



# Information from Catherine Nolan

*Helping our Community*

Spring 2015

Dear Neighbor,

*This year's state budget was one of the most difficult budget negotiations during my tenure in the Assembly, with education funding and teacher evaluations playing prominent roles in the discussion. It's not a perfect budget, but I do believe we were able to defend against some untenable proposals. In the end, the newly enacted budget contains a substantial increase in funding by \$1.6 billion for our public schools, as we work to adequately fund education in accordance with the Campaign for Fiscal Equity decision.*

*Here in Queens I have been working with community groups to oppose the city's overdevelopment proposals that would affect the Sunnyside, Ridgewood and Long Island City neighborhoods. I am concerned that current infrastructure will not be able to accommodate the additional residents that these developments will attract. Both the proposed Sunnyside Yards development and the proposed 70 story tower near Queens Plaza have the potential to seriously overburden our already stretched infrastructure, adding more people to congested public transportation and overcrowded classrooms. I will continue to push for a more collaborative effort in the decision making process so that the voices of the residents most affected will be heard.*

*I also had the great pleasure in participating in the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Geraldine Ferraro Campus in Ridgewood. This modern, state of the art school has been named for a wonderful role model and I look forward to watching its students grow into community leaders in their own right.*

*If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to either of my district offices in Ridgewood and Sunnyside..*

Sincerely,

Catherine Nolan  
Member of Assembly

## Hardworking New Yorkers Deserve Paid Family Leave

The Assembly passed my bill (A.3870) which would implement paid family leave benefits for injury or sickness, pregnancy or to care for a family member. Providing workers with paid time off to care for their families is not only good for their economic security but also benefits the overall economy and society as a whole.

My bill would help families maintain financial security and provide the flexibility they need while caring for loved ones. Businesses would be required to offer a paid family leave benefit and employers could have workers contribute up to 45 cents per week to the policy. This small employee contribution would ensure up to 12 weeks of paid family leave, cover two-thirds of the worker's salary and guarantee both job and financial security during the absence.

I would urge both the Senate and the Governor to support this vital legislation to help all hardworking New Yorkers balance both their work and family responsibilities.

## 2015 – 2016 Enacted State Budget

The 2015-2016 enacted state budget represents long, intense negotiations about important issues for our community. Overall, the enacted state budget puts families first by restoring much-needed funding for our schools, making it possible for more students to achieve a college education and helping New York's struggling families. The \$150.3 billion plan also funds numerous economic development projects to create more jobs and continues the state's fiscal discipline by holding spending growth to less than 2 percent for the fifth consecutive year.

Some Notable Highlights:

- The budget secures a \$1.6 billion increase in education aid over last year, for a total of \$23 billion.
- Includes a \$30 million increase in pre-K funding for 3- and 4-year-olds, while protecting last year's pre-K investment in New York City.
- The plan invests in New York's public higher education system and includes an increase in support for CUNY community colleges of \$100 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student, for a total of \$2,597 per FTE
- \$1 million for CUNY Child Care Centers, for a total of \$1.8 million.
- \$100 million for New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) capital repairs, while also requiring the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal and NYCHA, to develop a plan detailing how the funds will be used
- The budget agreement includes \$20.3 million for Neighborhood and Rural Preservation programs, restoring \$742,000 in funding to the New York City Housing Authority Tenant Watch Program.
- Includes a \$15 million increase in funding for the Environmental Protection Fund – for a total of \$177 million – and a 10-year extension of the Brownfield Cleanup program, which helps redevelop previously contaminated properties.
- Provides \$350,000 for the Veterans Entrepreneurial Assistance Program to provide veterans the training they need to start a new business.

In regards to education, the Governor proposed in his initial budget a number of policies that the Assembly Majority questioned. The Assembly one-house budget bill rejected the Executive's proposals. During the ensuing negotiations, my colleagues and I offered alternative proposals to advance public education throughout the state and championed more resources for schools, particularly those that struggle to meet federal benchmarks of academic progress.

