



News

from
Assemblymember
**LINDA B.
ROSENTHAL**

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Dear Neighbor,

It was great to be back in the district this summer after a long session in Albany. I am pleased to report that I was able to accomplish many important reforms that will improve your lives. This year, we passed an on-time budget of \$132.51 billion, closing a projected budget deficit of \$3.5 billion. In addition, we were able to restore critical funding to EPIC, the program that helps seniors pay their Medicare Part D premiums. After last year's budget's drastic cuts to the program, I heard from hundreds of constituents about the difficulty the cuts had caused them. This year's budget restored \$30.6 million to provide co-payment assistance for approximately 300,000 enrollees and ensure that no senior will have to pay more than a \$20 co-payment for prescription drugs.

After learning that the proposed Executive budget sought to zero-out funding for the Neighborhood and Rural Preservation Programs, both of which provide essential funds to community-based organizations that protect tenants facing eviction, I wrote a letter to the Governor requesting that this funding be restored. These revenue sources are directed toward housing organizations that provide free legal representation to low-income tenants facing eviction and other forms of landlord harassment. I am pleased to report that the final budget not only restored funding to these programs, but increased it by \$2.2 million. Unscrupulous landlords will always look for ways to harass and/or evict rent-regulated tenants, but the restoration of this funding will ensure that tenants have access to groups that will fight alongside them to protect their rights.

I also wrote a letter to the Governor after learning that the proposed Executive budget would have cut all funding for non-residential domestic violence programs available to help domestic violence survivors access counseling, legal and other supportive services. These critical programs enable survivors to return to normalcy and regain some control over their lives. I am pleased that the final 2012-2013 Executive budget provided \$1.2 million for these life-saving services.

In the articles in this newsletter, you will learn about some of the other important issues I have been working on, both in Albany and here in the district. I have enjoyed spending time with you this summer, and seeing you at the myriad community events on the West Side. Please feel free to drop by my district office, as we are always here to help. In the meantime, I hope you had a safe and happy summer full of family, friends and fun!

Sincerely,

Linda B. Rosenthal
Member of Assembly — 67th AD

Assemblymember Rosenthal Votes Against Political Gerrymandering

With the results of the 2010 Census, new district lines were drawn this year for both the State Legislature and the House of Representatives. While the new Assembly lines, for the most part, resulted in reasonable districts, the Senate lines were little more than thinly veiled incumbent protection plans, designed to ensure that the conservatives in the Senate maintain their majority in that house. I have opposed the unfair process by which new legislative districts are drawn, and I voted against these lines. Instead, I am in favor of amending the New York State Constitution to create an independent redistricting panel to ensure that each person has an equal and well-represented voice in the democratic process. To see the new district lines, you may visit <http://www.latfor.state.ny.us/>.



Hundreds of seniors enjoyed a day full of festivities at my sixth annual West Side Seniors Day held at the American Museum of Natural History. Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer was on hand to deliver a speech to those gathered.

FREE NOTARY SERVICE AT MY DISTRICT OFFICE EVERY FRIDAY 1 – 4 P.M.

Community Corner

Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal Hosts First-Ever West Side SCRIE Clinic

The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program protects senior citizens aged 62 or older with an annual income of \$29,000 or below who pay one-third or more of their income toward rent against rent increases. Seniors who qualify for the program have their rent frozen, and their landlords receive a tax abatement from the City to make up the difference.

In the past, seniors applying for the program experienced long delays and administrative errors, which prevented many from receiving the benefit. In an effort to improve the system and bring the SCRIE program directly to the community, I hosted the first-ever West Side SCRIE Clinic in February 2012 with representatives from the New York City Department of Finance, the agency responsible for administering SCRIE. Nearly 100 seniors attended the Clinic and were able to resolve problems with their benefit. Since then, I have hosted additional SCRIE Clinics and will continue to provide my constituents with access to expert advice about SCRIE and the many other programs to which they are entitled.

