women's Caucus and Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force.

Assemblywoman Mayer received a JD from SUNY Buffalo School of Law in 1979 and a Bachelor of Arts from UCLA in 1975.

Patricia Fahy



2013 – Present / Assembly
D – Albany County

Patricia "Pat" Fahy was elected to the New York State Assembly in November 2012 to represent the 109th Assembly District from the City of Albany, Towns of Bethlehem, Guilderland, and New Scotland. She is the first woman elected to the New York State Legislature from the Capital Region.

A leading advocate for job creation and education, Pat has sponsored more than 200 bills and has been the prime sponsor of over 50 bills, of which 32 have become law. This includes legislation to improve access to legal representation for all New Yorkers and relieve an unfunded mandate off counties; ensure protections from petroleum disasters; to fund Pre-K transportation; and tax relief for land owners to encourage conservation. In her first term, Pat was awarded Freshman Legislator of the Year by the NYS School Boards Association.

Previously, Pat served as the Associate Commissioner of Intergovernmental Affairs at the NYS Department of Labor. She also served as Executive Director to the Chicago Workforce Board; and spent nine years in D.C., as legislative staff on Capitol Hill in both the House and Senate, and in the Clinton Administration in the Congressional Affairs Office of the U.S. Department of Labor under Secretary Robert Reich. Pat has a Bachelor's degree from Northern Illinois University and a Master's degree from University of Illinois at Chicago.

Kathleen A. Marchione



2013 – Present / Senate
R – Columbia/
Rensselaer/Saratoga/
Washington Counties

Kathleen A. Marchione was first elected to the New York State Senate in 2012, and was overwhelmingly re-elected in 2014 to continue serving and representing families across the 43rd Senate District, which includes parts of Rensselaer, Saratoga and Washington Counties, and all of Columbia County.

Senator Marchione is a trusted, independent voice for the real change that New York's families, taxpayers, communities and small businesses need. Taxpayers know that she cares and that they can count on Kathy to continue putting people before partisan politics, stand up for what's right, and work for a safer, stronger, more affordable New York.

Prior to entering the New York State Senate, Kathy Marchione was the former County Clerk of Saratoga County and is now serving in her 35th year of public service, winning her first election as Halfmoon Town Clerk at age 25 and thereafter serving as Halfmoon Town Supervisor before being elected as Saratoga County Clerk in 1997.

Senator Marchione Chairs the Senate's Committee on Local Government, in addition to serving on several Senate Standing Committees including Aging; Banks; Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation; Elections; Finance; Racing, Gaming and Wagering; and Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee. Senator Marchione also serves on the Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, the Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases and the Senate Task Force on Workforce Development.

Gabriela Rosa



2013 – 2014 / Assembly
D – New York County

Gabriela Rosa began her public service career as a Legislative Assistant to Assemblyman Herman D. Farrell, leaving after two years to become Chief of Staff to a City Councilmember. After a period of time she returned to work for the Assemblyman as a Senior Policy Advisor and Special Assistant. This gave her a better understanding of the issues affecting the life of New Yorkers and the workings of the legislature.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Marketing from the Dominican Republic's Universidad Pedro Henriquez Urena and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Economics at Instituto Tecnologico de Santo Domingo.

Assemblywoman was a member of the Aging; Banks; Correction; Higher Education and Real Property Taxation Committees.

Nily Rozic



2013 – Present / Assembly
D – Queens County

Assemblywoman Nily Rozic represents New York's 25th District, which spans the northeast portion of Queens, including the communities of Flushing, Queensboro Hill, Hillcrest, Fresh Meadows, Oakland Gardens, Bayside, and Douglaston. Upon her election in 2012, she became the youngest woman in the State Legislature and the first woman ever to represent the 25th District.

Nily serves as the Chair of the Subcommittee on Emerging Workforce and as a member of the Assembly's Ways and Means, Corporation, Authorities and Commissions, Correction, Environmental Conservation and Labor Committees. She is also a member of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus and the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force.

Nily is an outspoken advocate for working and middle class families, immigrant communities, and students, and she has already sponsored and passed legislation aimed at revitalizing New York's environment, expanding government transparency, and strengthening the state's workforce development system. She is also committed to social justice, equality and opportunity for all.

Assemblywoman Rozic is a graduate of New York University.

Michaëlle Solages



2013 – Present / Assembly
D – Nassau County

As a lifelong resident of the 22nd Assembly District, Honorable Michaëlle Solages was elected to represent the area in November 2012.

Assemblywoman Michaëlle Solages fights for Nassau County's middle class, small businesses, and working families by supporting lower property taxes, improving public safety, and increasing educational opportunities for students.

