



# Assembly Member REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT

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## 2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION BULLETIN

Dear Neighbor,

It was a historic year for the Legislature. Working together, the Assembly and Senate were able to move landmark legislation forward. I am proud to have been appointed by Speaker Carl Heastie to leadership as the Secretary for the Majority Conference.

In this momentous session, we achieved the strongest tenant protections in history with the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019. We passed the New York State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act to cut greenhouse gas emissions, expand the production of clean, renewable sources of energy, and protect the environment. We revamped workplace discrimination statutes, decriminalized marijuana possession, strengthened the rights of the LGBTQ+ community by banning the “Gay and Trans Panic” defense, and reformed our elections in New York State.

From the very start of the 2019 legislative session, we set the tone for meaningful change. We enshrined Roe v. Wade into New York State law with the passage of the Reproductive Health Act. We banned conversion therapy and passed the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) to protect trans and gender non-conforming individuals from acts of hateful discrimination. We approved the DREAM Act to support college-bound children of undocumented immigrants, and the Child Victims Act allowing survivors of childhood sexual abuse in New York State to seek justice.

We look forward to continuing close collaborations and partnerships with colleagues, advocates, and, most especially, our constituents. Call, email, or visit us. Our office is here to serve you!

Onward,

  
Rebecca A. Seawright

### Examples of Seawright-Sponsored Bills Passed Assembly

- **Equal Rights on the Basis of Sex (A.271)** Amends section 11 article 1 of the constitution to provide equal rights for women.
- **Filing Campaign Financial Disclosure Agreements (A.1641) signed into law.** Amends the election law and requires all candidates and committees in accordance with Article 14 of the election law to file campaign-financial disclosure agreements in an electronic reporting system by removing the \$1,000 filing threshold.
- **Required Warning Label on Electric Assisted Bicycles (A.4990)** Requires manufacturers and retailers of electric assisted bicycles to print warning labels stating the use of electric assisted bicycles is prohibited on any public highway or sidewalk.
- **Management of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (A.316) signed into law.** Adds the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation to the consolidated Public Authorities Law. Updates the Equal Employment Opportunities section of the law of Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation to include sexual orientation.
- **The Women on Corporate Board Study Act (A.6330)** Implements a study on the number of women directors who serve on the boards of corporations who are authorized to do business in the state of New York to ensure women are included in corporate leadership positions. Every fourth year, a new report will be prepared and published.
- **Licensed Lenders Charge Annual Fees on Open-End Personal Loans (A.7668) signed into law.** Extends the provisions of the 1996 law for two years which gives licensed lenders the flexibility to charge annual fees on open-end personal loans. This will give licensed lenders the same pricing flexibility as banking institutions.
- **Notification of Allowance for Infant’s Support (A.8033) signed into law.** Ensures that all persons legally responsible for a minor child, regardless of gender or status as a parent or legal guardian, will receive equal notice of that minor child’s right to support. Currently, New York State law does not reflect the diverse family structures that exist throughout the State and does not treat parents and legal guardians equitably under the law.



### Spotlight on Constituent Advocates

#### Big Win For Adoptee Advocates: Records Unsealed in 2020

The Assembly passed legislation that will allow adoptees 18 years and older to obtain a certified copy of their original long form birth certificate (A.5494). Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright cosponsored and voted for this critical legislation to give her constituent, Joyce Bahr, President of New York Statewide Adoption Reform’s Unsealed Initiative, and all adoptees, the right to know their heritage and medical histories.

Adoptee advocate Joyce Bahr (right) proudly rises to be recognized in the Assembly’s Chamber beside Jack Robbins (left), Special Assistant-Community Affairs for Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright.

# Victories for New York State: Examples of Seawright-Cosponsored Legislation Signed Into Law

Assembly Member Seawright is proud to have cosponsored the following measures:

