

Dear Neighbor,

I hope this email finds you well. I'm reaching out to share some important updates about the work I've been doing to support our community, small businesses, and fight back against the Donald Trump/Elon Musk White House.

Outdoor dining has been a lifeline for restaurants, creating thousands of jobs and making our streets more vibrant. However, new city regulations are making it harder and more expensive for businesses to maintain their outdoor spaces. That's why I introduced bill A7598, which will remove seasonal restrictions, cut unnecessary costs, allow restaurants to offer year-round outdoor dining, while letting municipalities keep reasonable regulations to promote clean, safe, and visually appealing outdoor dining setups. At a recent press conference, I stood alongside restaurant owners, hospitality leaders, and community advocates to push for this much-needed change— we can't let red tape dismantle a program that has benefited so many.

Beyond outdoor dining, I'm proud to share some information about the Assembly's 2025-26 budget proposal, which makes historic investments in housing, public safety, education, healthcare, and infrastructure. From increasing funding for affordable housing and mental health services to ensuring all students receive free school meals, this budget is designed to lift up working families and strengthen our neighborhoods.

Additionally, I am continuing to fight for affordability in our economy, democracy, immigrant protections, and LGBTQ+ rights. I recently passed a bill to expand ballot drop boxes, spoke out against federal overreach on immigration, and joined advocates to defend gender-affirming care.

Lastly, I invite you to join me at some upcoming events I am hosting including an **Easter Egg Hunt**, a **town hall**, and a free mammogram bus visit. Also, don't forget to check your ID—starting May 7, 2025, travelers will need a <u>REAL ID</u> to board domestic flights.

You can read about all of this and more below!

BUDGET & LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

I am happy to announce some of the amazing ways we are supporting our community in the Assembly's 2025-26 budget proposal.

Addressing the Housing Crisis:

- The budget proposal addresses New York's housing crisis with \$250 million for a Housing Access Voucher Program.
- A \$100 million towards NY-RUSH (Redevelopment of Underutilized Sites for Housing) and another \$100 million for Mitchell-Lama and NYCHA affordable housing developments to offset maintenance costs.
- \$750 million towards lead, mold, and asbestos remediation in NYCHA, and \$750 million for Mitchell-Lama preservation. These efforts will help low-income families, reduce homelessness, and improve housing conditions for New Yorkers.

Easing the tax burden on families and providing inflation relief:

- <u>Cut income taxes</u> for approximately <u>8.3 million taxpayers</u> providing an <u>average tax cut of \$446 in the coming year.</u>
- Eliminate income taxes for the lowest-income households, putting over \$225 million back into the pockets of over 350,000 filers.
- Support the governor's proposal to return sales tax payments directly to New Yorkers in the form of \$300-\$500 inflation rebate checks.
- An income tax credit of up to \$750 for eligible renters with incomes under \$200,000 in New York City, providing \$275 million in tax relief for around 1.87 million filers.
- Invests \$2 billion in helping cover childcare costs for families. This includes \$327 million towards expanding universal pre-k and \$100 million to support nonprofits that offer afterschool programs.

Public Safety:

- The Assembly's budget supports law enforcement, improving mental health care, and ensuring fair access to justice for all New Yorkers.
- \$10 million for anti-gun street outreach and other crime reduction initiatives focused on safeguarding at-risk youth to combat the epidemic of gun violence affecting our communities. It also allocates \$80 million for the Communities Helping Improve Lives Daily (CHILD) program for at-risk youth in high-need communities.
- Invests in criminal justice reform, mental health crisis response organizations, and provides \$20 million for Daniel's Law pilot programs.
 - Daniel's Law ensures mental health crises are treated as a public health issue, not a criminal threat, by establishing a meaningful response system to mental health crises outside of police and creating councils of mental health experts focused on de-escalation, trauma-informed care, and avoiding criminal justice system involvement.
- Improves monitoring of those in the mental health care system by requiring that hospitals create discharge plans with patient agreements, confirm follow-up appointments, coordinate care, and refer patients to community programs.

