



Dear Neighbor,

The months since my election have been action packed. We have a lot to be proud of locally especially as the federal government challenges basic human values of family and community. Our office is actively helping constituents in the district while working on larger issues around the state and the nation. I look forward to continuing to serve you and all the residents of the 74th Assembly District.

See you around the district.

Sincerely,

Harvey Epstein
74th Assembly District

Five Point Plan

I am proud to say that since being elected, I have begun work to address our five point plan. The plan for the East Side included fixing the MTA, expanding and preserving affordable housing, investing in public education, economic and social justice reforms, and expanding voting access and transparency in government.

1. Fixing the MTA

In the last newsletter, I wrote to inform you that my first press conference was in support of people with disabilities and their rights to access public transportation. With the help of many disability rights advocates, transit improvement activist organizations, and local elected officials, we were able to compel the MTA to prioritize the 6th and 3rd Avenue L train stops. This month, I also met with New York City Transit President Byford, and he is committed to making the MTA a more accessible system. There is still much work to do, but this is a step in the right direction to make our subway more accessible.

In addition to addressing accessibility issues, I helped pass bills that ensure we are not allocating funds intended for public transportation elsewhere (A8511), and also eliminating the MTA's exemption from environmental quality review standards (A3992). By ensuring money allocated to funding public transportation systems is not reallocated and holding the MTA accountable to environmental quality review standards, we can stabilize fares and make environmentally conscious decisions.

2. Expand and Preserve Affordable Housing

As an affordable housing advocate and former tenant member of the Rent Guidelines Board for 4 years, I have had the opportunity to hear from thousands of tenants about their struggles to remain in their homes. These conversations now

inform my lawmaking. I joined my colleagues in passing an expansive package of housing bills aimed at closing a number of loopholes in our current patchwork of rent laws. A6285 would end preferential rent scams, A09815 would eliminate the vacancy bonus, and A00433 would end the practice of vacancy decontrol.

In addition to the package we passed in May, I want to inform you of another slate of housing bills I introduced in the Assembly, sponsored by Senator Liz Krueger in the Senate, that would empower tenants when dealing with bad landlords and expand tenants' rights in housing court.

Among the bills I introduced is A11091, which provides a legal basis for tenants to withhold rent from the landlord if he or she fails to provide heat. I also introduced a bill to level the playing field in housing court, where tenants too often lack legal representation who can explain the technicalities of the proceedings. A11106 would require housing court judges to fully describe the terms of stipulations to tenants without representation. Ideally, every tenant before a judge in housing court would have legal representation. While we work towards that goal, this measure will ensure that unrepresented tenants have a better chance at grasping often complex stipulations that can determine sums of money owed and warrants of eviction.

I am eager to work with my colleagues in the Assembly to pass these and other bills next session to strengthen tenant rights and protections.



Predatory Equity Presser

On Sunday, June 3rd, I held a press conference with Senator Brad Hoylman to announce a bill we introduced that requires the Department of Financial Services to conduct a study on predatory equity. The bill (S08675A/A11083A) was recently amended to widen the scope of the study to understand how predatory lending practices affect small business tenants. This study will shed light on the current process by which banks and other lenders decide whom to lend to. We hope the study yields the information we need to end predatory equity.

3. Champion Economic and Social Justice Initiatives

I was honored to co-sponsor effective and progressive legislation addressing major social justice issues our city is facing. I will always strive to address issues in District 74 through an inclusive lens that ensures we do not leave any New Yorkers out. I signed on to a package of bills addressing the gap of services provided to individuals with limited English proficiency when they interact with the court system. Navigating the court process is difficult enough—we should ensure we are giving everyone a fair chance. That is why I co-sponsored bills A2890A and A2891, which require certain civil and housing court documents to be provided to parties in their native language. I also co-sponsored bill A11013A, which would remove ICE from court proceedings.

Another vital piece of legislation that I co-sponsored eliminates the option for a court to impose a monetary bail requirement at arraignment in most instances, when a defendant is charged with a traffic infraction, violation, misdemeanor, or non-violent felony (A10137A). Instead, the courts would be required to release the individual on their own, without bail. For certain offenses, the court would be authorized to use electronic location monitoring, or impose travel restrictions.



Loved walking in Pride!

4. Fight for Fair Funding in Our Public Schools

As a public school parent, I care deeply about fair funding. All children should have access to quality, free education. I co-sponsored legislation to separate testing and teacher evaluations (A10475) and I fought against the increase in the charter school cap this year. Being able to provide funding to schools in our district is a privilege and I am excited to announce that I was able to secure a total of \$75,000 for PS 34 Franklin D Roosevelt, PS 15 Roberto Clemente, and the East Side Community School.



5. Improve Voting Access and Transparency in Government

This session, we passed bills in the Assembly to help make progressive changes to voting laws. Bill A6839/A6840 would amend current New York election law to allow all persons seventeen years of age or older to vote in state and local elections. I have also co-sponsored legislation that shortens the time it currently takes to change party enrollment (A10843). Under current law, when a registered voter seeks to change their party enrollment to a different party, to enroll in a party when not previously enrolled in any party, or to end his or her enrollment in a party the effective date of that enrollment change is deferred until the first Tuesday following the next general election. This results in voters waiting up to 13 months before a change in their party affiliation is made.

Sending a Message to the Rent Guidelines Board with My Assembly Colleagues

Thirty-five of my colleagues in the Assembly and I, all representing rent-stabilized tenants in districts across the city, wrote to the Rent Guidelines Board to ask that, short of a zero percent increase, the Board only approve the lowest possible guideline in the range set by the April preliminary vote, which disappointingly had no option to freeze rents at a time when our city is gripped by an ever-worsening homeless crisis and weathering an especially grave period of federal disinvestment in affordable housing that could seriously exacerbate an already dire shortage.

