

Assemblyman

Jeffrey Dinowitz

Reports to the People of the 81st Assembly District

DECEMBER 2016

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

Dear Neighbor:

A new administration will soon take office in Washington that is committed to decimating Medicare, repealing the Affordable Care Act that provides millions of Americans with health insurance, slashing taxes on the wealthy and on corporations, deporting many hardworking immigrants, and repealing many of our environmental laws. The newly-nominated Secretary of Education is a staunch foe of public education. The newly-nominated Health and Human Services Secretary is a Congressman who is the number one foe of Obamacare. These are just a few of the challenges that now face us as a result of the recent election.

This new situation makes what we do as a State more important than ever before. Protecting health care, fighting for fairer taxation, taking every step possible to combat climate change, bringing even more resources to public education, and fighting for the rights of all Americans including immigrants, many of whom have lived here for most of their lives, are among the many items that must be on our state agenda. If we cannot count on our federal government to do right by all of our residents, then it is incumbent upon the state and all of our elected officials to fill the void and fight even harder for every New Yorker during this particularly challenging time.

As we approach the new year, I know I must redouble my commitment to fight for our neighborhoods, to speak up on issues, including controversial ones, regardless of pushback and opposition of bureaucrats. I will continue to work to address the many problems in our schools, including overcrowding, often exacerbated by misguided policies and actions on the part of some school officials. I will continue to stand up to developers and to the City when necessary to fight against poorly conceived projects in our district.

My staff members at our district office on Kingsbridge Avenue and satellite office on Dekalb Avenue help countless constituents with every imaginable problem, and some you can't imagine, especially in cutting through government red tape. Everybody on my staff is a Notary Public, and we provide the service for free. If you need help please contact us. Have a wonderful holiday season and a healthy, happy, and successful New Year.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Dinowitz
Assemblyman



Once again, Assemblyman Dinowitz enjoyed helping to light the Chanukah Menorah and Christmas tree at the Bronx Botanical Garden. Pictured are Council Member Andrew Cohen, Assemblyman Dinowitz, and Eric Dinowitz.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Sponsors Holiday Canned Food Drive

I am pleased that this year I was able to continue the tradition of sponsoring an annual canned food drive. My district office has already collected and donated food to various non-profit organizations in the Northwest Bronx for families in need for the Thanksgiving, Chanukah, and Christmas holiday seasons.

Several schools even collected one-dollar donations for the purchase of turkeys for needy families on Thanksgiving, in addition to the canned foods and non-perishables. I was extremely pleased to get such a huge and generous contribution thanks to the efforts of some great kids at P.S. 7.

Our annual food drive is always such a wonderful event, and I believe the donations for this year will be even better than the last. I am always encouraged to continue this event by the selfless actions of our community. We always see a huge swell of support for this, from buildings, to schools, to residents who drop off even a single can at my office. Every year, this community donates an impressive amount of food for those in need, making me proud to represent such a generous community. I look forward to another great year of giving, and thank in advance everyone who participates through their donations.



Once again, the generous students of P.S. 7 donated an extraordinary amount of cans for the annual holiday food drive sponsored by Assemblyman Dinowitz. Students from P.S. 7 are shown here with Assemblyman Dinowitz, Principal Frank Paterson, and Tara McMaster.

The Electoral College and the National Popular Vote

The Electoral College is an affront to democracy. For the second time in just 16 years, the candidate who placed second was elected President and the candidate who won the national popular vote, by over two and a half million votes, lost.

My legislation, known as the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV), if enacted by enough states, would guarantee that the winner of the national popular vote is always the one who is elected President. We all learn at an early age about the democratic process and that the person who receives the most votes wins an election. This is true for members of Congress, governors, mayors down to class treasurer and dog catcher. It's true for every office, except the most important office in the world, President of the United States. That is because back in the eighteenth century the founding fathers created the Electoral College in the Constitution. They did it both to prevent the voters, i.e. white male property owners, from directly electing the President and also to give a disproportionate say to the smaller states. Once enough states adopt NPV, as New York has, such that they comprise at least 270 electoral votes, the interstate compact will take effect. It would obligate all states in the compact to vote their electors for the winner of the national popular vote, guaranteeing that the person who receives the most votes is always elected President. In what other democracy can the loser be the winner and the candidate

with the most votes the loser? None, except in the U.S., the greatest democracy of all.

