



Assemblymember
Jo Anne Simon
52nd District



Announcements & Upcoming Events December 2019

A Message from Jo Anne...

The New York Public Campaign Financing Commission (PCFC) recently issued its recommendations for a public financing system in New York State. I strongly support a public financing system, but I have several concerns about the PCFC's recommendations, including campaign contribution limits (which were rightly lowered, but not enough) and their new restrictions on ballot access for minor parties.

The PCFC was created as part of the 2019-2020 enacted budget as a way to address the issue in the face of the legislature's inability to come to agreement on a system of publicly financed elections for New York State. Public financing of campaigns is a means of keeping big money out of politics and enabling candidates with little access to money to compete on a level playing field.

However, I am extremely disappointed with the PCFC's vote to require 2% return for minor parties to have a ballot line (or meeting an increased threshold of 130,000 votes instead of the current 50,000 vote threshold every four years for a gubernatorial nominee), which would empower the Conservative party and eliminate other minor parties' ballot access. As I said in my letter to the Commission, "whether fusion voting should continue in New York should be left to the legislature, not a commission. If the Commission wants an updated standard for minor party ballot access, it ought to do so fairly and not advantage one minor party" over others.

Another feature in their proposal was to restrict matching contributions only to those coming from a candidate's district. However, in districts where the majority of constituents are people of low to moderate income, the likelihood of contributions from in-district donors is greatly decreased. In the City's public financing scheme, contributions from all New York City resident donors are matchable, so City Council candidates representing low to moderate income districts are not limited to contributions from their districts in order to qualify for matching funds. I had proposed a regional approach that more closely resembled the New York City approach.

The legislature and the Governor have to reject the recommendations by December 22nd, or they will go into effect. I, for one, am available for a special session to address this and other issues which have been raised. The legislature could also pass another proposal in the next session.

FYI: letter I wrote to the Commission: <https://www.scribd.com/document/437225240/Ltr-to-PCFC-Simon-11-19>

Sincerely,

Jo Anne Simon

Save the Date: Dyslexia Awareness Day in Albany, 3/17/20. You are cordially invited to attend the 5th Annual Dyslexia Awareness Day on Tues., March 17th, 2020 at the New York State Capitol in Albany. This extraordinary event brings together students, parents, advocates, and experts from across the state who care about this issue. You will have an opportunity to network with others, meet with legislators to share your experiences, and advocate for legislative solutions, such as early screening and teacher training.

2020 Parking Calendar. My 2020 parking calendar includes the days of the year that certain parking regulations are suspended throughout the city. You may download the 2020 parking calendar on my [website](#) or contact my office via email simonj@nyassembly.gov or call 718-246-4889 to have one sent to you.

Climate Wednesdays: Solutions for a Cooler Brooklyn, 12/11/19 & monthly. Join 350Brooklyn and the Brooklyn Public Library for a monthly educational series to engage citizens in accessible solutions to the climate crisis. The series takes place in the Info Commons Lab at Brooklyn's Central Library (10 Grand Army Plaza) from 7-8:30pm. The next event will be on Dec. 11: Green New Meal: The Food-Climate Connection. Details: <https://350brooklyn.org/climate-wednesdays/>

Time to Enroll in Health Care for 2020. New York's Healthcare Marketplace, NY State of Health, is a way for individuals, families, and small businesses to find quality health insurance, including stand-alone dental plans (Note: the Marketplace is not for people who have Medicare). The enrollment period for 2020 plans is open.

Need Financial Help? Financial aid to buy insurance is available for most consumers. You may qualify for an even more affordable option through the state's new Essential Plan (EP), which covers key health benefits for a \$20 monthly premium or nothing, depending on income (ex. EP is available for a household of one with an annual income of \$24,980). You may also be eligible for Medicaid or Child Health Plus (CHIP).

How Do I Apply? Apply online at www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov, or call the Marketplace at 1-855-355-5777.

Need Free Help Applying? Trained in-person assistors, or navigators, are available to walk you through the application process. To find a navigator near you and set up an appointment, call the Marketplace or go to: <https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/ipanavigatorsitelocations>

When Do I Apply? **Apply by Dec. 15, 2019 for coverage effective Jan. 1, 2020. Open enrollment for 2020 ends on Jan. 31, 2020** (Note: NYS has a longer enrollment period than the federal government). After that time, you may only apply if you experience a qualifying event, such as loss of your current coverage, pregnancy, job loss, marriage or divorce, or other event.

Note: You may apply for Medicaid, CHIP, or the Essential Plan at any time of year.

Provider Look-up: <https://pndslookup.health.ny.gov/>. Find out which plans your doctor accepts, which plans a facility accepts, and which doctors are in each plan.