What's that Buzzing? Rosenthal Hosts Town Hall Meeting on West Side Mosquito Infestation



A standing-room-only crowd attended Assemblymember Rosenthal's town hall meeting on the West Side mosquito infestation.

A packed Goddard Riverside Community Center was the setting of my town hall meeting where frustrated residents confronted City officials regarding their neglect of a mosquito problem that has been plaguing the West Side and other parts of Manhattan for years. Immediately following the meeting, my office convened a collaborative interagency taskforce to develop solutions to this long-standing problem. Representatives from New York City Departments of Transportation, Environmental Protection, Health and Mental Hygiene and Buildings and representatives from the Mayor's Office and Con Edison were on hand for the first taskforce meeting, which was held at my district office. In addition to this meeting, agency heads also conducted a walkthrough of West 84th Street, which appears to be the epicenter of the infestation. Since these meetings, the agencies have identified what they believe are potential sources of the infestation and have formulated a new plan of attack for the area. I will continue to host these meetings until the problem is solved. I am confident that with my oversight, the agencies will continue to work together until residents of the West Side and other parts of Manhattan can sleep easy knowing that mosquitoes will not be biting them during the night.

How Long Will It Take to Replace My Reduced-Fare MetroCard?!

Seniors living in my district are very active – from their daily visits to senior centers, friends' homes, shopping trips or weekly stops at the pharmacy to retrieve prescriptions and other necessities, seniors rely on their MetroCards – they are keys that unlock limitless opportunities. That's why I was particularly concerned when I heard from a number of my senior constituents that it was taking two, three and sometimes even four months to replace a lost or stolen reduced-fare MetroCard. For seniors on fixed incomes, losing a reduced-fare MetroCard shrinks their world and forces them to make decisions between traveling throughout the district and making ends meet. This is not a choice that seniors should be forced to face. In May, I held a news conference with Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer to demand that the MTA reduce the time it takes to replace lost or stolen reduced-fare MetroCards and to issue temporary cards in the meantime. I am working with the MTA to improve its response time and ensure that seniors have access to replacement or temporary MetroCards as quickly as possible. If you have any problems with your MetroCard, please contact my office at 212.873.6368 or rosenthal@assembly.state.ny.us.

Stop the Squeeze: Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal Works to End D3 Middle School Madness

While the West Side boasts some of the best public schools in the City, the district is also facing a critical shortage of middle school seats, likely to reach a tipping point by 2015. In addition to parents and education advocates, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) also is well aware of the looming crisis, yet seems to be content to take no action now to ameliorate the problem. The apparent lack of urgency on DOE's part is unacceptable. I will fight alongside parents and advocates in School District 3 to ensure that the DOE acts now to add more middle school seats as it has done in other districts. A student's ability to learn and grow is inhibited by crowded classrooms, which present obstacles to individual mentoring and relationship-building between student and teacher. School District 3 must be the beneficiary of the New York City Schools Chancellor's pledge to open 50 new middle schools across the City during his tenure. I intend to ensure that the DOE stands by its word and stops the middle school squeeze before it is too late.



After working to secure funding to construct the Kathryn W. Davis Science Teaching Classroom at the American Museum of Natural History, Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal stands with Museum President Ellen V. Futter next to the plaque commemorating the grant.

Legislative Roundup

Rosenthal Fights to Raise the Minimum Wage

For years, the cost of goods and services has continued to rise while wages for some of New York's hardest workers have stagnated. To right this inherent wrong, the New York State Assembly passed legislation that would increase the state's minimum wage to \$8.50 an hour and index it to inflation. Full-time minimum wage earners currently gross \$15,080 a year before taxes. This modest increase in the minimum wage would raise workers' salary by about \$200 a month. I was a proud cosponsor of this legislation because it is critical, particularly during this period of prolonged recession, that we help build ladders for people to climb into the middle class. I will continue to fight for legislation that will enhance opportunities for economic advancement in this state.