Assemblywoman Solages is nationally recognized as a leading advocate for improving child care, implementing early learning educational programs and establishing innovative ways to support families with young children across the age spectrum from birth and into early grades. Michaëlle advocates for increased funding for libraries so that students have equitable opportunities to develop strong literacy skills and critical thinking skills.

Originally the first person of Haitian descent elected into the New York State Legislature, she is now serving as chair of The Task Force on New Americans. She also serves as Chair of the Subcommittee on Child Product Safety.

She graduated with a Bachelor's Degree from Hofstra University's School of Education, Health, and Human Services.

Cecilia Tkaczyk



2013 – 2014 / Senate
D – Albany/Greene/
Montgomery/Schenectady/
Ulster Counties

Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk was recognized as an expert on housing policy. In her role as Senior Policy Analyst for the Senate Majority Conference, she was key in developing the 2009 Mortgage Foreclosure Law to assist homeowners and tenants in with foreclosures.

Her top priorities included strengthening the state's economy and fostering job growth. She felt that this only be done by supporting and improving New York's public school system whereby our children would be better prepared for technology-based jobs.

Senator Tkaczyk was on the following committees: Elections (Ranking Minority); Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (Ranking Minority); Agriculture; Children and Families; Education; Environmental Conservation.

She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Science from Rutgers University.

Maritza Davila



2014 – Present / Assembly
D – Kings County

Assemblywoman Maritza Davila was elected to represent the 53rd Assembly District in 2014. She understands through experience the challenges and successes that her community has faced and will face. She began her career in public service as a community organizer, giving a voice to community residents on issues of education, healthcare, public safety, affordable housing, open space, and economic development within the communities of Bushwick and Williamsburg.

As a staunch defender of women's rights, Davila has supported numerous organizations and initiatives to empower and protect Brooklyn's women. She was a founding member of the North Brooklyn Coalition Against Family Violence and served on its Board for two years.

A strong advocate for community access to quality public education, Maritza Davila served as President of the Community School Board of Education of District 32. While serving as Director of a statewide program to increase lead-paint awareness, she cultivated a particular concern for the special educational needs of the large population of children in Bushwick and Williamsburg that suffer from autism, learning and developmental disabilities, and other mental and physical challenges.

For over 20 years, Assemblywoman Davila has fought to preserve and expand affordable housing in Williamsburg and Bushwick. She also founded the Northern Brooklyn Residents Association, a community advocacy group which supported affordable housing and community development on the city and state level.

Assemblywoman Davila graduated with her AA in Political Science from Long Island University. She currently Chairs the Sub-Committee on Retention of Homeownership and Stabilization of Affordable Housing.

Latoya Joyner



2014 – Present / Assembly
D – Bronx County

Since her election to the Assembly in 2014, Latoya Joyner has made her mark both in Albany and in the district she represents with issues ranging from affordable housing and education to domestic violence. She authored groundbreaking legislation to create a pilot program that protects victims of domestic violence by speeding up the process for obtaining temporary orders of protection and allowing them to file protection orders electronically.

Assemblywoman Joyner is also an ardent advocate for strengthening rent regulation and protecting tenants. She publicly supported a rent freeze for the 33,000 apartments under rent regulation in her district and remains committed to this issue. She chairs the Subcommittee on Diversity in Law and serves on the Labor; Judiciary; Insurance and Housing Committees.

She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Sociology from State University of New York at Stony Brook and Juris Doctor from the University at Buffalo Law School.

Rodneyse Bichotte



2015 – Present / Senate
D – Kings County

Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte, representing Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood and Ditmas Park, was born and raised in Brooklyn. She is the first Haitian-American woman elected in New York City, and the first woman Engineer elected to the NYS Legislature.

Ms. Bichotte currently serves as Chair of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs), Vice Chair of the NYS Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators, and was appointed by Governor Cuomo to the Domestic Violence Advisory Council. Assemblymember Bichotte is a strong advocate for the economic development of women with the introduction of over 13 pieces of MWBE legislation and has a strong track record on women's reproductive health and rights, family leave, and pay equity. Additionally, Assemblymember Bichotte introduced legislation on STEM, criminal justice reform, and housing rights. A crowning achievement of her first term was establishment of the Haitian Studies Institute, at Brooklyn College.

Professionally, Assemblymember Bichotte has worked in a variety of fields such as a math teacher in the public school education system; an engineer in the telecommunications industry where she traveled to Japan and China on assignments; and an investment banker in the financial services industry structuring corporate finance deals.

Pamela Harris



2015 – Present / Assembly
D – Kings County

Pamela Harris was elected in 2015 special election to fill an open seat in the 46th Assembly District. The district includes Bay Ridge, Beach Haven, Brightwater Towers, Brighton Beach, Coney Island, Dyker Heights, Luna Park, Sea Gate, Trump Village and Warbasse communities.