Infrastructure:



- Fully funding an elevator at the 23rd street A/C/E station.
- Invests in infrastructure with \$7.2 billion for the DOT Capital Plan, \$1.48 billion in local capital aid, and \$3 billion for the MTA's 2025-2029 Capital Plan.
- Modernizes roadways, bridges, and public transportation, making commuting safer, more reliable, and affordable for all New Yorkers.

Education:

- Invests in education to ensure every child has access to high-quality learning. It includes a \$2.7 billion increase in school aid, \$1.1 billion over governor Hochul's proposal; this includes a \$2 billion increase in Foundation Aid, \$569 million over the governor's budget.
- Provides <u>free school meals for all students</u> and introduces the LEAD summer youth program to connect kids with summer jobs.
- An additional \$2.5 million in <u>library aid</u>, bringing the total to \$107.1 million to support programs and resources in schools and libraries across the state.
- Makes higher education more accessible by offering tuition-free community college for all New York students, regardless of age or field. It also includes \$3.5 billion in capital funding for SUNY,
 \$1.2 billion for CUNY, and additional operating funds for both systems. To support students, the

plan expands income eligibility for TAP and the Excelsior Scholarship Program and restores \$9 million for college opportunity programs, with a \$6.2 million increase, totaling \$212 million.

Healthcare:

- Prioritizes healthcare access for all New Yorkers, with \$35 million for reproductive and maternal health.
- Addresses hunger with \$75 million going towards hunger prevention, and \$75 million for Nourish NY.
- A 7.8% wage increase for health and human service workers.

Environmental Protection:

- Invests in climate action by putting \$500 million towards the Environmental Protection Fund, \$600 million for clean water infrastructure, and \$1 billion for green building and transportation programs.
- Includes a requirement that the New York Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) conduct an updated comprehensive study of energy affordability and energy burden throughout the state.
- These efforts aim to mitigate climate change and preserve New York's natural resources for future generations.

Supporting Small Businesses and Communities:

- Creates job opportunities for veterans and formerly incarcerated individuals through a new Work Opportunity Tax Credit, which rewards businesses with up to \$9,600 for hiring individuals from these groups who have historically faced barriers to employment.
- Invests in infrastructure, including \$50 million in Temporary Municipal Assistance and \$758.2 million in AIM funding to support local governments and their public works projects.

Supporting Veterans:

• Allocates \$35 million for veterans' programs and fully funds the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Veterans Support Program, providing counseling for veterans dealing with PTSD and other mental health challenges.

FIGHTING BACK AGAINST FEDERAL OVERREACH

Ballot Drop Box Bill Passed



With a long record of attacks on democracy coming from Donald Trump and the weaponization of the federal government, such as the current effort to dismantle the Post Office, it is more important now than ever to ensure all New Yorkers can safely and securely vote.

My pro-democracy bill <u>A1014</u> has been adopted by the Assembly and Senate! Once the bill is law it would make it possible for early and absentee ballots to be returned at secure ballot drop-boxes.

Assemblymember Tony Simone Slams Trump ICE Head Tom Homan As He Visits Albany



Tom Homan was invited to our state capital by Republicans attempting to sow fear and division into our communities. New York has always been and will always be a home for immigrants. I am proud to come from a family of immigrants and I will always stand up to fight white supremacists like Tom Homan who try to tear our nation apart. In Albany, I am continuing to push for laws to protect our immigrant New Yorkers like the Access To Representation Act, the New York for All Act, and the Dignity Not Detention Act to protect hard working immigrants in our state. You can read the full NYIC package on their Web site.

Assemblymember Tony Simone Speaks Against ICE Overreach with the NYS BPHA Caucus



Spreading lies does not make it true... but that's what autocrats do!

Overstaying your visa is a civil offence, not a criminal one, but Tom Homan and his white supremacist advisors don't care about that fact. Constitutional rights, especially the first amendment, apply to ALL people in this country, as the Supreme Court has declared time and time again, but Homan wants to enter our state and demand that we break the law and defy the Constitution because his boss said so.

