



Dear Neighbor,

It has been a harrowing Fall. Our country has experienced a tumultuous election season, marked by political violence. Multiple wars continue to be waged around the world, and while we are not at war directly, their impacts on many of us continue to be immense. Many states have faced the devastating impacts of climate change due to the destruction wrought by Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

In times of instability, it is easy to become fearful. In that fear, we are faced with a choice – will we use that fear as justification to turn away from our communities, acting only in the interests of ourselves and our families? Or will we recognize that our fates are bound to the fates of those around us, and act for the common good?


The American Revolution was a response to living under monarchy, and with it the subjugation of individual rights to the “divine” rights of monarchs. In that context, it is easy to understand why individualism is so central in our founding documents. This individualism, reflective of its time, was reserved for white, land-owning men, many of whom had built their wealth using the labor of enslaved people in a country that was seized from the Indigenous people who lived here.

In the centuries since, the myth of individualism has masked just how much support most of us – and especially the most successful of us – get, from our government, our communities, our families, and workers. Whether it be access to public schools, the trains we ride, the roads we drive on, having a family member who can give you a small loan to get started, or a neighbor who picks up your kid when you're in a pinch, none of us gets where we are alone. While there is much more work to do to ensure equitable access to resources and support for all Americans, it's also essential for us to understand how these kinds of supports are the foundation on which even the most successful of us stand.

Unfortunately, many of our leaders are more than happy to prey on our more individualistic instincts, using fear to incite anger and pit whole communities against one another. The use of dehumanizing language by some leaders is not new and we have seen its corrosive power in the past, and in the present, resulting in instances of innocent people being harassed or attacked, whether they are poll workers or election officials or immigrants. The goal is division by scapegoating specific populations to erode our shared humanity. These leaders express bewilderment, or even anger, towards those who express care towards people they don't know or when they aren't directly affected. Why would you care about abortion rights if you can't get pregnant? Why would you care about migrant families if you're a citizen? Why would you care about funding education if you don't have children?

But so many of us do care. There is ample evidence of Americans coming together to help. It can be on a wider scale, like the efforts of so many to gather supplies and provide housing to those impacted by the recent hurricanes, or closer to home, seen in the way neighbors come together to support each other in a crisis. Even when external forces seek to drive us apart, the vast majority of us show up for one another.

In that spirit, I want to encourage us all to keep prioritizing the common good, even when it would be easier to be self-interested. Pick up after your dog. Hold the door open. Take time to understand someone you disagree with, even when it would be easier to demonize them. Act with compassion for others, and for yourself. Kindness is at the heart of the common good. The scope of what we face is too large for any of us to face alone; individualism won't save us, but banding together to act in the best interests of all of us just might.

Sincerely,

Deborah

Legislative Preview

The 2025 legislative session is only a few short weeks away from convening and I would like to share with you my priorities for the coming year. As is true every year, there is much that influences the legislature's work that is not directly controlled by legislators. As I write this, we are preparing to transition to a new federal administration. Hopefully we will have allies in Washington D.C. that will help us as we strive to clean up the environment, further protect bodily autonomy, and combat the historic housing shortage.

Environmental Conservation

Last session I was disappointed to leave Albany without the passage in both houses of two of my priority bills; the **Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (PRRIA)** (A.5322) and the **Bigger Better Bottle Bill** (A.6353). PRRIA will substantially reduce packaging waste, including toxic materials, by making producers of products responsible for the packaging they use to sell and ship their items. The Bigger Better Bottle Bill will raise the deposit by five cents for returnable beverage containers, which will raise recycling rates for deposited containers and will provide a much needed lifeline to redemption centers across the state. It will also expand the types of beverages covered, such as sports drinks and coffee and tea products. Taken together, these bills will lead to transformational change in how we produce and consume packaging waste and significantly curb waste that is landfilled or incinerated.



I recently visited the Sure We Can non-profit recycling center and sustainability hub, where canners – those who collect cans and bottles from our streets – are supported in their work and brought together as a community. It was an opportunity to hear from their executive director Ryan Castalia and workers who make their living as canners, about how the passage of my Bigger Better Bottle Bill will positively impact redemption centers, canners, and our environment.

