

Assemblyman

Jeffrey Dinowitz

Reports to the People of the 81st Assembly District

SUMMER 2015

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Serving the communities of Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Norwood, Riverdale, Van Cortlandt Village, Wakefield, and Woodlawn

Dear Neighbor:

We have finally concluded the legislative session in Albany, with mixed results to show for it. The biggest, toughest, and most important battle this year was over the future of tenant protection laws in New York City - which are controlled not by the city but by the state. While I had high hopes this year that we would be able to make positive changes in the law to help tenants and level the uneven playing field between tenants and landlords, we only made modest gains. The State Senate, controlled by an anti-tenant and pro-landlord & developer majority, not only did not want to strengthen the law, they actually wanted to weaken it. The State Senate majority consists almost exclusively of senators from upstate and Long Island. Almost all of them have no constituents covered by tenant protection laws; yet they controlled the fate of over two million tenants in New York City.


The modest changes we made include lowering MCI increases, improvements for tenants with preferential rents, and raising the vacancy de-control threshold. While the legislative session is over, the fight for new York's two million plus people in regulated apartments, including tens of thousands in my district, will go on.

The Governor succeeded in including anti-teacher provisions in the state budget that was passed in April. His efforts to include very expensive tax credits for wealthy individuals and corporations in the end of session legislative deal failed as did his attempt to raise the statewide cap on the limit of the number of charter schools. In a very partisan move, the Senate agreed to renew mayoral control of our schools, but for only one year.

Locally, we have won a number of victories on issues in which I was directly involved. The City finally agreed to construct the long-sought-after pedestrian bridge over the Deegan to connect the two sides of Van Cortlandt Park. The DEP agreed to a pilot project at the Jerome Park Reservoir, which I hope will eventually lead to another goal we've long fought for: increased access to the beauty of the Reservoir. And finally, LG Electronics has backed down from their plans to construct a tall building in New Jersey that would have spoiled the view of one of our most treasured natural resources: the Palisades.

While the legislative session has ended, we have much work to do in our neighborhoods. I look forward to continuing to work with our local community leaders, community board members and my colleagues in government for the needs of the great neighborhoods I represent. Have a great summer!

Sincerely,


Jeffrey Dinowitz
Member of Assembly

Assemblyman Dinowitz Secures \$3 Million for Van Cortlandt Park Pedestrian Bridge



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured here with Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie, Congressman Eliot Engel, Council Member Andrew Cohen, Commissioners from the NYC Departments of Environmental Protection, Parks and Recreation, & Design and Construction, as well as Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and State Senator Jeff Klein, at the announcement of the Van Cortlandt Park Pedestrian Bridge.

I am proud to announce that the long awaited Van Cortlandt Park Pedestrian Bridge will become a reality in 2019! As a longtime Van Cortlandt Park activist I have been advocating for this project for many years. Building a bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway uniting the two sides of Van Cortlandt Park and connecting Riverdale to Woodlawn will make it easier for community residents to access all parts of this great park, as well as the 1 and 4 train lines. Thanks to my colleagues in government, Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Senator Jeff Klein, Council Member Andrew Cohen, and Congressman Eliot Engel, and groups such as the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park, this bridge will finally come to fruition.

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation will each invest \$4 million to construct the bridge, as well as \$3 million from the Assembly and \$1 million from the State Senate. Once it is built, it will make moving around the park much easier and safer for pedestrians. It will help connect our 20-plus miles of hiking trails and 1,146 acres of parkland, bringing us closer to making Van Cortlandt Park the premier hiking destination in NYC.



Assemblyman Dinowitz took a walking tour of Ampark Neighborhood School to see what the young minds in our community are learning. He was met by Ampark Principal Christine Milton and many smiling faces.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Hosts Town Hall Meetings on Rent Laws

In anticipation of the expiration of the state's rent laws, I held a series of Town Hall meetings with the community to address tenant concerns. It was great to have so many community members attend these meetings to learn more about the tenant protection laws. We discussed the basic rights of tenants as well as the nuances of programs like SCRIE and DRIE, which offer qualifying seniors a rent freeze. Tens of thousands of Northwest Bronx residents and millions of people across the city depend on our rent laws to shield them from massive rent increases and ensure their right to a lease renewal. As always, I encourage constituents to contact me or stop by my district office for advice on housing or any other issues.



Assemblyman Dinowitz held a town hall meeting at the Kingsbridge Public Library on New York's tenant protection laws. Assemblyman Dinowitz and the town hall's other two panelists, Judith Goldiner, Attorney-in-Charge at the Legal Aid Society, and Katie Goldstein, Executive Director of Tenants and Neighbors, spoke briefly and then answered a number of questions from the scores of people who attended.