# AROUND THE DISTRICT

## Geraldine Ferraro Campus Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

I was delighted to take part in a ribbon cutting for the Geraldine Ferraro campus located in Ridgewood. This modern, state-of-the-art building has been named after a wonderful role model to many women leaders, including myself. As a former teacher in Queens, she knew how important it was that our children have safe, adequate space to learn. I want to thank Chancellor Farina and SCA President Lorraine Grillo for their work on our community's behalf and Principal Mieasia Harris for her leadership of this school.

The school, which was officially named for former Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro at a groundbreaking ceremony in 2013, will have 616 seats serving pre-kindergarten to 5th grade. The new building, which is the first school built in Ridgewood in over 80 years, will include two playgrounds, a gymnasium that also serves as an auditorium, a second gymnasium, library, kitchen and cafeteria, 23 classrooms and a District 75 school. The building will also include a science room and a science lab with prep rooms. I look forward to attending many school events in the future.



Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan with Mieasia Harris, Principal, P.S. 290, Denise Vittor, Principal, Grover Cleveland High School and several parent and community leaders.



Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan cutting the ribbon with Assemblywoman Marge Markey, Mieasia Harris, Principal, P.S. 290, John Zaccaro, Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley, State Senator Joseph Addabbo, Evelyn Cruz representing Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Vincent Arcuri, Chairman, Queens Community Board 5, and several students from the school.

## Ridgewood Property Owners

I was invited to swear in the new Officers and Board of Directors of the Ridgewood Property Owners & Civic Association. While meeting with the group, I gave an update about Albany and spoke about the many issues affecting our community in Ridgewood and Western Queens. I look forward to continue working with its President, Charles Ober and dedicated members to keep our community strong.

## Annual Women's History Month Event

I co-hosted the 5th Annual Women's History Month Event along with LaGuardia Community College President Gail Mellow. This year's honorees included Lily Gavin, Owner of Dazies Restaurant, Judith Chin, NYS Board of Regents, Assemblywoman Margaret Markey, Assemblywoman Nily Rozic, Kathryn Giaimo, former Executive Director of Thalia Spanish Theater, Francene Biderman-Gross, CEO Advantage Inc., and Diane Colon, Director of Administrative and Support Services at LaGuardia Community College. The event was held to celebrate and recognize strong women leaders in government and business who have made a difference in our community.



Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Dr. Gail Mellow, President LaGuardia Community College and NYC Public Advocate Tisch James welcome this year's honorees.

## Education Town Hall

This past February, I held an Education Town Hall at Sunnyside Community Services to discuss with residents and the community on how to better advocate for additional funding for our Public Schools. The speakers who participated included Councilman Danny Dromm, Chair of the New York City Council Education Committee, Michael A. Rebell, Executive Director of the Campaign for Educational Equity and Professor of Law and Educational Practice at Teachers College and Zakiyah Ansari, Advocacy Director, Alliance for Quality Education.

Many of the issues and concerns that were highlighted focused on the need for New York State to continue its pledge to adequately fund education in accordance to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity decision (CFE). This funding, which is estimated to be as much as \$5.9 million, was promised by the state to be directed to the New York City school system in response to the CFE decision.

As Chair of the Assembly Education Committee, I will continue to advocate for our students to receive the necessary funding they are owed in keeping with the promise of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity's decision. This much needed funding will con-

tinue to allow us to make the necessary investments by helping to purchase more textbooks, expand after-school programs and reduce class size. Our public schools deserve nothing less.



Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Michael A. Rebell, Executive Director of the Campaign for Educational Equity and Professor of Law and Educational Practice at Teachers College, Zakiyah Ansari, Advocacy Director, Alliance for Quality Education and Councilman Danny Dromm.