Working with local community groups, Pamela has fought to revitalize the region by ensuring more opportunities for children. One of Pamela's achievements includes founding the Coney Island Generation Gap, a non-profit organization aiming to educate and empower youth to get them off the streets and away from crime. Prior to her work with local children, Pamela served as a correction officer for many years – helping keep our families safe. Her community activism expands to helping those affected by Superstorm Sandy.

Pamela has an Associate's Degree in General Studies from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, a Bachelor's Degree in Health and Human services from St. Joseph's College, and a Master's Degree in Human Development and Family Studies from Capella University.

Pamela Hunter



2015 – Present / Assembly
D – Onondaga County

Pamela Hunter is an Upstate NY native and a US Army veteran, honorably discharged with a commendation medal and two achievement medals. Pamela received her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Strayer College in Washington, DC, with concentrations in Human Resources and Computer Information Systems. She has a Professional Certification in Human Resources. She represents the southern and eastern portions of the City of Syracuse, as well as the surrounding towns of Dewitt, Onondaga, Salina and the Onondaga Nation.

Prior to her election to the NYS Assembly in 2015, Pamela served on the Syracuse Common Council for three years and chaired the Public Safety Committee. She has broad professional experience having held executive positions with nonprofit organizations and professional service firms and has served the community on various boards including Catholic Charities, Meals on Wheels and the Syracuse Industrial Development Association.

In the Assembly she serves on the Energy, Insurance, Social Services, Transportation, and Veteran Affairs Committees, along with being a member of both the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus and the Legislative Women's Caucus. In her first full year in office, Pamela passed a bill to extend the statute of limitations for military service members injured or killed by contact with Agent Orange in Vietnam to file legal action. She also secured funding to manage the deer population in East Syracuse and Dewitt and authored a law extending an EPA pesticide policy. She lives in Syracuse with her husband and son.

Alicia Hyndman



2015 – Present / Assembly
D – Queens County

Alicia Hyndman was elected to the New York State Assembly on November 10, 2015 in the 29th AD, encompassing the neighborhoods of Laurelton, Rosedale, St. Albans, Addisleigh Park, Hollis, Springfield Gardens and Jamaica, Queens.

Prior to being elected to the State Legislature, Assemblywoman Hyndman worked closely with community stakeholders as an active member of Community Boards 12Q, and 13Q, serving as a member of the Boards Education Committees, and also as a regular participant of the Rosedale Civic Association.

Assemblywoman Hyndman served on the NYC Department of Education's Community District Education Council 29 (CEC 29) for ten years, the last four years as President. Leading the advocacy for the 36 elementary and middle schools in the district, through collaborative leadership, she was able to bring in \$30 million in capital funding for technology upgrades, facilities improvements, playground rehabilitation and other amenities to enhance the quality of education for students

As a longtime advocate for education, Assemblywoman Hyndman's focus is to bring resources and information back into the community to support youth and senior services, alleviate flooding, help small businesses to grow, and provide access to living wage jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Assemblywoman Hyndman currently sits on the Aging, Economic Development, Governmental Operations, Small Business and Transportation Committees.

Alicia Hyndman holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the State University of New York at New Paltz, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Framingham. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Kimberly Jean-Pierre



2015 – Present / Assembly
D – Suffolk County

Assemblywoman Kimberly Jean-Pierre was elected in the 2014 general election. She is the daughter of parents who migrated from Haiti to the United States. She attended Brooklyn College, and earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing in 2005. In pursuit of her master's degree she attended Stony Brook University, earning her Master of Science in Public Policy in 2007.

Kimberly was employed by the Suffolk County Legislature, working for Legislator DuWayne Gregory of the 15th Legislative District as a legislative aide and the district Community Outreach Coordinator for Congressman Steve Israel. She served as the Vice President of Properties at the Town of Babylon's Industrial Development Agency and the Director of the Town of Babylon's Wyandanch Resource Center.

Assemblywoman Jean-Pierre is very involved in the Haitian-American community and is the former Vice-President of Haitian Americans United for Change Inc., (HAUC), a community grass-roots organization. After the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January 2010, the HAUC team worked with local not-for-profits, clergy members, local businesses, and various levels of governmental agencies on a Haiti Relief Project as one of the lead organizations. Kimberly also served as Coordinator of the Project.

Jean-Pierre serves as Chair of the Subcommittee on Banking and Underserved Communities. She sits on the Banks, Children and Families, Economic Development, Local Government, Mental Health, and Transportation Committees. Jean-Pierre is also part of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus, Legislative Women's Caucus and the Women of Color Subcommittee.

Roxanne J. Persaud



2015 / Assembly
2015 – Present / Senate
D – Kings County

Roxanne Jacqueline Persaud was elected to the State Senate in November 2015 after serving in the State Assembly.

