



Assembly Member

Inez E. Dickens



Reports to the People

Winter 2019

End of Legislative Session 2019

To My Fellow Residents of the 70th Assembly District,

We have finally arrived at the season of change. The holiday season is a time to cheer, to spend with family and good friends, to enjoy each other's company and celebrate togetherness. This is also a good time to remind people of the changes that have occurred in the last several years, the amount of hate that has grown, the level of discrimination and incivility that has taken over our shared spaces and mediums has ruined that notion of America as a melting pot.

I am sure it is not lost on you how important voting is in this country, which is why I worked in the Assembly to pass historic voting reforms that will help more people decide the direction our country takes. By the way, how did you like early voting?

In New York, civically engaged people have taken back their power and made their anger heard to enact legislation long awaited in affordable housing, criminal justice reform, and immigration.

The 2019 legislative session was considered a threshold year to see what could be accomplished. As you read my newsletter, know this only scratches the surface of what we were able to do for New Yorkers. In 2020, we intend to do far more for Minority and Women Business Entrepreneurs (MWBE), the LGBT community, and those seeking affordable, quality education.



Assembly Member Inez E. Dickens with US Senator Chuck Schumer

CENSUS

Every 10 years the United States conducts a census count of the number of people who call this country home. In 2020, we are encouraging all persons to participate in this most important endeavor.

The census is vital to our communities because population drives the allocation of resources in the form of federal aid to our schools, senior centers, housing markets, transportation infrastructure, health care services, and greater political representation.

While there are hurdles being put in place by the federal government to make it harder for certain communities to participate in the census, we included \$20 million to promote the census and to assist with funding for local outreach efforts. The Census Bureau is aiming to receive half of its 2020 submissions online, but this can be a real problem for lower-income households and communities with limited internet access. Libraries bridge this divide. Not only are they the primary channel of internet access for many, but public libraries across the state are hosting programs and setting up census stations to inform communities about the importance of the census and how to participate.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

To remedy the ongoing inequality in our criminal justice system the state budget eliminates cash bail for misdemeanors, excluding sex offense misdemeanors, and non-violent felonies, allowing individuals to be released on their own recognizance or under non-monetary conditions. Electronic monitoring will not be available for most misdemeanors, but can be ordered as a condition of release, following a hearing, for felonies, domestic violence misdemeanors, sex offense misdemeanors or a misdemeanor where the defendant had a violent felony conviction within the past five years.

Under the legislation, a cash bail option will be retained for sex offense misdemeanors and most violent felony offenses, excluding felonies classified as “violent” but which do not actually have a violent component, such as second-degree robbery or burglary.



City Council Member Vanessa Gibson, Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, Assembly Member Inez E. Dickens, former Congressman Charles B. Rangel

MILESTONES

National Urban League

I am proud to announce Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a key piece of legislation I proposed in the state Assembly that brings the National Urban League back to the place of its birth, Harlem, USA. Along with the return of this important institution, the project will also include 170 units of affordable housing ranging upwards to a maximum of 80% Area Median Income (AMI). This project will also be the new home for Jazzmobile, Inc. and 100 Black Men, Inc. and will see significant funding provided to the 125th Street Improvement Fund. I appreciate the governor for continuing to support me in creating additional housing for low- and middle-income families that allows them to remain part of the fabric of our city.

Minority and Women Business Entrepreneurs

MWBEs have long suffered from the disparities in receiving grants and loans from banks which have prevented their overall growth in the marketplace. As such, I was able to pass legislation that requires banking institutions to accurately detail how they are assisting communities in need. With this law we will maintain oversight of the disparities that MWBEs experience when it comes to lending approval.

Parks

After four years, the Mount Morris/Marcus Garvey Park Fire Watchtower has been restored to former glory atop of the acropolis. I was able to fund the restoration of the tower during my tenure in the City Council and coordinate this endeavor with the help of the City’s Parks Department, particularly Manhattan Borough Commissioner William Castro, and having the support of the community to ensure symbols of old Harlem were not forgotten. We also dedicated a new playground this past summer near 123rd Street in Morningside Park, providing families with additional safe spaces for children. The new park has more slides, climbing gyms, benches and padded surfaces.

CONGESTION PRICING

In order to raise funds for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), to make improvements to our public transit network and ease congestion on our streets, the enacted budget includes the Central Business District (CBD) tolling program. The CBD zone includes 60th Street and areas south in Lower Manhattan – excluding FDR Drive and the West Side Highway. MTA recently presented its capital plan, go online, read it and let us know what you think. (<https://new.mta.info/capital/2020CapitalProgram>)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Earlier this year, the Assembly Majority passed the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act, which will help ensure victims are treated with compassion and fairness by our justice system.

Under the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act, judges may consider non-incarceration for survivors whose abuse was a significant contributing factor in their offense, including community-based alternative to incarceration programs that would allow survivors to rebuild relationships with their families, recover from abuse and take responsibility while remaining in their communities.

