



Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon



Reports to the People

Winter 2024/2025

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

I'm honored that you have continued to place your trust in me to be your Assemblymember. As we anticipate challenges due to the incoming federal administration and its potential impacts on New York's environmental, health, and transportation budgets, I will be in the trenches fighting for the people of this district.

In many ways, New York is in a stronger position than it was 8 years ago. The State Legislature has enacted massive reforms to our voter and election laws, passed the strongest environmental law of any state in the country, overhauled our gun violence prevention laws, enacted a state paid family leave program, permanently protected our rent-stabilized housing units, enshrined *Roe v. Wade* protections into our state law, passed a first-in-the-nation prenatal leave policy, and expanded childcare. However, we still have a great deal to do to continue the post-Covid economic recovery for everyday New Yorkers and make New York more affordable for working families. The type of impacts or support that we will receive from the federal government is unknown, so we will have to be ready, thoughtful, and creative.

This is one of the reasons why I have been laser-focused on ensuring equal rights and protections for New Yorkers. I am relieved that New Yorkers passed ballot Proposition 1, our Equal Rights Amendment. This amendment to our State Constitution will protect abortion and reproductive freedom. Prop 1 also closes loopholes to prohibit governmental discrimination based on gender, age, ethnicity, pregnancy status, disability status, or whether someone is LGBTQ.

It's also been a bustling time in the district. The NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) took control over the Brooklyn Marine Terminal from the Port Authority of NY/NJ to modernize the maritime facility and create a mixed-use community asset. The terminal was deteriorating, stagnant and financially unstable, so I am hopeful that this transfer of control will be for the better. However, there is still much that we do not know about the future of this site as EDC is in the planning phase. They are currently engaging in a rapid community engagement process (too fast in my opinion). I strongly urge you to participate in this process; email bmt@edc.nyc.

Neighbors often ask me about the status of the Carroll Street Bridge, which has been closed for several years now. When the EPA and the City began dredging and pile driving to clean up the polluted Gowanus Canal, they determined that the bridge was in worse shape than they thought. The clean-up work further de-stabilized the 135-year-old bridge. Fortunately, the design of the bridge repair has finally advanced to the next stage and is under EPA review. Once EPA grants approval, City DOT can move forward with construction which is roughly estimated to start in winter 2024/2025 and to be completed in winter 2025/2026. So, it's going to be a while longer but there is forward momentum. For bridge status updates, email info@gowanussuperfund.com or call the Gowanus Remediation Team at 718-569-5762.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office with questions on any local or policy issue. You can also stop by my office in Carroll Gardens and speak with my staff about unemployment, SNAP, HEAP, housing, healthcare, transit and more.

It is truly my privilege to serve you.

Sincerely,

Jo Anne Simon

Civic Engagement Opportunities

There is no better time than now to get involved in your community. This district is chock full of ways to plug into local issues, meet your neighbors, and join volunteer opportunities.

Support Your Neighbors:

- Gowanus Mutual Aid organizes food and clothing drives for local shelter residents and neighbors in need in Gowanus and Park Slope. www.gowanusmutualaid.org
- Camp Friendship hosts a weekly food pantry in Park Slope along with food, clothing, and toy drives. www.campfriendshipbrooklyn.org/food-map
- There are excellent local non-profits that could use the assistance of volunteers, like CHiPS which offers a soup kitchen, food pantry, and transitional homes for women and their babies (www.chipsonline.org). Contact our office for an extensive list.

Community Education Councils (CECs). CECs are made up of volunteer parents dedicated to supporting local district schools covering Pre-K through 8th grade. CEC monthly meetings are open to the public and provide an opportunity to connect with other parents and to have a say in your child's educational experience. Each council has 12 voting members whose responsibilities include working with the local superintendent to evaluate educational programs and student progress, organizing town halls with the chancellor, holding hearings on budget and other matters, and providing input on school closings and co-locations.

- CEC 13: Brooklyn Heights to Park Slope to Bed-Stuy. www.cec13brooklyn.org
- CEC 15: Cobble Hill to Boerum Hill to Carroll Gardens to Park Slope. www.cec15.org

Community Boards (CBs). CBs are the most local form of City government. CBs are made of volunteers from the community who are appointed to advisory boards, which are managed by City employees. CB members are appointed by the Borough President and City Council Members, but the full board meetings and committee meetings are open to the public. Non-members can serve on committees. Committees address concerns ranging from land use and zoning, parks and health, liquor license approvals, transportation, and more.

Assembly District 52 covers Community Boards 2, 6, and a small section of 8:

- CB 2: Downtown Bklyn, Boerum Hill, Bklyn Heights, Fulton Ferry, DUMBO, Vinegar Hill, Ft. Greene, Clinton Hill, Bklyn Navy Yard. 718-596-5410.
- CB 6: Park Slope, Gowanus, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, Red Hook, Columbia St. Waterfront. 718-643-3027.
- CB 8: Prospect Heights and East. 718-467-5620.

