



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz

Reports to the People of the 81st Assembly District

SPRING 2019

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

Dear Neighbor:

It has been a very exciting time in Albany during this 2019 legislative session. We hit the ground running on the first session day and we haven't stopped since. On day 1 we passed a long list of important election law reform bills to make voter registration and voting easier and more accessible. On day 2 we passed the Gender Expression Non Discrimination Act and a ban on gender conversion therapy. Day 3 was devoted to women's reproductive rights and access to family planning. We finally passed the DREAM Act on day 4, providing increased college opportunities for thousands of New Yorkers. The landmark child victims act to provide justice for the survivors of childhood sexual abuse took center stage on day 5, and on day 6 the Assembly passed a series of bills to combat gun violence, and that was just the beginning.

Many key pieces of legislation became law as part of the budget process. For example we passed MAJOR criminal justice reform, a ban on single use plastic bags, and we took major steps to fix our subway system and our buses, and that's not to mention the funding we provided to education, higher education, health care, and so many other important areas of the budget.

Despite the unprecedented number of accomplishments, we have a lot more work to do this session. At the top of my agenda is to significantly strengthen tenant protection and rent laws. I expect the Assembly to pass a very strong package of pro tenant bills and I hope the State Senate and the Governor will support us in these efforts. I am also looking forward to passing the New York Health Act, additional election and campaign finance reform, and much more.

The tremendous work and long list of accomplishments have not slowed me down one bit in working locally to address neighborhood issues. I've recently held a series of five town hall meetings "democracy in action" in which hundreds of people came out to discuss local and legislative issues. I intend to continue holding such meetings and look forward to your participation and attendance.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Dinowitz
Assemblyman

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.

2019 Legislative Update



Local baseball stars, members of the NYPD, and elected officials marched in the annual North Riverdale Baseball League parade to mark the opening of the new season. AM Dinowitz, Council Member Andrew Cohen, 50th Precinct Captain Emilio Melendez, Detective Mindy Ramos were among the marchers.

Election Law Reform

Long overdue election reform became a reality with bills passed by the Assembly to make it easier to vote and easier to register, bringing more people into the democratic process. This includes early voting, no-excuse absentee ballots, voter portability (meaning if you move within the state you stay registered), same day registration,



Assemblyman Dinowitz rallied in Albany with members of 32BJ SEIU for prevailing wages. Thousands of 32BJ members are our neighbors and friends in the Bronx.

combining the federal and state primaries, voter pre-registration for 16- and 17-year olds, and partial closing of the LLC loophole.

GENDA and Conversion Therapy

The Assembly passed GENDA (the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act) and a ban on conversion therapy. These are both important laws in our fight for equality for the LGBTQ community.

continued on next page

2019 Legislative Update

Women's Reproductive Rights and Access to Family Planning

The new law, the Reproductive Health Act, updates New York law by codifying Roe v. Wade into the Health Law and protects New Yorkers against future potential federal intrusion into women's healthcare decisions including decisions on reproduction. The Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act codifies in New York's Insurance Law the requirement under the Federal Affordable Care Act that all health insurers provide cost-free contraception coverage as part of their insurance policies. Additionally, the Boss Bill prohibits employers from accessing an employee's personal information regarding reproductive decision-making and from imposing any requirements that would obstruct their ability to make these decisions.

Increased College Opportunities

The Jose Peralta DREAM Act is now the law of the state. It eliminates potential financial obstacles to obtaining state financial aid for undocumented students seeking to attend college.



Assemblyman Dinowitz stood with members of local 372 AFSCME at their Albany lobby day.



Assemblyman Dinowitz, as Chair of the Assembly Committee on the Judiciary, is pictured with colleagues at the joint fiscal hearings prior to the budget.

Justice for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

The Child Victims Act has finally become law. It gives childhood sexual abuse survivors an additional five years to seek criminal charges against perpetrators by changing when the statute of limitations clock begins to run; it will start at age 23 instead of 18. For civil cases the statute of limitations will be tolled and a lawsuit by a victim will be permitted until age 55. The law includes a one-year look-back window for survivors who are not able to seek recourse under the previous law. Public and private entities are treated equally.

Combatting Gun Violence

We acted on a robust package of laws in order to reduce gun violence. The Red Flag bill allows a court to issue extreme risk protection orders, prohibiting a person who is determined to be a threat to themselves or others from purchasing or possessing a firearm for up to one year. We established a waiting period for up to thirty days before a gun can be sold to anyone who has not cleared a background check. We banned bump stocks, and we created a municipal gun buyback program.