I will also be prioritizing my bill that requires the **safe recycling of lithium ion rechargeable batteries** (A.7339) used to power e-bikes and e-scooters. There is currently no requirement that these batteries be included in a recycling program like other smaller rechargeable batteries and this must change. Safely disposing these batteries will keep them from entering the waste stream where they will pollute the land, and potentially catch fire in refuse facilities.

The Climate Corporate Data Accountability Act (A.4123) will be another important policy to ensure our friends in the corporate sector are doing their part to reduce our statewide greenhouse gas emissions. This bill will require businesses with annual revenues greater than \$1 billion to annually report their emissions including direct emissions and indirect emissions from their supply chain and other sources. I believe this will be good for the planet and also for businesses who are increasingly finding their customers care deeply about their environmental footprint.

I will once again be pushing for the passage of my bills to **ban the use of lead ammunition for hunting on state land** (A.2084), to **require wind turbines have one colored blade to minimize bird collisions** (A.1903), and to **prevent homeowners' associations from limiting low impact landscaping** (A.6317) in members' yards.

Reproductive Rights

In 2019 I was very proud to lead the passage of the Reproductive Health Act, which codified the protections of *Roe v Wade* in state law. Yet with a hostile federal supreme court and states across the country emboldened to erode reproductive autonomy, there is much work left to be done. In 2021 my bill to study the unmet health needs of pregnant New Yorkers was signed into law. As we prepare to receive the results of this statewide study I am ready to prioritize my bill that will **require limited service pregnancy centers to disclose that they are not a medical facility** (A.9773). It is critically important that New

Legislative Preview Continued

Yorkers know whether they are speaking with a licensed professional prepared to provide all necessary services as they seek time sensitive information about their potential pregnancy and overall health.

Street Safety

As the lead sponsor of the original school zone speed camera bill and its subsequent expansions, I am extremely proud of the associated reduction in motor vehicle crashes near schools.¹ As data has proven the life-saving effects of these cameras, I have introduced bills to improve upon the program. One of the most convincing data points in support of school zone speed cameras is the sharp decrease in recidivism; after receiving a fine, most drivers slow down and do not receive a second. Yet there are some motorists that simply refuse to modify their behavior. For that reason I will be working to pass a bill to **increase fines for the most dangerous repeat offenders driving in school zones** (A.9462).

It is important that survivors of traffic crashes and their families are supported in the aftermath of a serious injury or death in our streets. This session I hope to pass the **Crash Victims Bill of Rights** (A.1901), which will provide survivors and family members free copies of all crash reports, give them the opportunity to be heard at DMV hearings, and will require the creation of a report examining the feasibility of creating a compensation fund to provide counseling, end of life expense assistance, and other financial support in a great time of need.

Housing

The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE), Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE), Senior Citizen Homeowners' Exemption (SCHE) and Disabled Homeowners' Exemption (DHE) programs crucially keep our senior and disabled neighbors in their homes and part of their communities. Yet the maximum income threshold for eligibility for SCRIE and DRIE was set at \$50,000 in 2014. The rising cost of living in the intervening years makes this threshold insufficient for New Yorkers in 2024. I will work to pass my legislation to **increase the income threshold for these programs to \$61,000 and to index annual increases to the Consumer Price Index** (A.5741).

I was distressed that this year's state budget agreement included a provision to lift the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) cap on new construction in New York City. Sold under the guise of a catalyst for affordable housing construction, this misguided proposal will only lead to more luxury development. Although some concessions were made in response to criticism my colleagues and I raised; including exempting a higher FAR cap in historic districts or buildings that include Joint Living-Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQA) units and anti-harassment protections, adherence to the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) program, and required rezoning and the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), this is insufficiently protective against the wave of development that will follow this policy change. I will continue to push for a **reinstatement of the previous FAR cap** (A.6956) under my legislation that would allow for a targeted exemption to the cap when former commercial buildings are renovated to create truly affordable housing that does not expire.