Roxanne spent many years as a Higher Education Administrator prior to being elected to the State Legislature. In addition, she is a longtime advocate for the community. She served as President of the 69th Precinct Community Council in Canarsie, a member of Community Board 18 and Commissioner on the New York City Districting Commission. She also is a graduate of the NYPD Citizens Police Academy as well as, the New York City Office of Emergency Management-Community Emergency Response Team.

Additionally, she was a member of Community Action Board of the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development and Chairperson of the Neighborhood Advisory Board - District 18. She also serves on organizations highlighting domestic violence and cancer awareness among others. Her dedication to community involvement and her interest in helping others stretches well beyond Brooklyn. She has traveled overseas on several occasions as a volunteer on medical and social outreach programs.

Roxanne was born in Guyana, South America, and migrated to the United States with her parents and siblings. She is a graduate of Pace University from which she holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Education Administration.

In the Senate, Roxanne's legislative priorities for the district include safer communities, affordable housing, funding for schools and libraries, supportive services for youth and senior and quality healthcare. Roxanne lives in the Canarsie section of the 19th Senatorial District.

Diana C. Richardson



2015 – Present / Assembly
D – Kings County

Diana C. Richardson represents the 43rd Assembly District in Brooklyn, which includes the neighborhoods of Crown Heights, Prospect Lefferts Gardens, Wingate and East Flatbush. This fearless leader is a first generation native of Crown Heights, Brooklyn and of West Indian descent. With a strong passion for community, Richardson has worked to improve the overall welfare of her neighbors through raising awareness on key issues such as housing, juvenile justice, and criminal justice reform.

Richardson is a member on the Assembly standing committees on Banks; Children and Families; Corporations, Authorities and Commissions; Mental Health; and Small Business, as well as the Women's Caucus, and the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus where she holds an executive role on its Women of Color Sub-Committee as Secretary.

While earning her Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration at CUNY Medgar Evers College, Richardson discovered her passion for public service, and it was clear that community empowerment would be her central focus. Richardson later obtained a Master's in Public Administration degree with a concentration in Policy Analysis and Evaluation from the School of Public Affairs at CUNY Baruch College. She began her career in the NYS Senate serving as the Director of Constituent Affairs in the office of Senator Kevin Parker.

Prior to her election as Assemblymember, Richardson used her program development and advocacy skills as Director of Government Relations with Boys Town New York; a nearly century old national youth and family service organization, dedicated to changing the way America cares for children and families.

Rebecca Seawright



2015 – Present / Assembly
D – New York County

Rebecca Seawright is the first female to represent the 76th Assembly District, which is comprised of Roosevelt Island, Manhattan's Upper East Side and Yorkville.

As a Member of the Assembly, Rebecca is committed to environmental protection, increasing government transparency and senior citizen rights. She fights against discrimination and intolerance at all levels of our society. To date, ten of her bills passed both houses, with eight of them signed into law.

She is currently a member of the Banking; Consumer Affairs and Protection; Corporations, Authorities and Commissions; Judiciary; and the Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development Committees. Assemblywoman Seawright also chairs the Subcommittee on Consumer Fraud Protection and is a member of the Assembly's Workgroup on Operations and a member of both the Legislative Women's Caucus and the Bipartisan Pro-Choice Legislative Caucus.

Susan J. Serino



2015 – Present / Senate
R – Dutchess/Putnam Counties

Having grown up in Dutchess County, Susan J. Serino developed a distinct appreciation for the uniqueness of the area and its homes. The daughter of a hardworking immigrant, Sue was taught that homeownership was a critical component of achieving the "American Dream." Hoping to make that dream a reality for her neighbors in the community, Sue took an interest in the real estate industry. She began working in the industry in 1996 and opened her own office in the City of Poughkeepsie shortly thereafter.

Prior to her election to the Senate, Susan "Sue" Serino was a member of the Dutchess County Legislature. She proved to be a vocal advocate for hardworking taxpayers and consistently resisted efforts to raise taxes and fees at the local level. Sue firmly believes that like so many hardworking families in our communities, our government needs to learn to do more with less as well as prioritize measures that will directly benefit our local communities.

Having spent her life in Dutchess, Sue cares deeply about ensuring our communities remain places where our young people can afford to start their lives and our seniors can afford to stay and enjoy the lives that they worked so hard to build. Sue fights tirelessly in Albany to achieve that goal.

Senator Serino chairs the Senate Aging Committee and the Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases. She also serves on the following Committees: Children & Families, Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks & Recreation, Education, Higher Education, Insurance, Judiciary, Libraries, and Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities.

Jo Anne Simon



2015 – Present / Assembly
D – Kings County

During her past tenure as community leader, and State Committeewoman for the 52nd Assembly District, Jo Anne Simon leads by example; putting principles over politics earning a reputation as an effective community leader. She brings these leadership qualities and principles, along with deep community roots to the Assembly.

