



Dear Neighbor,

When I think about what to write in my Dear Neighbor letter, I try to imagine what might be on the minds of my constituents and naturally I reflect on current events. For many, the news can be distressing- to say the least. Regardless of one's political views, the undermining of civility and the incitement of angry and vulgar discourse is troubling, because we have seen in history where that can lead.

As heat waves across Europe and Japan are resulting in record deaths, fires raging across California and persistent droughts in places where our food is grown are all disconcerting reminders that the climate is changing and without truly dramatic changes we are all facing uncertain futures. Dependence on foreign oil, once a hot button issue, is no longer the main concern. The reliance on fossil fuel itself risks our long term survival. Renewable energy has struggled with start-up expenses, but is now comparable in cost. We need to do all we can to encourage our society's shift to these less polluting sources of power.

While the Federal Administration issues a daily challenge to our basic values, whether it is fairness for students duped by for profit colleges, or funding for reproductive health care, there is a less visible threat to our public lands and endangered or threatened species. In an odd interpretation of conservative values, oil, gas, mining, and ranching interests think these publicly held assets: national parks, forests and wildlife refuges should be open for private exploitation. The latest attack is on the Endangered Species Act, which for 45 years has ensured endangered and threatened species would be protected. It also requires that federal agencies consult with scientists and wildlife agencies before approving permits for commercial ventures such as: oil and gas drilling and logging activities.

Proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act, if allowed to proceed, will only increase the already intense pressure on many species that have lost habitat and will speed the path to extinction. In the late 1890s and early 1900s it was unthinkable that the overwhelming numbers of passenger pigeons, whose flocks could darken the skies, would end with their extinction by 1914. We have saved numerous species by careful protections via the Endangered Species Act. If we are not strong in our defense of it, not only will the Act die, but so will so many of our treasured animals, plants, fish and birds.

Without these protections, vital species will be lost and our bio diversity diminished. If for no other reason, than enlightened self-interest, speak up for those other earthly inhabitants who cannot speak for themselves.

Sincerely,

Deborah

A Silent Public Health Crisis

There have been a number of high-profile deaths by suicide this year, which have served to highlight the fact that the rates of death by suicide are growing across the country. A report issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in June found that the United States' suicide rate has risen roughly 30% since 1999, making it the 10th-leading cause of death in the country. The prevalence of deaths by suicide has even affected the decrease in life expectancy in the US in the last two years. As this newsletter goes to print, I am happy to see that there is starting to be more recognition and discussion of many concerns outlined below.

Historically, suicide has largely been treated as a mental health issue – treatment would only begin once someone was showing signs of mental illness or suicidal behavior, and those who died by suicide were believed to have some kind of a disorder or mental health issue that fundamentally distorted their perception of their environment. As the suicide rate has risen, however, more and more mental health professionals and researchers have begun arguing that we should be transitioning from a mental health approach to a public health approach.

While continuing to provide robust mental health services is essential, a public health approach to suicide would focus on population-level efforts to prevent the condition in which suicidal thoughts and behaviors occur. This kind of an approach acknowledges that while mental health is a factor in many deaths by suicide, individuals are also affected by very real cultural, economic, and social forces that influence their health and wellness. The June CDC report found that there was no diagnosed mental health condition in as many as half of reported deaths by suicide, and that death by suicide was most frequently associated with a number of stressors, like work or financial stress, strained relationships, and physical health conditions. While it is likely that many of those who died by suicide without a diagnosis were struggling with mental illness and not getting needed supports, this research also suggests that suicide is not something that solely mentally ill people grapple with, but rather an issue that can affect anyone dealing with serious problems or crises.

This reality is reflected in the differences in suicide rates for different demographic groups; for example, suicide rates have grown most for white men in rural communities, which have experienced an increase in economic insecurity and also often have a culture of gun ownership that allows easy access to a deadly weapon. Suicide rates are also much higher for those who habitually use opioids, and the CDC estimates that deaths by suicide involving opioids have doubled in the last two decades as opioid use has exploded. And, while suicide is rare among children and rates of suicide are much higher in white populations in general, black children between the ages of 5 and 12 are more than twice as likely to die from suicide than their white peers. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are five times as likely as their heterosexual peers to attempt suicide and their attempts are often much more serious. Additionally, over 40 percent of transgender adults report having made a suicide attempt. Research has pointed to the prevalence of bullying, both by peers, but also by adults and family members, as a major contributor to the increased rates of suicidality in the LGBTQ community.

