



News from Assemblymember

LINDA B. ROSENTHAL

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Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal is working for you in Albany and in the Community

Since I took office in 2006, I have passed 45 laws on issues as varied as housing, environmental and consumer protection, domestic violence, public health and animal welfare to name a few. According to a review conducted by NYPIRG, a good government group, I am among the top legislators with respect to bill passage and introduction. This past session alone, 22 of my bills passed the Assembly; nine of those passed both the Assembly and the Senate. Three have already been signed by the Governor into law, and I am confident that the remaining bills will be signed.

Many of the bills I have introduced over the years have been the result of conversations with constituents who are experiencing problems or have stopped by my office to share their thoughts on issues of the day. To be sure, I am a much more effective representative when I am legislating to correct problems that my constituents face, to address gaps or loopholes in existing law or to effect social change. I have a bustling community office, with scores of people seeking assistance each week. Though mine is a state office, there is no issue too small for me to address. Over the years, my staff and I have successfully resolved thousands of constituent cases, and I want to tell you a little more about what we do.

- **We are anti-eviction specialists.** We have helped hundreds of constituents avoid eviction. Two especially egregious cases involved landlords attempting to evict two seniors, both nearly 100 years old, by serving them with frivolous eviction notices to harass them out of the apartments they had lived in for decades.
- **We help to organize people with severe clutter issues.** Over the years, most people accumulate many things. Unfortunately, some landlords attempt to evict tenants whose apartments are severely cluttered instead of trying to work out solutions to the issue. We help constituents receive assistance in decluttering their apartments and keep them that way by connecting them with professional organizers, counselors and social workers. We also advocate on their behalf with landlords and management to prevent eviction.

- **We bite bed bugs back.** With recent reports that bed bugs have expanded their stomping grounds to the subway, the specter of bed bugs still looms large in this City. We have helped constituents navigate often tense situations with building management to have their apartments exterminated. In some cases, we have also been able to secure grants to help replace clothes and furniture that were lost or damaged as a result of the infestation.
- **We can get you the benefits you need.** Far too many people are erroneously denied benefits to which they are entitled, such as SNAP and Medicaid, and others have their benefits improperly revoked because of administrative errors, such as lost or misplaced paperwork. We partner with you and the agencies to ensure that your documents are received and your benefits are restored.
- **We are the SCRIE/DRIE experts.** For years, I have been hosting SCRIE/DRIE clinics with the New York City Department of Finance. In addition to the regular clinics I host, we work closely with individual constituents to review their income to ensure that they qualify for these critically important programs.
- **We help consumers navigate the health care exchange.** Since the rollout of the Affordable Care Act, thousands of New Yorkers were required to purchase insurance through New York State of Health, our health care exchange. We have helped constituents sign up for coverage and address any problems they encounter, in addition to making referrals to experts in the new health care law.
- **We advocate on your behalf with utility companies.** Whether your bill increased by 200% or you are experiencing problems with your service, we have helped countless consumers address problems with utility companies, such as Con Edison, Verizon and Time Warner Cable, to name a few. We cut through the bureaucracy and get you results fast.

My office hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and I or one of the members of my staff will always be here to assist you. If you are experiencing any problems or need advice on an issue, please do not hesitate to drop by during our walk-in hours or to contact us at 212.873.6368 or rosenthal@assembly.state.ny.us to schedule an appointment.

Preventing Pedestrian Fatalities

Some years ago, I partnered with Transportation Alternatives to design a comprehensive pedestrian safety action plan to take back the streets and reduce the impact of motor vehicles on the well-being and lives of residents, targeting portions of the Upper West Side, including West End Avenue, and dangerous intersections and corridors in the West 60s and West 70s. Now, a spate of fatalities on the Upper West Side and across the City has prompted action by State and City leaders to crack down on dangerous driving, enhance enforcement of existing traffic laws and make the streets safer for pedestrians. In addition to supporting Vision Zero, the City's plan to reduce traffic fatalities to zero, and being a prime cosponsor of legislation to reduce the speed limit in New York City to 25 mph, I am also the sponsor of legislation that would increase penalties for repeat reckless or dangerous drivers. This bill will allow prosecutors to charge individuals who repeatedly break traffic laws or otherwise drive recklessly with a felony-level crime, leading to much harsher penalties that reflect the gravity of the crime. My legislation also addresses the increasing frequency of people driving under the influence of varied substances. I have long been committed to infrastructure improvements and changes to traffic laws to make streets safer, and while it has taken numerous tragic accidents to produce meaningful action, I believe the goals of Vision Zero are within our grasp.



Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal standing with Amy Cohen and Gary Eckstein, parents of 12-year-old Sammy Cohen Eckstein who was killed in 2013 by a van on the street where he lived, at a rally in Albany in support of Vision Zero.

FREE NOTARY SERVICE AT MY DISTRICT OFFICE EVERY FRIDAY 1 – 4 P.M.

ALBANY HIGHLIGHTS

Taking on Housing Discrimination

New York City continues to struggle through an affordable housing crisis, with rising rents and low vacancy rates pushing apartment seekers to the fringes of the City and beyond. Real wages have not kept pace with skyrocketing rents, and hardworking families can barely afford to live in the City anymore. Between illegal apartment deregulation and vacancy decontrol, we have lost hundreds of thousands of units of affordable housing over the past 20 years.

Against this backdrop and a renewed commitment by government to create and preserve affordable housing, landlords and developers should be our partners in creating a diverse City. Instead, some have taken to discriminating against affordable housing residents. After learning that landlords were forbidding long-time rent-regulated tenants from using building amenities, such as fitness rooms, pools and rooftops, even when tenants offered to pay, and were instead reserving them exclusively for use by market rate tenants, I introduced legislation that would require landlords to provide rent-regulated tenants with access to building-wide amenities for a reasonable fee or face stiff monetary penalties.

Contributing to the increasing divide between wealthy and lower income New Yorkers, some developers are using the very incentives provided them by the City and the State of New York to construct affordable housing that separates those with great means from those who qualify for the affordable units. In my district, the developers of 40 Riverside Boulevard have constructed two separate entrances to the building, one on the waterfront for the condominium owners and one on the side street next to the garage, now referred to as the “poor door,” for affordable tenants. This arrangement has been roundly criticized with many New Yorkers demanding immediate change.

While the City and State must partner with developers to construct affordable housing, developers should not be permitted to use taxpayer dollars to reinforce economic segregation. Developers must be required to provide a much greater percentage of affordable units (relative to the total number of building units), particularly when attempting to qualify for multiple incentive programs, such as the Inclusionary Housing or 421-a tax abatement programs.

I am committed to putting an end to all kinds of housing discrimination and am working on legislation to overhaul the 421-a tax abatement system. In addition, I have started a Change.org petition to elicit support from New Yorkers who, like me, agree that housing discrimination should not be tolerated under any circumstances. I encourage you to sign it if you have not already done so. The petition can be found here: https://www.change.org/organizations/assemblymember_linda_b_rosenthal_and_city_council_member_jumaane_d_williams.



Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal with, from left to right, Victor Gonzalez, NYCHA Resident Board Member, Margarita Curet, Amsterdam Houses Resident Association President and Maria Guzman, Harborview Terrace Tenant Association President.

Giving the Voiceless a Voice: Animal Protection Legislation

Each year I have been in office, I have passed at least one law to protect animals and the people who love them. Last year, I passed a landmark law to crack down on puppy mills. Now, I am working closely with New York City and other municipalities across the state to implement strong local laws that will prevent the sale of puppy mill dogs in New York State.

This year, I passed an important consumer and animal protection measure, a law that will ban direct contact between members of the public and big cats, including lions, tigers, leopards, jaguars, and cougars. Despite any level of training, big cats are dangerous wild animals, with instincts to kill. Roadside zoos offer people the opportunity to pose for photographs with big cats for a fee, which places the unsuspecting public at great risk, and also contributes to abuse and neglect of the big cats. Under no circumstances should direct contact between dangerous wild animals and the public be legal: banning this practice will remove the profit motive, and end an unscrupulous industry that exploits animals and endangers the public.

In addition, I was pleased when my bill to prohibit piercing and tattooing of companion animals, such as dogs and cats, passed both the Assembly and the Senate unanimously. I introduced the bill in 2011 after learning about a woman who was piercing kittens and selling them on the internet as “gothic” kittens. There is no need to subject innocent dogs and cats to the pain associated with tattoos and piercing to satisfy the aesthetic predilections of their owners. Once this bill is signed into law by the Governor, it will ban the practice in New York State unless performed by or under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian for identification or medical purposes only.



Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal discussing nightlife issues at a meeting with New York State Liquor Authority Chair Dennis Rosen.

Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal’s Law Requires Hospitals to Provide Audio Recordings to Blind or Visually Impaired Patients

I passed a law that requires hospitals to provide audio recordings of discharge instructions to blind or visually impaired patients. When a patient leaves the hospital, it is critical to that patient’s well-being that information, such as post-discharge instructions, is effectively communicated to them. The patient’s discharge plan includes information on medication and dietary restrictions, follow-up protocol and medical referrals, to name a few. A patient’s ability to follow the discharge instructions helps to reduce the incidence of infection, complications and ultimately, re-admittance to the hospital. If a patient is unable to fully understand or remember discharge instructions then the purpose of the discharge plan is lost.

EDUCATION

Primary Day Voting in Public Schools; Student Safety Should Come First

Voting is the bedrock of our democracy, the ultimate exercise of freedom in an open and egalitarian society. While it is critical that voting remain easy and accessible for all, it is also crucial to guarantee that the process does not expose vulnerable individuals, particularly young children, to an unnecessary risk of harm. Unfortunately, according to many parents I have heard from across the district, voting on primary election days, which takes place in many public school buildings, has caused disruptions and raised serious security concerns.

These parents tell of troubling incidents of strangers cursing at or around young students, roaming the halls without supervision and using student restrooms. Unlike on general election days, public schools are open on primary election days, meaning that students and the public interact in ways that would never be permissible under normal circumstances. On an average day, all visitors to a school would be required to produce identification and sign a visitors log; school exits would be closed to prevent strangers from entering and exiting without supervision.

It would appear that all these safety measures have been tossed aside on primary election day, which is simply unacceptable. I have convened a working group, composed of parents, community activists, elected officials, Community Board 7, Community Education Council 3 and the New York City Department of Education, Board of Elections and Police Department to ensure that there is a comprehensive safety plan in place that will achieve both student safety and ease of voting. We are also exploring the option of having primary election day designated a professional development day.

Student Privacy, State Testing and Education Funding

Following intense advocacy by parents, advocates and elected officials like me, the 2014-15 State budget addressed some of the most controversial issues distressing students and their families. The budget allocates \$1.5 billion over five years to Universal Pre-K, with \$300 million per year for two years for New York City schools. In response to my criticism and that of numerous parents in district and statewide regarding the Common Core Standards, the State created a taskforce to study implementation and recommend best practices. In addition, the budget bans the use of standardized testing for students in kindergarten through second grade. It also delays for one and one-half years the use of Common Core test scores on permanent student records for students in grades three through eight. Importantly, the budget prevents the use of Common Core test scores as the primary factor in decisions regarding student promotion or placement, ensuring that no student will be negatively or unfairly impacted by the botched rollout.

Student privacy was a top concern for many parents after the State entered into a controversial contract with inBloom, a national cloud-based database provider, to aggregate and store confidential student information. After hearing from concerned parents in my district, I wrote to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) demanding that it sever all ties with inBloom. Despite repeated requests for information, NYSED offered no justification for use of the massive data storage program, did not adequately address data security concerns and refused to acknowledge parents' rights to determine what and whether information would be stored. We negotiated to include robust student privacy protections in the New York State budget, such as the creation of a chief privacy officer position and a Parents Bill of Rights. We also permitted individual school districts to opt out of any future data storage or sharing programs. I will continue to remain vigilant and protect our students and their families against unwarranted and potentially dangerous privacy intrusions.

Data Security and Your Smartphone

The major smartphone manufacturers release new products every couple of years, enticing consumers to upgrade to the latest device. When you upgrade to a new smartphone, you must decide what to do with your old one. You might donate it to an organization that provides free phones to elderly or low-income individuals, you might sell or trade it through an online marketplace or you might give it to a friend or coworker. Regardless of what you do with your old smartphone, one thing remains the same: you must ensure that the data you stored on your phone is wiped clean before you relinquish it.

One of the experts I consult with on tech-related issues, Assistant Professor of Public Policy at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Adam S. Wandt, JD, MPA, has a few tips to ensure that your smartphone is wiped clean and your private data remains just that, private, in the event that you sell, trade or donate your old phone.

