



Assembly Member

SUMMER 2017

# Rebecca A. Seawright

## Community Bulletin

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Dear Neighbor,

Thank you for giving me the honor of serving as New York State Assembly Member for District 76. Please allow me to share the advancements we are making for our neighborhood and our state. There is much more progress still to be made and many more important issues that need to be addressed in the next legislative session. The best ideas come from you, and I invite you to stay in touch with me about topics that are important to you.

I hope you enjoyed local events such as our Shred-a-thons where we helped Upper East Siders dispose of personal documents in an environmentally safe way, the Third Annual Women of Distinction Awards honoring 21 women who helped make Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island a better place, the Book Give Away on Roosevelt Island Day where we partnered with Reading Reflections to provide free books to local children, and the free screening of Hidden Figures at the Julia Richman Education Complex to inspire young women to explore an interest in coding and technology, and the mobile mammogram screenings.

This legislative session, I am pleased to report that I introduced 26 bills in the Assembly pertaining to consumer protection, online privacy, senior citizens, women's health, and election reform to name a few.

I introduced and obtained passage of a bill in response to the 91st Street Marine Transfer Station requiring a study on the high incidence of asthma in Manhattan and preparation of a remedial plan.

In our community, I stood united with fellow Upper East Side elected officials to demand more pre-k seats, oppose service cuts to bus lines, combat the overdevelopment crisis, and advocate for a no-fee integrated ferry transfer, among others.

While one hard-fought session and several battles are behind us, we set our sights to the next session for the continued fight for health care reforms, affordable housing and women's rights and equality. As the federal climate shifts and the federal government acts to strip citizens of health care and basic civil rights, I am committed to fighting for the protection for those living on the Upper East Side, Yorkville, Roosevelt Island and the great State of New York.

**I welcome you to visit our new district office at 1485 York Avenue. This fall, we will host a grand ribbon cutting to celebrate our new location and I hope you will join us.**

**As always, our office is just a call, email, or visit away.**

Sincerely,

**Rebecca A. Seawright**  
Member of Assembly, 76th District

### THE END OF SESSION

At the conclusion of session, Assembly Member Seawright and her colleagues in the Assembly and Senate returned for a special session to come to an agreement on highly contested issues including the extension of mayoral control of New York City schools, local taxes and the re-naming of the Tappan Zee Bridge after Governor Mario Cuomo. The Assembly was in session until 2 a.m. on Thursday, June 29, working to come to a resolution on these outstanding matters. Assembly Member Seawright voted for the passage of the extension of mayoral control and the extension of local taxes.

#### Seawright legislation that passed both houses:

- Requiring an air quality and asthma study in Manhattan;
- Requiring insurers to cover 3-D mammography with no additional co insurance or co pay;
- Requiring candidate website information to be provided on the State Board of Elections Website;
- Capping the amount a company can charge a consumer in terms of interest rates.

### GOVERNOR SIGNS SEAWRIGHT BILL PROTECTING CONSUMERS FROM OVERPAYING ANNUAL FEES ON PERSONAL LOANS

Assembly Bill 6284, introduced by Seawright protecting consumers from overpaying yearly fees on open-end personal loans was signed into law and effective as of on June 29. Annual fees are a commonly used feature in the pricing of open-end loan products such as credit cards, home equity loans, and personal loans. This law states that such fees may not exceed the lesser of 1% of the loan amount or \$50.

### HEALTH

#### Requiring Insurance to Cover 3-D Mammograms

Last year, constituents expressed concerns to Assembly Member Seawright that insurers would not cover 3-D mammograms. After learning about the benefits of 3-D mammography, Seawright introduced Assembly Bill 5677 to remedy this injustice. The bill – which passed the Assembly on March 30, and the Senate on June 15, that would expand access to breast cancer screenings without cost sharing, to include breast tomosynthesis screenings and 3-D mammography. These screenings use X-rays to collect multiple images from several angles. Studies have shown that it is more effective in detecting cancer in dense breast tissue. The bill will be delivered to Governor Cuomo for consideration.

#### The Continued Fight for the New York Health Act

On May 16, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright helped pass the New York Health Act in the Assembly, which would create a universal single-payer plan to provide health coverage to every New York resident (A.4738).