Assembly Member Simon is the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). She is also a member of several other committees in the Assembly; Consumer Affairs and Protection; Higher Education; Judiciary; Labor; Transportation Committees.

A long time disability advocate, Jo Anne graduated from Iona College with a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Sciences, a Master's Degree in Education of the Deaf from Gallaudet University, and Fordham University Law School. She comes to the Assembly after 25 years of practicing disability civil rights law in higher education, and high stakes standardized testing. She has served on the boards of numerous professional and community-based organizations.

Latrice M. Walker



2015 – Present / Assembly
D – Kings County

Latrice Monique Walker was elected to the New York State Assembly in 2014. A native of the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, Assemblywoman Walker received her early childhood education in the NYC public schools and went on to receive her undergraduate degree from SUNY Purchase College where she double-majored in Sociology and Political Science. She achieved a Juris Doctorate Degree of Law from Pace University and was admitted to the New York State Bar in 2007.

Assemblywoman Walker is not new to the legislative process, having served as Counsel to U.S. Representative Yvette D. Clarke since 2007; helping to plan, organize, and integrate the congressional agenda to improve her community.

She played a central role in facilitating the federal, state, and city governments' community planning and development initiatives, and she evaluated their economic and civic effect on the community.

For nearly a decade, Assemblywoman Walker has worked with local elected officials, supporting affordable housing while preserving and advocating for residents of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). As a lawyer, she helped tenants avoid eviction and defended young minority victims of stop-and-frisk practices.

Assemblywoman Walker is a member of the New York City Bar Association and a founding member of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Coalition of Young Professionals. As a private citizen, Latrice remains active in community affairs and is a member of Wayside Baptist Church, a preeminent faith institution in her community. The Assemblywoman resides in Ocean-Hill Brownsville and is the proud mother of daughter Nile Anderson.

Carrie Woerner



2015 – Present / Assembly
D – Saratoga/
Washington Counties

Carrie Woerner was elected to the New York State Assembly in November 2014.

During her first year in office, Woerner authored legislation that passed both the Assembly and Senate, including five bills that were signed into law by the Governor. These included a law allowing the Ballston Spa Central School District to establish a semiconductor manufacturing tax stabilization reserve fund and one enabling Saratoga Harness Racing to continue receiving regional payments from Capital Region Off-Track Betting.

Woerner is the chair of the Subcommittee on Agricultural Production & Technology and a member of the Assembly's Agriculture, Local Governments, Racing and Wagering, Small Business and Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development Committees, and the Legislative Women's Caucus.

Woerner earned her undergraduate degree from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and her Masters of Business Administration from Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, California.

Angela Wozniak



2015 – 2016 / Assembly
R – Erie County

Angela Wozniak was elected to serve the 143rd Assembly District. The district includes the Towns of Cheektowaga and Lancaster and the Village of Depew. Before being elected to the Assembly, she successfully ran for Town Council of Cheektowaga. While in office, the town board was downsized from seven to five members, and she also fought for tax reform, ethics reform, school board consolidation, and term limits. In just a short time as an elected official, Angela has proven her ability to fight for taxpayers, develop sound legislation, and reach across the aisle to get things done.

Angela pledged to bring much-needed funding back to her home district, and provide a voice in Albany on issues such as ethics reform and the Common Core educational standards.

She graduated from D'Youville College with a degree in Business Management.

Alice Cancel



2016 / Assembly
D – New York County

Alice Cancel was elected to represent the 65th Assembly district. Prior to her election to the New York State Assembly, Alice worked for 26 years as the area's community leader. She also worked in the State Senate and in the New York City Comptroller's office has served in many capacities – board member, chair, president, volunteer, founder, and community leader in numerous organizations in her community.

Alice acted as a liaison between offices dealing with many issues ranging from potholes to noise proliferation; an advocate for individuals in private and public housing; assisted homeless families and children and worked with domestic violence victims to assist with legal representation, counseling, and providing for emergency food and clothing.

Jaime R. Williams



2016 – Present / Assembly
D – Kings County

Jaime R. Williams was elected to serve the 59th Assembly District on April 19, 2016; encompassing the neighborhoods of Canarsie, Georgetown, Mill Basin, Marine Park and Gerritsen Beach. Originally from Trinidad and Tobago, she came to the United States in 1999, settling in NYC.

After obtaining her GED, Assemblywoman Williams attended Kingsborough Community College, earned a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work at York College, and a Master's Degree in Social Work from Fordham University. She returned to Kingsborough Community College where she received a CASAC-T Certificate (Credential Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor) with a Specialization in Gambling Counseling.