These differences tell us that there are broader forces that influence the rates of death by suicide, and that a preventative public health approach is essential for addressing this issue. What would a public health approach look like? It should include resources and supports that ensure wellness at the individual, family, community, and societal level, building capacity at all levels to recognize the factors that put people at risk for death by suicide as well as those who help protect them. We must educate people on mental health issues and undertake (or build on existing) campaigns to destigmatize seeking help, so that people are getting the support they need. We should also ensure that the mental health supports that we have are well-funded and easily accessible.

At a governmental level, we must enact policies that support everyone's health, safety, and security. If you are always one paycheck away from losing your home, or one job loss away from losing your healthcare, it is only reasonable that you might experience high rates

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A Silent Public Health Crisis (continued from page 1)

of stress and anxiety. I believe that it is not a coincidence that suicide rates are rising at a time when income inequality is growing and our safety net programs are being eroded. We must fight for the conditions and policies that create the environments for people to be well – security around housing, education, jobs, access to healthcare, and the elimination of injustice. We must also fight for stricter gun control laws; firearms account for over half of all deaths by suicide, and the CDC report makes clear that individuals are at higher risk in areas where they have easy access to guns.

And lastly, at a societal level, we should work to center the values and characteristics that contribute to social and emotional wellness, and expand ideas of what it means to be successful. Starting at an early age, but continuing well into adulthood, many feel an immense amount of pressure to be successful. Definitions of success have narrowed over time, however; as job security and a strong middle-class job market have waned while inequality has grown, it has felt increasingly important to be successful in very specific ways. When success is defined as getting

into one of a handful of elite colleges (or in New York City, elite high schools), working in an exclusive field and accumulating wealth, it becomes incredibly difficult to achieve. The failure to be successful in specific ways is then often internalized, leading to high rates of anxiety, stress, and depression. Researchers have documented this in young people and older adults alike. Importantly, these definitions of success ignore much of what we know contributes to happiness – a strong sense of self and self-worth, maintaining health and physical well-being, intimate and supportive relationships with others, intellectual curiosity and the ability to explore what genuinely interests you.

We must recognize that for many, suicidal behaviors and even mental illness do not occur in a vacuum; people live in environments, and when those environments do not offer them the support and security they need, their mental health suffers. I will continue to work in Albany, and in my own community in New York City, to ensure that we are putting the policies, programs, and funding in place to support communities in this essential work.

Understanding the Importance of Public Assets

On Wednesday, September 5th, our new community middle school, MS 297 (aka 75 Morton Street) will open its brand new doors. For more than a decade, parents, teachers, advocates, community members, and elected officials have worked to create a community-based middle school in Greenwich Village housed in what was a state owned building. Once an eyesore in our community, 75 Morton has been rehabilitated, adaptively reused, and improved to such a degree that it is a true source of pride for our community.

However, this building is more than just a school we desperately needed – it is a publicly held asset being used for public good. Reusing the building at 75 Morton to create MS 297 was a goal realized by a community that looked to the long-term future rather than the short-term gain. While the sale of the building for any variation of luxury development would have brought a high price-tag for the state; a dearth of school seats in Lower Manhattan would still exist. The Department of Education (DOE) would have had to look to another developer to shoehorn a school elsewhere to meet needs, and our community would have lost a publicly held asset. Furthermore, rezoning and conversion to residential would have come with additional impacts on the community. While it may not have seemed like much to some, the building is invaluable to the City and students, parents, teachers, and Community Education Council District 2 will benefit enormously in the long-run. The opening of MS 297 proves that what is owned by the people, such as schools, public buildings, parks, public utilities, and even easements, are assets the people have a right to and should be preserved as public assets for the promotion of a better society.