*Assembly Member Seawright partnered with Project Renewal to provide free mammograms on the Upper East Side. Seawright has previously hosted the ScanVan at no cost on both Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island.*

“Each session, there is a bill that overwhelmingly resonates with our constituents,” Seawright said. “This year, that bill is the NY Health Act. Good quality and affordable health care is a basic necessity that should be available to all.”

The New York Health Act would establish a universal health care system within the state, and expand coverage eligibility to include all residents, regardless of wealth, income, age or pre-existing condition. The plan would provide comprehensive inpatient and outpatient care, primary and preventive care, maternity care, prescription drug costs, laboratory testing, rehabilitative care and dental, vision and hearing care. Providers would be fully paid by New York Health with no co-pays or deductibles to patients. The system would be publicly funded based on a shared 80/20 employer/employee payroll tax contribution. Out-of-state health care would also be covered during travel or if there is a clinical reason to receive care outside the state.

## THE LONG BATTLE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

### Seawright Introduces Equal Rights Amendment Bill and Resolution

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Women's Suffrage Movement. Much to our country's shame, there is still no law that prohibits discrimination against women. As of now, 36 states have ratified the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) – 38 are needed to amend the U.S. Constitution – and only 20 states have explicitly provided for equal rights in their respective State Constitutions. Seawright introduced the ERA Resolution in the Assembly calling on Congress to pass the federal ERA. This resolution gained signatures from over 50 Assembly Members and passed in the Assembly on International Women's Day, March 8, 2017 with bipartisan support. In addition, Assembly Member Seawright introduced the ERA legislation that would amend the New York State Constitution to include equal rights for women. To modify our State's Constitution, a bill must pass two successive legislatures and be voted on by the majority of the public.

*"With the changing political landscape in our country, there is a renewed call to ensure that basic equal rights are guaranteed for women," stated Seawright. "We cannot simply hope that we are treated equally, it must be guaranteed. It is crucial to have this provision in the Constitution to guard against a roll back of women's rights. "I made a promise to my friends and neighbors in the 76th district, as well as to all women, that I would fight tirelessly for women's equality. How can a document written to protect American citizens be a safeguard when there is no language in place to prevent discrimination against half the population?"* Seawright said.

### Third Annual Community Women of Distinction Awards



*Assembly Member Seawright honored 21 women who demonstrated hard work, commitment and dedication to making Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island a better place.*

### Seawright Keynotes RIRA Mother's Day Celebration

On May 13, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright along with the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA), Carter Burden Network, Roosevelt Island Disabled Association, and the Roosevelt Island Community Collaborative Coalition, hosted a Mother's Day Celebration at the Roosevelt Island Senior Center. Seawright awarded citations to four extraordinary mothers and RIRA Chair Jeffrey Escobar and RIRA Youth & Education Committee Co-Chairs Adib Mansour and Anne Heskell for their outstanding dedication and commitment to our community and perseverance in the face of life challenges.



## IMPROVING OUR EAST RIVER ESPLANADE

Assembly Member Seawright is proud to announce that she allocated \$500,000 for critical improvements to the East River Esplanade. *"The May 5th collapse of a part of the East River Esplanade seawall close to 89th Street is troubling. I am committed to working with the Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver, Community Board 8 and local elected officials to identify and repair parts of the esplanade that are susceptible to damage,"* said Assembly Member Seawright. *"I am pleased to share that thanks to the funding allocated by the Mayor and the City Council, the Phase I reconstruction project began on July 10, 2017."* Two other sites will be worked on during Phase I: 114th Street and 117th Street.

## Roosevelt Island Day



*On Saturday, June 17, Seawright partnered with the Comptroller's Office of Unclaimed Funds to offer screening for withheld payments and with the Reading Reflections for a free book giveaway!*

## 91ST STREET WASTE TRANSFER STATION

Assembly Member Seawright introduced bill A.7214, which requires the New York State Department of Health to conduct a study of the incidence of asthma in the Borough of Manhattan. Research has shown that air pollution can worsen asthma symptoms. The bill passed both houses and will be delivered to Governor Cuomo for consideration.

