



Assemblymember
Jo Anne Simon
52nd District



Announcements & Upcoming Events

February 2020

A Message from Jo Anne...

Mayor Bill de Blasio's expert panel released their report on the condition of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE) and their recommendations for the future of the BQE. The report reveals that the BQE, which we knew was on life support, is in much worse shape than we thought and is experiencing faster than expected deterioration due to overweight trucks and other wear and tear. The report recommends short and long term remedies, including immediate maintenance on sections of the cantilever, enforcement and additional restrictions on overweight trucks, lane reduction, diverting vehicles to other modes of transit, and a corridor-wide vision for the entirety of the highway connecting Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens. They propose a joint working group of city, state, and federal government and community stakeholders in order to accomplish these goals.

I have been calling for a comprehensive approach to address our deteriorating roadways for a long time - starting with the need to bury the highly polluting Gowanus Expressway into a tunnel a few decades ago - and I am pleased to hear the panel's recommendation for a wider vision for this corridor. Piecemeal approaches to our highways and traffic management are the reason that we are in our current situation and we cannot settle for them again. A wider vision for the corridor and some necessary fixes for immediate rehabilitation along the cantilever require state involvement and I am continuing to urge State DOT to bring its technical expertise back to the table for this project. I recently had the opportunity to question State DOT Commissioner Marie Therese Dominquez on the BQE and the need for the state to be a real partner with the city for this project. You can view this clip here: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Jo-Anne-Simon/video>.

Further, Arup, the engineering firm under contract with the City Council, should be issuing their report on policy and engineering recommendations on the BQE sometime this month. There will be a City Council Transportation Committee hearing on the future of the BQE on February 25th at 10am in the Council Chambers at City Hall. There will be opportunities to testify at that hearing.

For more information on the project and to see the panel's report, go to: <https://www.bqe-i278.com/en/home>.

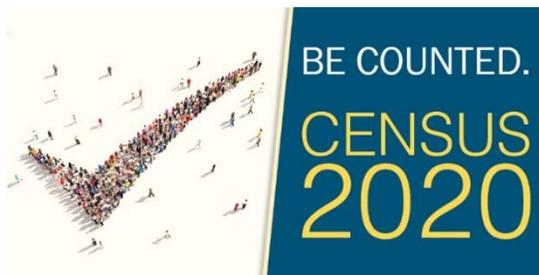
Sincerely,

Jo Anne Simon

Voter Registration Deadline for Party Enrollment – Received by the BOE by Friday, February 14, 2020: Change of party enrollment for any 2020 primary election must be received by the Board of Elections (BOE) by Friday, February 14, 2020 (by mail or in person). This includes a change of your current party or enrollment into a party by registered voters who are not currently affiliated with any party. If you want to change your enrollment online through the DMV, you must do so by Thursday, 2/13/2020.

- Check your current voter registration here: voterlookup.elections.ny.gov
 - Update your voter registration here: ny.gov/services/register-vote
 - For all voter registration deadlines for this year's elections: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingDeadlines.html>
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2020 Census is Coming - Help NY Get Counted! Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau works to count every person residing in the country. The information collected helps inform important political, economic and social decisions, including the allocation of funding, legislative redistricting and congressional representation. **In previous census counts, New York State -- and particularly Brooklyn -- has been undercounted**, resulting in the loss of billions in federal funding for hospitals, public schools, transportation, emergency services and more.



I am working with community partners and government agencies to make sure New York gets counted! Please reach out to my office to join community efforts to spread the word about the census. I have flyers you can give out and posters to display in your store, building, place of worship, etc. The census will be available online for you to complete starting March 12, 2020. Here are a few common myths and facts about the Census:

Myth: My information will be shared.

Fact: Your information is protected and anonymous. Federal Law requires your answers to be confidential and remain confidential.

Myth: There will be a citizenship question on the 2020 Census.

Fact: No, there will not be a citizenship question on the census and every New Yorker can and should respond without fear of repercussion because of their immigration status.

Myth: Taking the census is difficult.

Fact: For the first time ever, the census can be done in person, online, or over the phone. By Census Day, April 1, 2020, every home will receive an invitation to participate in one of the three ways. It only takes around 10 minutes to complete.

Myth: The census doesn't impact me.

Fact: The census determines your representation in congress. By not filling out the census, you impact the way you and your neighbors are represented. The census also impacts an array of local resources, including funding for school lunches, highways, firefighters and families in need.

The U.S. Census Bureau is hiring! For details and to apply for jobs: 2020census.gov/jobs.