Families are living in fear! Kids can't go to school! We cannot afford to deport thousands of hardworking people who keep our economy functioning!

If Republicans were about real solutions they would pass comprehensive immigration reform, but they only want fear.

In New York, we actually care about passing legislation to help people, such as the NY for All Act, the Access to Representation Act, the Dignity Not Detention Act, the Working Families Tax Credit, and language access.

We will fight back! If you come for one of us, you come for all of us!!!



Our trans and gender non-conforming siblings are under attack and we must do all we can to protect them here in New York!

I am proud to represent one of the Queerest districts in the nation, and to fight for a state contingency fund for gender affirming care. When you come for one of us, you come for all of us. We will fight back with every bone in our body, and we will win!

Congestion Pricing



Congestion pricing was developed as a crucial solution to multiple crises in our city and in the time since the cameras went live it has more than achieved its mission. Our subway system is crumbling. Congestion pricing has unlocked \$15 billion to fix it. Our city center had been brought to a standstill by an overwhelming number of cars. Congestion pricing has already significantly decreased congestion without spillover into surrounding areas. Our streets are cleaner and safer because of the traffic reduction. Spending in the Central Business District has not declined, transit ridership is up, and honking has decreased. Congestion pricing is finally here and it is exceeding expectations. I stand with the Governor—keep the cameras on!

FIGHTING TO SAVE OUTDOOR DINING IN NYC

Outdoor dining has been a game-changer for New York City—creating thousands of jobs, helping restaurants stay open, and making our streets more vibrant. However, new city regulations are making it harder and more expensive for restaurants to keep their outdoor spaces. Seasonal restrictions, costly fees, and excessive red tape have forced many beloved spots—like **Empire Diner in Chelsea**—to dismantle their setups and lose valuable seating.

That's why I introduced a bill (A7598) to legalize year-round outdoor dining across New York State. This legislation will:

- Remove seasonal restrictions so restaurants don't have to tear down and rebuild setups each year.
- ✓ Reduce unnecessary fees and red tape that make it too costly for small businesses.
- Allow municipalities to regulate outdoor dining in a way that makes sense for their communities, and promotes public safety and health, while keeping it accessible for small businesses.

New Yorkers love outdoor dining, and the numbers prove it: at its peak, the program created nearly **12,000 jobs**, earning **working-class** New Yorkers nearly **\$375 million in wages**, and **generated \$9.6 million in tax revenue**. We can't let bureaucratic obstacles crush something that has been such a success.

At a press conference on March 31st, I stood with restaurant owners, hospitality leaders, and community advocates to highlight the urgent need for action. Together, we will fight to save outdoor dining and ensure that New York remains a world-class dining destination.

YEAR-ROUND OUTDOOR DINING IN THE NEWS



By Phil O'Brien https://w42st.com/post/no-joke-outdoor-dining-takes-to-the-streets-age n-on-april-1/ PUBLISHED March 31st, 2025

"Assemblymember Tony Simone joined local restaurant owners and business leaders at Chelsea's Empire Diner on Monday morning, announcing legislation aimed at cutting through bureaucracy and making outdoor dining permanent year-round."

"Simone called current regulations "ridiculous," emphasizing, "One of the most beautiful things about COVID was seeing our streets come alive," and lamenting restrictive city regulations that have made outdoor dining too costly and cumbersome. His bill proposes eliminating seasonal limitations and unnecessary financial burdens..."



By ABC 7 https://abc7ny.com/post/nyc-outdoor-dining-restaurants-can-begin-serving-sidewalks-roadways/16114768/ PUBLISHED April 01st, 2025

"So many cities around the world you can eat in the street. We can't restrict these rules. The city put too many rules that make outdoor dining too expensive. We have to be a pro streetscape and a pro open streets city and state," Assembly Member Tony Simone said.