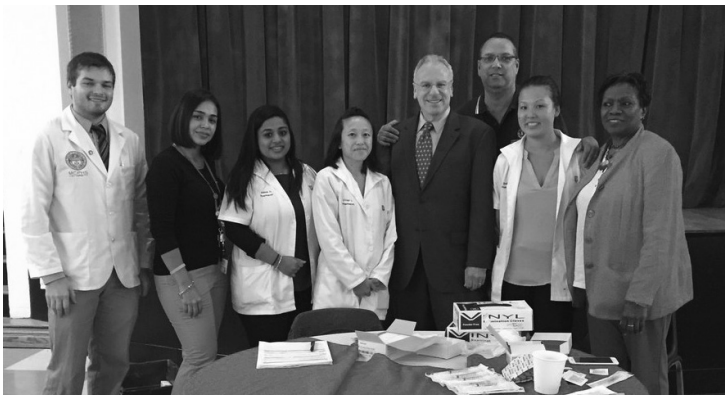
NPV will result in candidates campaigning throughout the country, not just in swing states. The issues of all states will be addressed in presidential campaigns. This electoral reform would once again make New York voters relevant to presidential candidates. The needs and issues facing New Yorkers are no less important than those in Florida, Ohio, and other swing states. Those who live in solid red or blue states where the outcome is virtually guaranteed would no longer be bystanders in an election that really takes place in just a small number of states. Voter participation would increase in the blue and red states. Currently, New York serves as nothing but an ATM machine for Presidential candidates.

The United States consists of fifty states, but we are one country. All of the voters throughout our great country should have an equal say in electing a president. With NPV every vote in every state across the nation will count equally, something which is not now true. The idea of one person, one vote will be made a reality with this compact.

Let's make the United States of America a true democracy when it comes to electing our President. Let's make NPV a reality so that the most votes wins for every office, including President.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Sponsors Annual Free Flu Shot Event

I am pleased to announce that once again my annual Flu Shot Event this past October was an enormous success. Thanks to the work and partnership of my office, Montefiore Health System, New York Presbyterian Hospital, RiverSpring Health, and Walgreens, this important service to the community was offered and enthusiastically attended by hundreds of Bronxites. The flu is a serious health matter, and getting a flu shot protects not just yourself but also your friends, family, and neighbors. It is important to protect those around you, particularly the young, the sick, and the elderly from catching the flu by getting vaccinated yourself, yet only half of New Yorkers get vaccinated. Thanks to the concerted efforts of everyone involved in this free event, we've spread the word that getting vaccinated is not only safe, it's easy.



The office of Assemblyman Dinowitz once again sponsored several free flu shot events for the community. The events were co-sponsored by Montefiore Health System, Walgreens Pharmacy, New York Presbyterian Ambulatory Care Network, RiverSpring Health, Congressman Eliot Engel, State Senator Jeff Klein, and Council Member Andrew Cohen. The events were graciously hosted by St. Gabriel's Church, the Amalgamated Houses, and the Riverdale YM-YWHA. Pictured is Howard Kamiel, President of Amalgamated Houses and Doris Spencer, Director of Education at Amalgamated, as well as Assemblyman Dinowitz and several visiting nurses who administered shots at Vladeck Hall at the Amalgamated Houses.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Urges MTA to Increase Bx10 Frequency

I have once again petitioned the MTA to add additional Bx10 buses to the West 231st Street and Broadway route to remedy severe overcrowding. Many Bx10 buses are already too full before they reach West 231st Street and often those waiting cannot get on the bus and have to wait for the next. People who are able to get on the bus must pack in like cattle, which is unhealthy, not to mention unsafe. Thousands of people rely on the Bx10 to get to and from work every day and they should not have to

either suffer this severe overcrowding or risk being late. The MTA needs to provide additional Bx10 service and make the commute of many of my constituents more bearable. I encourage my constituents to contact the MTA at 511 to voice their complaints and concerns regarding this matter.



Assemblyman Dinowitz was joined at his district office by representatives from the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and Saint Frances of Rome Church in Wakefield, who picked up boxes containing hundreds of cans, boxes, and jars of food collected by local students from P.S. 7, P.S. 81, and community members during Assemblyman Dinowitz's annual holiday food drive. These non-perishable food items, along with dozens and dozens of turkeys donated by Goodman Management, Kelly Ryan's Bar and Restaurant, BJ's, and Ben's Market, will go to Bronx families in need this holiday season. Pictured from left to right: Margaret Della, Executive Director of Kingsbridge Heights Community Center; Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz; Lorrin Johnson, co-chair of Saint Frances of Rome Food Pantry; Dave Lynch, Kelly Ryan's Bar and Restaurant, and Pat McCaffrey, co-chair of Saint Frances of Rome Food Pantry.