Heat Laws Reminder. We're into heat season, and it's important that tenants and landlords know their rights and responsibilities. "Heat Season" is October 1st through May 31st and heat must be provided:

- Between 6am and 10pm, if the outside temperature is below 55 degrees, inside temperature must be 68 degrees or higher.
- Between 10pm and 6am, inside temperature must be 62 degrees or higher, no matter the outside temperature.

It is New York City law that landlords provide hot water to tenants 365 days a year. If you are a tenant experiencing problems with your heat or hot water, please notify the owner of your building ASAP. If problems persist, call 311, or reach out to my office for assistance.

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Equipment Repair, & Clean and Tune Benefits. HEAP helps New Yorkers with lower incomes pay to heat their homes. The HEAP benefit application period is now open (apply ASAP). Eligibility and benefit amounts are based on household size and income, primary heating source, and if a household member is younger than 6 or older than 60, or permanently disabled. You may also be eligible if you receive certain public benefits like SNAP, TA or SSI. Emergency HEAP can also assist in a heat-related emergency.

You may also be eligible for other benefits like the “Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement” benefit or the “Clean and Tune” benefit, which includes the cleaning of primary heating equipment, but may also include chimney cleaning, minor repairs, installation of carbon monoxide detectors or programmable thermostats. To find out if you’re eligible and to apply for these benefits, contact HEAP at 1-800-342-3009 or go to: <https://www.ny.gov/services/apply-heating-and-cooling-assistance-heap>.

Celebrate Kwanzaa at the Brooklyn Children’s Museum (BCM). In partnership with the Asase Yaa Cultural Arts Foundation, this exhibit features the creation of a community mural, African dance and djembe drumming workshops, art making, storytelling and an introduction to Kwanzaa program. BCM’s pay-what-you-wish hours take place on Thur., Dec. 26 from 2-6pm and on Sun., Dec. 29 from 4-7pm (full exhibit runs longer).

Citizen Squirrel’s Youth Civic Engagement Workshop, 1/14/2020. I’m happy to co-sponsor this event with Citizen Squirrel, Big Reuse, CB6, the Brooklyn Public Library, and Council Member Brad Lander, which invites our youngest community members to be civically engaged, focusing on elementary-school aged children. This free workshop will be interactive and fun, and will guide families on the range of civic engagement opportunities in our community. The workshop will take place on Tues, 1/14, from 4-5pm, in the Park Slope Library, 431 6th Ave/9th St. RSVP to CitizenSquirrelNYC@gmail.com.

Park Slope Civic Council - Grant Applications Due 12/13/2019. If you know of community groups with projects in the arts, education, youth programs, or civic improvement, the Civic Council is accepting grant applications! Applications are due by Dec. 13th. Application & details here: <https://parkslopeciviccouncil.org/2020-community-grants/>

BQE Reconstruction Update. The BQE Expert Panel is still evaluating the suggested reconstruction ideas, reviewing the project assumptions, and developing a set of project guidelines. It is my understanding that the panel will come out with their report soon, possibly this month, and I'm looking forward to seeing what they have to say on this difficult issue. I am still working to bring State Department of Transportation (DOT) and its technical expertise back to the table for this project, and recently met with the new State DOT Commissioner to make this request again.

You may have seen that the Brooklyn Heights Association, Cobble Hill Association, A Better Way, and several other nearby community groups recently released a statement about their vision for the end result of the BQE reconstruction, focusing on a sustainable solution that would benefit all of the neighborhoods that surround the BQE and that would “protect our neighborhoods and parks, emphasize our neighborhoods’ historic character, and enhance pedestrian connectivity and green space.” I am pleased to see the impacted communities come together, and I look forward to continuing to work with them on this project. You can read their vision here: <https://thebha.org/news/unified-vision-for-the-bqe/>

As more information comes out, we will continue to inform the community. For more information on the project and the panel, visit: <https://www.bqe-i278.com/en/home>



Helpful Resources. My office has various resources available, including bike maps, recycling stickers for your trash and organic bins, women’s history brochures for youth, a guide to filing utility complaints, and housing and legal resources. Stop by to take a look and chat with my staff.

Sign up for my Email Alerts. Email simonj@nyassembly.gov to stay informed about community events, including my senior resource fair, mammogram van, flu shot drive, summer reading challenge for kids, and public forums.

My Bill to End Name Hyphenation Mandates is Enacted! Did you know that if you marry and wish to keep your own name and add your spouse’s, you must hyphenate it? My bill to eliminate the hyphen-mandate (pun intended) was also enacted. You can [read more about it on](#) my website.

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