

## Assemblyman

# Jeffrey Dinowitz

### Reports to the People of the 81<sup>st</sup> Assembly District

SPRING 2016

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

Dear Constituent:

I am sending this newsletter out in the middle of our annual state budget negotiations. Although the budget may have already passed by the time you receive this newsletter, I just wanted to mention a few of my top priorities in this year's negotiations.


The Governor has proposed large cuts to the City University and to Medicaid dollars for the City. I am working hard to oppose these cuts. We need more money for health care. As a staunch supporter of the CUNY system, as well as a CUNY graduate, anything less than a full restoration of CUNY funding is not acceptable. The fight for increases in public school funding is no less important. The City is still owed huge amounts of education dollars based upon the Campaign for Fiscal Equity court decision.

I am working on the efforts in Albany to enact real ethics reform and campaign finance reform. I am hoping that this year we will be able to strengthen current ethics rules and to address the issue of outside income for elected officials. In addition, I strongly support strong and meaningful campaign finance reforms, including the closing of the so-called LLC loophole, which has allowed some private entities to give unlimited amounts of money to campaigns. Given the recent convictions of some elected officials, we may never have a better opportunity to pass serious reforms.

Closer to home: we are faced with a severe overcrowding problem at P.S. 24 due to incompetence at the Department of Education and misguided policies by the leadership, or former leadership, at the school. Our entire district would be impacted by the Mayor's controversial proposed zoning changes meant to increase the amount of affordable housing but which could have other serious, negative repercussions. A third proposed homeless facility, this one for "transitional housing," has been put forth in Wakefield. One unacceptable proposal for new housing on Fort Independence Street was withdrawn. Another building is proposed on Broadway, two stories higher than what the zoning rules allow. These are just a few of the many neighborhood issues before us that I will be working on tirelessly on behalf of the community.

As always, please feel free to contact my district office with any issue you may be having. My excellent staff is top-notch at solving problems and cutting through government red tape.

Sincerely,

  
Jeffrey Dinowitz  
Assemblyman

## Assemblyman Dinowitz Hosts Series of Five Town Hall Meetings for Seniors



Assemblyman Dinowitz is shown here at the RAIN Nereid Senior Center in Wakefield talking to a large group of seniors concerned about a variety of issues facing them today.

Recently, I held a series of Town Hall Meetings at Senior Centers across the community where I discussed a range of issues that disproportionately affect seniors, including housing issues and consumer fraud. Many of those who participated were concerned and shared stories about various scams that they had either heard of or experienced for themselves. During the conversations, my staff distributed informational pamphlets on how to avoid such scams and how to better protect consumers from being taken advantage of. In addition, I spoke about the many programs and benefits New York City and State offer that many seniors are unaware of – including the New York City Rent Freeze Program formerly known as SCRIE. I was excited to meet with and talk to the hundreds of seniors who showed up to the centers throughout the district. It was encouraging to see such an active part of our community asking engaging questions about issues facing our neighborhoods and what solutions might be available. For those who couldn't make it and would like some information about senior-related issues my office is always available at 718-796-5345 to answer any questions or provide any information we can.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz and Local Leaders Announce Traffic Light at PS 24



Assemblyman Dinowitz stands with Council Member Andrew Cohen, NYC Department of Transportation Representative Nivardo Lopez, Chief of Staff to Congressman Eliot Engel, Bill Weitz, and PS 24 Parents Association Co-President Laura Moukas at a press conference on West 235th Street and Independence Avenue in front of PS 24. **See Page 2 for more on how we were able to get a traffic light at this dangerous intersection!**



## Assemblyman Dinowitz Partners with Local Electeds and Community Board 8 to Bring Traffic Light to PS 24

In an effort to create a safer environment outside of Public School 24, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Council Member Andrew Cohen, State Senator Jeff Klein, and Congressman Eliot Engel penned repeated requests to the Department of Transportation (DOT) for a traffic light at the intersection of Independence Avenue and West 235th Street. With two schools, the Spuyten Duyvil Public Library, and Seton Park in close proximity to the intersection, it can become extremely busy and congested during arrival and dismissal times, making it difficult for students and

parents to safely cross the street. After conducting a traffic study, the Department of Transportation (DOT) approved the installation of a traffic control device at this intersection in November of 2015. The traffic signal was completed and fully operational as of February 2016. This new traffic signal will significantly improve safety for not only P.S. 24's students and teachers, but for all residents in our neighborhood. I am happy DOT listened to the concerns of the community and its elected officials, while also finishing the work expeditiously.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz, the FDNY, and the American Red Cross Sponsor Smoke Detector Giveaway

I am excited to announce that in the coming months I will be partnering with the FDNY and the American Red Cross to sponsor two free smoke detector giveaways to the community. At each of the events there will be several Fire Safety Educators from the FDNY to distribute the smoke alarms, and to set up appointments for free installation. The giveaways will take place on:

**Wednesday, April 27, 2016**

**at the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center**

3450 Dekalb Ave., Bronx, NY 10467

and

**Thursday, June 30, 2016**

**at the RAIN Nereid Senior Center**

720 Nereid Ave., Bronx, NY 10466



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured here speaking about community issues and legislative priorities for the 2016 legislative session at a meeting of Community Board 7.