*"The construction of the 91st Street Waste Transfer Station in our residential community is a looming threat to public health and quality of life. Air quality continues to be one of our most important concerns. According to the New York City Department of Health, the community surrounding the 91st Street Marine Transfer Station has disproportionately higher rates of asthma,"* stated Assembly Member Seawright. *"All of the 2015 Manhattan based air pollutant readings were above the city wide average. Due to the higher than average rates of air pollutants found in Manhattan, it is necessary to conduct this study."*

According to the most recent updates provided at the Construction Advisory Group meeting in June 2017, the 91st Street Ramp is scheduled to open in the beginning of 2019 and the 91st Street intersection safety measures are being designed; the 92nd Street Ramp is in the design stage and is scheduled to open between July and December 2021; 128 25 feet tall trees will be planted as soon as construction is completed as close as possible to their original location; truck route proposal will be discussed at the October meeting. Local elected officials and community members demanded that the New York City Department of Sanitation take into consideration school arrival, dismissal, and afterschool program times. Other priorities included ensuring that there is no smell, extermination is completed on a regular basis, a traffic study is conducted, and that truck routes are consistent with community input.

*"Our office continues to work with the CAG to send a clear message that this waste transfer station is harmful to the health, safety and well-being of our neighbors. We will continue to provide updates on this ill-conceived project and I assure you that we will communicate the community's concerns at every discussion,"* said Seawright.

## EDUCATION

### Speaker Carl Heastie Appoints Seawright to the Assembly Education Committee

In January 2017, Speaker Carl Heastie appointed Rebecca Seawright to the Committee on Education. The Committee considers legislation relating to more than 700 school districts across the state and allocations totaling more than \$25 billion in the 2017/2018 state budget. “As the mother of two children who went to public elementary, middle, and high schools, I am especially aware of the importance of ensuring that adequate resources are available for good quality educational opportunities at all levels across our state,” Seawright said.

### Upper East Side Electeds Unify for More Pre-K Seats

“This year in Albany, we worked hard for a budget that includes \$817 million in total funding for prekindergarten programs, which includes \$5 million to expand half-day and full-day prekindergarten for 3- and 4-year olds in high-need school districts,” Assembly Member Seawright said. “Sending students outside of their neighborhood for pre-k poses a hardship and represents a barrier to education and the success of our children. It is critical that all families have the same access to good quality education in their community.”

Thanks to the mutual efforts of our city and state government, the number of pre-k seats on the Upper East Side has increased by 90 since April 2017 for a total of 349 according to the NYC Department of Education. “I am pleased to report that two additional pre-k sections were added to PS 6, and one section in each of the three schools – PS 290, PS 151 and PS 183,” said Seawright.



On April 30, 2017, Seawright spoke at Council Member Ben Kallos' rally for pre-k.

### Meeting with City DOE Chancellor Fariña in Albany

On May 1, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright and New York City Department of Education Chancellor Carmen Fariña discussed educational priorities for the rest of the session. The Chancellor came to Albany one week before the New York State Education Department released New Standards for English and Language Arts Common Core Learning. The revision of the English Language Arts and Mathematics Learning Standards has been a two-year collaborative process involving educators, parents, specialists, and the public. The changes will go into effect in the 2020/2021 school year.



## HOUSING

### Seawright Commits \$400,000 to NYCHA Robbins Plaza for New Appliances, Security Enhancements and Capital Improvements

#### Hundreds of Needy New Yorkers Received New Refrigerators and Stoves Just in Time for the 2016 Holidays

Robbins Plaza tenants received brand new refrigerators and stoves as a part of Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright's funding allocation. Specifically, 105 refrigerators and 102 stoves were delivered in time for the December holidays. Seawright's office met with Tenant's Association President Lovelle Watts, Robbins Plaza Manager Aida George, and a DASNY representative for a scoping meeting to discuss camera placement within the interior and exterior of the building. Six security cameras will be installed on the first floor in the perimeter of the building. Additionally, interior and exterior cameras will be placed on the building's 20 floors.

### Local Electeds Stand United on Overdevelopment Crisis

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senator Liz Krueger, Council Member Ben Kallos, and President of the East 86th Street Merchants Association Dr. Elaine Walsh met with the MTA, the NYC Department of Transportation and the developers to discuss mitigation efforts in light of the new 147 East 86th Street construction which will impact the entrance and egress of the 86th Street and Lexington Avenue Station area. Electeds opposed taking away parking spots, even bigger traffic and pedestrian congestion and demanded a fully ADA-accessible subway station.

### Seawright Brings Stop Work Order to Protect Tenants from Lead Exposure

Seawright called attention to the plight of mistreated tenants residing at two buildings on First Avenue that are undergoing renovations. Following numerous inspections made at her request, the Department of Health issued a Stop Work Order. The unsafe environment caused residents and workers to be exposed to harmful levels of lead. The tenants, including senior citizens and children, also reported extremely dangerous and unlivable conditions such as limited access to heat, poor lighting in common areas, an unsafe staircase and a heavy door.

