



## Assemblyman

# Jeffrey Dinowitz

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

SPRING 2017

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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 pleased to report that we achieved a number of victories for our community in the recently passed state budget. While the on-time budget streak was ended this year, we nevertheless added significant funding for public education, made college more affordable for some New Yorkers, and stopped Governor Cuomo's proposed cuts to Title XX funding that could have closed up to 65 Senior Centers. We added \$65 million (at my urging) to the MTA for capital projects, although the Governor did cut \$65 million in operating expenses. We renewed the millionaires tax, added funds to fight the heroin epidemic, and released \$2.5 billion to combat homelessness and preserve and create affordable housing. We invested \$2.5 billion in clean water by replacing water pipes and other infrastructure, and raised the age in most cases of criminal responsibility.

I continue my fight to protect the quality of life in our community whether its blocking a bad development on East 233rd Street, stopping another homeless shelter in Wakefield, fighting so kids can go to their neighborhood schools, getting new traffic lights, stop signs, and speed bumps installed or keeping pre-k programs open, I never stop my efforts to keep our communities great.

As always, my excellent staff stands ready to help with concerns and complaints, cutting through government red tape and providing free notary service. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any problems or issues.

Sincerely,  
  
Jeffrey Dinowitz  
Assemblyman

## Dinowitz Named Chair of Committee on Corporations Authorities and Commissions

Recently, I was appointed Chair of the State Assembly's Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions (CAC) by Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie. I'm honored that Speaker Heastie has entrusted me with this enormous responsibility, the work of the Committee touches the lives of every New Yorker, from the trains we ride to the phones in our pockets and the utilities we pay for. I intend to use this new role to ensure full accountability of the MTA and all the authorities. As Chair of the CAC, I have jurisdiction over the laws concerning private, not-for-profit and public corporations in the state. This includes both the Public Service Commission, which monitors New York telecommunications and utilities, and, most notably, the MTA and its many sub agencies. This appointment comes at a critical time for the nation's largest transit system. The MTA faces budget cuts from the Governor, decrease in bus service, increased services complaints, and overall dissatisfaction. I intend to use the new post to address the persistent transit woes in our borough and throughout the city. Lastly, a major component of the committee's work in recent years has been the oversight of the ongoing 2015-2019 MTA Capital Program. While the agency recently saw the successful on-time opening of Phase I of the Second Avenue Subway, questions linger about funding for future extensions of the line, as well as other big-ticket transit projects in the city. One of my longer term goals is to see East side access for Metro North.



Millions of people, including Assemblyman Dinowitz, marched in Manhattan and around the country for women's equality a day after the inauguration of the current president.

## New York Health Act Ensures No One Will Be Without Health Care Coverage

I am pleased to announce that I helped pass the New York Health Act in the Assembly, legislation that would create a universal single-payer plan to provide health coverage to every New York resident. The New York Health Act would establish a universal health care system within the state, known as New York Health, and expand coverage eligibility to include all residents, regardless of wealth, income, age or pre-existing condition. In addition, every enrollee would have access to the full range of doctors and service providers offered. The plan would provide comprehensive inpatient and outpatient care, primary and preventive care, maternity care, prescription drug costs, laboratory testing, rehabilitative care and dental, vision and hearing care. Out-of-state health care would also be covered, both when the need for services arises during travel and when there is a clinical reason to receive care outside the state. Care providers and coordinators would be fully paid by New York Health, with no co-pays, deductibles or other charges to patients.

The system would be publicly funded based on a shared 80/20 employer/employee payroll tax contribution that would be progressive and based on the amount the employee is paid. This eliminates the regressive tax of premiums, co-pays and deductibles that is currently imposed on patients. Employers would no longer be responsible for paying premiums – saving them money – and they would also no longer have to sign contracts with insurance companies and deal with the administration of health plans. Further, small businesses wouldn't be forced to compete with the health plans offered by their large corporate competitors. Additionally, state funding would be combined with federal funds that are currently received for Medicare, Medicaid and Child Health Plus to create the New York Health Trust Fund. The state would also seek federal waivers that will allow New York to completely fold those programs into New York Health. The local share of Medicaid funding would be ended, offering major property tax relief for New Yorkers.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz and Congressman Espaillat Host Town Hall Rally Protesting Planned Repeal of Affordable Care Act