By Roger Clark https://abc7ny.com/post/nyc-outdoor-dining-restaurants-can-begin-serving-sidewalks-roadways/16114768/ PUBLISHED March 31st, 2025

- "In so many cities around the world, in Paris, in Italy, you name it, you can eat in the street. You have people, you have folks eating and dining. We can't restrict these rules," Simone said. "Unfortunately, the city put restrictive rules that make outside street dining too expensive. Too many bureaucratic obstacles in place."
- "The city has effectively killed, in so many ways, outdoor dining in the roadway, because of the seasonality of it," New York City Hospitality Alliance executive director Andrew Rigie said.
- Empire Diner founder and chief operating officer Stacy Pisone said she understands that guidelines needed to be put in place for roadway dining, but they withdrew their application because it was so limited.

Check out the full New York 1 story by clicking <u>here</u>.



By Dean Moses https://www.amny.com/news/nyc-outdoor-dining-launches-manhattan-as sembly-03312025/ PUBLISHED March 31st, 2025

"We're a really amazing city. We have a lot of smart, hard-working people in sanitation, and in the bids, there's a way of keeping them clean and having outdoor dining all year," Assemblymember Simone argued on March 31.

"One of the most beautiful things about COVID is the streetscape was alive," Simone said. "Unfortunately, the city put restrictive rules that make outside street dining too expensive, too many bureaucratic obstacles in the place. And we support small businesses. We want New Yorkers to allow this piece to be alive."

NYC outdoor dining sheds would be year-round again if new bill becomes law



OUTDOOR DINING SEASON STARTS WITH NEW PUSH TO MAKE OPTION YEAR-ROUND

PIX11.COM ONUT SHOP (II) NYC OUTDOOR DINING SHEDS WOULD E

By James Ford https://pix11.com/news/local-news/nyc-outdoor-dining-sheds-would-be-year-round-again-if-new-bill-becomes-law/ PUBLISHED March 31st, 2025

"State Assemblymember Tony Simone led a demonstration at the Empire Diner on Monday morning after introducing a bill in the state legislature calling for outdoor dining structures to be allowed year-round in city streets. The measure is in contrast to a New York City Council law passed last year that now requires dining sheds to be up for the eight-month period only. The City Council law also restricts the design and types of structures that can be built."

"It fosters community," he said at the morning news conference. "[It's] good for small businesses, improves public safety, increases tax revenue, and makes our streets more than a way to get around. It makes them a place to be."

Check out the full Pix 11 story by clicking here.



By Lisa Ritchie https://wabcradio.com/2025/03/31/outdoor-dining-begins-in-nyc/PUBLISHED March 31st, 2025

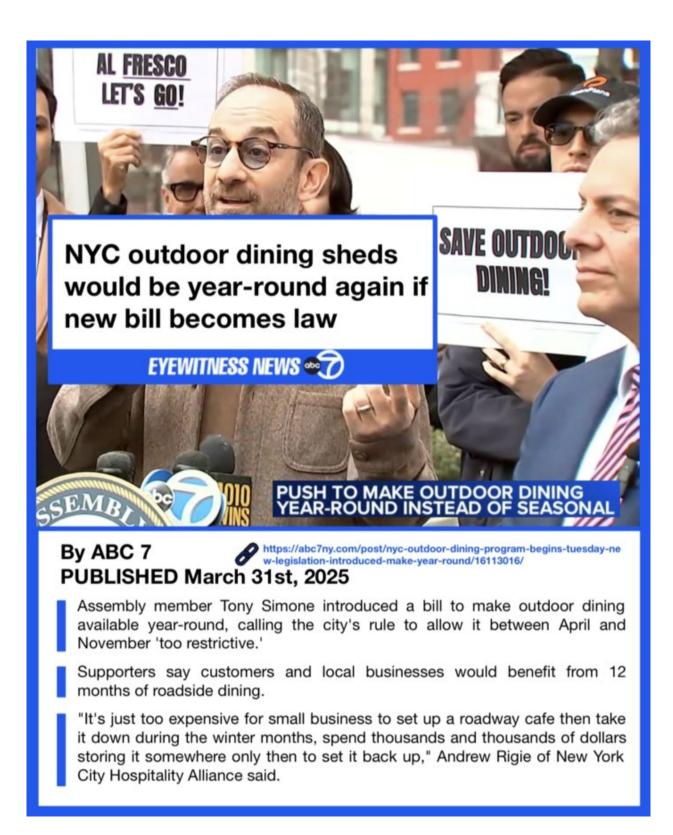
Meanwhile, there's a call to ease up on the roadway restrictions, which were put in place after the pandemic. Manhattan Assemblyman Tony Simone is pushing a bill that would allow roadway setups year-round, saying the regulations are overburdensome for small businesses.