Assemblymember Rosenthal's Bill to Ban Sale of Electronic Cigarettes to Minors Heads to Governor's Desk

Electronic cigarettes are battery-operated devices that vaporize cartridges filled with nicotine, flavor and other unknown chemicals that the user inhales. Marketed as smoking-cessation devices, they are also targeted at young people, offering such flavors as watermelon and bubblegum. They are popularized by other young people who smoke them in bars and nightclubs. More than one million people smoke cigarettes in New York City alone. Another 1.3 million New York City residents are former smokers. Tobacco kills more New Yorkers each year than AIDS, drugs, homicide and suicide combined. Most smokers have acknowledged that they began smoking as teenagers or before the age of 18. While adults may use electronic cigarettes as smoking-cessation devices, despite the lack of knowledge about their chemical content, they act as a gateway for young people, and their availability to this impressionable group should be banned. The bill now awaits the Governor's signature after both the New York State Assembly and Senate passed it unanimously.

Governor Adopts Assemblymember Rosenthal's Bill to Create a New Felony-Level Domestic Violence Bill for Repeat Offenders

Domestic violence is a crime of escalation. It begins with a slap, and then escalates to a push or a punch. Over time, the attacks worsen and occur with greater frequency, and in the worst cases, they end with serious injuries or even death. Unfortunately, domestic violence offenders often amass a myriad of lower-level misdemeanor offenses, and are only charged with serious crimes when it is way too late, after their victim has been seriously injured or killed. In 2011, I introduced and passed legislation in the Assembly to create a new felony-level crime, aggravated family offense, for repeat offenders of domestic violence crimes.

With passage of this bill, any person who commits more than one specified offense against a member of the same family or household within a five-year period of time will be guilty of an aggravated family offense, a class-E felony carrying with it a mandatory minimum jail term. The Governor, recognizing the significance of my bill, included it in a package of domestic violence reform bills.

Rosenthal Introduces Bill to Revolutionize Animal Cruelty Laws and Crack Down on Puppy Mills in New York State

This past session, I introduced two new pieces of legislation critical to protecting animals in New York State. The first bill will enhance humane law enforcement in this state by moving all animal crimes from the agriculture and markets law to the penal code, where they belong. Making such a move will enable law enforcement and prosecutors to more easily charge and prosecute animal abusers. In addition, since many of the cruelty laws have not been changed since the 1920s, this bill



At a news conference to announce the introduction of legislation to modernize animal cruelty laws in New York State, Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal is flanked by Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice, while holding a nine-month-old puppy who was rescued after being hit by a car and left for dead.

will modernize the crimes and ensure that current law better reflects society's more evolved attitudes toward animals.

The second bill will crack down on puppy mills. I introduced this bill as a way to put an end to puppy mills, here in New York State and across the country. Every time an unsuspecting customer walks into a pet store, they too, albeit inadvertently, fall victim to puppy mills. Puppy-mill dogs are puppy-making machines, kept in tiny, filthy crates for their entire lives; many rarely see the light of day. In addition, these animals do not receive routine and critical medical care if they become sick or are injured. My legislation will require commercial breeders to adhere to strict, humane housing standards. In addition, it would impose limitations on the ages of breeding dogs and the number of litters for each animal and would require that animals have access to the outdoors, to run and play, and receive annual veterinary examinations by licensed veterinarians.

Assemblymember Rosenthal Passes Legislation to Equalize Pay for Women

Despite tremendous strides toward equality made in the last 40 years, women's wages continue to lag far behind men's, with women making a mere 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. For many women, the disparity becomes glaringly evident at retirement, when after a career of hard work, women find that they have fewer resources than men with which to retire comfortably. My legislation will require New York State to compensate male and female employees equally for work of comparable value, ending a practice that devalues stereotypically "female-dominated careers" merely because they are female dominated. The Senate has failed, year after year, to pass this legislation to eliminate the historic disparity for women.

Assembly Passes Four Rosenthal Bills to Strengthen and Improve Tenant Protections

I have consistently led the charge in Albany for stronger tenant protections. Here in the city, we are dealing with a critical shortage of affordable housing, and tenants who benefit from the protections afforded them by rent regulation are under near-continuous assault by landlords who seek to demand astronomical, market rate rents for their units. Given the constant push to deregulate, I have a responsibility to fight for ad-

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Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal discusses campaign finance reform and other issues with a constituent following a town hall meeting on the issue.