## Proposed Sunnyside Yards Development

I stand in strong opposition to the Mayor's proposal to develop and deck the Sunnyside Yards. The plan faces environmental, developmental and density issues that have the potential to damage the middle class quality of life of our Western Queens communities. As I have stated before, any project of this magnitude needs strong local review by our community, including input from residents, local businesses and the many civic organizations that currently advocate for our neighborhoods. I will be vigilant in monitoring the actions of the New York City Economic Development Corporation and will continue to demand that the Mayor hear the voices of the many tax paying, middle class New Yorkers who live in Western Queens. This proposal is unacceptable for our community.

## Cross Harbor Plan is Wrong for Western Queens

The Cross Harbor plan is simply unacceptable to our local communities in Western Queens. I recently submitted comments to the Port Authority's Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). One of these plans would include the construction of a rail tunnel between Greenville Yards in New Jersey and Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. This proposal would severely impact our community by moving traffic northward to the Fresh Pond Rail Yard, which is already running at capacity. This plan would reduce truck traffic for the rest of New York City but would shift that burden onto our local communities.

With no plans to protect the surrounding community from the severe impacts, I am very concerned about how the increased train and truck traffic would impact Ridgewood, Maspeth, Glendale and Long Island City. I urge the Port Authority to rethink these alternatives and come up with a real plan that reduces congestion, the production of greenhouse gases, upgrades our infrastructure and ensures that the quality of life for our community is not seriously diminished. Our Western Queens communities deserve better.

## No NYCHA Parking Fees

It has come to my attention that many residents were notified that New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is looking to implement new regulations that will feature reserved parking. I am opposed to this situation. These very high increases are unacceptable and I am concerned about the impact this will have on the many residents and seniors that currently reside in Ravenswood, Queensbridge and Astoria Houses.



Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan with residents from Queensbridge Houses

I recently sent a letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio expressing my opposition, urging his administration to rethink this misguided policy. It is important for the NYCHA to be a responsible landlord that provides safe, reliable housing to all of its tenants. I will continue to monitor this situation very closely.

## 70 Story Tower Near Queens Plaza

I am very much opposed to the MTA's recent sale of its air rights to Queens Plaza Park development which would pave the way for the construction of a 70 story building near Queens Plaza. The extreme height of this building would be out of character with the neighborhood and not supported by the present infrastructure. I am concerned that as the Long Island City community continues to grow, the demand for basic transportation needs, health facilities and classroom seats are not keeping up with demand.

I am calling on the MTA to rethink this deal because the quality of life for our community and Queens Transit riders will be seriously diminished.



## Historic Election of Regent Judith Chin

I was happy to announce the election of Regent Judith Chin to represent Queens County on the New York State Board of Regents.

The dedicated individuals we elected today to the Board of Regents share our longstanding commitment to academic performance and excellence so that every child in our state has access to a quality education. Judith Chin is an excellent candidate and will make a great Regent in representing our great borough of Queens.

The Board is comprised of 17 members elected by the Legislature for five year terms. One member is elected from each of the state's 13 judicial districts and four members serve at-large.

Judith J. Chin, who will represent the Judicial District 11, worked for the New York City Department of Education for 37 years, serving in various capacities including as a Regional Superintendent / Chief Education Officer for a majority of the elementary, middle schools and high schools in Queens.



*Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Speaker Carl Heastie and the Queens Delegation welcomed Newly elected Regent Judith Chin to the Assembly Chamber.*



Assemblywoman

**Catherine  
NOLAN**

*Helping our  
Community*

## ALBANY VISITS

### Uniformed Firefighters Association of Greater New York



*Happy to stand with NY's Bravest! As a former Chair of the Assembly Labor Committee, I know how important our FDNY workers are in keeping our city and state safe.*

### Meeting with James B. Milliken, CUNY Chancellor



*Assemblyman Felix Ortiz, CUNY Chancellor, James B. Milliken, CUNY Chancellor, Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan and Assemblyman David Weprin.*