In 2007, Ms. Williams founded Empowerment = Courage to Heal Inc., an organization devoted to raising awareness against domestic violence in the community. Jaime's experience includes more than 8 years of counseling women and children who were victims of domestic violence. Her experience has allowed her to collaborate with faith-based community and civic organizations to promote awareness about domestic violence. Jaime has also used her skills to advocate and counsel clients who are HIV positive with history of substance abuse.

Following Super Storm Sandy, Jaime was employed by Catholic Charities Brooklyn & Queens to work in Brooklyn with residents affected by Super Storm Sandy, particularly in Canarsie, Bergen Beach, Gerritsen Beach and Coney Island. Jaime also served as the Community Project Director for Brooklyn East at Catholic Charities, where she provided outreach programs for the community in Brownsville, East New York, Canarsie and Mill Basin. Assemblywoman Williams truly believes in giving back to the community.

Marisol Alcantara



2017 – Present / Senate
D – Bronx/New York Counties

State Senator Marisol Alcantara is a longtime labor organizer, community organizer, and activist who has devoted her life to empowering low-income communities, women, workers, and immigrant New Yorkers. In Albany, Marisol fights both for the robust social safety net that people in the 31st State Senate District deserve and for an end to the system of patronage and corruption that skews policy in favor of monied interests.

Marisol is a graduate from Manhattan College, where she earned a B.A. in Government and Politics. Next, she earned a Masters in Labor Relations from the CUNY Murphy Institute of Labor. She then went on to be a Coro Fellow, which allowed her to work at the New York Immigration Coalition and become a Graduate of the New Americans Leadership Institute.

Afterwards, Marisol began her career in labor as a union organizer for SEIU 32BJ in New Jersey for 8 years and helped coordinate SEIU's Latino outreach efforts in the 2008 presidential election. Immediately before being elected as the New York State Senate's only Latina member in 2016, she was working as a labor organizer for the New York State Nurses Association, advocating for patient-centered reforms such as safe staffing and expanded access to care.

As Chairwoman of the State Senate Labor Committee, she brings strong values forged over a lifetime of working within the labor movement. She also serves on the Social Services, Infrastructure, Higher Education, Cultural Affairs, Corporations, and Aging Committees.

Carmen De La Rosa



2017 – Present / Assembly
D – New York County

Carmen De La Rosa was elected in 2016 to represent the 72nd Assembly District in Manhattan. She is a career public servant who is deeply committed to serving her community, Assemblywoman De La Rosa was born in the Dominican Republic and immigrated to the Inwood section of NYC as a young child. She was proud to be the first person in her immediate family to graduate from college, receiving a Degree in Political Science and a Certification in Peace and Justice Studies from Fordham University.

In 2007, she began her career working for Assemblymember Daniel O'Donnell, where her passion for government and politics was sparked. She worked with communities on the Upper West Side to improve the quality of life of residents, fight colocations in local public schools and preserve affordable housing. It was here that she learned the functions of a State Assembly office.

Rising through the ranks in state and local government, Carmen was appointed Chief of Staff to Council member Ydanis Rodriguez where she managed the daily operations, strategy and focus of both the legislative and community offices. De La Rosa has gained a firm understanding of the real needs of her uptown community and how to address them through legislative action; smart, progressive budgeting; fierce advocacy and community organizing.

Carmen is passionate about using government as a tool for social change and a vehicle to empower and support communities. A lifelong resident of Inwood, Carmen resides on the same street she was raised, with her husband Jose and daughter, Mia.

Inez E. Dickens



2017 – Present / Assembly
D – New York County

As a lifelong resident of the 70th Assembly District, Inez E. Dickens is a tireless fighter for basic civil and human rights, social justice, wage equity, inclusion and diversity. She is committed to improving the quality of life of everyone in her community.

Inez takes an active role in economic development, supporting small businesses with a focus on minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs) and strengthening New York's celebrated village of Harlem. MWBEs remain Inez's main focus for political and economic empowerment for minorities.

During her tenure in office as New York City Council Member and the first Black woman in its leadership, Inez brought millions of dollars in services and resources to her community and to economically distressed communities throughout the city of New York. She has fought to make the City a welcoming place for all, assisting in building futures of promise for her constituents and all New Yorkers.

Assemblywoman Dickens studied Real Estate and Land Economics at New York University and later completed her studies at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Pamela Helming



2017 – Present / Senate
R – Cayuga/Monroe/
Ontario/Seneca/Tompkins/
Wayne Counties

Senator Pamela Helming is the New York State Senate Representative for the 54th Senatorial District, and currently serves as Chair of the Rural Resources Commission. Prior to her election to the Senate, Helming served as Canandaigua Town Supervisor, where she worked on behalf of the taxpayers to make local government more efficient and transparent, reduce property tax costs and grow jobs by attracting new businesses and development. After graduating from Hiram College in 1984, Senator Helming worked with developmentally disabled individuals and followed a career path that led her to manage several local group homes.