I will also be working on codifying into law regulatory changes made by the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) to **ensure that the stock of rent stabilized apartments is protected from deregulation through the use of "phony demolitions"** (A.3977). This practice has allowed landlords to deregulate apartments and dramatically raise rents under the pretense of demolishing the building, when in fact much of the building including all exterior walls are left intact.

Consumer Protection

The average American uses ten personal care products – soaps, sunscreen, cosmetics, and other similar products – every day. Taken as a whole, these **products contain thousands of chemicals; many of which have never been fully tested for the potential health and environmental impacts**. Many other chemicals used in these products have been banned from use in Canada, the European Union, and other countries due to their association with asthma, hormone disruption, infertility, and even cancer. I will be prioritizing my **Beauty Justice Act** (A.6969) this upcoming year to make certain that dangerous chemicals are no longer contained in the personal care products we apply directly onto our bodies and rinse down our drains and into our waterways.

Quality of Life

Sidewalk sheds, or scaffolds, are increasingly becoming permanent fixtures in our community. Some property owners would rather keep sidewalk sheds and scaffolding installed unnecessarily than to make the requisite repairs on their building. Languishing sidewalk sheds adversely affect the quality of life of a neighborhood as they collect trash, become unsafe in extreme weather and are an eyesore. I carry a bill that **will ensure that no sidewalk shed permit will be renewed unless it is being used as part of an ongoing construction project** (A.1957).

¹New York City Automated Speed Enforcement Program 2022 Report

Encouraging a Multi-Faceted Approach to Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable housing in New York City has been a consistent issue for decades, and it's an issue our Mayors have tried to tackle. They've taken different approaches, but they've all marched to the beat of the same drum - they tell us that the only way through the housing crisis is to build. These leaders argue that when new housing is created and the housing supply increases, demand for individual units, and their prices, go down. We have watched multiple administrations push through rezonings, new developments, and tax credits, promising that enabling private developers to build bigger for cheaper is the only way we can increase affordability.

This trickle-down approach to housing has failed, as evidenced by the housing crisis New Yorkers continue to face. However, when the community raises valid concerns about how, exactly, this strategy will support affordability we face immense pushback. The district I represent has often been criticized for not doing enough to support new affordable housing. We are called "NIMBY" for fighting to preserve our historic districts and resisting new luxury buildings. These critiques overlook the many times my district has agreed to increased development with the promise of new, affordable housing, only to see those promises broken. They also ignore the sustained efforts to save the affordable housing we have, and the many times those efforts have been steamrolled by developers and the city.

In 2008, the city touted the potential for affordable housing through the approval of the East Village/LES rezoning, predicting the creation of 5,375 residential units, 485 of which would be affordable. By 2017, only 1,002 units had been created, and only 190 of them were

affordable. In 2013, the city predicted we would add over 3,000 residential units through the Hudson Square Rezoning. Since the rezoning's approval, only 1,462 units have been created. The city has predicted that the recently approved SoHo/NoHo rezoning will create 3,500 units of housing, 900 of which would be affordable. Since approval, we have seen the submission of a single proposal for a building that would include affordable housing; at the same time, a number of commercial and luxury developments have been announced, and rent stabilized tenants have been displaced to make way for new buildings.

Our community has worked with the city in good faith countless times to ensure the kind of housing protections and growth that would protect lower-income renters, only to have the lack of stringent affordability requirements for developers result in a loss of affordable housing. Our well-earned skepticism about building our way to affordability isn't NIMBY-ism; it's a reasonable response to an incomplete and failing strategy.

Recently, the Mayor proposed a vast number of zoning changes under the banner of City of Yes. While the Mayor's office argued that the zoning changes would increase affordability by "building a little more housing in every neighborhood," these changes would in fact remake the landscape of the city and how development happens, changing standards for residential housing and removing public oversight from many major development projects. At the same time, the proposal includes no affordability requirements, meaning that developers will be able to take advantage of these policy changes without giving

anything back to the public. While there are some positive aspects of the proposal, like eliminating parking mandates, it appears that its supporters are again co-opting progressive language in the service of enriching private developers.