Seawright hosted a meeting with the tenants, the owner, and managers of the buildings. Since then, construction has been completed and tenants have better communication with their management and are able to express any concerns moving forward.

### Helping Seniors

Two senior constituents with a disability came to Seawright asking for help after a building management company ignored their request for reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

*“We found ourselves desperately in need of keys to an entrance that would greatly lessen the distances we needed to come and go in our building, yet we were denied by management time and time again though some other physically challenged seniors did have said keys. In desperation, we turned to your Manhattan office and are fortunate your team calmed our anxieties, took our information, followed through, and yes, we did get those keys,”* the constituents wrote in a thank you letter to Seawright.

## TRANSPORTATION

### MTA to Add More Trains to Second Avenue Subway Starting in November 2017

In order to ensure that subway service meets public demand, we are pleased to inform you of the approved schedule adjustments to the Q line recently announced by the MTA. One additional weekday southbound Q trip will be operated from 96th Street - 2nd Avenue, between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. and one additional weekday northbound Q trip would be operated to 96th Street - 2nd Avenue, between 6:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.

### Ferry Landing Construction on Roosevelt Island

Construction on the new ferry landing on Roosevelt Island is underway and is expected to open on Tuesday, August 29. Roosevelt Island is served by the Q102 bus, the F train and Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOCI)-operated tram service, seamlessly integrated with the MTA fare system and no-fee transfers. With EDC's projected 4.6 million trips per year, the ferry will relieve the crowded neighboring transit options and forge critical connections for the city's waterfront communities.

### Local Electeds Object to Service Cuts Bus Lines Crucial to the Upper East Side

On June 17, Seawright joined Council Member Ben Kallos' initiative along with Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senator Liz Krueger, State Senator Brad Hoylman, Assembly Member Dan Quart, and Council Member Dan Garodnick and wrote a letter to the MTA Acting President Darryl C. Irick opposing service cuts to four bus lines:

*"Following our letter we were grateful to see the implementation of Select Bus Service for two crosstown bus routes on the M79 and M86. We are however troubled to see cuts in service to the M31, M57, M66, and M72 increasing scheduled wait times by as much as five minutes for 20 minutes between buses. We are concerned with increases to headway that will leave our residents feeling abandoned by our buses. Increasing headways above 9 minutes leaves residents more likely to walk than wait the proposed 20 minutes for a bus that might never come," the letter stated.*

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## CORNELL TECH UPDATE

The end of summer 2017 means the completion of Phase I of the Cornell Tech construction, comprising more than 650,000 square feet and 2.5 acres of open space, 59 Cherry Blossom trees, and eight Bluelight Emergency Phone locations with 360° cameras.

### The Emma and Georgina Bloomberg Center

The 150,000 square foot academic building, in addition to the classrooms and a 200-seat lecture hall, includes a public cafe and free meeting rooms that accommodate 50-70 people community groups.

### The Bridge at Cornell Tech

This 240,000 square foot business space with ground floor retail building is for technology companies to work in conjunction with academic researchers.

### The House

352 out of the 536 total apartments will be occupied this year by faculty, staff, students, and visiting academics. This will be the very first high-rise, residential building in the world built according to energy-efficient Passive House standards.



### Future Buildings

When open in 2019, the Verizon Executive Education Center and Graduate Roosevelt Island hotel will create a place where the campus can host academic gatherings and out-of-town guests.

### Employment Opportunities

[www.tech.cornell.edu/jobs](http://www.tech.cornell.edu/jobs) for current opportunities with Cornell Tech and our contractors.

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## NOTICES AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### MOBILE HOURS – Seawright's Office Comes to You!

Once a month, our office comes to Roosevelt Island from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Senior Center. Sign up for our email newsletter or call the community office for details.

### Computer Comfort for Seniors

Sessions are every first Saturday of the month from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Dining Room (343 E 70th Street).

### District Office Grand Ribbon Cutting!

Stay tuned for a date this fall!

### Visit Our Table at the Second Avenue Benefit Festival Sunday, August 20th

Second Avenue, 66th - 86th Streets  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

### Stay Tuned for our Shred-a-Thon in October!