2019 Local Update

Life-saving Speed Cameras

The Assembly passed life-saving legislation to expand the use of speed cameras in New York City school zones. The law will encourage motorists to drive with caution through school zones, thus helping to protect the lives of students and pedestrians. The new law expands the use of speed cameras to 750 school zones. The cameras will operate Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., and the city will be required to install signs giving notice that a speed camera is in use. There was a 60 percent drop in speeding infractions in school zones where speed cameras have been installed.

Democracy in Action Town Halls

Over the past several months, I've held a series of five town hall meetings, "Democracy in Action" in every corner of the Northwest Bronx to hear directly from constituents what they want to see from government and in their communities.

Discussion topics have been open-ended with a wide diversity of concerns including overdevelopment, poor bus service, rent reform, government efficiency, and more. I will continue to organize these events to give local residents an opportunity to air their opinions and have questions answered on the many subjects affecting our communities.

ADA Improvements at Metro-North Stations

I have vocally advocated for full compliance with the Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA) throughout the entire New York City mass transit system, and I recently submitted a formal request for accessibility improvements to be made at the Spuyten Duyvil and Woodlawn Metro-North stations in the Northwest Bronx. The request is similar to an ongoing campaign for accessibility improvements at Mosholu Parkway along the 4 train, which united transit advocates, community leaders, and elected officials around the cause and successfully pushed New York City Transit to begin designs for the station. A coalition of these transit advocates led by Community Board 7 Chair Jean Hill and Eric Dinowitz garnered over 2,000



The KRVC Development Corporation again held a very successful jobs fair, this time at the Kingsbridge Library. Pictured are Executive Director Tracy Shelton, Assemblyman Dinowitz, KRVC Jobs Program Director Holly Makin and Community Advocate Eric Dinowitz.

signatures demanding greater accessibility at the station which were presented to the MTA Board.

Rally in Response to Christchurch Terrorist Attack

I participated in a rally at the Riverdale Monument to mourn the victims of the Christchurch, New Zealand terrorist attack, as well as to support the survivors and the survivors of gun violence across the United States and the world. These preventable tragedies, perpetrated by bigoted hate-filled individuals, will continue to happen until we all take a stand against bigotry, hatred, and access to weapons of mass murder such as the assault rifles used in this latest attack. This attack is symptomatic of the rise of white supremacist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic violence in the US and around the world.

Ending Non-Medical Exemptions for Vaccinations

I am the lead sponsor of legislation, along with State Senator Brad Hoylman, which would eliminate non-medical exemptions to school vaccine requirements in New York State. Current New York law

continued on next page

2019 Local Update

exempts “children whose parent, parents, or guardian hold genuine and sincere religious beliefs” from these requirements. However, many observers have anecdotally noted that many parents appear to be using the religious exemption as a de facto philosophical exemption. While 17 other states permit philosophical exemptions, New York State does not. There are numerous instructions on how to apply for vaccine exemptions being circulated on various anti-vaxxer websites, social media, and in online forums, lending credence to the argument that some religious exemptions are being applied for based on personal or philosophical grounds and not religious canon.

It is essential that we eliminate all non-medical exemptions to school vaccine requirements. We cannot let a small number of people dictate public health policy in New York State. Choosing not to vaccinate without a medical reason is putting the rights of other children and their parents in jeopardy – the right to be healthy and safe from preventable diseases. We must rely on scientific fact and not allow the false information being spread on social media to dictate how to protect our children.

Holocaust Comparisons By Anti-Vaxxers

I am truly sickened by the horrifying rhetoric that has emerged among some anti-vaxxers. On my own social media pages, I have received numerous comments of this highly offensive nature and I am grateful to the Anti-Defamation League for speaking out against this growing problem. To compare school vaccine requirements to genocide is intentionally inflammatory and goes beyond what our society should be willing to accept in regular discourse. In fact, it’s disgusting.

Six million Jews and millions of others were killed in history’s



Assemblyman Dinowitz is the lead sponsor of legislation to allow only medical exemptions to vaccine requirements in New York State. He is joined by State Senators Brad Hoylman and David Carlucci in calling for these tougher requirements that will undoubtedly prevent deaths and serious illnesses, particularly given the current measles outbreak.

worst genocide. The false comparison diminishes the significance of the Holocaust. The use of the Star of David as a rallying image for anti-vaxxers is morally repugnant and dilutes the significance of what it means to many people of Jewish heritage and faith.

We cannot let this ugly propaganda deter us from keeping our children safe. Vaccine hesitancy is one of the top threats to global health, and there are active outbreaks of measles in our own backyards. We cannot wait for someone to die before we take action.

