

# Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal

Reports to the People • 67<sup>th</sup> Assembly District • Winter 2019

## New York Leads Coalition of States in Lawsuit to Overturn Federal SALT Law

In 2017, the president signed a new tax law capping state and local tax (SALT) deductions to no more than \$10,000 for families itemizing deductions on their federal returns. The provision served as the linchpin in the plan to reduce taxes for the wealthy and large corporations, and has the potential to cost our state and other high-earning states billions of dollars.

New York, along with the other party states - Connecticut, Maryland and New Jersey – believe that the law was politically motivated, and intended to hurt states that the Administration considers not supportive of the president. They have sued to block implementation, and are now appealing the decision of the U.S. District Court upholding the constitutionality of the cap.

We will continue to protect all New Yorkers from this Administration's draconian policies.



## Fighting for State-Level Campaign Finance Reform

For as long as I have held office, I have been fighting to get the big money out of politics. My colleagues and I in the Legislature are elected to represent all the people, not just the ones with the most money. But our broken system for financing state elections has given elite donors and corporate interests an outside influence in shaping the actions of our government.

Creating a system of public financing for state elections, modeled closely after the matching funds system currently in place in New York City, would level the playing field and restore power into the hands of the people.

In 2019, the State budget created the New York State Public Financing Commission, and tasked it with outlining a system for public financing of elections for legislative and statewide offices.

The Commission was marred by dysfunction from the outset. It devised an overly complicated system that maintains big money's grip and falls far short of the vision we had for it. In addition, it unnecessarily undermines the existence of independent third parties, which have historically helped to usher in progressive reforms.

The right way to achieve true and lasting change is transparently, by passing legislation to create and implement a robust system of public financing for state elections.

With the specter of Citizens United hanging over us, it is incumbent upon us on the state level to seize this historic moment to make real systemic change.

*Breast cancer claims the lives of tens of thousands of people each year. In New York, more than 16,000 women in 2016 were diagnosed with breast cancer. In addition to advocating for increased funding in the New York State budget for organizations that work to raise awareness about and provide treatment and support to individuals diagnosed with cancer, I also host an annual mobile breast cancer screening event at my district office. I was happy to be able to provide free mammograms to dozens of my constituents thanks to Project Renewal, which offers mammography services from its mobile screening unit.*



*I was honored to join my colleagues and advocates at an important town hall meeting at West End Collegiate Church to discuss the New York Health Act. Health care is a right, and everyone should be able to easily access quality and affordable health care. Even with the Affordable Care Act, many New Yorkers cannot afford health insurance or are underinsured. Those who do have insurance often struggle to cover high out-of-pocket and prescription drug costs. I look forward to working this session to enact this measure into law.*



*I was happy to host my annual free flu shot day in my district office, with the help of the wonderful staff and nurses at Mount Sinai Medical System.*

District Office: 230 West 72nd Street, Suite 2F, New York, NY 10023  
Phone: 212.873.6368 • Email: [rosenthal@nyassembly.gov](mailto:rosenthal@nyassembly.gov)

## Securing the Rights of LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers Gender Neutral Bathrooms

As states across the country are moving to institutionalize discrimination against transgender individuals by blocking their access to the restrooms that conform with their gender identity and expression, I was thrilled that my bill to designate as gender neutral all single-use restrooms in state-owned, operated and leased facilities was signed into law. With this new law, facilities like state schools, hospitals and parks will be required to make their single-stall restrooms gender neutral. Along with successful efforts to ban gay conversion therapy, end the “trans panic” defense and by finally passing GENDA (the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act) into law, New York sends a strong message that we condemn bigotry and hate. Instead, we send a message that New Yorkers and visitors from all walks of life are welcome and more importantly, respected.



*New York is the second largest producer of maple syrup in the country. As a member of the New York State Assembly Committee on Agriculture, I host a mobile Maple Experience exhibit in the district to help students make the connection between the products available on the shelves in the supermarket and the work that goes into producing them. A team from the National FFA Organization traveled to New York City with students from New Visions FFA Chapter from Tompkins, Seneca and Tioga BOCES to PS 87 and PS 199. The students had the opportunity to walk through the interactive van, learn how maple syrup is made and sample some delicious maple treats.*

### West Side Sanitation Survey

After the New York City Department of Transportation’s (DSNY) wrongheaded decision to remove public trash can from numerous corners on the West Side and other areas across the City, many of you have reported to my office a noticeable increase in unsanitary conditions in our neighborhood.

