

NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

My Bills Passed and Signed Into Law:

Improving the System for People with Disabilities:

My first bill signed into law was A.2890, which advances disability justice by requiring the NYS Office of People with Developmental Disabilities to process applications within 120 days. The difficulties faced navigating our society are burdensome enough. Ensuring accountability in the system that is meant to serve them, by preventing delays in eligibility determinations and service authorizations, is crucial and I'm glad I could deliver this much needed change.

Protecting Interns: The Assembly unanimously passed my bill, A.7355, to protect unpaid interns from discrimination based on gender identity or expression. Interns are vulnerable members of the workforce and ensuring they receive the same protections as all employees is critical to their safety and future success.



Governor Hochul after signing my legislation removing homophobic language from state law as well as the Transgender Safe Haven Act!

Removing Homophobic Language from State Law: New York has long held legal protections from discrimination and hate crimes for lesbian, gay and bisexual New Yorkers. Current law left at least one vestige of homophobia enshrined in state law, including language conflating homosexuality with criminality. This language was rooted in a time when states had laws on the books criminalizing consensual sexual acts between adults. The Assembly passed my bill A.7367 which removes this language from the Human Rights law. This bill passed the State Senate thanks to sponsorship from Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal.

Protecting New York's Oceans: I passed A.7440, to extend the Department of Environmental Conservation's authority to manage conservation of sharks, improving the DEC's ability to protect New York's ocean habitats and biodiversity. With ocean temperatures rising and threatening sea life, it's critical that we are monitoring changes to animal populations. This bill was sponsored in the Senate by Senator Iwen Chu.

Streamlining Nonprofit Administration: Nonprofits serve New Yorkers in so many ways and it is critical they are managed and use their resources as efficiently as possible. Legislation I passed, A.6940, brings our law up to modern governance standards so organizations can focus more time on their mission and servicing communities, and less on red tape.

Veto of Pet Food Accountability Act

I was greatly disappointed (as was Radar) by the Governor's vetoing of A.7658, which I passed in the Assembly, and which would have regulated the labeling and marketing of pet food. Currently pet food is not legally required to meet the criteria for edible food, and is actually classified as animal feed. Without regulations, pet owners are being kept in the dark and misled about what it is they are feeding their beloved companions. This bill would establish the "human food grade" designation which would allow pet owners to make informed decisions about what they are bringing into their homes and feeding their companions. A "human food grade" designation will clearly indicate that a food meets basic safety and quality standards used for human food, but was designed for the unique nutritional needs of pets. I will continue to negotiate with the Governor's office to achieve a law that allows people to make informed decisions about what they are feeding their pets.

The Rev. Christine Lee met my best friend Radar at St. Peter's Chelsea for their annual Blessing of the Animals event! I passed the Pet Food Accountability Act to help Radar and all of our pets!



A Grand 8th Avenue Entrance for Penn Station and Through-Running

I have continued to call for the inclusion of a grand 8th Avenue entrance in the plans for a new Penn Station. The communities surrounding Penn have long felt our needs for the station have not been addressed. For too long all we heard about was commercial office development and not enough about building a new Penn Station we can be proud of and that works for us. Penn Station should be a world-class transit hub and an 8th Avenue entrance must be part of the next iteration of the station.

I was joined by "Train Daddy" himself, Andy Byford, at a public seminar to talk with the community about the option of "through-running" trains as a big part of the solution for the overcrowding at Penn Station. Through-running stations are stations between two terminals where trains come in from one direction, unload and load passengers, and continue on in the same direction, avoiding the inefficiency of terminal stations. In short, Penn can be a true regional hub where we can ride from Long Island to New Jersey without changing trains multiple times.



Speaking to the press with Congressman Jerry Nadler, Councilmember Erik Bottcher, and Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine outside Penn Station.

Reproductive Freedom: The attack on reproductive rights by conservative legislators and judges around the country was moved further into the extreme by a ruling in Texas by a Trump appointed judge. Mifepristone is a safe drug that has been used for reproductive health for more than twenty years, and this judge’s decision to suspend its FDA approval threw millions into uncertainty and fear as access to abortion continues to be restricted. This decision is another attempt to use courts to restrict health care, putting more lives at risk. New York will always remain a state where abortion is accessible, but we must go one step further to build capacity for the people who travel here from states where they cannot get the health care they need. To that end, I’m proud to join my colleague Assemblymember González-Rojas as a co-sponsor on A.361 the Reproductive Freedom and Equity Act.

Health Equity for Retirees: Two years ago, the City of New York began a move to take away traditional Medicare from over 250,000 public employee retirees and force them to enter a for-profit health network, a Medicare Advantage plan. This summer, a Manhattan Supreme Court Judge issued a ruling prohibiting the City from making the switch. I am strongly against the diminishment of anyone’s health care, especially those who earned their benefits through a career of service to their city. I am proud to co-sponsor the Health Equity for Retirees Act, A.7866, by my colleague Assemblymember Ken Zebrowski. I will continue to fight for greater comprehensive and affordable care for all and against any attempts to chip away at health care.

