



Assemblymember
Jo Anne Simon
52nd District



Announcements & Upcoming Events

May 2018

A Message from Jo Anne...

I am thrilled that the Assembly passed several bills to improve voter turn-out and reform campaign finance laws, including my bill to close the Limited Liability Company (LLC) Loophole ([A9758A/Kavanagh S7149](#)). New Yorkers deserve transparency and fairness in the electoral process and closing the notorious LLC loophole is an important step forward.

This egregious loophole has allowed unchecked campaign contributions by treating LLCs as individuals instead of corporations, and has allowed them to funnel millions of dollars into state elections with almost no transparency. The LLC loophole allows the wealthy and special interests to anonymously pour unlimited money into campaigns in hopes of influencing preferred candidates.

This bill would ensure that LLCs are subject to the aggregate contribution limit of \$5,000 that applies to corporations. It would also require the disclosure of the identity of all direct and indirect owners of the membership interests in the LLC. Similar bills have passed the Assembly every year since 2015. Now that the bill has passed the Assembly, it is time for the State Senate to act swiftly and level the playing field for all New Yorkers and end the practice of 'pay to play' politics.

We passed a series of other critical voter reform bills, including early voting ([A.9608-B](#), Lavine), no excuse absentee voting ([A.7623](#), Vanel), and online voter registration ([A.5382-A](#), Cusick).

For more details on the legislative session, sign up for my email alerts by emailing simonj@nysassembly.gov.

Sincerely,

Jo Anne Simon

Legislation Gives Control of Teacher Evaluations Back to Local School Districts

The Assembly recently passed legislation that I cosponsored to improve teacher evaluations by delinking them from standardized testing and returning control to local school districts (A.10475). First, it would eliminate the mandate that teacher evaluations are to be based on their students' performance on state-created or administered assessments, including the grades 3 through 8 English Language Arts (ELA) and math tests. The state mandate, which sparked widespread angst, was put on hold in December 2015 for four years, and this legislation eliminates it completely. The legislation would also make permanent the provision prohibiting grades 3 through 8 ELA and math state assessments from being included on a student's permanent record.

This recognizes that a one-size-fits-all approach is not right or effective and allows teachers to focus on providing well-rounded lessons that help their students grow. Every kid learns differently and it should be up to the people who know them best – their teachers and school districts – to figure out how to meet their needs. We also need to examine standardized tests more carefully and improve the validity of those tests.

Gender Neutral Bill for Police Officers & Firefighters

The Assembly unanimously passed my bill changing every NYS law which contains the words “policeman” or “fireman” to the gender neutral language “police officer” and “firefighter”. This antiquated and inaccurate language promotes an outdated worldview that suggests to young girls and young boys alike that law enforcement and firefighting are only open to men. Stamping out gender-specific language recognizes the incredible women who keep us safe every day, and promotes inclusivity and participation in these professions to everyone, regardless of gender.



Thank you to all the police officers and firefighters who fought for inclusion in their chosen professions. You can listen to my interviews with these remarkable women on my webpage: [FDNY Firefighters Sarinya Srisakul and Regina Wilson talk about their efforts to increase the number of women firefighters](#); and listen to my interview with [NYPD Chief Nilda Irizarry Hofmann and FDNY Firefighter Antoinette Proctor here](#).

Standing Up for Transgender Rights – Assembly Passes GENDA

It’s up to us to take a stand for the rights of all New Yorkers. All too often, transgender individuals come face to face with bigotry, inequality and discrimination solely because of who they are. From housing to health care, the essentials that so many of us take for granted are regularly denied. The Assembly once again passed the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) to protect the rights of transgender and gender-nonconforming New Yorkers and make gender identity and expression one of the state’s protected classes (A.3358), and I was proud to vote “yes.”

We need to ensure true equality, especially now with the presidential administration undermining the trans community – attempting to ban trans individuals from serving in the military, deeming that civil rights laws don’t protect transgender individuals from job discrimination, filling courts with anti-LGBT judges, and moving to re-write a federal rule barring discrimination in health care due to gender identity. Here in New York, we know that everyone deserves respect and equal protection under the law.

Be a Lifesaver! 76th Precinct Blood Drive: Thurs., May 10th, 2018

Join the 76th Precinct at the bus-mobile outside of the Precinct (191 Union St.) on May 10th from 12:30pm - 6:30pm. Eligibility criteria: general good health, at least 100 pounds, 16-76 years old, and a good meal before donating.

DUMBO: Recycle Your E-Waste: Fri., May 11th, 2018

Recycle your electronics on Friday, May 11th, 10am – 4pm, rain or shine, at the Pearl Street Triangle between Front and Water Streets. Drop off working and non-working computers, monitors, printers/scanners, keyboards, mice, cables, TVs, VCRs & DVD players, phones, audio/visual equipment, cell phones & PDAs. For more details: lesecologycenter.org or 212-447-4022.

My Free Rain Barrel Giveaway in Carroll Park: Sun., June 3rd, 2018

Join me for a Rain Barrel Giveaway, co-sponsored with the Friends of Carroll Park, on Sunday, June 3rd, from 11am - 3pm in the park (Smith St between Carroll St & President St). As part of the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan, these 60-gallon rain barrels can help you collect water for your garden and can capture storm water before it enters the sewer system, preventing sewage overflows from entering into our local waterways. If you’d like to reserve a rain barrel, please email sfikasa@nyassembly.gov or call our office at 718-246-4889 and speak to Alexis Sfikas.

Students, Parents, & Educators Testify at Dyslexia Town Hall

Thank you to the parents, educators, and kids who came to the 3rd Annual Dyslexia Awareness Day in Albany. This year, we had our first ever Dyslexia Town Hall. The speakers were powerful and articulate advocates for the rights of people with dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia. Members of the NYS Education Department also attended, and will soon release a guidance memorandum on dyslexia to schools across the state.