By Scott Pringle https://wabcradio.com/2025/03/31/outdoor-dining-begins-in-nyc/PUBLISHED April 1st, 2025

The city has approved about 600 of those and 18-hundred sidewalk dining structures. That's far below the roughly 13-thousand that were up during the COVID pandemic. Assemblyman Tony Simone just introduced a bill that will allow restaurant owners to keep their street structures up through the winter.

"It is cost prohibitive. It costs tens of thousands of dollars to build these structures that meet the qualifications and then to have take them down and find a place to store them is just too expensive." Check out the full WBGO story on their Web site.



Outdoor Dining Shrinks Back To Wealthier Neighborhoods as Mayor, Council Point Fingers STREETSBLOG NY



By Kevin Duggan https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2025/03/31/outdoor-dining-shrinks-back-to-we althier-neighborhoods-as-mayor-council-point-fingers PUBLISHED March 31st, 2025

"While the roadway dining season officially begins on April 1, overburdensome regulations such as limiting when outdoor dining is allowed have all but killed the program in New York City," Simone's office said in a Friday advisory. "The bill will fight back against government regulations that have unintentionally diminished our streetscape and stifled small business investment in their communities."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Easter Egg Egg-stravaganza



Hop on over to Chelsea Green Park for an egg-citing Easter Egg Hunt! Join me on Saturday, April 12th at 11 AM (with a rain date on the 13th) at 20th Street between 6th & 7th Avenues for a morning of fun, candy, and friendly competition. We'll have two hunts—one for the little bunnies and

one for the bigger kids (5th grade cutoff, no loopholes! 🔊). Plus, strike a pose at our festive	e photo
station with fun props! Don't miss out—this will be egg-stra special!	

Join Assemblymember Tony Simone for a Community Town Hall!



Town Hall Meeting

Saturday, May 3rd 11am-1pm (doors open at 10:30am) PS 11 Auditorium (320 W 21st St)

RSVP at: bit.ly/TonyTownHall



Have Questions Answered On:

Housing, Education, Immigration, Transportation & More

Hear From Speakers On:

Defending Against Federal Cuts, Protecting Civil Rights & More





Special Guest: Congressman Jerry Nadler



simonet@nyassembly.gov



212-807-7900

Date: Saturday, May 3

Time: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM (Doors open at 10:30 AM)

Location: PS 11 Auditorium (320 W 21st St)

I'm excited to invite you to my upcoming **Town Hall**—a space for open dialogue, community engagement, and solutions-driven discussions on the issues that matter most to you.

Join us for an opportunity to speak with experts on housing, education, immigration, transportation, and more. We'll also hear from powerful voices on defending immigrant and LGBTQ+ rights and more.

This is your chance to ask questions, share your concerns, and connect with neighbors working toward a stronger, more inclusive New York. **RSVP today to secure your spot!**

RSVP HERE

I look forward to seeing you there!

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No-Cost Mammogram Van

American-Italian

CANCER FOUNDATION

No-Cost Mobile Breast Cancer Mammograms



MAY 22, 2025, 9AM-4:30PM

FULTON HOUSES 421 W 17TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY, 10011

Call 212-628-9090 or go to bit.ly/Simone-Mammogram-Bus for more details!



Program only open to NYC residents ages 40-75 who have not had a mammogram within the last 12 months.