Some State Budget Highlights

We achieved many, but not every, important goal in the recently passed state budget. Like every budget deal during my tenure as your Assemblyman, it was a mixed bag. I was thrilled that many important items were included but was unhappy that others didn’t make it into the budget, but overall I think it was a victory for New Yorkers.

• **Education**

We increased funding to public schools by \$1 billion over last year for a total of \$27.8 billion, including an increase of \$618 million in Foundation Aid. It also includes \$822 million for pre-kindergarten.

• **Higher Education**

The budget raised the income eligibility threshold for Excelsior Scholarship to \$125,000. It makes City and State University tuition free for eligible New Yorkers and makes students attending private colleges eligible for a \$6,000 scholarship. We also included funding to implement the Jose Peralta New York State DREAM Act.

• **2020 Census**

The next census will have major implications for New York. The census count determines the amount of federal funding that comes to New York for hospitals, schools, transportation and other priorities, and it also determines the size of our Congressional delegation. The budget includes \$20 million to promote the census and to assist with local outreach efforts.

• **Protecting New York Workers and Unions**

To protect the personal information of public employee unions in the wake of the US Supreme Court decision in Janus v. AFSCME, the budget prohibits disclosure of the information unless it relates to union enrollment and employee organization representation or is compelled by a court.

• **Extending the Millionaires Tax, raising funds for MTA repairs**

The budget extends the millionaires tax by five years. It also implements a progressive and supplemental mansion tax starting on properties valued at more than \$2 million at an additional .25% and ending at a top rate of 2.9% for properties in excess of \$25 million. This would raise \$243 million. A supplemental Real



Assemblyman Dinowitz and Speaker Carl Heastie stood with colleagues in support of Planned Parenthood’s Day of Action in Albany. The Assembly this legislative session passed the Women’s Reproductive Health Act and other important women’s health legislation.

Estate Transfer Tax of .25% for residences over \$3 million and commercial property over \$2 million would raise \$122 million for a total of \$365 million. This money would go into the MTA capital lockbox. \$232 from internet sales tax revenues would also go to the MTA.

• **Congestion Pricing**

To raise funds for the MTA, the budget creates the first congestion pricing tolls program in the country. While I have serious misgivings about this, it was in the final budget deal that I and all of our local state senators voted for. The congestion zone includes 60th Street and south in Manhattan, excluding the FDR Drive and the West Side Highway. The Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority will oversee the program.

• **Funding Early Voting and Modernizing our voting system**

We passed early voting at the beginning of the session providing for a nine-day period before any election to make voting more accessible. The budget allocates \$10 million to localities to implement it. We also enacted in the budget an electronic voter registration system so voters can register and have their applications

Some State Budget Highlights



Assemblyman Dinowitz is shown at the Speaker's rostrum with two families from PS 24.

submitted online. The budget also provides \$14.7 million in capital funding for the purchase of electronic poll books and on-demand ballot printers in support of early voting.

- **Some progress toward public financing**

While the budget unfortunately did not enact public financing with small donor matching funds, it did establish a commission to examine, evaluate, and make recommendations regarding a public financing system for New York. The Commission must report by December 1 and the recommendations will be binding unless modified by law within 20 days. I have long advocated for campaign finance reform, co-sponsoring legislation providing for small donor matching funds several times. In fact, I recently indicated on the floor of the Assembly my support for small donor matching funds. I have always been a vocal election reform advocate and am proud of the large package of election

reform bills that we recently passed. I was the main sponsor of one of them and a co-sponsor of the rest. These bills will be transformative in terms of making it easier to vote and to register, thereby increasing participation in the democratic process.

- **Banning Plastic Bags**

A statewide ban on single-use plastic bags given out by grocery stores and other retailers has been implemented. The bags end up in trees, our waterways and have been a tremendous source of litter and pollution.

- **Increasing fairness in our criminal justice system**

The budget includes sweeping criminal justice reforms to ensure fairness. These include reforming the discovery process in criminal cases, ensuring the right to a speedy trial and bail reform.



Assemblyman Dinowitz recently spoke at a Town Hall meeting sponsored by the Marble Hill Tenants Association. He is shown speaking at the dais. Seated next to him is 50th Precinct Captain Emilio Melendez and Marble Hill Tenants Association President Tony Edwards.

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz
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Assemblyman Dinowitz along with Council Member Cohen and Community Leaders Randi Martos and Eric Dinowitz rallied in support of our nurses and safe staffing.