Thank you to the panelists, the organizations and individuals who made this day a success, including: Eye to Eye, Mary McDowell Friends School, The Kildonan School, Disability Rights New York, The Windward School, Decoding Dyslexia - NY, Everyone Reading, and more.

You can go online to [listen to the testimony from the Town Hall](#), the [panel discussion](#), learn about [the Super d! Kids & Dyslexiaville](#), and hear [Eye to Eye's tips on how to talk about learning differences](#).

District 15 Diversity Plan: Public Workshop #3, Sat., May 12th, 2018

This Middle School Diversity Workshop is a community planning process led by the NYC Dept. of Education. Share your ideas on draft recommendations to create a more diverse, meaningfully integrated middle school. This "Open House" style-workshop (you can come and go for as little or as long you'd like) will take place on 4/12, 12pm - 4pm, Red Hook East/Joseph Miccio Community Center, 110 W. 9th St., Brooklyn, NY 11231. Translation services, food, and child care will be available. To RSVP, call [718-935-2212](tel:718-935-2212) or go to <http://d15diversityplan.com>

Learn How to Save a Life: Overdose Prevention Training, Wed., May 16th, 2018

Brooklyn has the second highest number of drug overdose deaths in NYC. Free trainings are being offered throughout the borough, sponsored by the Brooklyn Borough President's office. You can receive opioid overdose training on Wed., May 16th, at Borough Hall, [209 Joralemon St.](#), 1-2pm. More information & RSVP: 718-802-4299 or Brooklyn-usa.org/narcan

Community Meeting: Gowanus CSO Facility Design Review, Thurs., May 17th, 2018, 7-8:30PM

Join Council Member Stephen Levin and the NYC Department of Environmental Protection on Thurs., May 17, 2018 at the YWCA Brooklyn (30 3rd Ave.) to talk about the continuing efforts to keep the Gowanus Canal clean. The DEP will be building an 8 million gallon combined sewage overflow tank at the north end of the canal. Come hear their plans and offer your thoughts and comments. Please direct questions to 718-875-5200.

Brooklyn Heights Walking Tour Celebrates Walt Whitman's Birthday, Thurs., May 31st, 2018

St. Francis College and the Walt Whitman Project are hosting a reception and free Brooklyn Height's walking tour to celebrate the famous poet's 199th birthday. Explore the places that inspired his poetry and prose! May 31st, 2018 at St. Francis College Callahan Center, 1st Fl., 180 Remsen St., 5:30-8:00pm. For more details: 718-489-5272.

76th Precinct NCO Meeting, Thurs., June 7th, 2018

Sector A of the 76th Precinct is hosting their Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO) public safety meeting on Thursday, June 7th, at 7pm at Cobble Hill Nursing Home, 380 Henry Street (light refreshments at 6:30pm). Come and discuss your public safety needs and concerns with your local law enforcement officers. To find your NCO Sector, [view the map on the 76th Precinct's website](#).

Women Veterans Event in Albany: Wed., June 13th, 2018

Assemblymember Pamela Hunter's is hosting an event in honor of women veterans. The day will include veteran organization tabling, guest speakers, an introduction in the Assembly Chamber, lunch and a chance to meet with Assemblymembers. For more details, contact Assemblymember Hunter's office:

cordiald@nyassembly.gov or 315-449-9536, or go to: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Pamela-J-Hunter>.

Save the Date! Senior Resource Fair: Friday, June 29th, 2018

Please join me for my Annual Senior Resource Fair on June 29th, 2018 from 10am to 2pm at St. Francis College, 180 Remsen Street (between Court St and Clinton St). A variety of groups will be available to provide you with information on legal services, health care, government services, community resources, and more! Admission is free and no registration is required. We also welcome volunteers to help us organize this exciting event. Additional details will be available soon.

Assembly Passes Legislation to Support Victims of Domestic Violence

We passed a series of bills to help ensure victims of domestic violence (DV) can seek justice and the resources they need to move forward with their lives. Nobody should live in fear in their own home, but it's the sad reality for far too many New Yorkers. Since victims are often most in danger if they attempt to leave or after they escape, the legislation also puts protections in place for the women and men who leave an abusive situation. Here is a summary of the key bills (reach out to my office for a full list):

- allows victims of DV to be released from a telephone, cable or broadband contract, including shared wireless contracts, without incurring cancellation fees (A1056, A946A);
- requires hospitals to establish procedures regarding DV and ongoing training programs for staff, and to designate a staff member to coordinate services for victims (A.4014-A);
- allows non-physically injured victims of certain crimes to be reimbursed for shelter costs and crime scene cleanup (A.10275);
- mandates employers to provide accommodations in the workplace for employees to attend court appearances and seek counseling or medical treatment related to abuse (A1481A);
- allows judges expanded discretion in sentencing defendants who are victims of domestic violence where the abuse was a significant factor in the commission of an offense (A.3110); &
- ensures victims of DV understand their legal rights and access to services during criminal and family court proceedings by simplifying the language in court documents (A.5921).

Help and support are always available. New York's toll-free hotline is open 24 hours a day at 1-800-942-6906. For additional information, visit the New York State Office of Victim Services website at ovs.ny.gov or the NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence website at opdv.ny.gov.

District Office: 341 Smith Street | Brooklyn, NY 11231 | 718-246-4889 | Fax: 718-246 4895

Albany Office: LOB, Room 326 | Albany, NY 12247 | 518-455-5426 | Fax: 518-455 4787

Email: simonj@NYassembly.gov | Web: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Jo-Anne-Simon>

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