FUNDED BY NYS Cancer Services Program





Early detection saves lives! I'm partnering with the Italian-American Cancer Foundation to offer free mammogram screenings for eligible NYC residents.

Date: Thursday, May 22, 2025 **Time**: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Location: 421 West 17th Street, New York, NY 10011

This service is available to NYC residents ages 40-75 who have not had a mammogram in the last 12 months.

Sign Up Here – You'll be contacted closer to the date to schedule your appointment.

For more details, call 212-628-9090. Take charge of your health—schedule your free screening today!

PSAs AND UPCOMING PUBLIC EVENTS



Starting May 7, 2025, travelers 18 years or older will require a REAL ID-compliant form of identification to board domestic flights at JFK, LGA, EWR, and Stewart International Airport. If your New York State

driver's license or ID doesn't have a star or a flag on it, it won't be accepted for air travel—so now is the time to check!

The Port Authority wants to ensure everyone is prepared for this change. Avoid last-minute travel headaches by updating your ID ahead of time. For more information, check out the <u>NY DMV website</u> with instructions on how to apply, information on documentation and fees, and tips on how to avoid mistakes!





Update for Reduced-Fare riders! The MTA has officially transitioned to **Reduced-Fare OMNY**, making it easier than ever to tap and go on subways and buses. With your **Reduced-Fare OMNY** card, you'll still

enjoy half-price fares, free transfers, and the new fare-capping benefit—after 12 rides in seven days, the rest are free! Reload your card online, at OMNY vending machines, or participating retailers. If you haven't received your card or need help, visit <u>OMNY.info</u> or call 877-789-6669 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. or Saturday-Sunday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Get ready to ride with convenience and savings!





Vanderbilt is presenting the next installment of Vanderbilt in the City: Conversations on America series—a fireside chat on "American Humor." This event promises a rich exploration of humor's influence on literature and society and will be guided by accomplished authors and Vanderbilt faculty members **Lorrie Moore** and **Major Jackson**.

Please join on April 10 at 6 p.m. ET for a pre-event reception. The discussion will immediately follow at 7 p.m. ET. An RSVP is required to attend.

Neighbors and Vanderbilt communities will have an opportunity to convene with faculty and thought leaders for discussions that explore big questions, ideas and the ever-evolving identity of the United States.

American Humor

In a fireside chat, award-winning authors and Vanderbilt faculty members Lorrie Moore and Major

Jackson will explore the power that humor and storytelling have to bridge divides. Moore will read from *I* Am Homeless if This Is Not My Home, and Jackson will read from Razzle Dazzle: New & Selected Poems. Afterward, they will discuss humor's role in society and writing's cultural power and political impact.

Thursday, April 10 Reception: 6–7 p.m. ET Event: 7–8:30 p.m. ET

All events for this series will be at Vanderbilt University-New York City, at 440 W. 21st St., New York, NY 10011.

PS: Please also save the date (May 1) for the last event in this series:

Health in America: Challenges and Opportunities

This panel, moderated by **Jonathan Metzl**, director of Vanderbilt University's Department of Medicine, Health and Society, will explore pressing public health issues. Panelists will include Eric Klinenberg of New York University, **Melissa Harris-Perry** of Wake Forest University, and **Alfredo Morabia** of Columbia University.

Thursday, May 1 Event: 7–8:30 p.m. ET

For more information, please visit their website.

Supply Drive Announcement



We will be holding a donation drive at our office to collect school supplies and toiletries for Guttman Community College students in need. The drive began Monday, March 10th and will continue through June 14th. Please drop off donations at our office any time between 10AM and 4PM Monday through Friday with supplies or schedule a pickup by calling 212-807-7900.

Thank You!

Thank you so much for reading our Community Update! I hope you were able to learn something of value about our work in Albany and found some helpful information about happenings in our district. As always, my office and I are here to serve you so if you need any assistance with a state agency, unemployment benefits, tenant issues, or have an idea for new legislation, please email us at simonet@nyassembly.gov or call us at 212-807-7900.