Birds and Bees Protection Act: The Assembly and Senate has passed the Birds and Bees Protection Act to restrict the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, A.7640, introduced by Assemblymember Glick. These widely used pesticides are toxic for birds, bees and other pollinating insects as well as people. They have been banned in Europe since 2018.

Protecting the Hudson River: I worked with my Hudson Valley colleague, Assemblymember Dana Levenberg to pass her bill, A.7208, which would make it unlawful to discharge any radiological substance into the Hudson River in connection with the decommissioning of the Indian Point Nuclear Power plant. Because the Hudson is tidal up to Kingston, meaning it flows both

north and south, the downstream impacts of radiological waste down the Hudson to the harbor are something we should all be concerned about.

Local Involvement in Community Health Care Act: I was proud to vote for this bill from my colleague Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon, A.1633, which ensures that the public receives advance notice and an opportunity to be heard at a public forum if a hospital is closing, or a critical unit such as an emergency or maternity department is being lost. The bill also ensures that the NYS health department conducts a review before a hospital or major department is closed. This will increase patient safety and transparency while giving communities a voice in their health care options.

Helping Student Loan Borrowers: There are 2.5 million New Yorkers with student loan debt who collectively owe almost \$100 billion. To help ease the burden of student loans, I introduced legislation with State Senator Nathalia Fernandez, A.6109/S.4436, to establish a state level student loan interest deduction for middle income filers, both single and joint, who currently are unable to benefit from the federal deduction. Relieving the burden faced by student loan borrowers helps lift us all and will bring immediate economic benefits.

Defending Transgender Students: I have re-introduced a critical bill, A.4576, to help ensure school is a safe and respectful environment for students. Transgender and gender non-conforming students experiencing victimization due to their gender expression are almost three times as likely to have missed school in a given month, had lower GPAs than students who experienced less harassment, and experienced lower self-esteem and higher incidences of depression and suicidal ideation. This legislation will codify a requirement that school districts have procedures and policies in place to ensure that they treat students consistently with their gender identity or expression, and allow students to access sex-segregated facilities and activities consistent with their gender identity or expression.

Strengthening Democracy: The Assembly passed a package of bills to empower voters and strengthen New York’s electoral system. The legislative package includes bills to crack down on “faithless” electors (A.928), increase

Solving the Housing Crisis

From day one, I have been outspoken about the need for major housing reform in New York. I will be honest, progress on this front in Albany has been slow and frustrating. The pain of inaction will be felt across the state, from tenants struggling to stay in their homes, to young people seeking their first home, to seniors being able to afford living in their longtime communities.

I have fought hard to pass Good Cause Eviction legislation which will ban the monstrous rent increases so many of us have seen in recent years. Keeping tenants stable in their homes means stronger communities, healthy families and less homelessness.

We also must begin creating the affordable housing of tomorrow, because we needed it yesterday. There are so many available tools to increase the housing supply that we can not just meet, but exceed demand and lower rent costs. I support converting empty office buildings to residential, legalizing basement apartments, mandating development in the suburbs around commuter train stations, and making it easier to build small apartment buildings. The State will allow creation of significant new affordable housing to tackle the crisis. We don’t have a moment to lose to live here and have a home.



Rallying in Albany with hundreds of tenants and colleagues to pass Good Cause Eviction

participation by changing most local elections outside NYC to be held during even-numbered years (A.4282-B), make it easier to register to vote and receive early mail voting ballots (A.6132-A and A.7632-A), ensure ballots are counted properly (A.7690), and require ballot question language to be clear and easily understandable (A.1722-B).

LLC Transparency Act: We all know that bad landlords will try any tactic to cheat and take advantage of their tenants and workers, and shady LLCs have been a favorite for years. That's why my colleague, Assemblymember Emily Gallagher, passed the LLC Transparency Act, A.3484, in our house this year, while Senator Hoylman-Sigal carried the bill through the Senate. I have been a strong supporter of this bill, which requires the beneficial owners of LLCs to identify themselves, making it possible to hold them accountable for their bad behavior. This fall, we held a rally to urge Governor Hochul to sign the bill into law, and help regulators hold these companies accountable.



Rallying for the LLC Transparency Act with Senators Brad Hoylman-Sigal and Liz Krueger, and Assemblymembers Emily Gallagher, Karines Reyes, Alex Bores, and Marcela Mitaynes. We were joined by the New York City District Council of Carpenters and Reinvent Albany, a good-government watchdog group.



and Cause Eviction.

ments, creating new incentives for deeper affordability levels, findings in all communities across the state. Bringing new tools use. It is a crisis we must solve so all New Yorkers can afford



Educating bike riders on 9th Avenue alongside Pedestrians for Bike Safety, Deliveristas Unidos, State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal and Councilmember Erik Bottcher. This Summer, I introduced the Commercial E-Bike Licensing Act to require all delivery e-bikes and scooters be licensed while fining companies for bike violations on our sidewalks.