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz presented a \$125,000 check to Riverdale YM-YWHA Chief Executive Officer Deann Forman for the construction of a new, barrier-free playground for young children at the Riverdale YM-YWHA. The barrier-free playground, first of its kind in the Northwest Bronx, will allow children of all abilities to access outdoor play equipment.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Makes Riverdale YM-YWHA Playground Accessible to All

While our community is a great place for families, there is always more that can be done to ensure that children of all abilities have a safe place to play in their neighborhood. This is why I was so pleased to provide funding for a new barrier-free playground at the Riverdale YM-YWHA. Barrier-free playgrounds are designed to be accessible to all children, including those with mental and physical disabilities. Building this playground will be a tremendous step forward in better meeting the social, recreational, and wellness needs of all Riverdale families with children with special needs.

This playground will also be the first that is accessible to every family with young children in the 81st Assembly District and I was happy to be able to partner with the Riverdale Y, which has always been a wonderful friend to our community.

Reminder: The Rent Freeze Program, Formerly Known as the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE), Has Expanded

The New York State legislature has expanded the SCRIE and DRIE income eligibility from \$29,000 a year to \$50,000 a year. If you qualify, your monthly rent amount will be frozen and the City of New York will give your landlord a property tax credit equal to the amount of your increase. If you would like more information or would like help filling out an initial application, please feel free to call or stop by our office. To be eligible you must be at least 62 years of age or disabled, your income must not exceed \$50,000, and your annual rent must be greater than one third of your annual income. Residents of rent regulated apartments, Mitchell Lamas, or the Amalgamated Houses may be eligible.

If you would like assistance with applying to the program, or would like to know if you are eligible, please contact our office at (718) 796-5345.



Assemblyman Dinowitz presented a proclamation marking the formal naming of P.S. 7 as the "Milton Fein School." Pictured are Anita Ross-Fein, Skylar Fein, Principal Frank Patterson, former principal Dita Wolf, and Assemblyman Dinowitz.

Henry Hudson Parkway Repaved

Last year, after making a site visit to the Henry Hudson Parkway, I successfully requested that the New York State Department of Transportation repair the parkway's crumbling retaining walls between West 231st and West 235th Streets. After the wonderful job the State DOT did fixing those retaining walls I followed up to request that they repave the road itself as well. I am thrilled to announce that after just a few weeks of construction, they have completed repaving the entire Bronx section of the Henry Hudson Parkway! I applaud the State DOT for acting on this matter so quickly.

Legislation in Albany

Preventing Fees on Gift Cards & Certificates

My bill to prevent fees from being assessed on gift cards and certificates recently passed in the State Assembly (A.7610B). Too often consumers have either purchased or been given a gift card, only to later find out that there is little to no money left to spend because of exorbitant fees assessed on the card due to inactivity. Current New York State law requires notice of expiration dates, as well as any fees that will be charged along with other terms and conditions that must be clearly and conspicuously stated. Fees are currently not allowed to be assessed prior to the thirteenth month of dormancy, but New York State does not specify how much of a fee can be assessed, offering consumers little to no protection. This legislation seeks to correct this, while adding protections for consumers who purchase and use gift cards.

Increasing Free Metro Card Transfers

My legislation requiring the MTA to allow two free transfers instead of just one on buses or subways to address the issue of people who are in two-fare zones as a result of budget cuts passed both houses of the legislature.

Protecting Low-Wage Workers

Recently, I introduced legislation to stop employers from requiring low-wage employees to sign non-compete agreements, preventing them from seeking higher paying jobs. The bill, known as the Mobility and Opportunity for Vulnerable Employees (MOVE) Act (A.8108), will ban the use of non-compete agreements for employees making less than \$15 an hour, or \$31,200 annually. Requiring low-wage workers to sign non-compete agreements as a condition of employment is a practice that must end immediately. Practices like these by employers hinder workers' ability to move up in the world by using their experience to find better paying jobs; the MOVE Act will help remove barriers for those currently stuck in their low-wage jobs so they can work toward a better life for themselves and their families.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Secures State Funding for Riverdale Neighborhood House

The Riverdale Neighborhood House is one of our community's most treasured organizations. For over 140 years it has been an invaluable resource for children and families as a place that helps families of all income levels and ethnicities through various social programs for children, teens and seniors, including pre-kindergarten. I was thrilled I could provide a \$250 thousand grant to modernize and upgrade the facility, as well as bolster social services programming in the Riverdale community for their new facilities. I am confident that this grant will mean that RNH can continue its long tradition of service and learning in top of the line facilities.