Assemblyman Dinowitz travelled to Puerto Rico with colleagues and other community leaders for this year's annual Somos el Futuro Conference. Pictured are Assemblyman Dinowitz, First Lady of New York City Chirlane McCray, Mayor of San Juan Carmen Yulín Cruz, New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and Council Member Andrew Cohen.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Warns Local Residents of Predatory Towing Companies in the Area

An old problem has reared its ugly head. Tow trucks are again operating at the Key Food parking lot on Johnson Avenue, as well as Skyview Shopping Center where a number of cars have been towed for allegedly parking illegally. A reminder to residents that parking in the Key Food lot is restricted to those who shop at the stores adjacent to the lot, including on Johnson Avenue and on the south side of West 235th Street, and for a limited amount of time. My office has been receiving calls about illegal practices of demanding cash payments to get cars back or even to get it unhooked from the truck and for claims that the towing companies are overcharging people. While those parking in that lot should absolutely comply by the rules posted on the signs as you enter the lot, there are specific rules that must be followed by the tow people if they do start to tow illegally parked cars. The rule that is most often violated by some towing companies is demanding cash payment. The law requires that they accept a credit card. The towing company can charge up to \$125 plus tax to retrieve your car

if it has already been towed. If your car is about to be towed, the maximum 'drop fee' to unhook the car from the tow is \$62.50 plus tax. They cannot demand cash. Period. Sometimes the tow operators are abusive or intimidating. It is important for an individual assert his or her rights. If there is a perceived danger, call the police. While I can't say that illegally parked cars, especially those that are clogging up the parking lot for extended periods, should not be towed, I can say that those responsible for initiating this new wave of towing are not good neighbors in our community. If a person planning to shop at Key Food parks in the lot and then walks to the ATM machine in the bank across the street to withdraw money to spend at Key Food, they can be towed and have been. That is not an incentive for neighborhood residents to shop there. If anyone feels that they have been ripped off by the tow operators because they have demanded cash, please call my office and we will help you file a complaint with the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs.

Assemblyman Dinowitz Introduces Bill Requiring Healthy Food Options in Public Vending Machines

As part of ongoing efforts to combat the growing obesity epidemic in New York State, I am introducing legislation that will require vending machines in state buildings to provide healthier food options. Currently, there are extremely limited, if any, healthy food and beverage options available in public places such as parks, recreation centers, and state owned buildings. I have proposed the NYS Healthy Vending Act to promote an environment where visitors and employees in state-owned facilities are able to make a choice to eat healthy. Affording consumers a healthy option at the vending machine in place of the usually salty, fatty, high in sugar, and high in calorie options will no doubt promote a healthier New York. Obesity and weight-related health issues are currently the second leading preventable cause of death in the United States and may soon overtake tobacco as the leading cause of death. Currently, a third of New York's children are obese or overweight and roughly two-thirds of adults are overweight or obese. Obesity and weight problems can contribute to a host of health problems and illnesses in adult life such as chronic heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and even some forms of cancer. Addressing this issue now is critical for the long-term health and well-being of the New York State's population.

Proposed Bronx Boulevard Homeless Shelter Defeated

I am very proud to announce that thanks to fierce efforts and advocacy by myself, Council Member Andrew Cohen, and the community, the proposed shelter on the northern end of Bronx Boulevard has been canceled.

The proposed shelter, which was intended to house 90 individuals diagnosed with HIV, was put forth by the non-profit community-based health and housing service provider Comunilife. Although Comunilife is a wonderful organization providing valuable health and housing services to thousands of people who are in dire need of both, we did not feel that the location of this particular facility was in the best interests of the community. I, along with Council Member Cohen, held several meetings with both community leaders and Comunilife representatives over the last several months to express our concerns regarding the oversaturation of shelters in the Wakefield community.

Following a June 27th town hall meeting at Community Board 12 where we voiced our strong opposition to the plans, Mayor de Blasio's administration determined that the proposed location would not be appropriate.