Congressman Adriano Espaillat and I hosted a town hall to oppose efforts by the radical Congress to end the Affordable Care Act. This repeal, which initially failed to pass the House of Representatives, is now in Senate Committee.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), colloquially dubbed “Obamacare,” has insured tens of millions of Americans previously left uninsured, granting them affordable health care and prohibiting insurance companies from denying coverage to Americans based on pre-existing conditions. This landmark legislation sought to shift health insurance in the United States onto a more progressive and sustainable path, by providing health insurance that was previously unaffordable and unattainable to millions. Now, Congress hopes to repeal this law and endanger the health insurance of millions of Americans with no clear plan on what they will offer as a replacement. Up to 23 million stand to lose health insurance if the ACA is repealed.

New York will continue to take measures to protect its citizens from a hostile federal government intent on taking health away from its people.



Assemblyman Dinowitz and newly elected Congressman (13 CD) Adriano Espaillat are pictured here speaking for the preservation of the Affordable Care Act at a recent town hall meeting they held at Montefiore Hospital.

## Department of Transportation Confirms Plan to Install Traffic Light Dinowitz Requested in Kingsbridge Heights

Recently, I hosted a press conference and rally attended by my colleagues, Congressman Adriano Espaillat, Council Member Andrew Cohen, State Senator Gustavo Rivera, and State Senator Jeffrey Klein, at the intersection of Heath Avenue and Ft. Independence Street to bring attention to dangerous conditions there and to highlight Ft. Independence’s lack of adequate pedestrian safety measures. Deputy Inspector Terence O’Toole and Detective Mindy Ramos from the 50th Precinct were also present at the event, as well as parents and students from the nearby P.S. 360.

We elected officials agreed that the current three way y-shaped intersection should be replaced with a three way traffic light and a new traffic island to slow down speeding cars on Ft. Independence, which pedestrians, most notably children, must deal with when attempting

to cross the street on the way to school or to the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center.

After repeated requests for a review of traffic conditions, the DOT agreed to conduct a twelve week traffic study. The results of that study were released and the Bronx DOT Commissioner Nivardo Lopez confirmed plans to have a traffic light installed. In addition, the Fort Independence Street Corridor will be studied for additional safety improvements. I am very pleased that the DOT has agreed to install a traffic signal at this very dangerous intersection by the end of July. I have seen first-hand how dangerous this location is for pedestrians and motorists alike. I am confident that safety will be improved thanks to this wise decision by DOT.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz Applauds Closing of Indian Point

As a longtime opponent of Indian Point Nuclear facility, I applaud the recent deal made by Entergy Corporation, the facilities operator, to permanently close it by 2021.

Problems and incidents have plagued the facility, located in Westchester, for years including one as recently as February 2016 when a leak in the facility was revealed after radioactivity was detected in the groundwater beneath the plant. Governor Cuomo made a statement that this leak posed no immediate danger to public health and had not migrated off site, but this incident was merely the latest in a string of mishaps and problems that have occurred at Indian Point since it began operating in 1974.

I have long opposed the plant’s continued operation given the facility’s problems and its proximity to one of the most populous metropolitan areas on the planet. In 2012, I opposed Entergy being granted an exemption from fire safety requirements by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission without a public hearing, and filed a brief in the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.



The recent free rain barrel giveaway, held in Van Cortlandt Park, was a great success! Pictured are DEP Rep. Effie Ardizzone, Council Member Andrew Cohen, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park Executive Director Christina Taylor, Community Board 8 Environment and Sanitation Chair Laura Spalter, and Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz.