Assemblyman Dinowitz, Council Member Andrew Cohen, and State Senator Jeff Klein were able to secure more than \$550,000 in state and capital and municipal grants to upgrade the athletic facility at the Riverdale Neighborhood House. They are pictured here with RNH Executive Director Daniel Eudene, President Josephine Perrella, former Presidents Alison Pavia and Sarah Gund, as well as RNH Board Member David Bent, Brad Gold, and Ivan Ilyashov.



Assemblyman Dinowitz attended a rally at the Department of Education Headquarters with UFT President Michael Mulgrew and other UFT Leaders in support of public schools and against the increase of the charter school cap.



Assemblyman Dinowitz presented Sister Christine Carrigg with a Certificate of Merit in recognition of her 50th Jubilee of Religious Profession and for her many dedicated years of service as a Catholic school educator. Here Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured with Sister Christine Carrigg, Father Edward Higgins, and several students who received student of the month awards from St. John's School.



Assemblyman Dinowitz and State Senator Jeff Klein were visited by the students of P.S. 81 for a day at the Capitol in Albany. The students spent the day learning how the Capitol functions and even spent some time in the Senate and Assembly Chambers. Here Assemblyman Dinowitz, State Senator Jeff Klein, and children are seen standing on the steps of the Million Dollar Staircase.

Reminder: The NYC Speed Limit Has Been Reduced to 25 MPH

As of last fall the speed limit on ALL NEW YORK CITY STREETS was reduced to 25 mph unless otherwise posted. The reduced speed limit is an integral part of Mayor de Blasio's comprehensive Vision Zero Action Plan, and will be enforced by the NYPD. On average, a New Yorker is killed or seriously injured every two hours in a traffic crash. Moreover, a pedestrian struck by a vehicle traveling at 25 mph is half as likely to die as a pedestrian who is struck by a 30 mph vehicle. Reducing the speed limit in New York will make our streets safer not only for pedestrians, but for motorists as well.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Hosts Annual Free Summer Concert Series

Summer is here again, which means it's time for my Annual Free Summer Concert Series! I am partnering with the Bronx Council on the Arts to host a series of concerts across our community, and this year's concerts will be as fun as ever. Last summer hundreds of people attended, and I'm hoping even more will attend this year's eight concerts. I hope you and your family will join me for any of the below fun-filled evenings of music, dancing, and wonderful summer weather!

7/14 Gene DiNapoli

Considered to be one of the top Elvis tribute artists in the country. *Riverdale YM-YWHA, 7 p.m.*

7/15 John Benitez and his Latin Jazz Band

The Grammy award-winning bassist performs with his Latin Jazz Band. *Amalgamated Train Park, 7 p.m.*

7/21 Just Nuts Party Band

A returning favorite that plays music of all eras such as Dion, The Four Seasons, Barry White, and Huey Lewis and the News just to name a few. *Amalgamated Train Park, 7 p.m.*

8/5 Orquesta SCC

A Latin Jazz band that everyone can't help but dance to. *Williamsbridge Oval, 7 p.m.*

8/11 NY Skyscrapers and Friends

New to the scene this year, NY Skyscrapers and Friends play all the classics and already have plenty of, as Aretha Franklin would put it, R-E-S-P-E-C-T. *Williamsbridge Oval, 7 p.m.*

8/12 Ginetta's Vendetta

A triple threat female powerhouse who plays pocket trumpet, sings and composes for her original jazzy funk band Ginetta's Vendetta. *Amalgamated Train Park, 7 p.m.*

8/18 Just Nuts Party Band

A returning favorite that plays music of all eras such as Dion, The Four Seasons, Barry White, and Huey Lewis and the News just to name a few. *Henry Hudson Park, 7 p.m.*

8/20 The Mystery Tour Beatles Tribute Band

A Beatles cover band that plays all the classics and have several interesting costume changes throughout the performance. *Riverdale YM-YWHA, 7 p.m.*



Assemblyman Dinowitz attended this year's annual Truck Day at the Riverdale Temple Nursery School. It was a day full of laughter, adventure, and of course, ice cream.

Free Notary Service

Our office provides free notary service during regular office hours, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please bring two forms of identification, at least one with your photo and signature, if you would like your signature notarized.



Assemblyman Dinowitz attended this year's Annual Celebrate Israel Parade in support of Israel. While there, the Assemblyman met with many recognizable faces including New York City Mayor de Blasio and Congressman Eliot Engel, as well as students from SAR Academy and Kinneret Day School.