- **Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (A.8281)** Implements measures to abolish vacancy decontrol, expand the Emergency Tenant Protection Act statewide, and diminishes the ability of landlords to raise the rent after renovations of a building or apartment unit.
- **Co-op/Condo Tax Abatement Extender (A.8383)** Many young families, retirees living on a fixed income and others rely on the New York City co-op and condo tax abatement program to stay in their homes. Seawright cosponsored A.8383 to extend the property tax abatement for New York City co-op and condo homeowners for two more years.
- **New York State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (A.8429)** Reduces greenhouse gas emissions, implements the state's renewable energy goals for 2030, supports disadvantaged communities, and invests in green energy projects that pay prevailing wages.
- **Banning the 'Gay and Trans Panic' Defense (A.8375)** Prevents the use of a victim's sexual orientation or gender identity as an affirmative defense in an effort to reduce a charge of murder to manslaughter.
- **The "Times Up" Workplace Discrimination Act (A.8421/A.8424)** Ends the "severe or pervasive" standard for discriminatory harassment – by eliminating the archaic standard for harassment; we can crackdown and hold employers accountable regardless of how the reports are made. The law extends protections
- for all employees working for all employers, public and private, across the state, including domestic workers and independent contractors. We are enshrining safeguards for race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other protected classes under New York State law.
- **Extend the Statute of Limitations for Sexual Assault Survivors (A.8412)** Extends the statute of limitations to twenty years for rape in the second degree and criminal sexual act in the second degree, to ten years for rape in the third degree and criminal sexual act in the third degree, and would make conforming changes to incest in the first and second degrees. Further, this bill increases the time period in which the victim could bring a civil suit for these offenses to twenty years.
- **Expand Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Programs to Promote Economic Growth (A.8414)** Extends and improves the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) program, which helps ensure these businesses have fair and equal access to state contracts.
- **Primary Election Reform** Makes it easier for voters to change party affiliation so they can vote in their preferred party's primary (A.8228B), and sets next year's presidential primary election date as April 28, 2020. (A.8176).
- **Decriminalization of Possession of Marijuana (A.8420A)** Allows for the expungement of certain marijuana convictions and eliminates the "public view" statute that has allowed New Yorkers to be charged with misdemeanor possession, regardless of the quantity possessed, exacerbating an injustice that's put disproportionately more people of color through the criminal justice system.

## Seawright Sponsors Panel Discussion on "Combating Anti-Semitism: A Discussion with Jewish Leaders in New York State"



Seawright said, "We need to speak up, we need to speak out, and we need to speak the truth about confronting and eliminating anti-semitism in all its hateful forms—period." Seawright introduces the panel and welcomes Jewish Community Relations Council of New York President and constituent Dr. Cheryl Fishbein. The event had a huge turnout with constituents of all backgrounds interested in learning how to combat hateful acts of discrimination in their own communities.

(Second left photo) Callie Teitelbaum, a Simon Wiesenthal Center scholar and intern with the Office of Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright for the Summer of 2019, introduced each panelist.



(Left to right), Amanda Berman, founder and Executive Director of the Zioness Movement; Callie Teitelbaum, Simon Wiesenthal Center student intern; Michael Cohen, Wiesenthal Center Director; Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Executive Vice President of The New York Board of Rabbis; Cheryl Fishbein, President, Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC); Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright; Jeff Leb, founder and President of Capitol Consulting; Melissa Weiss, the National Campus Outreach Director at the Simon Wiesenthal Center; and David Pollock, the Associate Executive Director and Director of Public Policy and Jewish Security of the Jewish Community Relations Council.

## Seawright Holds Press Conference at Capitol to Support 9/11 First Responders and Firefighters

The Uniformed Firefighters Association of Greater New York came to the steps of the New York State Capitol to announce their support of A.5026A, cosponsored by Assembly Member Seawright. This legislation will eliminate “mechanical void spaces” in high-rise buildings that are a danger to residents and firefighters.

Seawright said she is proud to cosponsor legislation to protect our heroes and she took the opportunity to call on the federal administration to renew the 9/11 Victim’s Compensation Fund.

“We stand here today with New York’s bravest to call on Congress to do the right thing and fully fund the 9/11 victims compensation fund!” said Seawright. The measure was subsequently approved and signed into law in July.



Seawright stands with the Uniformed Firefighters Association (UFA) on the steps of the Capitol at a press conference.

## Commitment to Air Quality

As the waste transfer station at East 91st Street has been open for over 8 months, we have been closely monitoring conditions with the Community Advisory Group. With a commitment to monitoring air quality in the surrounding area, Assembly Member Seawright has secured an additional grant for that purpose.

In response to traffic collisions at the intersection, Seawright sent a letter to request additional resources to address a mounting problem. In response, the New York City Department of Transportation installed new pavement markings to clarify movements for vehicles traveling through the intersection at East 91st Street and York Avenue. These markings include left/straight and straight/right lane designations for northbound York Avenue approaching 91st Street and a straight only arrow in the left lane of southbound York Avenue approaching 91st Street to eliminate conflicts with left-turning vehicles.

The Department of Design and Construction, responsible for the design and construction of the East 92nd Street ramp, are advancing with their design for the project.



Seawright toured the East 91st Street waste transfer station before the opening in March 2019.