HEALTHCARE

To that end, the 2019-20 state budget restores \$550 million in Medicaid cuts from the executive proposal. This includes \$137.8 million to restore cuts to the Indigent Care Pool, \$222 million to restore the 2 percent rate increase for hospitals and the 1.5 percent rate increase for nursing homes, as well as \$190.2 million to restore the 0.8 percent Medicaid claim cuts across the board.

A.2102	Dickens -- Establishes tenants' right to offset rental payments by the cost of certain emergency repairs
A.2103	Dickens -- Directs the commissioner of labor to establish the form and content for contracts for the employment of domestic workers
A.2114	Dickens -- Relates to identity theft; clarifies personal identifying information and what acts constitute the offense of identity theft
A.2233	Dickens -- Prohibits the erection or maintenance of billboards advertising alcoholic beverages within 1000 feet of schools or playgrounds
A.2260	Dickens -- Defines as aggravated harassment in the third degree photographing persons entering or leaving reproductive health care services facilities
A.3235	Dickens -- Relates to assessment of the record of performance of banking institutions in helping to meet the credit needs of local communities
A.3239	Dickens -- Authorizes guidelines for granting contracts to disabled veterans eligible under the home for heroes program
A.3242	Dickens -- Provides that in proceedings to review real property assessments in N.Y. city assessing method, capitalization rate, etc. must be disclosed
A.3309	Dickens -- Requires a public hearing for substantial change in transit authority service by the New York city transit authority
A.3354	Dickens -- Relates to prohibiting the use of residential automatic pesticide misting systems
A.3385A	Dickens -- Requires public officers and bodies to provide interpreters and assistive listening devices for the hearing impaired at public hearings under certain conditions
A.3388	Dickens -- Creates the New York city transit authority safety advisory panel to study and report on safety from terrorist acts
A.3398	Dickens -- Relates to digital blocking capability
A.3833	Dickens -- Relates to the racial and ethnic makeup of the board of parole
A.3837	Dickens -- Relates to the "juvenile offender second chance act"
A.3853	Dickens -- Requires the board of elections to provide email notifications to voters whenever they change the location of a polling place
A.3866	Dickens -- Requires nursing homes that maintain a trust fund or funds into which residents' money is deposited to conduct quarterly audits and to report the findings of such audits to the commissioner of public health
A.5495	Dickens -- Relates to eliminating rent increases for structures due to major capital improvements
A.6865A	Dickens -- Authorizes the commissioner of general services to transfer and convey certain lands in New York City to the urban development corporation
A.8285	Dickens -- Relates to disclosure of certain employment statistics of state-assisted construction projects
A.8596	Dickens -- Allows police officers to wear body-worn cameras, and prohibits agreements with other state or federal agencies that prevent the use of such cameras

EDUCATION

The 2019-20 state budget provides a total of \$27.8 billion in education funding, an increase of \$1 billion – or 3.7 percent – over last year. This includes a \$618 million increase in Foundation Aid for a total of \$18.4 billion.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

This legislation allows undocumented immigrants to apply for a standard state driver's license; it has nothing to do with federal immigration laws, voting rights or anything else – it simply allows for driving legally

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The state passed the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act – the strongest rent regulation legislation ever passed in New York State – to better protect millions of tenants from unfair landlord practices, while safeguarding affordable housing across the state.

The bill makes permanent rent stabilization and rent control and extends the Emergency Tenant Protection Act which:

- prohibits landlords of rent-regulated apartments from discontinuing preferential rent for a current tenant, and ensures all future increases are based on the preferential rate, not the legal maximum rent;
- requires landlords to provide 30 days' notice for a tenant of one year or less, 60 days' notice for a tenant of one to two years and 90 days' notice for a tenant of two or more years when refusing to renew a lease;
- requires landlords make a good faith effort to re-rent a unit after a tenant breaks the lease to help mitigate damages;
- prevents landlords from using a database of court information to blacklist prospective tenants;
- limits the amount of a security deposit to an amount equal to one month's rent and requires any deposit to be refundable; and
- limits background check fees to \$20 and prohibits lease application fees.

The rent reform legislation eliminates the vacancy deregulation provision, which allowed a landlord to remove an apartment from rent stabilization if it became vacant and the monthly rent exceeded \$2,774.76.

To help prevent abuse of the major capital improvement (MCI) program, the bill caps MCI rent increases at 2% and extends the period over which the rent increases are paid in order to reduce the burden on tenants.

For more information about the changes made to our state's affordable housing laws, you can go online for the Department of Homes and Community Renewal at <https://hcr.ny.gov/> or call at **212-961-8930**.

New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248

PRSRT STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Albany, New York
Permit No. 75



Assembly Member
**Inez E.
Dickens**

Reports to the People
Winter 2019



Assembly Member

Inez E. Dickens



Harlem State Office Building, 163 West 125th Street, Suite 911 | New York, NY 10027 | 212-866-5809
Room 819, Legislative Office Building | Albany, NY 12248 | 518-455-4793 | dickensi@nyassembly.gov