NYPD Community Council and Build the Block Meetings. NYPD Community Council monthly meetings and Build the Block meetings are a good way to engage with your local police precinct and get to know your local Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs). Check with your Community Board or call your precinct for updates on how & when to join.

- 84th Precinct (718-875-6850).
- 78th Precinct (718-636-6410).
- 76th Precinct (718-834-3211).
- Find your local Build the Block meeting: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/>

Environmental Groups:

- **Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board** is a volunteer citizens' advisory board dedicated to helping Brooklyn contribute to New York City's zero waste goals. You are encouraged to join their monthly meetings, which are open to the public. www.brooklynswab.org
- **350Brooklyn** is a volunteer-run organization that strives to counter the climate crisis through local action and educational activities. www.350brooklyn.org

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Civic Engagement Opportunities (Continued from page 1)

Neighborhood and Block Associations. Neighborhood and block associations include residents who come together to organize around hyper local issues. Our many neighborhood associations organize local clean-ups, street tree care, community celebrations, and educational events. They also conduct community advocacy on a variety of issues like transit and street safety, sustainability, access to parks, and quality of life issues.

Let my office know if you need help getting in touch with local groups, like the Boerum Hill Association, Brooklyn Heights Association, Cobble Hill Association, DUMBO Action Committee, DUMBO Neighborhood Alliance, Park Slope Civic Council, Vinegar Hill Neighborhood Association, or the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council.

Resources for Seniors

There are many community groups and resources that help older New Yorkers live a healthy, active, and fulfilling life. I have highlighted a few below, but please contact my office if you would like to learn more.

- **NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA):** Contact DFTA's Aging Connect Hotline to get help accessing the City's senior resources and services: 212-244-6469.
- **DFTA's Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program (HIICAP)** can answer your health care questions and help you determine which plan is right for you. 212-244-6469.
- **Medicare Rights Center (MRC):** This non-profit helps you understand Medicare benefits, make enrollment decisions, coordinate Medicare with other insurance, appeal denials of care, and determine eligibility for Medicare cost-saving programs. Call MRC's free hotline at 800-333-4114. <https://www.medicarerights.org/resource-library>
- **Brooklyn Public Library - Technology for All:** If you need help navigating computers, cell phones, social media, or the internet, join the library's Technology for All program. Work one-on-one with an expert who will teach you how to use common forms of technology. 718-968-7275. www.bklynlibrary.org
- **NYS Attorney General's Office, Consumer Frauds Bureau:** Too often, fraudsters target seniors to get their money or personal information. If you are a victim of a scam or consumer fraud, contact NYS Attorney General Letitia James to file a complaint: 1-800-771-7755. <https://ag.ny.gov>
- **Housing Help through Stonewall Community Development Corporation:** This non-profit helps elders navigate the city's affordable housing lotteries and ensure access to the benefits to which they are entitled. 929-209-4070. www.stonewallcdc.org
- **GRIOT Circle** is a community-based, multigenerational organization serving LGBTQ elders of color. They provide health, wellness, advocacy, and leadership activities to remove isolation and build community. Call 718-246-2775, or visit 25 Flatbush Ave. <https://griotcircle.org>
- **Important Contacts Brochure:** My office has a brochure that lists the contact information for key resources such as city agencies, health care contacts, emergency numbers, and other helpful resources. Contact my office to obtain a copy: 718-246-4889.

Senior Centers:

- **SAGE Center at Stonewall House** enables LGBTQ+ elders to live as their best selves surrounded by joy. Open to all 60+ regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. They offer meals, a CyberCenter, local outings, exercise and more. 271 Myrtle Ave by Ft. Greene Park. 646-518-9744. <https://sageserves.org>
- **Eileen Dugan Older Adult Center** offers community, meals, case management, and various classes. 378 Court St, between President & Carroll St. 718-596-1956.
- **Heights and Hills** (Park Slope Center for Successful Aging) provides case management, meals, social activities, and family events. 463A 7th Street (at 7th Ave). 718-596-8789.
- **St. Charles Jubilee Older Adult Center** provides meals, social services, exercise classes, games, art classes, events and parties. 55 Pierrepont St (at Hicks Street). 718-722-6001.
- **Spanish Speaking Elderly Council-RAICES Senior Center** provides meals, health and wellness activities, case management, educational classes, and social activities. 460 Atlantic Ave (at Nevins). 718-643-0232.

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I'm proud to stand with the residents of 63 Tiffany Place as we fight to protect their homes and community. We must work together to ensure affordable housing remains a priority in NYC. The people who have built and sustained these neighborhoods deserve to remain here, and we call on their landlord to negotiate with them. We also called for the passage of the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (A3353) to protect tenants like those in 63 Tiffany.