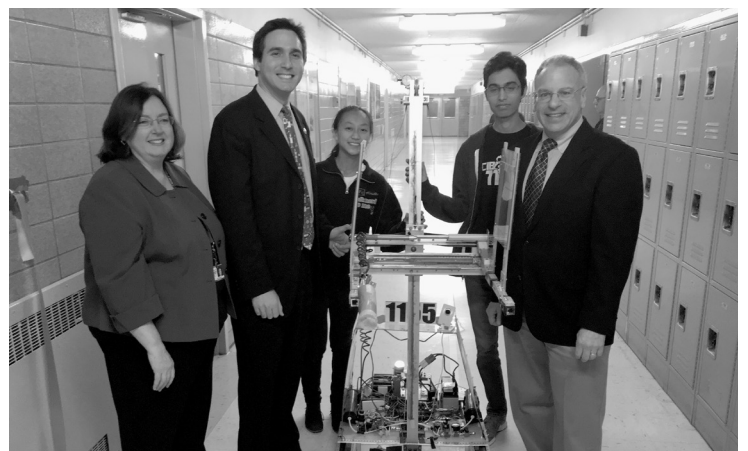
On February 25th, Assemblyman Dinowitz celebrated Riverdale resident Sylvia Lask's birthday in the Assembly Chamber along with his colleagues. Pictured are Assemblywoman Linda B. Rosenthal, Assemblyman Victor Pichardo, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Sylvia Lask, Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon, Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj, and Assemblyman David Weprin. Ms. Lask is a statewide leader and champion for mental health issues.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz Warns Against New Wave of Phony IRS Calls

Over the last year many community residents have reached out to my office after receiving calls, specifically scammers claiming to be affiliated with the IRS, who threatened to shut off their electricity if they didn't receive payments for alleged debts or tax liabilities. These fraudulent calls are well-coordinated and widespread attempts to take advantage of unsuspecting New Yorkers, especially seniors. The most important thing to remember in this instance is that **THE IRS WILL NEVER CONTACT YOU BY PHONE**. If you receive one of these calls, the best thing you can do is just ignore it, don't call back, and don't give away any personal information.

## NYC Department of Transportation Approves Pair of Dinowitz Requested Traffic Safety Measures in North Riverdale

After hearing from numerous community members about vehicles traveling at dangerously high speeds in the residential neighborhood of North Riverdale, I am happy to announce that at my urging the Department of Transportation has agreed to install two speed humps in the area. After conducting a survey of the area earlier this year, the DOT informed me of their intention to address the safety concerns I raised by installing two speed humps per my request; the first on Liebig Avenue between West 263rd and West 259th Streets, the second on West 263rd Street between Riverdale Avenue and Liebig Avenue. High speed vehicles in North Riverdale pose a significant danger to the residents of that area, including many seniors and children. These speed humps will help keep car speeds down in North Riverdale, keeping pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers in our community safer.



Assemblyman Dinowitz took a tour of his alma mater, Bronx High School of Science, to meet with faculty and staff, including Bronx Science Principal Jean Holland. They are pictured here with a robot made by some of the school's amazing and talented students.

# Albany Update

## Assemblyman Dinowitz Introduces E-Privacy Bill (A. 9235)

Recently I introduced a bill requiring law enforcement officials to obtain a court-ordered warrant before physically or electronically accessing information generated by, or stored in, electronic devices such as cell phones, computers, or tablets. There is absolutely no reason that electronic devices such as cell phones, tablets, and laptops

should be treated any differently than a citizen's car or home when it comes to search and seizure laws. This legislation is a significant step towards protecting the privacy rights of New Yorkers. This legislation also includes reasonable exceptions to ensure that police can continue to effectively and efficiently protect public safety.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz Proposes Expansion of School Entrance Smoking Ban to Libraries (A.9495)

Several years ago New York State successfully banned smoking indoors to protect all New Yorkers from the harmful side effects of secondhand smoke, and four years ago Senator Rivera and I expanded that ban to the entrances and exits of our schools. Now, I am proud to extend that smoke-free protection even further to include the entrances and exits of our state's libraries. New Yorkers have the right to go to their local public library without being exposed to

secondhand smoke – which despite being secondhand, is still known to have detrimental medical side effects to those exposed. This bill is especially important when you consider the number of school age children and seniors who patronize public libraries – they deserve a smoke free and healthy environment to enjoy our state's great library systems, and I am thrilled to work with my colleague Senator Rivera again to make New York a healthier place.