I held my first town hall meeting at Hartley House in Hell's Kitchen with over one hundred of our neighbors joining to discuss a wide range of issues.



Rallying on the picket line with Assemblymember Deborah Glick, Councilmember Erik Bottcher, SAG-AFTRA workers, and organizers.



Walking West 42nd Street with the NYPD during a public safety walkthrough organized by my office.



Surveying construction at Muhlenberg Library in Chelsea which is slated to reopen next year after HVAC improvements, elevator repairs, sidewalk improvements and a new fire alarm system.

Dear Neighbor,

Winter is here and I wish you a joyous holiday season! This newsletter will bring you up to date on this year's legislative session and what I have been working on in our community.

I am proud to be representing you in Albany. You can visit my website at <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Tony-Simone>

I have introduced 27 bills this year, six passed in the Assembly, six passed in both houses and five have already been signed into law by Governor Hochul. I am proud to co-sponsor over 300 bills that will improve the lives of New Yorkers.

I thank the constituents who have called or emailed my office with your point of view on legislation and community issues. Your opinions matter to me and I have tried to respond to as many of you as possible. Some of the responses to legislation you will find in this newsletter.

I have enjoyed engaging with our community at numerous neighborhood events and have a few photos to share with you.

If there are specific events in the district you would like to share with my office, whether they are related to a community organization,

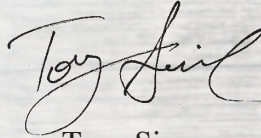
business, or special achievements, please contact us!

My community office staff and I fight to protect tenants and affordable housing, increase public safety, prevent reckless vehicles on our streets, and deal with a broad range of other individual and community concerns to have a safer, equitable, stronger, healthier and more vibrant New York.

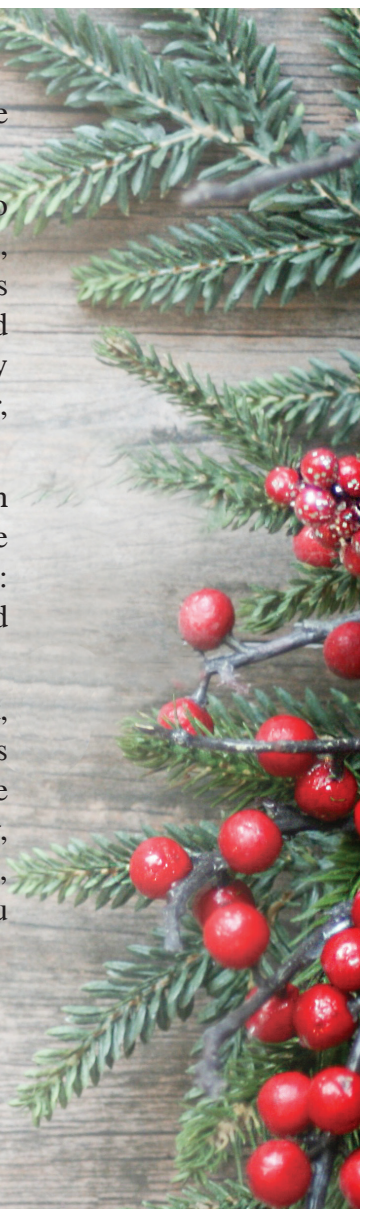
And if you'd like to contact me or sign up for more updates, you can click on the contact link on my website, or email me at: SimoneT@nyassembly.gov. I look forward to hearing from you.

My Community Office at 214 West 29th Street, 212-807-7900, SimoneT@nyassembly.gov is here to serve you. Please contact us if you're having a problem with a government agency, your landlord, a utility, noise or traffic issues, etc. We can help you. We can also assist you to apply for programs and benefits.

Sincerely yours,



Tony Simone



Assemblymember **Tony Simone**

Community Office

214 West 29th Street, New York, NY 10001

212-807-7900

SimoneT@nyassembly.gov

Legislative Update

214 West 29th Street
New York, New York 10001

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

Supporting People with Serious Mental Illness

Too many people living with serious mental illness (SMI) are stuck in a devastating cycle moving between hospitals, jails, and housing instability due to lack of community-based treatment. In 2021, over a third of people with SMI did not receive any form of mental health treatment. In New York City, a number of subway deaths have highlighted the need for access to intense and immediate mental health support. I was proud to join my federal colleagues to announce their bill, which would create new services under Medicaid specifically targeted to individuals living with SMI.



Speaking on the need for greater funding for people with severe mental illnesses at Fountain House in Hell's Kitchen with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Congressman Jerry Nadler and State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal.