



Assemblymember  
**Jo Anne Simon**  
52nd District



**Announcements & Upcoming Events**

**March 2020**

**A Message from Jo Anne...**

The saying goes, if you're not at the table you're on the menu. As we **celebrate Women's History Month** and the progress we've made, I'm grateful for the women who have not only pulled up seats to the table but made the table their own. Let's honor their legacy this Women's History Month by renewing our commitment to working for full equality.

Thanks to fearless New Yorkers, like suffragette Susan B. Anthony and abolitionist Sojourner Truth, we've come a long way since our nation's founding. We also take inspiration from Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who organized the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848, after they were turned away from the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention because they were women. Muckraking journalist Ida B. Wells-Barnett wrote articles exposing post-slavery racism and lynching. At a time when talking about birth control was considered absurd and obscene, Margaret Sanger broke the mold by opening the nation's first family planning center in Brooklyn in 1916, which resulted in her imprisonment. The courage that these women possessed has inspired other trailblazers to continue their fight, including disability rights advocate Judith Heumann, who helped develop the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The #MeToo movement, created by Tarana Burke, the founder of Just Be, Inc. and director of the Brooklyn-based nonprofit Girls for Gender Equity, has brought attention to sexual assault and harassment issues that have plagued our nation for far too long.

Although undeniable progress has been made, we have much to do to reach full equality. **Want to learn more about New York trailblazers like Shirley Chisholm & Sonia Sotomayor?** Email [simonj@nyassembly.gov](mailto:simonj@nyassembly.gov) to **request my women's history materials for youth**, including a Women's History Month brochure, activity pamphlet, and a Women's History Month Drawing Contest brochure.

Sincerely,

Jo Anne Simon

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**POSTPONED: Our March Java with Jo Anne in Park Slope is postponed.** We are following the city and state's guidelines on minimizing non-essential contact due to the coronavirus, but, as always, please feel free to call or email my office with questions, comments or concerns. We will let you know about the new date.

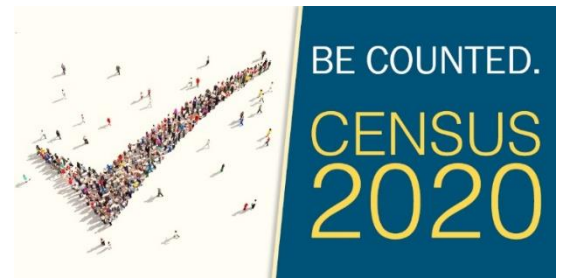
Note: Some Community Board meetings and public gatherings have been cancelled. Check before you go!

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**Free Tax Prep Assistance:** It's that time of year again...tax time! If your family earned \$64,000 or less or you are a single filer who earned \$45,000 or less in 2019, you can get free help using NYC Free Tax Prep. IRS certified VITA/TCE volunteer preparers can prepare returns for you or assist you in preparing your own returns online. Find a location near you by calling 311 or go to: [nyc.gov/taxprep](http://nyc.gov/taxprep)

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**2020 Census is Coming - Help NY Get Counted!** Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau works to count every person residing in the country. The information collected helps inform important political, economic and social decisions, including the allocation of funding, legislative redistricting and congressional representation. **In previous census counts, New York State -- and particularly Brooklyn -- has been undercounted**, resulting in the loss of billions in federal funding for hospitals, public schools, transportation, emergency services and more.



I am working with community partners and government agencies to make sure New York gets counted! Reach out to my office to join community efforts to spread the word about the census. I have flyers you can give out and posters to display in your store, building, place of worship, etc. **The census will be available online for you to complete starting March 12, 2020.** Here are a few common myths and facts about the Census:

**Myth:** My information will be shared.

**Fact:** Your information is protected and anonymous. Federal Law requires your answers to be confidential and remain confidential.

**Myth:** There will be a citizenship question on the 2020 Census.

**Fact:** No, there will not be a citizenship question on the census and every New Yorker can and should respond without fear of repercussion because of their immigration status.

**Myth:** Taking the census is difficult.

**Fact:** For the first time ever, the census can be done in person, online, or over the phone. By Census Day, April 1, 2020, every home will receive an invitation to participate in one of the three ways. **It only takes around 10 minutes to complete.**

**Myth:** The census doesn't impact me.

**Fact:** The census determines your representation in congress. By not filling out the census, you impact the way you and your neighbors are represented. The census also impacts an array of local resources, including funding for school lunches, highways, firefighters and families in need.

The U.S. Census Bureau is hiring! For details and to apply for jobs: [2020census.gov/jobs](https://2020census.gov/jobs).

Census teach-in events across the NYC: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/census/map/teachins.html>

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**Plastic Bag Ban Starts March 1.** On March 1, the statewide plastic bag ban went into effect. I was so proud to vote to ban single use plastic bags with the option for local governments to charge 5 cents for paper bags because plastic bags wreak havoc on our environment and make our neighborhoods dirty. You can do your part and BYOBag - Bring Your Own Bag - by remembering to take reusable bags with you when you shop. **Please feel free to stop by my office for a free reusable bag from NYC Department of Sanitation!** More information about the ban: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/50034.html>

**Renters & Homeowner's Tax Exemption & Rent Freeze Programs.** I was pleased to partner with Assemblymember Carroll and the NYC Department of Finance (DOF) for a renter's and homeowner's tax exemption and rent freeze program enrollment event. If you could not attend, but you are interested in applying, contact my office or go the DOF website <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/index.page> for details and an application. Here is a quick run-down of the programs:

Homeowners - apply for an exemption to lower your property tax bill:

- STAR: homeowners with an annual income of \$500,000 or less.
- E-Star: seniors 65 & older with annual incomes of \$88,050 or less.
- SCHE/DHE: seniors 65 & older, disabled homeowners with annual incomes of \$58,399 or less.
- Veterans.
- Clergy.