My colleagues and I agreed that the scales have been tipped in landlords' favor for years and tenants in our districts needed a rent freeze. I hand-delivered the letter to the members of the Board at the last public hearing before the final vote took place on June 26th.

I am greatly disappointed in the Board's decision to increase rents on stabilized tenants by 1.5% on one-year leases and 2.5% on two-year leases. While this outcome is on the lower end of the range set by the preliminary vote, it's the highest increase in rents since 2013 and it is quite obviously not the freeze tenants needed. At a time when landlords' incomes went up for the 12th year in a row, wages remained stagnant, and the homelessness crisis in our city entered its ninth year, with nearly 60,000 people sleeping in shelters nightly and as many as 4,000 people sleeping outside, raising rents on stabilized tenants defies common sense. Many of these tenants are just a paycheck away from being unable to afford their rents as it is.



In the next legislative session, the state's rent-stabilization laws are up for renewal. We need to take this opportunity to strengthen protections for tenants and eliminate the loopholes in the existing system that incentivize landlords to push tenants out so they can collect massive vacancy bonuses and deregulate stabilized units. I remain hopeful that we will be in a position to win groundbreaking victories for tenants in the next legislative session.



Having a blast at Campos Family Day with Council Member Rivera, Dereese Huff, and Patricia Troche.



On Wednesday, June 27th I hosted an Immigrant Accompaniment Training Session at the East End Temple in partnership with the New Sanctuary Movement. In light of what has happened recently, it is crucial that we stand up to protect immigrants. We received an overwhelming response! Due to the demand, we have scheduled a **second Immigrant Accompaniment Training Session on Wednesday, August 8th from 6:30pm to 8:30pm** at the East End Temple located at 245 E. 17th Street, New York, NY 10003.

To RSVP, please call 212-979-9696 or go to <https://iatraining.eventbrite.com> Please arrive 10 minutes before start time with your ticket to present at the door. We look forward to seeing you there!

10 Signs of Alzheimer's

Wednesday, August 1st
5:00pm – 6:30pm

Sirovich Center
331 E. 12th Street
New York, NY 10003

If you or someone you know is experiencing memory loss or behavioral changes, it is time to learn the facts. Early detection of Alzheimer's disease gives you a chance to begin drug therapy, enroll in clinical studies, and plan for the future.

Join us in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association on **Wednesday, August 1st from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm** for a 10 Signs of Alzheimer's Event. The event will be held at the **Sirovich Center, located at 331 E. 12th Street, New York, NY 10003.**

To RSVP, please call **212-979-9696** or email **chesters@nyassembly.gov**.

SCHE and DHE Tax Breaks

Senior Citizen Homeowners' Exemption (SCHE) and Disabled Homeowners' Exemption (DHE) tax breaks are available to homeowners with a combined annual income of \$58,399 or less. Be sure to visit www.nyc.gov/exemptionforms and select the "Property Owners" link to download the applications. For a paper application, call 311 or visit the NYC Department of Finance's Manhattan Business Center:

66 John Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10038
Hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm
Monday-Friday (Closed Public Holidays)
Wheelchair accessible

Meet the Staff



Alline Alvarez-Villa
Scheduler / Administrative Aide
Favorite Part of District 74:
I love how diverse the district is and how active people are in their communities.



Michael Schweinsburg
Projects Coordinator
Favorite Part of District 74: That the United Nations is contained within our boundaries is emblematic of the diversity and rich tapestry of cultures we enjoy here. Having lived and worked here for two decades, I relish the opportunity to work with Harvey to make District 74 an even better place for our neighbors to live, work, learn, and play!



Aura Olavarria
Community Liaison
Favorite Part of District 74: I am a fourth generation Lower East Sider and I am lucky enough to be raising my son Nico in the district as well. My favorite thing about Assembly District 74 is the privilege of having community gardens where I can enjoy nature, connect with neighbors, and give back to my community.



Rebecca Nieves
Chief of Staff
Favorite Part of District 74: Though a proud Bronxite, I've spent a lot of time in the Lower East Side during college and it has always felt like my home away from home. I love all the community gardens and the ability to be surrounded by nature in the middle of the city!



Jackson Fischer-Ward
Legislative Liaison
Favorite Part of District 74:
Tompkins Square Park. You will always find such an eclectic mix of people hanging out there, enjoying the open space with each other and the red-tailed hawks that have made the park their home!



SaMi Chester
Deputy Chief of Staff
Favorite Part of District 74: It's the people without a doubt! There is a fighting, fun spirit that makes the district buzz with excitement. The people here are super aware of the district history. Their need to support each other goes above and beyond. It is very much a community and I love the fact that we have their backs.

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



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Meet Our Assembly Member

I will be doing mobile office hours throughout the district over the summer into September. Come by to ask questions, provide suggestions, or just say hi!

Tuesday, August 7th
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm
StuyTown Community Center
449 E. 14th St, New York, NY 10009

Tuesday, August 14th
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Carmen Pabon Del Amanecer
Community Garden
115 Avenue C, New York, NY 10009

Wednesday, September 5th
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Tompkins Square Library
331 E. 10th Street, New York, NY 10009

Thursday, September 6th
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Outside of Lower East Side Girls Club
402 E. 8th St, New York, NY 10009

Wednesday, September 19th
8:00 am – 10:00 am
Stein Senior Center
204 E. 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010