In the Senate, Pam is a member of the standing Committees on Banks; Children and Families; Consumer Protection; Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation; Crime Victims, Crime and Correction; Higher Education; and Social Services, and is a member of the Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction.

Pam and her husband Gary have lived in Canandaigua for over 30 years, and have raised their two children, Catherine and Evan, in the local schools and community. Catherine and her husband, Captain Charles Sauter, US Army currently reside in North Carolina. Evan lives in Canandaigua.

Melissa L. Miller



2017 – Present / Assembly
R – Nassau County

Melissa L. Miller was elected to the New York State Assembly on November 8, 2016. Her district is in Nassau County.

Melissa (Missy) Miller was elected into office her first time running for the 20th District, Nassau County. In the Assembly, Missy plans to advocate for increasing accessibility to programs for disabled children and adults, finding more ways to combat a growing heroin epidemic, government transparency including term limits for legislators and giving power back to school districts to choose their own curricula.

Having raised two children with complicated medical issues and losing her oldest daughter to a rare disease, Missy dedicated much of her life to helping chronically ill children. For 25 years she worked in professional and volunteer capacities to train hundreds of pediatric residents to handle the wide variety of challenges they will face working with chronically ill children. She is continuing to effectively use her vast wealth of knowledge to help countless others.

As a leader with Compassionate Care New York — a statewide group of patients, providers and organizations advocating to relieve the suffering of extremely ill patients — Missy worked with state legislators to pass New York's Compassionate Care Act. In 2015, Missy was awarded the New York State Women of Distinction award for her impressive participation and dedication to passing the Compassionate Care Act.

Missy currently lives in Atlantic Beach, where she was born and raised, with her husband, Brandon, and children, Katy and Oliver.

Yuh-Line Niou



2017 – Present / Assembly
D – New York County

Yuh-Line Niou has spent her career working on legislative issues surrounding working families and has been a long time anti-poverty and environmental advocate, bringing over 15 years of policy experience to Albany.

Yuh-Line Niou began working on state policy as an intern while in college, eventually accepting a position with the Washington State House Health Committee Chair, Eileen Cody. While there, she worked on policies to expand senior access to prescription medication, improve women's health care, and expand health coverage for low-income families. She later worked for the Statewide Poverty Action Network, where she regulated the payday lending industry and expanded asset building programs across the state.

After moving to New York, Yuh-Line completed her Master's in Public Administration with the prestigious National Urban Fellows program, while working on critical regional and international environmental concerns with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Most recently, as Chief of Staff for Assemblyman Ron Kim, she used her legislative and advocacy experience to help hundreds of immigrants; small-business owners; teachers; workers, and students. She drafted legislation to expand language access for immigrant communities, fought for more affordable housing, and expanded services for seniors.

Christine Pellegrino



2017 – Present / Assembly
D – Nassau County

Christine Pellegrino was elected to the Assembly in a special election in 2017. Before coming to the Assembly, Christine was an elementary school reading teacher in the Baldwin Union Free School District for 18 years.

As an active member of the Baldwin Teachers' Association, Christine was an outspoken critic of Common Core. She helped lead the Long Island Opt Out movement, fighting for local control of our schools and against standardized testing, after experiencing firsthand how developmentally inappropriate education policies hurt our schools and failed our kids.

Christine organized her community's passion and desire for real, comprehensive education reform as a rallying point to advocate for issues that mattered to her fellow community residents at the local, state and national levels. She believes in the power of local grassroots activism and will continue to bring her neighbors together to get Long Island families the results they deserve.

Christine received her Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education and Master of Science degree in reading from St. John's University. She also received an advanced degree in educational leadership from Long Island University.

Christine Pellegrino resides in West Islip and is a proud mother of two daughters.

Stacey G. Pheffer Amato



2017 – Present / Assembly
D – Queens County

Stacey G. Pheffer Amato represents the New York State Assembly's 23rd District, encompassing the Queens neighborhoods of Broad Channel, Hamilton Beach, Howard Beach, Lindenwood, Ozone Park and Rockaway. Stacey's mother, Queens County Clerk Audrey Pheffer, previously held this Assembly seat, and upon Stacey's election, they became the first mother-daughter team to hold the same seat in the New York State Legislature.

Born in Rockaway, Stacey has a longstanding commitment to community advocacy and involvement. Stacey was most recently a community leader for the 23rd District, working closely with elected officials and civic groups to get more families involved in the community. Stacey has also been an active member of the Rockaway Beach Civic Association for the last 15 years and is a committee member of the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program, which is tasked with overseeing the state's recovery efforts from Superstorm Sandy. A dedicated public school parent, Stacey has served as president of the parent associations at her children's schools, including when the entire school was displaced to Brooklyn after Superstorm Sandy.