The city needs more housing, but we also need stricter conditions for rezonings that include commitments to building residential housing and permanent, mandatory affordability requirements. We need stronger protections for renters, and new policies that incentivize the maintenance and creation of affordable housing, like tax-breaks for rent-stabilized landlords in good standing. The city and state should work with not-for-profit affordable housing developers, and should also be looking at more creative avenues for housing creation. For example, what if rather than auctioning them off, the city took over

buildings in foreclosure due to tax liens and converted them into affordable rentals or coops? As more workers stay remote, we can utilize existing commercial buildings for housing rather than depend on new builds. I am a sponsor of legislation that would change the law to allow certain commercial buildings to be converted into residential, as long as there are strict permanent affordability requirements in place.

The myopic focus on building has not helped us out of the affordability crisis; if anything, it's gotten worse. I hope my colleagues across the city and state government will join me in fighting for a multi-faceted approach that encourages new affordable housing and protects the housing we already have.

On October 11th, I was honored to join a panel at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art with LLMA board member, writer, and activist Raquel Willis, actor and comedian Jes Tom, photographer and Lesbian Herstory Archivist Morgan Gwenwald, and poet and performer Pamela Sneed in honor of National Coming Out Day. We discussed the impacts of LGBTQ+ representation in art, culture, and politics particularly at a time when LGBTQ+ rights and protections are under threat nationwide. [Photo credit: Noel Woodford @noelwoodford]



I was very pleased to join advocates and colleagues for the installation of an elevator on 6th Avenue, the MTA's first milestone in the 14th St Complex megaproject. In 1994 I authored a bill to ensure the creation of a New York City-wide accessible rapid transit system for people with disabilities—100 Key Stations. Making stations fully accessible has long been an important priority for which I continue to advocate. I look forward to celebrating a completely accessible system for all New Yorkers.



Correspondence Corner

Letters and testimony play an essential role in the offices of elected officials and I want to highlight some of the writing my office has produced in the past few months to share this important part of our work with you.

Presidential Immunity Threatens American Democracy

I was confounded by the U.S. Supreme Court's majority opinion in July that the President enjoys broad immunity from prosecution, which effectively places the president above the law, preventing them from being charged criminally for official actions even if they are clearly in violation of the law. In response, I wrote a letter to each Supreme Court Justice, adamantly arguing against such a ruling. While our Constitution does not explicitly declare that the president would be subject to criminal laws, our forebears' rejection of monarchy - under the assumption that rulers have divine right and are above the law - implies that the president is subject to all laws applicable to fellow citizens, and such a ruling betrays our founders' belief that our country's leader is not to be a ruler allowed free rein to commit crimes.

The extremes to which the incoming administration has declared it will undermine our democratic institutions is inconceivable to many of our citizens today, and such actions may have been unforeseeable for our founders' implicit intention for a democracy of the people, and thus did not think to affirm this into the Constitution. Evidently, our founders could not have envisioned that a person convicted of multiple felonies could attain the presidency. Sadly, the Court's decision seems likely to ensure an unbalanced power for an unrestrained executive branch, potentially fostering an environment ripe for corruption. The Court's decision violates basic safeguards for our democracy with seemingly no accountability.

Protecting Hudson River Park's Estuarine Sanctuary

As many of you know, the Battery Park City Authority is engaged in a lengthy and necessary coastal resiliency project. Proposed measures to protect against future flooding were presented in their release of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in August. While I no longer represent Battery Park City, this resiliency plan will impact part of my district which is regulated through State Legislation.

The DEIS's proposed new pump station includes plans for a sewer main to be installed under the Hudson River Park (HRP) - connecting to an existing combined sewer outfall (CSO) in HRP's Estuarine Sanctuary - potentially leaving any surface water collected by the Battery Park City barrier system after a storm event to be pumped into the Sanctuary. The Estuarine Sanctuary, a critical habitat to over 85 species of fish, including seahorses, eels and striped bass, is also a vital source for migrating birds and other wildlife. Polluted surface water being pumped into the Sanctuary would damage this delicate ecosystem and devastate over 25 years of conservation efforts. Hudson River Park's careful stewardship

of the Sanctuary over the years has contributed to the overall health of the river and has benefited New Yorkers who rely on the river for recreation.

