

Assemblymember Quart meets with constituents.



Assemblymember
Dan Quart

*Reports
to the
People*

Inside this issue . . .

Passing a Fair Minimum Wage pg.1

Election Day Disaster pg.2

Improving Neighborhood Safety pg.2

Protecting Your Property Tax Abatement pg.3

Preventing Gun Violence pg.3



DISTRICT OFFICE:
360 East 57th Street, Mezzanine • New York, NY 10022 • Tel: 212-605-0937
ALBANY OFFICE:
530 Legislative Office Building • Albany, NY 12248 • Tel: 518-455-4794
Email: quartd@assembly.state.ny.us



ASSEMBLYMEMBER DAN QUART

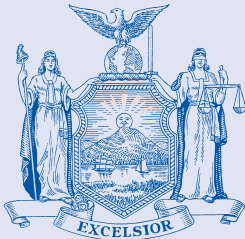
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PASSING A FAIR MINIMUM WAGE

Just a few weeks ago, I was proud to vote to increase New York State’s minimum wage to \$9 per hour. Surviving on the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour is incredibly difficult for anyone in our state. However, increasing the minimum wage is of particular importance to women in New York.

Because the minimum wage is based on an hourly rate, it is primarily applicable to shift workers in industries that are often dominated by women, like food service, hospitality, health care and retail. Currently, women in New York make up 63.4% of minimum wage workers although they only represent 51.5% of the state population, and while this overrepresentation is problematic in and of itself, increasing the minimum wage will counteract some of this disparity. Raising the minimum wage will also help close the wage gap – women in New York are still only paid an average of 83 cents on the dollar when compared to men. Minimum wage earners will be able to command a higher wage throughout their careers, also reducing the lifetime earnings gap that women experience. Finally, the legislation institutes an indexing mechanism, which ensures that the state’s minimum wage will be immune from any future political considerations.

As your representative in Albany, I’ve been committed to ensuring wage equity and basic fairness for women. I was proud to vote for the minimum wage increase to secure a fair and livable wage for all New Yorkers.



Assemblymember Quart debating on the floor of the Assembly chamber.

IMPROVING NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

In January, I conducted a walkthrough of East 49th Street between 1st Avenue and the FDR Drive with officials from the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), representatives of Community Board 6's Public Safety, Environment and Transportation committee and members of the local community to look at traffic issues that have plagued local residents for many years. My primary concern are the many drivers exiting the FDR Drive at high speeds, creating very dangerous conditions for residents attempting to cross the street into Peter Detmold Park. In recognition of these dangers, Community Board 6 has passed a resolution requesting that the DOT take immediate action to remedy this problem.

Working with the community, I have pressed the DOT to resolve this issue. While the design of the off-ramp precludes their taking measures to slow traffic from the exit ramp, DOT has proposed alternative solutions. They plan to install a crosswalk mid-block on East 49th Street to move pedestrian crossings further from the exit ramp. They're also considering extending the pedestrian countdown signal, giving pedestrians more time to cross before the light changes. Both of these modifications will go a long way toward making our streets safer for all of the residents of the East Side. I am grateful to the community for bringing this problem to my attention and to DOT for responding to the community's concerns.

ELECTION DAY DISASTER

In the weeks before Election Day 2012, my office began receiving inquiries from constituents who were waiting for absentee ballots they had applied for. My staff worked with the Board of Elections to ensure that these absentee applications were processed as quickly as possible. Presidential election years are always busy times for the Board of Elections, but voters shouldn't need legislator intervention to ensure their registrations are processed. We'll never know how many voters never received their absentee ballot and were prevented from voting.

Election Day 2012 itself brought all new challenges for New York City. The city was still reeling from Hurricane Sandy, which had hit barely more than a week earlier. A last-minute executive order from the Governor rightly allowed residents displaced due to the hurricane to vote anywhere in the state. Naturally, this new requirement overwhelmed the already underperforming Board of Elections, causing complete chaos. Over the course of the day, I witnessed and received reports of voters waiting for hours in long lines, voters being illegally turned away from poll sites, broken voting machines and a lack of necessary supplies, including pens to mark ballots and the ballots themselves. Poll site workers emailed me in crisis; too few poll workers left no time for lunch or even bathroom breaks.

These kinds of conditions can't continue. The right to vote is an essential one and the Board's failure to perform at this level is tantamount to voter disenfranchisement. I have introduced a package of bills to address these problems directly. My legislation will require the Board to provide each poll site with enough supplies, including voting machines, will allow poll workers to be hired for half-day shifts instead of full 18 hour days to expand the pool of willing poll workers and will require the Board to report on their performance each Election Day to allow for real oversight. Voters in New York City should never again have to worry that they will be unable to exercise this fundamental right due to Board of Election incompetence.



Assemblymember Quart visits Stanley Isaacs Senior Center.

PROTECTING YOUR PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT

In January, the legislature passed an omnibus housing bill that included the reauthorization of the property tax abatement for coop and condo owners. This legislation protects middle-class New Yorkers from an immediate and unjust tax increase and will provide certainty for these taxpayers through 2014. While I am pleased that this was one of the first issues taken up in this legislative session, this abatement should have been extended last year, before it expired. New York City homeowners shouldn't have had to depend on rumored promises to ensure the continued affordability of their homes.

This delay is emblematic of the City's approach to property tax reform. Over the past seventeen years, in recognition of the inequities existent in the property tax system, the state legislature created this abatement, passed it, and renewed it five times. Each renewal included a clause requiring New York City to create a permanent fix for the system, but this has never materialized. Instead, taxpayers face an opaque assessment process that leads to unpredictable and inequitable tax burdens. New Yorkers have been depending on stopgap

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measures for too long. It is time for the City to live up to its promises and reform this broken system into one that is simple, stable and fair.

Since no mayor or mayoral candidate has indicated any interest in taking action on this issue, I will be introducing a package of legislation intended to solve these problems without the support of the City of New York. Although I believe the system needs to be completely overhauled, without a willing partner in the City, I am limited to making a series of small but important changes to the system to increase transparency and equity for all property taxpayers.

PREVENTING GUN VIOLENCE

I am proud to announce the passage of the NY SAFE Act, legislation I co-sponsored, which enacts the strongest gun regulations in the country. The multiple mass shootings our country experienced last year clearly demonstrate that our current policies aren't working. I am proud that New York was the first state in the country to respond and pass stricter regulations to protect its citizens.

This legislation enshrines the common sense regulations that New Yorkers across the state have asked for. Provisions include:



- **High-capacity magazines will be limited to 7 rounds instead of 10.**
- **Ammunition purchases will be tracked in real time, to give law enforcement access to information about purchasers of large volumes of ammunition.**
- **Gun owners will be subject to stricter permitting regulations, and permits will have to be renewed every 5 years.**

"Gun violence has had a devastating impact on communities across the country. The NY SAFE Act will change the economics and regulations of gun ownership to ensure the safety of our families."