DSNY claims that it removed the public cans in an effort to stop people from using them as disposals for their household trash, but anyone could have told DSNY that fewer cans would not lead to less trash, just more trash on the streets, in front of our homes and businesses. I have seen, and you have reported to me, overflowing public trash cans, trash strewn streets and an increase in rodent activity as a result.

In order to demonstrate to DSNY the impact its policy has had on our community, I organized a series of walkthroughs of garbage hotspots with DSNY Chief of Cleaning Operations Paul Visconti. We toured some of the neighborhoods’ most notoriously dirty blocks and identified opportunities for enhanced DSNY garbage collection and enforcement. While we found that some cans did contain people’s household garbage, which is not allowed, there was also plenty of trash tossed by pedestrians.

DSNY has now increased garbage collection service on the West Side. In the past, trash cans were emptied three times a week; however, DSNY now deploys an additional seven trucks per week to ensure every bin is cleared three times a day, Monday through Saturday and once on Sunday.

This is a major improvement and will help reduce the trash on our streets and in our neighborhoods.

In addition, DSNY has agreed to replace dozens of public trash cans on an ad hoc basis. I am pleased by DSNY’s responsiveness to our concerns and will continue to advocate for a cleaner New York.

We will schedule additional walkthroughs if they are needed when the weather improves, so please continue to keep my office informed about any trash conditions you observe.

## New State Legislation to Combat Lead Paint in Schools

I was shocked to learn that more than 900 classrooms across 300 public schools citywide tested positive for the presence of dangerous chipped, peeled or deteriorated lead-based paint. No child should be forced to sit in a school building that has the potential to make them sick.

While exposure to lead paint poses health risks to all people, children under the age of six who inhale or ingest lead paint chips or dust are the most vulnerable to exposure. Lead levels build up in the blood over time, and children who are exposed to lead on a daily or near-daily basis at home or in school are more likely to develop some of the most severe consequences.

A child who has been exposed to lead may experience developmental delays, learning difficulties, hearing loss, seizures, fatigue and a host of other health problems. Babies exposed to lead before birth are more likely to be born prematurely, have lower birthweights and experience slow growth.

In many cases, the damage caused by lead paint to children’s brains is irreversible. That’s why prevention is key.

I have introduced legislation in the New York State Assembly to create a more robust lead inspection, remediation and notification protocol in schools. It mandates inspections be conducted by licensed professionals trained to identify the presence of lead paint. Detailed records of regularly required inspections would be kept, and only approved methods of remediation would be permitted.

Importantly, the bill will require the Department of Education (DOE) to notify parents and teachers about the presence of lead paint. Current policy only requires the DOE to notify school principals and does not mandate any direct communication with parents or teachers. In addition, my bill will require the DOE to provide parents and teachers with information about the dangers of exposure to lead paint and will encourage parents to have their children’s blood tested for the presence of lead.

I am always working to ensure that every student has access to an excellent public education in a safe public school. No parent should worry that their child might be exposed to dangerous chemicals in school.

### Addressing Vacant Storefronts

It seems that no neighborhood is immune to commercial blight. Here on the West Side and all over the City, we have seen the troubling loss of mom and pop stores and an increase in the number of vacant storefronts, which remain unrented for extended periods of time. The reasons for this situation are varied and include the popularity of online shopping, high rents and ever-present scaffolding, to name a few.

I am the sponsor of legislation that will address the commercial vacancy issue by requiring building owners with a commercial space that remains vacant for more than six months to pay a monthly penalty of 1% of the assessed value of the property, with exceptions in certain special circumstances, such as when negotiations with a potential tenant fall through. The money generated from this penalty could then be used to help promote small business growth and development.

I was honored to join the fantastic advocates of Upper West Side Save Our Stores (UWS SOS) at an informative and well-attended town hall meeting at the New York Society for Ethical Culture to discuss the commercial vacancy problem. And I was pleased that New York City Comptroller Stringer was able to join and speak about his Red Tape Report, which details a series of recommendations designed to alleviate the burden on small businesses.



*Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal with members of UWS SOS (from L to R): Leslie Gersing, Susan Davis-Eley, Beth Krieger, Natalie Hilzen and Debbie Spero. Below: New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer and Assemblymember Rosenthal.*



# Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal's West Side Survey

As your Assemblymember, it is my job to advocate for the issues that are important to you and your family. Though I spend a lot of time traveling throughout the district and talking with you at community events or in my office, I want to hear directly from you about the issues that matter to you.

