



Follow Assemblymember Simotas on social media:

 [facebook.com/SimotasNY](https://facebook.com/SimotasNY)

 [www.scribd.com/AravellaSimotas](https://www.scribd.com/AravellaSimotas)

# Assemblymember **ARAVELLA SIMOTAS**

## Reports to the Community



**Spring 2014**

Dear Neighbor,

I would like to update you on the 2014 Legislative Session in Albany and share news and information about our community. I am pleased to have voted for a balanced state budget for the fourth year in a row. This year's budget provides a significant increase in funding for NYC schools, strengthens the SCRIE program, restores funding to protect local pharmacies, and offers \$85 million in tax credits for NYC homeowners, renters, and condo & co-op owners.

As always, my office is available to assist you at any time. If you are having trouble with a state or local government issue, please do not hesitate to ask for help. My staff and I are always available to help you obtain benefits that you are entitled to, provide information on government programs, and develop legislative solutions to issues facing our community.

Sincerely yours,

Aravella Simotas  
Member of Assembly  
36th District – Queens

## Simotas Named Chair of Assembly Task Force on Women's Issues

As the state legislature began the 2014 Session, Assemblymember Simotas was named Chair of the Assembly's Task Force on Women's Issues. The Task Force has worked to address a wide variety of issues that affect women including job training, ensuring that survivors of sexual assault are protected, advocating for women veterans, pay equity, and increasing breast cancer screenings.

*"I am honored to have been appointed to lead the Task Force on Women's Issues and will work diligently to ensure that New York remains committed to improving the lives of women across our state. I want to make it clear that improving the lives of women improves the lives of everyone."*

**–Assemblymember Simotas**



## Congratulating Local Girl Scouts



Assemblymember Simotas joined the Brownies of Girl Scout Troop 4293 for a ceremony where the girls were awarded badges for community service and volunteerism.

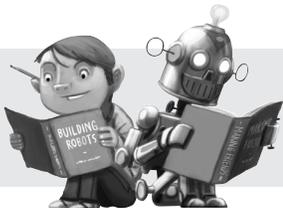
“I was honored to join these dedicated young women in recognition of their significant accomplishments,” Simotas said. “The Girl Scouts are an important local institution promoting leadership and a commitment to public service for our next generation.”

## Honoring Summer Readers

Assemblymember Simotas honored local students who successfully completed the 2013 “Summer Reading Challenge.” Each summer, Simotas hosts the contest for local students to promote the importance of reading every day.

*“Strong reading skills are the foundation of an effective education, and programs like this inspire students to really appreciate good books and spend time reading and learning during the summer months. These bright young people are proof of the power of reading.”*

*—Assemblymember Simotas*



*Information about the 2014 Summer Reading Challenge has been distributed to schools in our district. If you would like to request an additional program brochure, please contact my office.*

## Child Product Safety Update

As Chair of the Assembly’s Subcommittee on Child Product Safety, I would like to share two important resources:

1. A current list of recalled children’s products is available at: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).
2. If you have questions about recalled products or you want to report an unsafe product, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission provides a hotline which can be reached at 1-800-638-CPSC (1-800-638-2772).

## \*\*Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Program News\*\*

This year’s NYS Budget increased the income threshold for the program from \$29,000 to \$50,000, which is expected to increase the number of beneficiaries by 15%. This will help over 7,000 New York City senior citizens stay in their homes. If you are eligible and need assistance applying for SCRIE, please contact my office.

## Ensuring a Quiet Learning Environment for Students

Assemblymember Simotas joined community leaders, parents, teachers, and students from P.S. 85Q to demand that the MTA and DOE address noise problems created by passing trains. At P.S. 85, trains pass every 2 minutes during rush hour and every 5 minutes the rest of the day. As a result, the MTA modified the tracks on the N/Q line to reduce the decibel level in P.S. 85 classrooms. Our office is working with New York City on implementing additional noise reduction measures.