1. Reset your smartphone to the factory default.
 - For Apple Users: Settings > General > Reset > Erase All Content and Settings
 - For Android Users: Varies by phone and provider. In the settings menu, look for the "reset phone" or "reset phone to factory default."
2. Set up the smartphone again in order to access the App or Google Play Store.
3. Download and run a secure file shredder program that will forensically wipe information from your device.
 - Professor Wandt recommends the file shredder program contained in a free, secure communications application called Wickr. You can download Wickr from the App or Google Play Store. Once installed, access "Secure Shredder" from the Settings menu in Wickr and click "Start."
4. Reset the phone once again, following the instructions in Step 1.
5. Remove and keep the SIM card and all MicroSD cards.



Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal interviews Katie Goldstein, Executive Director of Tenants & Neighbors, about housing for an episode of Represent NYC on Manhattan Neighborhood Network.

Achieving Gender Equality in the Boardroom

Women are woefully underrepresented in the senior levels of the corporate world. Despite research that shows a close correlation between gender diversity on corporate boards and positive stock performance along with other indicators of success, 77% of all corporations doing business in New York State have only two or fewer women on boards. Even worse, 15% of all companies doing business in New York State have no women serving on their boards.

The underrepresentation of women on corporate boards is not only bad for women, who are still struggling to break through the same glass ceilings that their mothers and grandmothers bumped up against years ago, but it is also bad for business. To address these continuing inequities, I am working on legislation and a supporting resolution that would help promote gender diversity on corporate boards: companies that receive public funds or enter into contracts with the state would be awarded a preference for promoting and achieving gender diversity on their governing corporate boards.

Preserving a Piece of Our Past for Future Generations

As a young girl growing up on the West Side, I remember walking along West End Avenue with my grandmother marveling at the beautiful buildings lining the street. Today, many of those buildings are still in place, a constant reminder of our neighborhood's heritage and years gone by. The beauty of the Upper West Side is due, in no small measure, to the stately and historic apartment buildings that line West End Avenue and Riverside Drive. The West Side continues to be an oasis in the urban jungle that is New York City, and has managed to maintain a community feel despite being in the middle of one of the busiest cities in the world. The historic buildings in the area, which harken back to an earlier time, are a large part of that magic.

Since its inception in 2007, I have been working closely with the West End Preservation Society (WEPS) to have the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designate West End Avenue and Riverside Drive between 70th and 109th and its side streets as a historic district. Thanks to WEPS' tireless efforts, LPC designated both the Riverside-West End Historic District I and the West End-Collegiate Historic District Extension in 2012 and 2013, respectively. The last phase of the historic district extension, the Riverside-West End Historic District II, has not yet been designated, and I will continue to work closely with WEPS and my colleagues in government to urge the LPC to take action on the final phase immediately.



Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal helps to prepare the Neufeld "Elephant" Playground for the spring at Sandsational with John Herrold, Riverside Park Conservancy President and Park Administrator, William Curtis-Bey, Riverside Park Conservancy Gardener, and children and their families from the community.



Following a meeting to discuss the Women's Equality Act with the National Council on Jewish Women, New York Section, Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal stands with members of the delegation. From L-R: Beth Mitchell, volunteer, Andrea Salwen Kopel, Executive Director, Yael Reisman, Director of Outreach and Engagement, Susan Kirshner, volunteer, Beatrice Kahn, volunteer and Leslie Sternlieb, volunteer.



News

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SEPTEMBER 2014

Don't Miss out on Climate Week NYC

For a full list of events visit <http://www.climateweeknyc.org>

While there are dozens of events planned for the 6th annual Climate Week NYC, which will take place between September 22nd and 28th, you should not miss the following:

Movie Premier: The Future of Energy

Special Guest
Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal

Tuesday, September 16, 2014
6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

New York Society for Ethical Culture
2 West 64th Street

Today's Fossil Fuels and the Future of Our Children's Health

Special Guest
Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal

Friday, September 19, 2014
5:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

John Jay College for Criminal Justice
534 West 59th Street

The People's Climate March

Sunday, September 21, 2014
11:30 a.m.

March Start:
Just north of Columbus Circle at
Broadway and 59th Street

March End:
11th Avenue bet. 34th and 38th Street