Unfortunately, these assets are frequently threatened because the notion of our shared commitment to each other and societal improvement has changed over time. Political rhetoric has denigrated the role of government and undermined the public's confidence in government's ability to do the jobs necessary for promoting a forward looking and productive society. Many everyday challenges in dealing with running public systems such as sanitation and waste removal, maintaining parks, roads, public spaces, public buildings, public transportation, and the social safety net are met with a defeatist attitude that inevitably devolve into a discussion of privatization. Nonetheless these assets

still exist in the ownership of the public trust and are enormously valuable to a society that uses them, values them, and improves them for future generations. Public parks like Hudson River Park should not be left to seek out private development or donors to ensure the continued basic functions of a park. At a certain point, there will not be much park left.

I appreciate the community's continued vigilance and support in finding new opportunities to build schools that will serve young people in our neighborhoods. The opening of 75 Morton further reminds me that there are great opportunities for publicly owned assets to maximize the public benefit. Similar to personal real estate holdings, precious metals, or stock options, the short term gain achieved by selling off assets can appear paltry when compared to their long-run value. I hope that our community can further see the immense importance of these assets and resist attempts by any Administration, be it Federal, State, or City, to leverage public assets against the long-term public good.

Legislative Session Recap

In my June e-blast, I shared with you some of the highlights of the 2018 Legislative Session. Although I am proud of what my Assembly colleagues and I have accomplished this year, the 2018 Legislative Session is best defined by what was left unaccomplished by the State Senate. Specifically, I am referring to the Senate's craven refusal to pass the Reproductive Health Act and New York City's School Zone Speed Safety Camera Program. As the sponsor of both of these bills, I am deeply aware of the urgency for these bills to be signed into law. The speed camera program has already lapsed, putting school children in much higher danger of being struck by a speeding driver on their way to and from school. In addition, New Yorkers already have barriers accessing safe, legal abortions and with the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the US Supreme Court, this right is further threatened. The Senate must correct their historic failure of leadership and reconvene in Albany to pass these bills. If you would like a copy of my session recap, please email: glickd@nyassembly.gov



I was thrilled to tour the soon-to-be opened site of MS 297 at 75 Morton Street with Senator Hoylman and Speaker Johnson.



I was proud to stand with the Cooper Square Committee to raise awareness on illegal hotels and the detrimental impact they have on our communities.

Reducing Our Dependence on Plastic

We have an unhealthy dependence on plastics in the United States. We carelessly rely on plastic bottles, straws and bags, but we also consume plastic in our hair care products, medical supplies, clothing, and take out containers at alarming rates. Although our dependence on plastic stems from convenience, research suggests our consumption is detrimental to the planet.

The use of plastics was introduced on a wide scale in the United States in the 1950's, and since then it has dominated our lives. Plastics are in everything we rely on: your toothbrush and razor, the Tupperware you keep the potato salad in, and the nylon and polyester you wear are all made with plastic. Not to mention zip lock bags, eyeglasses, shopping bags, bottles and cups are all made with plastic. Plastic is made out of oil, diesel and petrol and is non-biodegradable. As a result, these items clog our landfills. New York City alone spends \$12.5 million dollars each year transporting plastic bags to landfills. Some researchers suggest these bags will linger in the landfill for more than 500 years.

One of the biggest impacts is from our reliance on disposable plastic bottles. On average, each person uses 167 disposable bottles a year. And only one out of six of the plastic bottles we use are recycled properly. In the United States, 38 billion water bottles are thrown away every year. Only 13% of these bottles are recycled in New York State.

If we do not take action to mitigate our consumption of plastic we will further destabilize aquatic and marine life, pollute our waterways and have far-reaching consequences in our food supply. Currently, an estimated 19 billion tons of plastic waste makes its way to the ocean every year. Some researchers predict that number could double by 2025. According to Ocean Conservancy, a science-based organization that monitors the ocean and wildlife community, 85% of debris collected from clean-up events in over 150 countries contained plastic

waste. Researchers also predict nearly 600 wildlife species could be drastically impacted by plastics polluting the oceans. This is particularly concerning given that fish often mistake plastic for food. Not only does this harm the aquatic community, it can also be harmful to humans who consume fish. In fact, by 2050 there is projected to be more plastic in the oceans than fish.