*“The students at P.S. 85, like all young learners, deserve a quiet school environment where they can focus; students and teachers should never be forced to ‘get used to’ a chronic issue which detracts from the learning process.”*

*–Assemblymember Simotas*



## Fighting to Protect the Community's Voice

In a unique move for a legislator, Assemblymember Simotas filed a legal brief defending the State Liquor Authority's consideration of community concerns during the liquor licensing process. Simotas's Community Full Disclosure Act, which went into effect last year, mandates greater transparency and a stronger community role in evaluating liquor license applications.

*“Community residents have a real and legitimate interest in determining the shape of their neighborhoods.”*

*–Assemblymember Simotas*

*“[Simotas's new law] will end the days when bikini bars could offer lap dances, pole dances, or other exotic performances without alerting communities ahead of time.”*

*–New York Daily News*

## Educating Astoria's Seniors About Healthcare

Assemblymember Simotas hosted a free seminar for Astoria senior citizens to offer information about Medicare, health insurance, and useful local resources from city officials and local healthcare experts. Hundreds of seniors turned out for the event.

*“It was encouraging to see so many of our friends in the neighborhood come out to hear this important information and get their questions answered. Our community's seniors have worked their whole lives to transform Astoria into the incredible place it is today—we owe it to them to make sure the highest quality services are always available and accessible.”*

*–Assemblymember Simotas*



### Find Me on Facebook

My Facebook page is a great way to stay informed about happenings in our community, legislative news, and real-time updates and information. Find me at [www.Facebook.com/SimotasNY](http://www.Facebook.com/SimotasNY)

## How Can I Help You?

Our office is here to help and listen to you. The best ideas I hear for how to improve New York come directly from my constituents. Please indicate on the form below if you have any community concerns and send it to us at 31-19 Newtown Ave., Suite 401, Astoria, NY 11102 or via fax at 718-545-3607. You can also call us at 718-545-3889 or reach us by email at [simotasa@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:simotasa@assembly.state.ny.us). For more urgent non-emergency issues, please call 311.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Issues: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

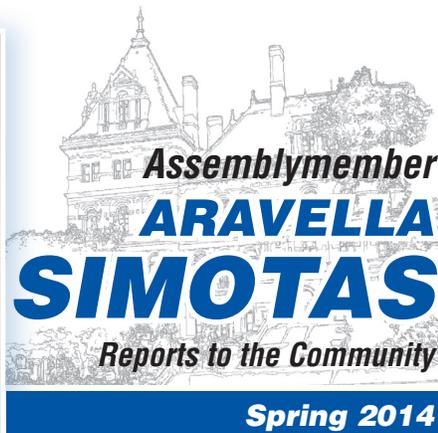
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Common issues include:

- Street lights out/damaged/exposed
- Street resurfacing or potholes
- Traffic sign/light issues
- Park or playground problems
- Bus stop signs missing or damaged
- Graffiti
- Garbage or trash issues



### Save Money on Your Summer Electric Bill

- ➔ Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible in the summer.
- ➔ Avoid setting your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster.
- ➔ Replace filters in your air conditioner at least once a month.
- ➔ Turn off ceiling fans when you leave the room.
- ➔ Avoid placing lamps or TV sets near your air-conditioning thermostat.
- ➔ On hot days, avoid using the oven; cook on the stove, use a microwave oven, or outdoor grill.
- ➔ Install efficient lighting that runs at cooler temperatures. Only 10% to 15% of the electricity that incandescent lights consume results in light—the rest is turned into heat.
- ➔ Seal cracks and openings to prevent warm air from leaking into your home.
- ➔ Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°F).

### Protect Your Vehicle From Theft

I will be teaming up with the 114th Precinct to host a **Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etching event in September 2014**. VIN etching deters theft and makes it easier to trace a vehicle if it is stolen.

To register for the event, contact my office at 718-545-3889 or [simotasa@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:simotasa@assembly.state.ny.us).

More information will follow.