Tenants - Seniors & People with Disabilities may apply to keep your rent from increasing if you:

- Are at least 62 years old or 18 years old with a qualifying disability; &
- Have a household income of \$50,000 or less; &
- Live in a rent regulated apartment; & you
- Spend more than 1/3 of your income on rent.

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**Over 150 People Attend Dyslexia Awareness Day! Our coalition to ensure that all kids can be successful readers grows stronger every year.** At my 5th annual Dyslexia Awareness Day, it was inspiring to hear from so many students, and see how they are succeeding not in spite of, but because of, their different abilities. We also heard a powerful keynote speech from actor, producer, and activist Ameer Baraka. Ameer finally received a dyslexia diagnosis when he was incarcerated, a story that happens too frequently, especially to young men of color. It is why Senator Myrie and I have introduced legislation to screen people who are incarcerated.

Thanks to my cosponsors for their moving testimony: Senator Brooks, Senator Jackson, Assemblymember Epstein, & Assemblymember Carroll. And, thanks to all of our great advocates and educators for participating, including teachers & students from Mary McDowell Friends School in Brooklyn and many more.

You can [view pictures from the event and view the keynote and attendee speak-out on my website.](#)

Let's keep the momentum going for these critical dyslexia bills!

[S4341/A5259](#) (Brooks/Simon): *Requires school districts to conduct mandatory early screening for dyslexia for all children*

[S4342/A6450](#) (Brooks/Simon): *requires all literacy classes for teachers to include the structured multi-sensory approach*

[S6787/A7822](#) (Myrie/Simon): *requires dyslexia screening for certain people who are incarcerated*

[S7093/A8786](#) (Hoylman/Carroll): *establishes a dyslexia task force*

[S5608/A7210](#) (Jackson/Carroll): *interventions for children with dyslexia & other phonological learning differences*

**CEC District 2's work on Dyslexia.** I also recently joined a group of dedicated parent-activists, advocates, and colleagues at the Clinton School in Manhattan for a panel discussion sponsored by Community Education Council District 2. We discussed the ways in which parents, students and educators can help pass legislation to change the way we identify and teach struggling readers and children with dyslexia. Watch a video of the event online and view their other resources: <https://www.cecd2.net/students-with-disabilities-committe>

**Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update.** New York State has declared a state of emergency relating to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Symptoms range from mild to severe respiratory issues, including a cough, fever and shortness of breath, which can appear two to 14 days after exposure. I helped pass \$40 million in emergency funding to deal with the emerging coronavirus threat because it's crucial that we invest in the necessary equipment and supplies and hire and train more health care workers. While this is a serious public health issue, there are steps we can all be taking to keep ourselves and one another safe. To protect yourself and those around you, you should follow these precautions:

- Stay home if you are sick, except to seek medical care
- Get the flu shot – it will not protect you from the coronavirus, but it will prevent the flu which has similar symptoms
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes
- Cover your cough or sneeze
- Try to avoid coming in contact with someone who is sick
- Disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

For more details, and guidance on travelers recently returning from abroad, [go to the NYC Department of Health's \(DOH\) website: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/coronavirus.page](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/coronavirus.page). Contact the NY State Hotline (1-888-364-3065), or text COVID to 692692 to get text updates from the NYC DOH.

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**SAFE Disposal Event, 4/5/2020.** Join the NYC Department of Sanitation for their upcoming SAFE Disposal Event in Prospect Park on Sunday, April 5, from 10am – 4pm (rain or shine). Prospect Park, Park Circle, corner of Parkside Ave & Prospect Park SW. You can get rid of harmful household products like Solvents, Automotive Products, Flammables, and Electronics safely! Learn more: [nyc.gov/safeevents](http://nyc.gov/safeevents)

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**It's Time for a Second, Accessible Entrance at York St!** My colleagues and I have requested that the MTA NYCT add a second, accessible entrance to the York Street Subway Station. The station is overcrowded, inaccessible and has only one entrance. Further, it is one of few stations across the system that has one entrance, with a single staircase, for both ingress and egress. That presents concerns about safety, congestion, and accessibility. The community (including the DUMBO BID and DUMBO Action Committee) has rallied around the need to upgrade the station, with over 3,000 people signing their petition in support of building a second entrance. A local architecture firm has a proposal to create a second, accessible entrance.

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**Pre-K for All Applications – Due 3/16/2020:** Do you have a child born in 2016 ready to enter Pre-K in September? Every NYC child can start their education with Pre-K for All. The application is due March 16. Apply online at [MySchools.nyc](http://MySchools.nyc) or [nyc.gov/prek](http://nyc.gov/prek), by phone at 718-935-2009, or at a Family Welcome Center. You can also contact the Pre-K for All Outreach Team: 212-637-8000, [ESenrollment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:ESenrollment@schools.nyc.gov). 3-K applications are also open for children born in 2017, and the deadline is April 24th.

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**Sign up for my Email Alerts.** Email [simonj@nyassembly.gov](mailto:simonj@nyassembly.gov) to stay informed of community events & policy issues!  
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