## “Assemblymember Seawright Calls for Extell Developer to Clean Up Upper East Side Construction Site”

*The Villager, 10/25/2019*

### Seawright Takes On Extell As Covered By NY1

Citing a growing list of community complaints, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright called upon Extell Development Corp. owner Gary Barnett to fix public health and safety hazards at his demolition site on the Upper East Side.

Seawright cited numerous complaints from neighbors including dark and dangerous sidewalks, rodent infestation, and related air quality concerns at the vacant parcel at First Avenue between East 79th and East 80th Streets. Neighbors report that sidewalk lighting installed by the owner is unreliable, leaving the area dark and unsafe at night.

“Exposure to the demolition site is a special public health concern for the many elderly and preschoolers who must travel along the perimeter of the block-long site to shop or go to school,” Assembly Member Seawright commented.

In response to Assembly Member Seawright’s action, the developer installed new lighting on the perimeter. Assembly Member Seawright will continue to monitor site conditions.



Community Board 8 Chairwoman Alida Camp, UES residents Helene Goldfarb and Michele Classe, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, 79th Street Neighborhood Association Founder and President Betty Cooper Wallerstein, and 79th Street Resident Dr. Sherley Zussman.



## Women of Distinction Awards

We honored women who live or work in the 76th Assembly District, who are making a difference every day with the Women of Distinction Awards at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Auditorium.

(Top row, left to right) Arlene Williams, Alida Camp, Jennilie Brewster, Khadijah Julia Abduraham, Ruth Berghammer, Alexandria Abenshon, Ruth Gutman, and Shakima Grant. (Bottom row, left to right) Jovemay Santos, Lori Bores, Rossana Ceruzzi, Faith Fraser, Rebecca Seawright, Police Officer Lori Murray, Police Officer Ashley Pappas, Julia Ferguson, Christine Crowther, and Police Officer Lorraine Wade.

## Seawright Questions MTA Chairman on Service Issues and Overcrowding at Hearing on MTA Capital Program

F train performance ranks dead last. It's the worst line in New York City. Roosevelt Island residents rely on the F train. They have few mass transit options.

At a recent public hearing on MTA spending, Assembly Member Seawright put the question directly to MTA Chairman Patrick Foye.

"I regularly hear many complaints from my constituents. They are fed up!" she said. "What are you doing to improve service on the F train?"

Chairman Foye responded that the F train will be getting a new signal system as part of \$40 billion in capital improvements for the system over the next five years. He promised that the new signaling will benefit customers at every stop of the F train, including Roosevelt Island.



Assembly Member Seawright followed up last spring's Cherry Blossom Festival on Roosevelt Island and extreme subway station overcrowding. Chairman Foye said the dangerous overcrowding occurred after the New York Police Department ordered trains to bypass the station for a "short period." He added, "That's not ideal...the next Cherry Blossom Festival, we're going to do better working with the NYPD."

Finally, Assembly Member pressed Chairman Foye on bus service restorations for our district. The MTA cut the M31 bus service in 2017. But bus ridership is trending upward with new medical and research facilities opening or expanding along York Avenue. Chairman Foye said he was aware of the expanding facilities in the neighborhood and would check back with information on plans for the M31.

Reliable and safe transit is a vital issue for our community, and Assembly Member Seawright is following up with the MTA Chairman and will continue to fight for the services every taxpayer deserves.



Community Board 8 Chairwoman Alida Camp, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright and President of Carnegie Hill Neighbors preservation group Lo van der Valk at the 19th Precinct's National Night Out in Carl Schurz Park.

## Census 2020 is Hiring!

The 2020 Census is hiring census takers and administrative positions with a starting rate of \$25/hour. The U.S. Census Bureau works to count every person residing in the United States every ten years. The results determine representation in all forms of government and funding, impacting all of our lives including public health, education, and infrastructure. As a member of the New York State Assembly's Manhattan Delegation, Assembly Member Seawright recently sponsored job fairs at Pace University and Hunter College Silberman School of Social Work to assist in providing employment opportunities to constituents. You may [2020census.gov/jobs](https://www.2020census.gov/jobs) for more information.

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from Assembly Member  
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Principal "Mr. Martin" Woodard and Assembly Member Seawright cut the ribbon on the newly renovated space with teachers, PTA presidents, and PS 183 parents.

## Funding A Creative Space For Students

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright is proud to have helped secure funding for a \$125,000 state grant to PS 183 on East 66th Street for renovations to an aging art room. The art room was in need of upgrading and repair to better serve the Pre-K through 5th grade students. Assembly Member Seawright is dedicated to supporting our communities' public schools in any way possible ensuring every student the best education possible.