In an effort to get ahead of the problem, many cities are banning single-use plastic bags, straws and bottles. In the United States, Seattle and San Luis Obispo instituted a ban on plastic straws and utensils where food is sold. Many other cities have added fees or implemented a ban on plastic bags. In February, the Netherlands rolled-out a supermarket with a plastic-free aisle to help consumers shop consciously in order to lessen their carbon footprint. Across the country, Starbucks is in the process of banning straws in all its locations by 2020. In Brooklyn, the Barclays Center has already banned plastic straws. One thing we must keep in mind is continuing to have access to appropriate items, even if they are plastic, for individuals who may need them due to a disability. As we make changes in the way we use plastics or any attempt to include environmental practices we should think of the consequences that may arise from these environmental initiatives.

I am a proud co-sponsor of a bill (A6480) which would place a statewide ban on plastic bags with no penalties for consumers. This is a proactive measure that encourages consumers to use more eco-friendly reusable bags, purchase compostable trash bags, and drastically reduce the amount of plastic waste that ends up in landfills each year. By raising our consciousness and reducing our dependence on single-use plastic bags, disposable water bottles, straws and other plastic items, we can make a difference for the planet, marine and aquatic community.

The Changing Role of Libraries

Libraries are an important cornerstone of democracy. They serve as civic hubs where members of the community promote social and intellectual engagement, regardless of one's social, racial or economic background. Libraries are places for sharing information, and often serve as a gateway to online job searches, research educational courses and social services.

Although technological advances are beneficial and bookstores are great places to shop, there is nothing like visiting your neighborhood library to borrow a book, sit in on a lecture or take a professional development class. Many local branches offer tax preparation, GED test prep, CPR training, computer help, job search assistance, movie nights, fitness classes, and courses for English as a second language. Most importantly, libraries are places where people from every walk of life are granted the opportunity to congregate free of charge while engaging with individuals in their community.

The expanding role of libraries and librarians is partly due to the changing dynamics of communities and the accessibility of these institutions. Across the country, librarians are often serving as front-line workers handling society's most pressing challenges. These institutions are becoming hubs of community advocacy by providing social support services for the City's most vulnerable populations including assisting the homeless, people without adequate heat or air conditioning, new immigrants and individuals in need of public benefits.

In San Diego, social work programs in neighboring colleges are collaborating with libraries to assist in community service delivery. Some libraries have volunteer social workers from the National Association of Social Workers North California Chapter. The District of Columbia Public Library hired a social worker that created partnerships with the Department of Health Homeless Outreach Team to include training and support services to assist homeless individuals. The library also assists people returning home from prison and jail to connect with community resources.

Not only are libraries safe havens for vulnerable populations, reading, researching, learning and gathering, they are also cultural hubs with illustrious histories and artistic beauty. As early as 1809, President Thomas Jefferson wrote about the benefits of libraries: "I have often thought that nothing would do more extensive good at small expense than the establishment of a small circulating library in every county, to consist of a few well-chosen books, to be lent to the people of the country, under such regulations as would secure

their safe return in due time." To Jefferson, a public library served as a steward in preserving individual rights through the expansion of knowledge. This sentiment still rings true today.

According to a 2015 Pew Research Center survey, if a neighborhood library closed, two-thirds of Americans would have limited access to alternative resources, which would negatively impact their quality of life. The survey also found that libraries were hubs of information, relaxation, safety and resources for the elderly, unemployed and young adult population.

In order for libraries to continue to thrive, the State Legislature negotiated an increase of \$9 million dollars for public libraries in the 2018 State Budget. Overall, the budget included \$109.6 million for libraries, which includes \$90.6 million for operating support and \$19 million for an increase in capital construction aid.

It is important that our libraries get the support they need, and equally important that we promote an educated society that is well informed and engaged in the political process.