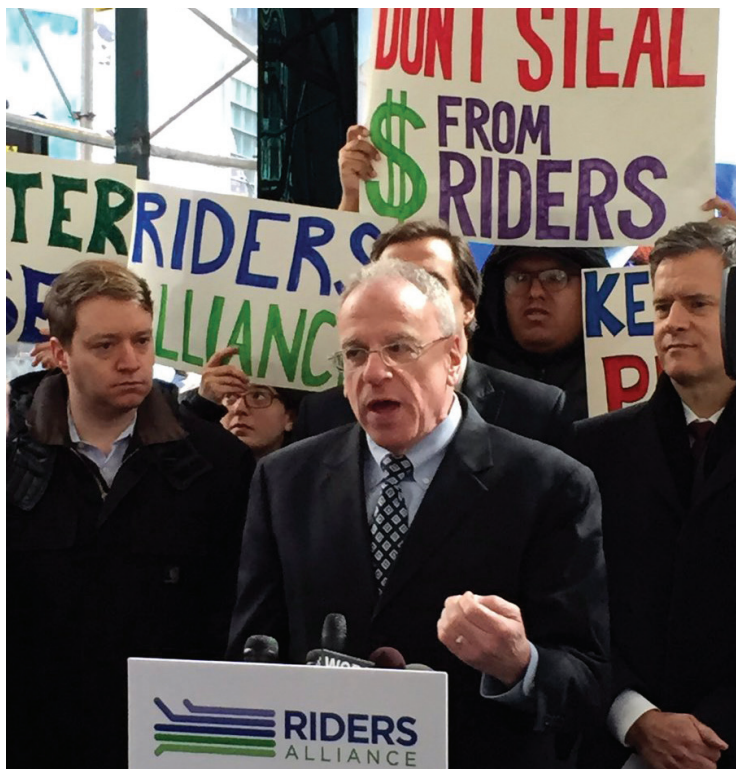


The Riverdale community stands united against hate. Pictured at a recent rally at the Riverdale YM-YWHA are Rabbi Steven Exler, Rabbi Barry Dov Katz, State Senator Jeff Klein, community leaders Randi Martos and Eric Dinowitz, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, and Dr. Nadia Afridi.



Assemblyman Dinowitz and Council Member Andrew Cohen celebrated the St. Patrick’s day Parade with Cardinal Timothy Dolan.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz Protests the Governor's Cut to the MTA



Assemblyman Dinowitz and advocates for mass transit riders rally for increased funding for the MTA and for service improvements.

I hosted a press conference in partnership with the Riders Alliance to protest the Executive Budget proposal to reduce the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) budget by \$65 million.

Even with this reduction, the Governor's office argued that overall the MTA budget is being increased. However this "increase" does not account for the funds the MTA would have made if not for the Governor's 2011 cut to the Payroll Mobility Tax transfer that helps to fund the MTA. The tax contributed around \$1.5 billion to the MTA but was reduced to \$1.2 billion after the scale-back. The Governor and legislature promised to replace the missing funds every year "dollar for dollar."

Every year since that time, the state has largely kept that promise, contributing approximately \$309 million a year to offset the funds lost from the 2011 tax cuts. This year the proposed \$244 million falls far short of the funds the MTA would have had if the Payroll Mobility Tax had remained in place.

As the newly appointed Chairman of the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, which oversees the MTA, I believe this cut to be untenable and wrote a letter cosigned by 45 other Assembly Members opposing the proposal. A promise is a promise. The MTA, which has been experiencing an overall decline in ridership as well as general service problems and delays, needs this money badly. Now is not the time to make cuts to the organization relied upon by 9 million people.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz Fights for Local Pre-K Programs

After learning that the Department of Education (DOE) had denied Riverdale Nursery School's application for a Universal Pre-K Program (UPK), I got to work.

The Riverdale Nursery School and Family Center is one of the few area schools that was established specifically as an integrated, inclusive mainstream nursery school that could offer quality education to both typically developing children and children with special needs. Having been denied a DOE grant for UPK, the Riverdale Nursery School and Family Center was in danger of losing students to nearby schools that were granted UPK as a result of economic constraints on parents, and Riverdale was in danger of losing this well established Pre-School program.

However, in partnership with Council Member Andrew Cohen, and with assistance from State Senator Jeff Klein, I was able to successfully petition the DOE to reverse their original decision. Now, with UPK, Riverdale Nursery School can continue to offer quality education to children.

At almost the same time, my office learned that the Amalgamated



Assemblyman Dinowitz asked Mayor de Blasio to support construction of a new school in the Kingsbridge/Riverdale area at a recent mayoral town hall sponsored by Council Member Cohen.

## Local Elected Officials Successfully Restore Zoned Students Seats at P.S. 24

This past March, my office was deluged with calls from parents in the community that their children had been wait-listed for the September 2017 P.S. 24 Kindergarten class. They received letters stating that their children, who lived within the P.S. 24 school zone, would not be offered a seat at the school.