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Chair of the Consumer Affairs and Protection Committee, and Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein, Chair of the Assembly Judiciary Committee, Co-Chair a hearing on arbitration practices with their colleagues Aravella Simotas, Phillip Steck, and Rebecca Seawright.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz Resolves Netherland Gardens Hoarding Issue

After several months of trying to no avail, residents of Netherland Gardens can literally breathe easier after Adult Protective Services agreed to clean out the apartment of a tenant whose apartment had collected a significant amount of mold – so much so that it permeated through the walls to the entire floor. After the management company neglected to take action, I personally contacted the City Department of Adult Protective Services (APS) to have them clean out the offending apartment – which had accrued a substantial amount of

hoarded garbage causing a significant amount of mold to spread through the building. Over three large trucks full of garbage were removed from the apartment by APS workers, which now that it is cleared out, is able to be cleared of all mold by the building's management company. If mold or hoarding is an issue in your building, you should write a formal letter to the management company or landlord, and feel free to call my office for any assistance you may need at (718) 796-5345.



Assemblyman Dinowitz walked through and spoke with students at High School of American Studies, which has fostered a wonderful learning environment for the community. Pictured here are principal Alessandro Weiss, Assemblyman Dinowitz, and Parent's Association Co-President Unjoo Trebach.



Assemblyman Dinowitz once again attended this year's annual Woodlawn Taxpayers Association Tree Lighting ceremony. Pictured are Councilmember Andrew Cohen, Assemblyman Dinowitz, State Senator Jeff Klein and Woodlawn Taxpayers Association President Kenneth Nugent.

### REMINDER:

## The Rent Freeze Program, Formerly Known As the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE), Has Expanded

If you qualify, your monthly rent amount will be frozen, and your landlord will receive a property tax credit equal to the amount of your increase. The New York State legislature has expanded the SCRIE income eligibility from \$29,000 to \$50,000. If you would like more information or would like help filing an initial application, please feel free to call or stop by my office. To be eligible you must be at least 62 years of age, your income must not exceed \$50,000, and your annual rent must be greater than one third of your annual income. Additionally, you must reside in rent stabilized, rent controlled, or Mitchell-Lama housing.

## State Tax Forms Now Available

With April 15th right around the corner, it's tax season! As always my office has the following state tax forms, along with the corresponding instructions:

- **IT201** (Resident Income Tax Return)
- **IT201ATT** (Department of Taxation & Finance Attachment)
- **IT203** (Nonresident & Part-Year Resident Income Tax Return)
- **TIT203AT** (Department of Taxation & Finance Attachment)
- **IT203B** (Nonresident & Part-Year Resident Income Allocation & College Tuition Itemized Deduction Worksheet)
- **IT213** (Claim for Empire State Child Credit)
- **IT214** (Claim for Real Property Tax Credit for Homeowners and Renters)
- **IT215** (Claim for Earned Income Credit)
- **IT272** (Claim for College Tuition Credit or Itemized Deduction for Full-year NYS Residents Only)



## Assemblyman Dinowitz Annual Canned Food Drive is Massive Success

I am proud to say that my office's 2015 Holiday Canned Food Drive was the most successful it has ever been. Though the holiday season came and went, I wanted to take the time to thank all of the people and organizations that made this year's food drive an unprecedented success. Thanks to the inspiring charitable efforts of the community, in particular the students and staff at PS 7, PS 24, PS 81, and Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy MS/HS 141, my office was absolutely packed over the last few months with boxes and boxes of canned goods. Le Chic Salon and Spa, and the Knolls Crescent Coop Section 2 also donated a generous amount of food. Additionally, I would also like to thank Goodman Management Realty, Kelly Ryan's Bar and Restaurant, Ben's Market, and Seaman's Car Service for donating over 100 frozen turkeys both for Thanksgiving and Christmas, with PS 7 and PS 81 raising several hundred dollars to contribute to that effort.

Both the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and the food pantry at Saint Frances of Rome Church were incredibly grateful to receive such an abundance of food during the holiday season. Personally, I could not be more grateful and proud to represent such a generous

and caring community that stepped up to provide for those in need at a time of year when they need most. I host this Food Drive every year, and every year countless residents, buildings, and community organizations donate their canned goods to my office, but this year by far exceeded all expectations. I look forward to sponsoring this event next year as I am hopeful the community will continue its impeccable record of selfless generosity during the holiday season.



*As you can see here this year's Annual Holiday Food Drive was a huge success. My office's annual food drive is possible thanks to the incredible generosity of the community, and all who contribute.*

### **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 participated in this year's 2nd annual Greenway Gala hosted by KRVC. Pictured are Congressman Eliot Engel, Assemblyman Dinowitz, KRVC's Executive Director Tracy Shelton, State Senator Jeff Klein, and Council Member Andrew Cohen.*



*After the horrific attacks on Paris, Assemblyman Dinowitz stood in solidarity with local community leaders to show support. Pictured are Council Member Andrew Cohen, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Congressman Eliot Engel, and Rabbi Avi Weiss.*