For a list of programs at various libraries around the city visit: <https://www.nypl.org/events>. You may be surprised at what you discover.



I am honored to stand with graduate students at Columbia University as they demand recognition of their union and a fair contract.

Reporting Noise Complaints from Bars and Restaurants

Noise complaints in New York City are the most frequently registered report to 311. We see a marked increase in complaints as weather improves and people spend more time outside and socializing at bars and restaurants. Most bar or restaurant owners who have gone through the Community Board liquor license review process have worked earnestly with the community to develop "stipulations" that govern how the bar operates in order to be mindful of their immediate neighbors. Stipulations get added to the liquor license and include things such as hours of operation, last call for drinks or table service, and how or when operable windows will be open or a sidewalk café used during warmer weather. However, not all bars and restaurants adhere to these stipulations.

If you are having issues with a bar or restaurant that services alcohol, there are a few steps you can take to ensure it is registered and addressed:

1. Call 311, or use the 311 website or mobile app to register a complaint either with your name or anonymously for the offending bar or restaurant.
2. Register the same complaint with the State Liquor Authority (SLA) either on the phone at (518) 474-3114 and select option 2, or online at: <https://www.sla.ny.gov/JSP/complaintreg/ComplaintRegistryPage.jsp>.
3. Inform the Community Board where the bar or restaurant is located that you believe they are in violation of the stipulations and they can help you ascertain specific stipulations for the location.
4. Call your local elected officials office, either on the State or City level to follow up on the 311 complaint with the NYC Department of Environmental Conservation for the noise complaint, the NYPD for the violation of stipulations, and to follow up with the SLA about doing an inspection and issuing a summons.

While these actions are not an immediate resolution to the annoyance, they do help hold bars and restaurants accountable that do not act in accordance with their commitments.

Appeal Lapsed SCRIE or DRIE

If you are a rent-regulated tenant who participated in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) or the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) program and were unable to appeal a denial of benefits after December 1, 2011 because of a disability or impairment, you may be able to restore lost benefits. Pursuant to a recent class action lawsuit, renters who were unable to appeal a denial and were phased out of the program, may be eligible to have prior frozen rent rates restored.

Renters need to reapply with a new application specifically for this purpose. The application can be found at: <http://nyc.gov/rentfreeze>. Please select the "Application for Additional Time to Renew Lapsed Benefit" document, or call 311 to have applications mailed to your home. You may also visit a SCRIE/DRIE Walk-in Center in Manhattan at 66 John Street, 3rd Floor, where you can pick up applications and receive assistance with submitting an application. All eligible SCRIE and DRIE renters will need to submit a completed application with all supporting documentation by October 26, 2018.

Sharing the Road

Just a friendly reminder that roads and sidewalks are shared by all-- pedestrians, vehicles, and cyclists—and we are only individually safe if everyone is following the rules of the road. Be aware of your surroundings and be courteous of others in your behavior.

Advancing One Fair Wage

Despite raising New York's minimum wage for non-tipped workers, tipped workers were not included in these changes. As such, tipped workers often earn below minimum wage, and are subject to harassment and exploitation in an attempt to earn higher tips. This is unacceptable. I will continue to support legislative efforts to pass one fair, living wage, for all New Yorkers. Additionally, as customers, we can all remember that tips are often the whole source of a worker's wages so please be thoughtful. Additionally, tipping in cash helps reduce wage theft. For more information and ways to be supportive of these efforts, visit One Fair Wage's website.

853 Broadway, Suite 2007, New York, NY 10003



NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

ASSEMBLYMEMBER

66TH DISTRICT

NEW YORK CITY

HOW TO REACH US:

Call 212-674-5153 or

email glickd@nyassembly.gov

PRSR STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Albany, New York
Permit No. 75

Don't forget,
due to religious
holidays, the Primary
Election will be
held **Thursday,**
September 13th.

The general election
will be **Tuesday,**
November 6th.



I am so happy
to have hosted a
successful paper
shredding event in
the East Village.
Safe disposal
of sensitive
documents helps
reduce identity
theft.