Making Albany Work for You: Reducing the Influence of Special Interests

For far too long, big money and special interests have had a stranglehold on the political system in this nation and this state. Regular citizens, the people who live and work in my district, do not have the resources to compete with deep-pocketed corporate interests. It is my job to represent *your* interests in Albany. I am honored to serve in that role and do not take my responsibility lightly. To ensure that the State Legislature is responsive to the people of this state, I voted in favor of tough ethics rules that will require lawmakers to disclose any outside business that could potentially represent a conflict of interest. In addition, I am committed to passing comprehensive campaign finance reform, including tougher disclosure rules, to reduce the influence that special interests have on the electoral process. With the outsize influence of wealthy and anonymous donors empowered by the Citizens United decision and other cases, it is imperative that we act now to protect our precious democracy.



Hundreds of community members attended the town hall meeting I hosted with Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer at the Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center in July. Joined by representatives from a number of City agencies, we addressed questions and concerns on a wide variety of issues affecting the community. It was a great evening, and I look forward to hosting similar events in the future.

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ditional protections. The four bills I introduced, which the Assembly passed, would do just that.

- A. 2430 would repeal vacancy decontrol, which has led to the deregulation of more than 300,000 units since its enactment. Not only would this legislation prevent landlords from deregulating a unit when a tenant vacates, but it would also re-regulate units that were lost in the last 15 years as a result of vacancy decontrol.
- A.1892-B would overhaul the rent-control system by changing the way in which rent increases are calculated. Once this bill becomes law, the Rent Guidelines Board would calculate rent increases for rent-controlled tenants in the same way it does for rent-stabilized tenants, meaning that rent-controlled tenants would no longer be subject to automatic 7.5% annual increases.
- A.7234-A would repeal the much-maligned *Casado v. Markus* decision, which allows landlords to charge tenants what amounts to a “poor tax” if their monthly rent is less than \$1,000 and they have lived in the apartment for more than six years.
- A. 4900 would require that rent overcharges be included in the rental history regardless of the statutorily imposed four-year look-back period.

Taken together, these four bills would provide tenants with tools crucial to protect their status as rent-regulated, and to fight back against unscrupulous landlords. I will continue to fight for increased tenant protections and to preserve affordable housing stock in New York.

Co-op and Condo Tax Abatement Program to be Renewed in Fall

I have heard from many of you about the urgent need to renew the tax abatement for co-op and condo owners. I agree. Although the Legislature did not take up this measure before the end of the 2012 legislative session, we are likely to reconvene during a special session before the holidays to address this issue and pass the renewal. In the meantime, the City will continue to collect taxes based on the old schedule. If you were overcharged, the City will apply a credit toward future tax bills. Should you have any questions about this issue, or if you require assistance, please contact my office at 212-873-6368 or rosenthal@assembly.state.ny.us.

Rosenthal Works to Create Thousands of Green Energy Jobs

New York State must invest in clean, safe and renewable energy sources, not merely because the investment will reduce pollution and climate change-causing emissions, but also because doing so will create thousands of jobs in the new green energy economy. As New York and the rest of the country continue to struggle through this economic downturn, we have a real opportunity to help spur economic growth in a new sector of society – the renewable energy sector. That is why I am a co-sponsor of A. 9149-A, the New York Solar Industry Development and Jobs Act of 2012. This bill would create the Solar Renewable Energy Credit Program to stimulate the installation and generation of solar energy in New York State. Providing incentives for the development and deployment of solar energy as well as investment stability will create a nurturing environment for this burgeoning industry to grow. I am committed to measures that create stable, long-term jobs for New Yorkers. At the same time, it is crucial that New York move away from dirty and dangerous sources of energy and get on a path toward 100% clean, safe and renewable energy. Our planet and our children will thank us for it.