

District 50 E-Newsletter

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Dear Neighbors,

Greetings from our State Capitol, Albany, where I spend the majority of my time from January through June each year. This period is known as the “legislative session,” where representatives from across the state nestle into the legislative office building to write, debate, and (ideally) pass legislation to improve the lives of New Yorkers.

The work this time of year revolves around our state budget. This is especially important this year, as the new administration at the Federal level has threatened to cut a vast array of services and payments that New Yorkers generally expect and count on.

This is concerning because 40 percent of the New York state budget comes from federal funding. It’s exceedingly likely that many of our most expensive and vital services, like Medicaid and education, are going to rely much more heavily on state funding – i.e. your tax dollars – in the years to come.



New York State as a whole has a budget larger than many countries, and the budget process is a long, fraught process. First, the Governor writes her “executive budget,” which is basically her wish list for what programs will be funded and how and also sometimes includes pieces of legislation.

In February and March, the legislature examines these proposals and debates them. In fact, we recently began my favorite part of the year, Budgetary Hearings, where members of different committees get to hear testimony and question executives at different state agencies and advocacy organizations in order to think through our response to the Governor’s proposed budget.

Next, the Assemblymembers and Senators gather in their respective chambers to determine how they would alter the Governor’s budget and draft our “One House Budgets.” The Governor’s team reviews our edits and gives feedback. Then begins the process, in late March, known as “Three Men In Room” (which is currently 2 women – Governor Hochul and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins— and one man, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie).

This is a very fluid, dynamic, and often frustrating process, where legislators play a game of telephone with our elected house leaders, who are negotiating directly with the Governor and her staff. The last weeks of March are a chaotic time in Albany, as legislators push hard to get the things they want for their district included in the budget. The Governor ultimately gets to write the final budget, and in the last few years, she's often inserted new policy into the budget in the final days. After all of this negotiation is done, individual legislators vote yes or no on each of the 37 budgetary bills.

April 1st is technically the deadline for the budget. After that, we need to receive an extender if it's not passed. The Governor can put whatever she wants into that extender, which can end up being passed as policy in order to get the extension on payments that a late budget requires.

Last year, the budget was delayed for 3 weeks. It can get really messy. Let's see what happens this year! Follow along with me on social media or here in the newsletter – I'll keep you up to date on what the latest ideas and controversies are.



I hope this overview was helpful! If you have additional questions or need to get in touch, you can reach out to my office anytime at District50@nyassembly.gov.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Gallagher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Emily Gallagher

Legislative Updates

Increasing Oversight and Accountability in State Prisons and Jails

Much of the conversation on prison and jail reform has taken a carceral tone in recent months, with politicians like Mayor Adams and Governor Hochul relying on fear mongering and conservative solutions like increased police on the subways and regressive reforms to bail and discovery laws. We have 50+ years of data to tell us mass incarceration mainly serves to rip apart communities and perpetuate cycles of poverty, violence, and trauma. It ultimately makes people and communities less safe, not more.

These developments are particularly devastating in light of the recent murder of Robert Brooks in Marcy State Prison. Mr. Brooks was handcuffed behind his back and attacked while at least 13 correctional officers and a nurse participated in or watched him being beaten to death. Watching the body cam footage—which we only have because the officers’ body cameras captured it in “standby mode”—the most striking piece of this is how blasé these officers were as they lynched Mr. Brooks to death. Their nonchalance underscored how normalized the culture of violence, racism, and impunity is at Marcy Prison.

I had the privilege to meet Mr. Brooks’ father, Mr. Robert Ricks, in my office in Albany yesterday. I thanked him for his incredible bravery and strength in this period of

unimaginable grief. And I promised him that I would continue to speak out against the horrors of our mass incarceration system.



We urgently need greater accountability and oversight for our state prisons and jails. I'm working hard, along with Senator Julia Salazar, to [pass a bill](#) (A.2315/S.856) that

would expand the State Commission on Corrections (SCOC) from three to nine members and would require commissioners to include one formerly incarcerated person, one behavioral health expert, and one lawyer with a background in criminal defense.

The SCOC is an oversight body that has broad statutory authority to provide oversight in our state prisons and jails. Its members can visit any state prison or jail and obtain any information it deems necessary for its audits and investigations. It even has the power to close facilities.

You can read more about the SCOC in this deep dive in NY Focus. In light of the lynching of Mr. Brooks and the ongoing horrors at Rikers Island, we must pass this bill and give the SCOC the resources and people power it needs to finally provide meaningful oversight in NY prisons and jails.

District Updates

Con Edison Rate Hikes

I've been hearing from several of you regarding the insane utility hikes we are facing from Con Ed and National Grid. As an elected official, I've been fighting against these rate hikes via the Department of Public Service. Rate hikes might seem like they are because of the delivery cost of gas and electricity—but often they are merely gifts to international shareholders, as these companies trade publicly on the international market.

