



Assemblymember  
**ARAVELLA  
SIMOTAS**  
*Reports to the Community*



Spring 2015

Dear Neighbor,

*I write to update you about the work I have been doing for our community as a member of the New York State Assembly. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a staunch and vocal advocate for you in Albany and here in Astoria.*

*In Albany, I recently participated in a roundtable discussion to advocate for pay equity and discuss legislative solutions to address the numerous challenges women face in New York. I'm also proud to report that my bills to provide a tax break for veterans and strengthen sentencing laws for repeat sex offenders became law. In addition, I have authored legislation to encourage vaccinations for children, increase access to healthcare for pregnant women, and to help senior citizens and disabled people receive the benefits they are entitled to.*

*Here in Astoria, in recognition of Women's History month, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and I co-hosted a luncheon to honor the achievements of three outstanding members of our community. I also hosted a group of bright young students from local schools who successfully completed my annual "Summer Reading Challenge." I will be sending out this year's Summer Reading Challenge to schools in Astoria in the coming weeks.*

*I would like to invite you to our Town Hall meeting with the United Community Civic Association on May 14. My fellow elected officials and representatives from city agencies will be on hand to answer your questions and hear your suggestions for future action in our state and our city. The best ideas I hear for how to improve New York come directly from my constituents, and I encourage you to attend and make your voice heard.*

*As always, my office is here to assist you. If you are having trouble with a state or local government issue, please do not hesitate to ask for help.*

Sincerely,

Aravella Simotas  
New York State Assemblywoman

## Simotas Appointed to Assembly Leadership

As the state legislature began the 2015 session, Assemblymember Simotas was named Vice Chair of the Assembly's Majority Conference. As Vice Chair, Simotas communicates the conference's message to its members and works to build consensus among fellow Assembly Majority members. This new appointment is in addition to her responsibilities as the Chair of the Assembly's Task Force on Women's Issues, Chair of the Subcommittee on Child Product Safety, and as a member of the Assembly's Child Care Workgroup.

*"I look forward to shaping the debate on the challenges facing our state and ensuring that the issues important to our community are at the forefront of the legislative agenda."*

## Working for You in Albany



*Simotas announces increased tax relief for veterans at the Astoria Park War memorial with Senator Gianaris and local veterans.*

### ■ Providing Tax Relief for Veterans (A.02124)

Simotas' legislation to provide increased property tax relief to veterans was signed into law by Governor Cuomo, raising the property tax exemption for veterans from \$5,000 to \$7,500. The original law went into effect more than 20 years ago and, since then, the increased cost of living has reduced the real value of the exemption at the expense of veteran property owners.

*"New York veterans have seen the value of this well deserved tax exemption decrease dramatically as costs and expenses have skyrocketed. Making sure that service members can remain in their homes is a small means of recognizing the great sacrifice these men and women have made for our country."*

### ■ Cracking Down on Repeat Sex Offenders (A. 02711)

Simotas' bill to close a loophole that allowed persistent sexual abusers to avoid appropriate punishment was signed into law. The legislation ensures that any time spent incarcerated is excluded from the 10-year period during which penalties are increased for multiple misdemeanor sex offenses.

*Simotas announces new law to crack down of repeat sex offenders with Queens District Attorney Richard Brown.*



*"The law must provide protection for the most vulnerable among us, not be a shield for predators. The passage of this legislation is an important step towards ensuring that individuals who commit persistent sexual abuse face the full consequences of their crimes."*

## Pay Equity Round Table



Assemblymember Simotas participated in a discussion regarding legislative solutions to address the pay gap between men and women and other challenges faced by women in New York.

*“With more and more families relying on women's income, the wage gap doesn't just hurt women, it hurts their families and the economy. I was proud to cast my vote for the New York Pay Equity Bill to ensure all New York women are paid the same as men for comparable work.”*

## Honoring Summer Readers

Assemblymember Simotas congratulated local students who successfully completed the 2014 “Summer Reading Challenge.” Each summer, Simotas hosts the contest for local students to promote the importance of reading every day. The 2015 “Summer Reading Challenge” will be distributed to local schools in the coming weeks, and young readers are encouraged to participate. Alternatively, parents can request “Summer Reading Challenge” materials directly from the office of Assemblymember Simotas.



*As a product of public schools in Astoria herself, Simotas hosted young readers from local schools to recognize their completion of the 2014 Summer Reading Challenge.*

*“These bright young people impressed me with their enthusiasm and intelligence. Education is power, and instilling a love of learning among our community's youth is a great way to ensure that the next generation is prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.”*

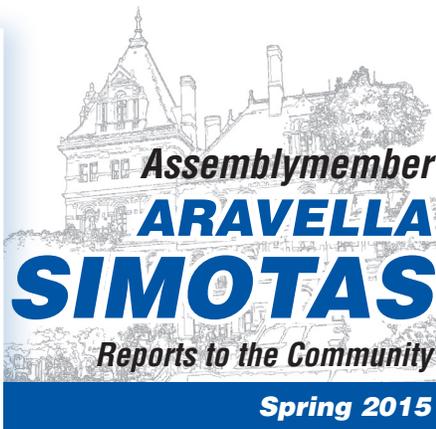
## Simotas Recognizes Prominent Women of Western Queens

Assemblymember Simotas co-hosted a luncheon with Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney to commemorate Women's History month and recognize the achievements of outstanding members of the community.

*"These three accomplished women demonstrate the tremendous strides that we have made towards securing equality in this country and motivate me to continue the fight for future generations of women."*



*Simotas and Congresswoman Maloney honored the achievements of Community Activist Patricia Babor, Vice President of Kaufman Astoria Studios Tracy Capune, and the Noguchi Museum's Director of Administration and External Affairs Amy Hau at a special community luncheon.*



## Assemblymember Simotas will co-host a Town Hall Meeting

with the **United Community Civic Association**

**May 14, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.**

at the Museum of the Moving Image

36-01 35th Avenue, Astoria

The panel will consist of agency commissioners and elected officials who will answer questions regarding issues in our community. Please contact us at **718-545-3889** to RSVP or with any questions.

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