While there is no question that we have a very serious homelessness problem in New York, asking one community to shoulder the burden of an entire city is not the answer. We will not allow Wakefield, or any other community in the Bronx, to fall victim to the over-saturation of homeless shelters in their neighborhood.



Assemblyman Dinowitz participated in a dedication ceremony at the Hebrew Home for the Aged where an artifact from the World Trade Center became a permanent memorial. Pictured are Assemblyman Dinowitz, Council Member Andrew Cohen, Congressman Eliot Engel, along with representatives from the 50th Precinct, including Deputy Inspector Terrence O'Toole, and CEO of RiverSpring Health, Daniel Reingold.



The Bronx Botanical Garden broke ground on their new edible garden, which is the newest expansion of the Edible Academy, where children learn the importance of growing fresh fruits and vegetables to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured here with local leaders and community activists including Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.



Assemblyman Dinowitz and Council Member Andrew Cohen celebrated Veteran's Day this year with local girl scouts.

Assemblyman Dinowitz and Congressman Eliot Engel Hold Press Conference Demanding Left Turn Signal

I held a press conference along with Congressman Eliot Engel, a representative of Council Member Andrew Cohen, and local community leaders including Community Board 8 Chair Dan Padernacht, and residents of Netherland Gardens, Riverdale Gardens, Skyview, and 5601 Riverdale Avenue and demanded that the city install a left turn signal at the intersection of Riverdale Avenue and West 256th Street. This intersection has been plagued with numerous traffic accidents and enormous traffic. The 50th precinct reports that there have been 6 accidents at this intersection alone since January of this year. Several times a day there are significant traffic backups which impede motorists, particularly those who are making a left turn.

Safety has to be our number one priority. The intersection of Riverdale Avenue and West 256th Street is dangerous and very congested. Alleviating the congestion by installing a left turn signal for north bound traffic will go a long way to improving safety at that intersection. Residents of Skyview, Riverdale Gardens, and Netherland Gardens all turn left there to go west on West 256th Street. Many scores of parents drive to P.S. 81 to drop off and pick up their children. Traffic backup has gotten out of control and the time is now to take a very simple step to improve the situation.



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Congressman Eliot Engel, a representative of Council Member Andrew Cohen, along with local community leaders including Community Board 8 Chair Dan Padernacht and residents of Netherland Gardens, Riverdale Gardens, Skyview, and 5601 Riverdale Avenue attended a press conference today demanding that the city install a left turn signal at the intersection of Riverdale Avenue and West 256th Street.



Assemblyman Dinowitz attended KRVC's annual gala recognizing several business owners for their amazing contributions to the community. Pictured are Angel Vasquez, Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Thompson, KRVC Executive Director Tracy Shelton, Sergio Vilaverde, Orlando Kross, Betty Campbell-Adams, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Andrew Williams, Senator Jeff Klein, Eric Dinowitz, KRVC Board of Directors President Paul Moore, and Community Board 8 Chair Daniel Padernacht.



Assemblyman Dinowitz and Senator Jeff Klein awarded High School of American Studies at Lehman College over a quarter of a million dollars in state funding on October 25th to improve this top school. High School of American Studies, a specialized high school, serves many gifted students from the community and from throughout the city. As the school approaches its 15th anniversary, it is considered one of the best high schools in the country. Pictured are PA Co-President Alice Lee, President of Lehman College José L. Cruz, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Principal Alessandro Weiss, Senator Jeff Klein, and PA Co-President Unjoo Trebach.

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 Visits P.S. 307

Earlier this year, I toured P.S. 307 on Eames place in the Bronx and was appalled by the state of the facility. Despite the best efforts of the principal and the staff at the school, it was very obvious that the children are put at a severe disadvantage because of the horrible conditions there. I have asked Chancellor Carmen Fariña to visit the school and to see the conditions for herself. As far as I know that never happened. Our Lady of Angels School, just three blocks away from P.S. 307, was closed by the Archdiocese just a few years ago. It was my hope that the Department of Education would make the sensible decision to relocate P.S. 307 to that facility. I was shocked to learn that recently the DOE has instead decided to relocate P.S. 315 from its current site in the southern part of district 10. While I do not doubt that the children of that school deserve to be in a much better building, it seemed to be a bizarre choice to not move a school housed in a substandard facility just a couple of blocks away. I believe not addressing the P.S. 307 problem is a terrible abrogation of the DOE's responsibility to provide a good education in a decent facility for the children of Kingsbridge Heights.