Prior to holding office, Stacey worked as an education paraprofessional for the NYC Department of Education and as a procurement analyst for the FDNY and the NYC Sanitation Department. Stacey earned a BA in Business Economics from SUNY Oneonta and co-owns Elegante Restaurant & Pizzeria, a small business in Rockaway Beach, with her husband, Frank. She and Frank live in Rockaway Beach with their two children, Sam and Isabella.

Elaine Phillips



2017 – Present / Senate
R – Nassau County

Senator Elaine Phillips is serving her first term representing the 7th Senate District, which covers the northwest portion of Nassau County. In both her public service in government and work in the private sector, Elaine earned the reputation of a hardworking, trustworthy leader who successfully delivers results by bringing people together.

As Senator, Elaine is working in a bipartisan manner to deliver tax relief, fiscal responsibility and a fair share of state aid for local schools and municipalities to help reduce the burden on hardworking families. She is a strong fighter for ethics reform and greater transparency to help rebuild the public's trust in government and fighting to protect the environment because she knows clean water and clean air are necessities, not luxuries.

Senator Phillips serves as Chair for both the Infrastructure & Capital Investments and Ethics committees and serves on the Alcoholism & Drug Abuse, Civil Service & Pensions, Environmental Conservation, Insurance, Investigations & Government Operations and Judiciary committees.

Prior to serving in the Senate, Elaine served as Mayor of the Village of Flower Hill and worked in the financial services industry for more than 20 years.

Elaine is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University, where she earned a Bachelor's Degree and a Master's in Business Administration in Finance. She and her husband, Andy, reside in the Village of Flower Hill and are the proud parents of three daughters, Kate, Hannah and Sarah.

Monica P. Wallace



2017 – Present / Assembly
D – Erie County

Monica P. Wallace represents the 143rd Assembly District, which includes the Erie County towns of Cheektowaga and Lancaster and the villages of Depew, Lancaster and Sloan.

Her legislative priorities include strengthening public education, standing up for working families, creating jobs by supporting economic development, upgrading local infrastructure and restoring integrity to government.

Prior to her election, Monica worked as a federal court Confidential Law Clerk. While there she helped ensure that justice was served and that laws were applied equally to all parties appearing before the court. Most recently, she was a faculty member at her alma mater - SUNY Buffalo Law School, teaching students how the law can be used as a vehicle for positive social change.

She earned her undergraduate degree with honors from SUNY Binghamton and her Juris Doctor, cum laude, from SUNY Buffalo Law School.

Mary Beth Walsh



2017 – Present / Assembly
R – Saratoga/
Schenectady Counties

Mary Beth received a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Rochester and a J.D. from Albany Law School in 1990. She was admitted to the NYS Bar Association and to practice before the U.S. Federal Court for the Northern District of New York in 1991. Throughout her 25-year legal career Mary Beth has practiced in many areas of law. She owns her own firm in Ballston Spa. In recent years she has maintained simultaneous concentration on family and general practice.

In addition to her years of legal practice, Mary Beth also served as Saratoga Assistant County Attorney and the Town of Edinburg Attorney. She has tried cases in both State and Federal court, as well as argued several appeals before the New York State Appellate Division, the New York State Court of Appeals and the U. S. Circuit Court, Second Circuit.

Mary Beth has served in a variety of leadership positions in local and county government, including two terms as a Councilwoman in the Town of Ballston, Saratoga County IDA, Saratoga County Ethics Advisory Council and Saratoga County Autism Council, as well as several other professional and political affiliations at the state and local level.

In the Assembly, Mary Beth is the Ranking Minority Member of the Children and Families Committee and the Libraries and Education Technology Committee. She sits on the Aging, Education and Mental Health Committee and is a member of the Sub-Committee on Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Tremaine Wright



2017 – Present / Assembly
D – Kings County

Tremaine Wright is a life-long resident of Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, an entrepreneur and volunteer who uses her time and talents to help improve the quality of life in her neighborhood. Tremaine served on her local Community Board for 12 years; is an active member the Brooklyn Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.; served as a volunteer lawyer for the Volunteers of Legal Services' Incarcerated Mother's Project and the City Bar's Neighborhood Entrepreneurs Program; is a founding member of the Brooklyn Alliance for Safer Streets; and is the former owner of Common Grounds Neighborhood Coffee House.

Tremaine attended Duke University and the University of Chicago Law School. Since graduating, Tremaine has worked at large law firms in both the corporate and litigation departments. Through pro bono work Tremaine has organized a merchant association, advised numerous small businesses, and counseled incarcerated mothers regarding their family law concerns. Tremaine's activism has empowered entrepreneurs and parents to provide for themselves, their families, and their communities. Tremaine continuously supports local initiatives to encourage community development and re-investment.

Committee assignments are: Aging, Banking, Children & Families, Cities and Transportation.