In response to this, I wrote to Battery Park City Authority emphasizing that while I recognize the complexity of designing appropriate resiliency measures, all climate change mitigation efforts should also strive to ensure the health of New York's waterways. I urged their Resiliency Team to modify the new pump station design in coordination with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. I'm hopeful they will work together to find an alternative method of dispersing captured storm water into the broader flow of the river in order to prioritize the protection of the Sanctuary.

Seeking Solutions from Con Edison

Over the past several months, many Con Edison customers reached out to my office seeking assistance with billing and voltage issues. Multiple constituents have received no bill for months, with little to no communication from the company, only to receive an enormous bill, putting their access to electricity and their credit rating at risk. In another instance, a residential building is facing persistent power outages and low voltage issues due to construction projects in the area. I wrote to Con Edison's CEO, Timothy Cawley, in September seeking resolutions and urging him to ensure that employees have access to the information they need and can communicate it quickly and clearly so that my staff is able to offer our neighbors solutions to ease their financial concerns and meet their daily energy needs. I'm pleased to report that the Con Edison community affairs department has been responsive and we will continue to work with them on any outstanding issues.

Advocating for Expanded Access of OMNY Student Cards

As OMNY student cards have been distributed these past few months, I'm pleased to see the NYC Department of Education and the MTA's expansion of this program to include nights, weekends, and a full year of access including the summertime for students. By expanding access to 7 days a week and 365 days a year, the new OMNY student cards will give students the freedom to go to extracurricular activities, educational opportunities, volunteer roles, summer jobs, and more without having to worry about cost. Still, students who live within one half mile of their school are ineligible for the program. In September, I joined colleagues in writing to the previous Chancellor David Banks and MTA Chair Janno Lieber, urging that the restriction be lifted to provide these benefits to all of our New York City students.

Support Biodiversity Right Here at Home

There is a biodiversity crisis alongside our climate crisis, but addressing climate issues won't necessarily solve the biodiversity challenges threatening our local ecosystems. Fortunately, **we can each play a part in supporting biodiverse habitats**. A movement called **Homegrown National Park** seeks to engage all of us in combating the threat of species loss especially insects which are the basis of the food chain for us and other species like birds.

The notion is simple: native plants provide for the needs of local insects and animals, while invasive species and barren lawns do not. Planting native plants and at the same time removing non-native and invasive plants is the goal to regenerate the vast number of species that are on the edge. Since most property in the eastern United States is privately owned, individuals, organizations, and workplaces can each have a role in cultivating healthy ecosystems upon which we all rely.

The great thing is nature will recover if we give it the chance. Our community gardens provide perfect opportunities for this work and if you have a small balcony you can plant in containers. If your building has tree beds or a small garden in the front or rear of your building planting only truly native plants will be an important part of giving insects a foothold from which to grow. Visit <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/> to learn more about how you can join the biodiversity map.



I was delighted to join colleagues and community members in the Meatpacking District for the opening and blessing of Coexistence: Great Elephant Migration celebrating the beauty of a herd of 100 elephants hand-crafted in the Nilgiri Hills of Southern India. These magnificent elephants are being transported around the nation to bring awareness to the essential interconnectedness between humans, animals and the earth.



What a treat to join the Third Street Music School's 130th Anniversary Block Party. The Third Street Music School is the nation's longest running community music school and serves as a vital cultural hub in Lower Manhattan. Founded in 1894 as part of a community settlement house that also provided social services to families who immigrated to the United States, this organization has offered high quality music instruction to generations of New Yorkers regardless of their ability to pay.

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Deborah Glick's

NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

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Drought Conditions in NYC

You may have heard the news that New York City is under a Drought Watch, as we are experiencing one of the driest Fall seasons on record. *It is imperative that we each do what we can to conserve water.* Property owners are urged to sweep sidewalks rather than washing with water hoses and take other measures to lessen water usage. Visit the DEP website for guidance on saving water and updates on drought conditions. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dep/water/water-saving-tips.page>



NYC IS IN A DROUGHT. EVERY DROP COUNTS!

We need you to conserve water *immediately*.

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