It is important that we do everything we can to keep utilities affordable, so I have 3 calls to action for you:

- **Show your support for the NY HEAT Act**, sponsored in the Assembly by our neighbor, Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon. This legislation seeks to cap energy bills at six percent of household income cap for low-income customers. You can [sign up to phone bank](#) in support of the bill, since in the last two years the Assembly has refused to pass the bill (despite my best efforts to advocate for it!).
- **Join Public Power NY**. In 2023, we passed the Build Public Renewables Act, which gave the NY Power Authority the right to build its own renewable energy,

which would make our energy systems infinitely less expensive by breaking the corporate monopoly of Con Ed and other private, profit-incentivized power companies.

- [Fill out this form](#), so your voice is included in my letter to the Public Service Commission and to Governor Hochul, showing we support her in resisting these rate hikes and pushing her to fight for our district's needs.

New Proposed Elementary School in Greenpoint

Greenpoint parents know we're long overdue for another school in our neighborhood! The NYC School Construction Authority (SCA) has hosted two community briefings about their plans to build a new elementary school on Dupont St here in Greenpoint. We greatly appreciated the engagement from neighbors who attended the two meetings, and for those who weren't able to attend, you can check out videos of both meetings, information about the site, and more on [SCA's website](#). You can also continue sharing your feedback and questions by emailing newgreenpointschool@gmail.com.

Events & Activities in the Neighborhood

***Sing Sing* Screening**

I recently attended a screening of the film [Sing Sing](#) while I was in Albany and was so moved that I knew I had to bring it back to our district! Join us **Tuesday, February 18 at 7pm** for a brief panel discussion then a screening of the film at our beloved local indie theater, Nitehawk.

This film—starring many actors who were incarcerated at Sing Sing and actually went through the Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA) program featured in the film—is an incredible tribute to what's possible when we invest the time and resources into rehabilitation. Nitehawk will be generously donating a portion of proceeds to RTA, and you can make an additional donation when you purchase your ticket. More details can be found, [here](#).

Community Defense Canvassing

As the new federal administration is violently targeting immigrants in our communities, I ask you to join me in loudly and clearly affirming that immigrants are an essential part of New York. I will always stand with my immigrant neighbors, whether they arrived a century ago, like my family did, or within the last year. With the threat of ICE raids in our community, my office is working to ensure District 50 residents have the Know Your Rights (KYR) information they need to protect themselves, their neighbors, and colleagues. We aim to reach at least 10,000 residents in Williamsburg and Greenpoint with KYR materials in relevant languages, and we need your help to make it happen.

Starting today, we're looking for volunteers to help drop off KYR literature at doors around the community. Hours and locations are flexible. You can pick up the materials at our district office (685 Manhattan Ave) Monday–Friday, 10am–5pm, or we may be able to arrange delivery to you.

If you're interested, please complete [our sign-up form](#). We'll follow up to coordinate materials and locations.

Housing Lottery Open Now for 18 India Street

You don't need me to tell you that affordable housing is scarce in New York! Make sure to check out the lottery for rent-stabilized apartments at 18 India Street (formerly known as 1 Java Street) in Greenpoint. There will be 251 rent-stabilized studios to two-bedrooms, in what will be the largest geothermal tower in New York State. This was constructed as part of the 421A program which expired two years ago, so this building has a high threshold for what they considered "affordable." (The new system that we put in place in 2024 has a more reasonable affordability metric.) That said, twenty percent of the units give preference to folks in this neighborhood, so make sure to get your name in by March 28! [Apply here](#).

New Hours in our District Office

Our district office is now going to be appointment-only on Mondays. We'll be available for walk-ins the rest of the week, Tuesday-Friday, 10am-5:30pm. If you need to see us on a Monday, make sure to call or email us by the Friday before so we can make an appointment with you! You can still reach us on Mondays by calling and leaving a voicemail or by emailing us at District50@nyassembly.gov.

Other Resources



Free Tenant Legal Advice

Facing landlord harassment, neglect or a massive rent increase? Wondering what your rights are? Get free legal advice at the Greenpoint office of Assemblymember Emily Gallagher from the housing lawyers at Communities Resist. Call or e-mail our office to reserve an appointment.



10am - 3pm on:

**Tuesday, February 18th
Wednesday, March 5th
Wednesday, March 19th**

685 Manhattan Ave, Greenpoint
Ph: (718) 383-7474
district50@nyassembly.gov

**Community Farmers Market
Local Food**

McGolrick Park Farmers Market

Sundays, 9AM-2PM

At the center of the park, Greenpoint



**WE ACCEPT
SNAP EBT**

**GET HEALTH
BUCKS TO
MAKE YOUR
SNAP \$ GO
FURTHER**

**USE WIC &
SENIORS'
FMNP
COUPONS
JUN-NOV**



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