Our office was pleased to showcase the creative talents of local seniors from the Eileen Dugan Senior Center in Carroll Gardens. Their artwork brought vibrancy and color to our office. We are lucky to have so many incredible senior centers in the district that provide a wide range of activities from meal service to art classes, to exercise classes, to help with Medicare and more.



The community has long advocated for traffic calming and street safety improvements on Atlantic Avenue, which has been the site of several tragic preventable deaths, including 31-year-old children. After relentless advocacy, City DOT has finally added several mid-block improved traffic light timings, and additional safety calming efforts like speed bumps.

ND THE 52ND DISTRICT



New Yorkers and their families deserve a lift! As a long-time advocate for congestion pricing, I am relieved that it will be reinstated in January of 2025. The new plan includes a 40% reduction to previously proposed fees and tolls. Congestion pricing will ensure a dedicated funding stream for mass transit, incentivize traffic reduction, improve air quality, and help build a more accessible subway and bus system for those with disabilities.



Ensuring students have the tools they need for a successful school year is essential! It was wonderful to join the Arab-American Family Support Center to distribute backpacks and supplies to families in our community. Thank you to everyone who donated so our students are set up for success.



I was honored to stand with the dedicated activists of Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action as we work to end gun violence. Together, we're making strides to hold gun manufacturers accountable. Thank you to all the champions who tirelessly work to protect our communities and save lives.



Storytime is always a joy, especially when it helps foster a love of reading in young children! Thank you to the Jewish Child Care Association for inviting me to be a guest reader and for your work with foster and biological families to build early literacy skills. Programs like this nurture young minds and strengthen our community.



*measures to make Atlantic Avenue safer. I
ents to this dangerous stretch of roadway,
near old resident Katie Harris. I am relieved
back crossings, concrete pedestrian islands,
painted curb extensions and rubber speed*



Thank you to the incredible team at NYU Langone Health Cobble Hill for hosting my annual flu shot drive. It's always great to catch up with neighbors and local health care professionals. If you still need a flu shot or a Covid-19 booster, find one here: www.vaccinefinder.nyc.gov

Housing Resources

Good Cause Eviction. I am proud that the enacted 2024-05 budget included good cause eviction protections against unreasonable rent hikes and retaliatory or discriminatory evictions. If you are eligible for Good Cause, you now have a right to remain in your home if you pay rent and follow your lease.

You may be protected under the new law if you live in a building with 11 or more units that was built before 2009. If your building has 10 units or fewer, you may still be protected if your landlord owns other buildings. The law does not apply to small landlords or tenants in rent-regulated or stabilized buildings, public housing, or Section 8 housing.

Tenant protections include restricting rent increases by more than 5-10% based on inflation, guaranteed lease renewals or the ability to stay month to month without a lease, and preventing eviction without the landlord showing good cause.

For more details, visit www.housingjusticeforall.org. The City's Tenant Helpline can also answer your housing questions, refer you to legal services, and provide ongoing case management. Call 311 and ask for the Tenant Helpline.

Rent Freeze Programs for Seniors (SCRIE) and People with Disabilities (DRIE). SCRIE and DRIE help people stay in affordable housing by freezing their rent. Eligibility is based on age, household income, disability status, and the type of building you live in. Many eligible people do not take advantage of this program, but it's easy to see if you are eligible. Call 311 or visit nyc.gov/freezeyourrent.

Senior Citizen and Disabled Homeowners' Exemption Renewals Due March 15. The NYC Department of Finance sent out renewal notices to households who take advantage of the senior citizen and disability tax exemptions in October. You have the option to apply online at or apply via a paper application. If you need help renewing or applying, call 311 or visit nyc.gov/finance.

New York School Tax Relief Program (STAR) and Enhanced STAR offer property tax relief to eligible homeowners. STAR and E-STAR can be issued as a credit by NY State, or, in some cases, as a tax exemption by NY City. Visit nyc.gov/finance or call 311.

Affordable Housing Lotteries: <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov>

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



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The Path Forward: NY's Literacy Action Plan

We are finally making progress in our goal to improve literacy rates. Our schools have been doing an inadequate job of teaching our kids to read because the prevailing approach for decades has been 'balanced literacy,' which isn't effective for two-thirds of our students. The Literacy Academy Collective - a non-profit and school in the South Bronx started by moms - and the NYS Education Department released the NYS Action Plan: The Path Forward to improve literacy instruction. As a Steering Committee member of The Path Forward, I am proud of the coordinated effort between key institutions and education leaders from across the state. Learn more: <https://linktr.ee/NYSthepathforward>

This new, historic Action Plan outlines how we will train future teachers in evidence-based methods aligned with how the brain processes written language. By targeting key areas of literacy instruction, the Action Plan is designed to align New York's education preparation programs with best practices for teaching literacy. New York will no longer send its education graduates off to teach reading with an empty toolbox. Now, it will be packed with tools that work.