



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukah, and Joyous Kwanzaa to all who are celebrating the holidays this week. Thank you to our neighbors who joined us for a holiday open house at our district office on Thursday and contributed to our toy drive.

Enclosed in this report is my Op-ed in AMNY calling for wage and cost of living increases for the Direct Support professionals in the non-profit sector who support over 85% of IDD New Yorkers. It's time to do the right thing for New Yorkers with disabilities with a budget including a 7.8% COLA increase.

As Chair of the Assembly Disabilities Committee, I helped to negotiate a budget that included starting a new ombuds program to help New Yorkers with Developmental Disabilities navigate services. I have included the contact information for the Community Service Society, the new ombuds program manager in this report.

New measures have been signed into law that I cosponsored and strongly supported to prevent lithium-ion battery fires in New York City. In 2023, 18 New York City residents lost their lives from lithium-ion battery fires. Earlier this year, a young journalist was killed, and several others sustained critical injuries from a lithium-ion battery blaze. This is a first step to ensuring safety from these fast-moving and deadly fires.

As a reminder, our office will be closed for the legal state government holidays including Christmas and the new year from Monday, December 23 through Wednesday, January 1. We will re-open on Thursday, January 2, 2025.

Phone: 212.288.4607
Email: SeawrightR@NYAssembly.gov

Sincerely,

REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT

Seawright Op-Ed Featured In...



THE CHALLENGES ARE IMMENSE, BUT SO IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENACT MEANINGFUL REFORMS THIS YEAR.

By Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright, Chair of the New York State Assembly Committee on People with Disabilities



Seawright Op-Ed: Time to do right for New Yorkers with disabilities

New York is at a vital crossroads when it comes to supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and the workforce that provides essential care. The voters of the state recently and overwhelmingly approved the Equality Amendment to the NYS Constitution, which I proudly sponsored. It protects from discrimination, for the first time within our primary state governing document, people with disabilities. Now, we must turn our attention to the plight of the dedicated workers who provide critical assistance every day to our community. The challenges are immense, but so is the opportunity to enact meaningful reforms this year

[Read More](#)

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright Announces the Start of New Ombuds Program to Help New Yorkers with Developmental Disabilities



In last year's fiscal budget, and as Chair of the People with Disabilities Committee, Seawright supported the inclusion of \$2M appropriation to establish the ombuds program through a competitive procurement process and included additional annual funding for ongoing support of the program.

The goals of the new ombuds program are focused on providing for our most vulnerable communities the resources that they need to thrive in New York:

- Establish a statewide ombuds network to identify, investigate, refer and resolve complaints related to access to or delivery of services;
- Provide people with developmental disabilities and their family members education on services and rights, help people complete forms/paperwork, access records, and connect to legal services as necessary;
- Implement comprehensive community education to increase awareness and use of ombuds services by people with developmental disabilities; and
- Collect and analyze data on ombuds program activities and use that information to support ongoing quality assurance and improvement activities.

To contact the new ombuds program for assistance, people with developmental disabilities or their family members can call 1-800-762-9290. For more information, visit <https://www.cssny.org/programs/entry/iddo>.

Seawright's Annual Holiday Open House & Toy Drive



Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright and Judge Jim "Santa" Clynes.



Sheila O'Doherty, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, District Leader Kim Moscaritolo, and Joan Hasner.



Health Advocates for Older People Executive Director Laura Colin Klein (left) and Board Chair Betsy Timberman (right) joined the celebration, bringing the healthy aging calendar and other resources to our community.



Volunteer Kevin, his grandfather Mr. Sintuchai, and Assembly Member Seawright.



David Hochberg and Assembly Member Seawright talk about the success of 2024 and the adoption of the Equal Rights Amendment to the New York State Constitution.



Intern Gavin Alder who was just nominated by Seawright and selected by the State Education Commissioner for consideration to be a Presidential Scholar.



Community activist Todd Stein donated toys to the annual toy drive to benefit children in our community.

**Toys Donated to New York Center for Children & Families With
Green Thumb NYC**



Executive Director of the New York Center for Children Christine Crowther received generous toy donations from our community delivered by Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright.



Fior Hidalgo accepted the toys on behalf of Green Thumb NYC to be given to local children.

Seawright Discussed Passage of the Equal Rights Amendment with Feminist Leaders Shari Weiner, Linda Stein, Dr. Barbara Rosen, and Patricia Martone



Seawright Presents Judy Gilbert with Special Recognition as a Board Member of the Ronald McDonald House Charities



Assembly Member Rebeca Seawright, New York State Attorney General Letitia James and Piet Sinthuchai Discuss Upcoming Legislative Session



**Assembly Colleagues Jennifer Rajkumar and Rebecca Seawright
Sponsors of E-Bike Legislation Discuss Strategy for Passage in
2025 Session**



Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright cosponsored and strongly supported a legislative package signed into law to ensure the safety and quality of lithium-ion batteries



According to the FDNY, Lithium-ion batteries are one of the leading causes of fires and fire deaths in New York City. This has caused devastating results – there were more than 200 fires in New York City in 2022, causing six deaths and well over 100 injuries.

In 2023, 18 New York City residents lost their lives from lithium-ion battery fires. Earlier this year, a young journalist was killed, and several others sustained critical injuries from a lithium-ion battery blaze.

These are not your typical fires – they burn hotter and longer, making them particularly deadly. These laws address serious safety concerns and help ensure that lithium-ion batteries are safe for New Yorkers

The new measures:

- Prohibit retailers from selling lithium-ion batteries unless they meet specific safety standards
- Mandate notices on lithium-ion battery charging cords that warn consumers not to leave them plugged in when they aren't in use
- Create a lithium-ion battery education campaign
- Provide training for firefighters on how to handle lithium-ion battery fires

Minimum Wage Increased



While we have taken concrete steps to improve our economy, create good-paying jobs and keep costs in check, many New Yorkers are still struggling to make ends meet. The higher cost of living driven largely by pandemic-related economic disruptions has taken its toll on families' household budgets. We shepherded through a multi-year, gradual increase in the state's minimum wage.