For details about Census teach-in events across the NYC: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/census/map/teachins.html>

Dyslexia Awareness Day in Albany, 3/4/20 featuring actor & producer Ameer Baraka! You are cordially invited to attend the 5th Annual Dyslexia Awareness Day on Wed., March 4th, 2020 at the New York State Capitol in Albany. This extraordinary event brings together students, parents, advocates, and experts from across the state who care about this issue. You will have an opportunity to network with others, meet with legislators to share your experiences, and advocate for solutions, such as early screening and teacher training.

I am pleased that our keynote speaker will be Ameer Baraka, who was diagnosed with dyslexia while he was in jail, learned to read, and is now a thriving activist and actor who has partnered with me on dyslexia advocacy. People who are in prison and people of color have a higher rate of undiagnosed dyslexia. We will also be highlighting my bill to require that people who are incarcerated who do not have a high school diploma or GED are screened for being at risk for dyslexia.

Vision Zero: New Protected Bike Lanes for the District. The NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) recently announced that as part of the ongoing implementation of Vision Zero, they will be creating over 30 miles of protected bike lanes citywide, with at least 10 miles of those lanes here in Brooklyn. After last year's devastating

increase in cyclist fatalities, it is good to see that the City is adding more protected bike lanes, which ensure safer streets for everyone. The proposed lanes in District 52 will be on Smith Street, Navy Street, Flatbush Avenue, and 4th Avenue. You can participate in the community engagement process as the City works out the details of this proposal. They will be attending CB meetings to solicit feedback, or you can send your feedback to me, and I will pass it along to DOT. For more information, go to www.nyc.gov/visionzero.

Free Tax Prep Assistance: It's that time of year again...tax time! If your family earned \$64,000 or less or you are a single filer who earned \$45,000 or less in 2019, you can get free help using NYC Free Tax Prep. IRS certified VITA/TCE volunteer preparers can prepare returns for you or assist you in preparing your own returns online. Find a location near you by calling 311 or go to: nyc.gov/taxprep

Fair Fares for Subway Riders are in Full Effect. Fair Fares is now available to everyone at or below the Federal Poverty Line (ex. annual income of \$12,760 or less for a single person). Using the Fair Fares NYC MetroCard, City residents receive a 50% discount on subway and eligible bus fares. Pay-Per-Ride, 7-Day, and 30-Day Unlimited Ride options are available. New Yorkers shouldn't have to make the choice between a meal or a MetroCard. Check your eligibility and sign up for Fair Fares: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/fairfares/index.page>.

Plastic Bag Ban Starts March 1. On March 1, the statewide plastic bag ban will go into effect. I was so proud to vote to ban single use plastic bags with the option for local governments to charge 5 cents for paper bags because plastic bags wreak havoc on our environment and make our neighborhoods dirty. You can do your part and BYOBag - Bring Your Own Bag - by remembering to take reusable bags with you when you shop. **Please feel free to stop by my office for a free reusable bag from NYC Department of Sanitation!** More information about the ban: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/50034.html>

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Equipment Repair, & Clean and Tune Benefits. HEAP helps New Yorkers with lower incomes pay to heat their homes. Eligibility and benefit amounts are based on household size and income, primary heating source, and if a household member is younger than 6 or older than 60, or permanently disabled. You may also be eligible if you receive certain public benefits. Emergency HEAP can also assist in a heat-related emergency. You may also be eligible for other benefits like the "Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement" benefit or the "Clean and Tune" benefit, which includes the cleaning of primary heating equipment, but may also include chimney cleaning, minor repairs, installation of carbon monoxide detectors or programmable thermostats. To find out if you're eligible and to apply for these benefits, contact HEAP at 1-800-342-3009 or go to: <https://www.ny.gov/services/apply-heating-and-cooling-assistance-heap>.

Pre-K for All Applications – Due 3/16/2020: Do you have a child born in 2016 ready to enter Pre-K in September? Every NYC child can start their education with Pre-K for All. The application is due March 16 and is available in 10 languages, with interpretation services for 200 languages available over the phone and in person. Apply online at MySchools.nyc or nyc.gov/prek, by phone at 718-935-2009, or at a Family Welcome Center. For more info, contact the Pre-K for All Outreach Team at 212-637-8000 or ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov. Admissions guides are also available in my office. 3-K applications are also open for children born in 2017, and the deadline is April 24th.

Sign up for my Email Alerts. Email simonj@nyassembly.gov to stay informed of community events & policy issues!

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