It is easy to feel disconnected from the conversations that shape our city, state and neighborhood. This survey is an opportunity to convey your priorities, and I encourage each of you to share your thoughts with me.

Whether it is a broken streetlight that needs to be repaired, a street that needs to be paved, a trash can that is overflowing or a school that is underresourced, please let me know. And, of course I want to hear from you about the work we do in Albany. How can we prevent overdevelopment while protecting small business, encourage tech innovation while protecting personal privacy, expand the housing laws to protect more tenants and homeowners in deeper and more meaningful ways and empower more workers to protect themselves?

I want to hear it all: the good, the bad and everything else. We are living in unpredictable times, and it is more important than ever that we work together to ensure that New York remains a bulwark in the storm.

*\*\*Your information is for sole use by Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal and her staff. It will not be shared with any third parties.\*\**

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Age Range \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are the most important issues you think I should be working on in Albany this session?

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2. What are the most important issues you think I should be working on in the district?

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3. Are there any public events you would be interested in attending? What issues should my office focus on for upcoming events?

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4. How do you keep up-to-date on my work in Albany and in the district? By what methods do you prefer to learn about what my office is doing? Examples might include email blasts, printed newsletters, or via social media.

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5. Please place a check mark next to the issues that interest you.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Agriculture
- \_\_\_\_\_ Aging
- \_\_\_\_\_ Animal Welfare & Protection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children & Families
- \_\_\_\_\_ Civil Rights
- \_\_\_\_\_ Consumer Protection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Coop/Condo Rights
- \_\_\_\_\_ Criminal Justice Reform
- \_\_\_\_\_ Data Privacy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disability Rights
- \_\_\_\_\_ Economic Development
- \_\_\_\_\_ Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Environmental Protection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ethics & Campaign Finance Reform
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gender Equality
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gun Safety
- \_\_\_\_\_ Healthcare
- \_\_\_\_\_ Homelessness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Housing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Immigration
- \_\_\_\_\_ LGBTQIA+ Rights
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mental Health
- \_\_\_\_\_ NYCHA
- \_\_\_\_\_ Public Safety
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quality of Life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reproductive Rights
- \_\_\_\_\_ Small Business
- \_\_\_\_\_ Substance Use Disorder
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation & Pedestrian Safety
- \_\_\_\_\_ Veterans' Issues

6. Do you have any other comments or feedback you would like to share with my office?

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7. If you would like to receive regular email updates about my work in Albany and in the district, please supply your email address here.

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Go to: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Linda-B-Rosenthal> to complete this survey online

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# News

from  
Assemblymember  
**Linda B.  
Rosenthal**

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## Working to Improve the M104 and West Side Bus Service

Residents of the West Side used to be served by a network of buses. After a series of service cuts were implemented by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority starting in 2010, the M104 and many other bus lines in my district and around the City suffered serious declines in ridership. More cuts were made, and a cycle of unreliable service followed by riders abandoning routes began, which persists to this day. Since the first round of cuts, I have been advocating aggressively for the restoration of bus service in my district.

As part of my continued advocacy for better bus service on the West Side, I invited New York City Transit President Andy Byford to ride the M104 bus with me and residents to discuss the chronic issues plaguing the route.

Dozens of eager straphangers, including members of Community Boards 4 and 7, gathered with me at the southbound West 92nd Street M104 stop to ride the bus with President Byford. He heard about the vital importance of the M104 bus line, and I also spoke with him about the recent removal of bus schedules that had for years been posted at every stop.

In addition, part of our conversation revolved around the financial hardship many riders felt, especially elderly riders and riders with disabilities, when the MTA eliminated the M104's east side connection in 2010. Without that connection, riders were forced to pay a second fare when transferring from the M104 to the M42. I am pleased to report that after the M104 bus tour, President Byford decided to discontinue that practice. From now on, straphangers who have already used their first free transfer will not have to pay a second fare when transferring from the M104 to the M42.

As part of its Fast Forward Plan, the MTA has undertaken an aggressive review and redesign of the subway and bus system citywide, and has committed to implementing a series of reforms. I am grateful that President Byford took the time to experience the M104 as regular riders do daily. I will continue to prod the MTA to improve and expand service on our vital bus routes.



*Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal with NYCT President Byford on the M104 bus.*