The 2023-24 state budget increases the minimum wage to 16.50 starting January 1, 2025. Then, in 2026, the minimum wage will increase and be indexed to inflation, so wages always keep up with rising costs and help ensure that lower-wage workers can afford necessities, such as food, housing, and health care.

Consider Our Office Your Resource!

Vehicles enrolled in the Individual Disability Exemption Plan (IDEP) are exempt from the Congestion Relief Zone toll

To qualify for IDEP, the vehicle must be registered to an individual with a disability that prevents them from using public transportation, or to a person designated by that individual, such as a caregiver, if they use that vehicle to drive the applicant in the Congestion Relief Zone.

Enrolling into IDEP is a two-step process. Applicants first need to establish eligibility, and then use that eligibility to enroll in IDEP.

Eligibility and credentials

To apply for IDEP, applicants must first establish eligibility for the plan by:

- Getting assessed at an IDEP Assessment Center and receiving a determination of eligibility, or
- Providing proof of enrollment in the MTA's Access-A-Ride program, or
- Providing proof of enrollment in the [NYC Parking Permit for People with Disabilities \(PPPD\) as of](#)

[November 15, 2024](#)

To be assessed at an IDEP Assessment Center, follow these steps:

1. To schedule your IDEP assessment, please call the appropriate number for your preferred location. Additional Assessment Centers will be opening in the coming months.
2. Brooklyn, Queens, and Bronx: 844-233-3377
3. Manhattan: 888-811-1050
4. Print and complete the IDEP Eligibility Assessment application.
5. Take a copy of the completed application form to the assessment appointment.
6. If the applicant is found to be eligible for IDEP, they will receive a IDEP eligibility approval notice.

Once an applicant has established eligibility, they may apply for IDEP either for the vehicle registered to them, or for a vehicle registered to another person, such as a caregiver.

Enrollment in IDEP requires a valid E-ZPass New York account. If you already have an account, please ensure the license plate on the account is up to date.

Vehicle owners without an E-ZPass New York account must sign up for one before applying for IDEP. [Learn more about signing up for E-ZPass New York.](#)

How to apply

[The IDEP application is available on the MTA website. Follow these steps:](#)

1. Complete the online application.
2. Upload the required documentation.

You can also find a copy of the application on the [E-ZPass website](#). Applying online is the preferred method.

Applicants will receive a formal decision notice once their application is processed. If the application is denied, the decision notice will provide information on how to appeal.

For additional instructions on how to apply for IDEP, [watch this webinar](#). You can also call the E-ZPass Customer Service Center at 800-333-8655 for assistance.

How To Use Your Reduced Fare OMNY Card





METROCARD BUS

STOPS HERE (79/York):

WED. 1/15

10:00AM- 12:00PM

REFILL YOUR
METROCARD

APPLY FOR
REDUCED FARE

CASH ONLY

Rebecca
Seawright
ASSEMBLYMEMBER

NO-COST NOTARY

Monday - Friday

10am-12pm

1485 York Avenue (78/79 Streets)



**ASSEMBLY MEMBER
REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT**



HOUSING LEGAL CLINIC

EVERY OTHER TUESDAY

**EVERY OTHER TUESDAY
AT 3:30 PM ATTORNEYS FROM
THE LAW OFFICES OF GRIMBLE
& LOGUIDICE, LLC WILL
PROVIDE ADVICE ON HOUSING-
RELATED MATTERS AT NO-
COST FOR CONSTITUENTS OF
THE 76TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT**

Get help navigating the housing court process, responding to notices, dealing with threat of eviction, getting repairs from negligent landlords, and advocating for your rights as a tenant in New York City!



**SCAN ME TO
RSVP!**

**A VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY WILL
HOST A ONE -ON-ONE SESSION
WITH ATTENDEES.**

**RSVP REQUIRED:
CALL: 212-288-4607**

EMAIL: SEAWRIGHTR@NYASSEMBLY.GOV

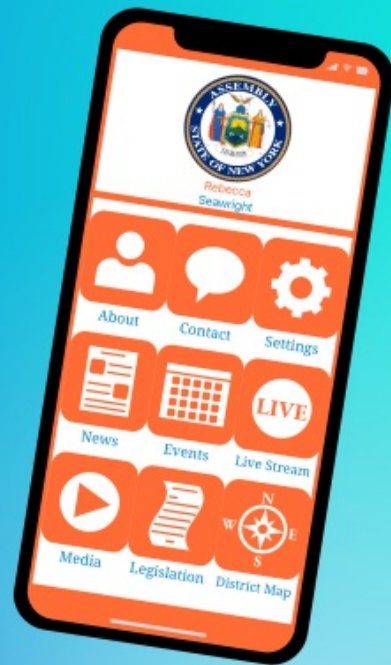
*The legal clinic is solely to provide guidance and advice from attorney's experienced in landlord- tenant law.
The clinic does not guarantee a desired outcome and does not establish an attorney- client relationship.
Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright does not represent or advise constituents in any legal matters.*

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright's App is Live!

Stay Up-To-Date with the latest:

- News
- Events
- Legislation
- Livestream
- Media

Available on iPhone and iPad



[Community Update: December 13, 2024](#)

[Community Update: December 6, 2024](#)

[Community Update: November 26, 2024](#)

[Community Update: November 22, 2024](#)

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