P.S. 24 is one of the best elementary schools in the Bronx and a compelling reason for young families to buy homes and move into the community. In many ways, the school's accomplishments reflect the success of the community and its continued well-being is in the interest of everyone, whether they have children who attend the school or not. Unfortunately, in recent years, the school has experienced severe overcrowding, exacerbated by the DOE's bungling of the Whitehall Annex lease renewal as well as by the previous administration's acceptance of high numbers of out-of-zone students.

Due to this overcrowding problem, 58 children residing in the P.S. 24 zone, including some who live across the street or around the corner, were put on a waiting list. This was unacceptable to all of the parents and the elected officials. After many meetings and conversations with District Superintendent, Maribel Hulla, Principal Steven Schwartz, and other DOE officials, the decision was made to reverse this ill-conceived plan and to offer seats at P.S. 24 to all 58 children.

I am pleased we were able to convince Dept. of Education officials to change their minds and to agree to accept the 58 zoned children of P.S. 24 that had been put on a waitlist. Every child in a school's zone, without exception, should be able to attend their zoned school. I applaud District 10 Superintendent Hulla and Principal Schwartz for doing the right thing for our community and for the families of these soon-to-be P.S. 24 students.



Assemblyman Dinowitz is pictured with some of the District 10 teachers who came to Albany to advocate for New York City public schools and students.

Nursery School, an invaluable resource for local parents, would not be receiving UPK, and was in danger of closing as a result. According to the DOE, there was not enough demand for seats in the area despite a Nursery School opening up nearby that had received UPK. After learning of this, I was able to successfully intervene in order to keep the school open and ensure the nursery school remained open and with UPK.



Assemblyman Dinowitz, Congressman Eliot Engel, and Council Member Andrew Cohen attended the annual dinner for SAR Academy which honored Donna Salamon, Barry L. Stern, Deborah Shapira, and Dr. Mark Shinar. Also pictured are Rabbi Binyamin Krauss and Rabbi Tully Harcsztark.



Assemblyman Dinowitz joined members of the Riverdale Senior Services for St. Patrick's Day.

## Dinowitz Introduces Bill to Shine Light on State Energy Policies

I have introduced legislation to overhaul the public meeting and voting protocol for the state's Public Service Commission (PSC). This legislation comes amid criticism of a recent proposal by the agency to subsidize the operator of four upstate aging nuclear power plants, and the initial refusal by PSC to attend a recent joint committee hearing convened by myself and colleagues to discuss it. The PSC faces mounting criticism over a decision to offer Zero-Emissions Credits (ZEC) to four upstate nuclear power plants owned by the Exelon Corporation. The plan, which appears to be little more than corporate welfare would cost ratepayers as much as \$7.6 billion over the next twelve years according to the New York Public Interest Research Group. This cost would be disproportionately shouldered by downstate customers.

In March, as the Chair the Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, I held a joint hearing with three other assembly committees to review the proposal. Despite being invited to testify, the PSC declined to send representatives to the hearing,

drawing the ire of myself and my colleagues. In a subsequent letter to our committees, the PSC alternately defended its absence by blaming legislators for not providing sufficient advance notice, and pointing to advice from legal counsel in light of pending litigation filed by environmental groups in response to the ZEC proposal.

While the agency has sent its representatives to a subsequent hearing, more actions must still be taken to ensure a greater level of accountability on issues affecting so many New Yorkers.

The Public Service Commission has the power to regulate the utility services for millions of New Yorkers. The people of this state expect their government to make such important decisions transparently. The new legislation would amend the state's public service law to require a majority of the total members of the PSC board to be present in order to hold commission meetings or take votes. The PSC's five-member board of commissioners is currently down to two sitting members after Chair Audrey Zibelman left her post on March 20 to oversee the Australian Energy Market Operator.

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## Women's Reproductive Health

It's been nearly 44 years since the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision, Roe v. Wade, and yet the threat to women's reproductive rights is as alarming and real as ever. With an anti-choice President and stolen Supreme Court seat, the time to fight back is now. That's why I helped pass two critical pieces of legislation to strengthen and protect women's reproductive rights, one to affirm a woman's right to an abortion in New York State, and one to require insurers to continue covering contraception at no cost to the consumer. The Assembly Majority has shown a steadfast commitment to ensuring New York is a place where a woman's constitutionally guaranteed right to choose is safeguarded and valued. The legislation emphasizes that the goal of medical laws and regulations should be to improve the quality and availability of health care, not to place undue burdens on patients and providers.

The second piece of the legislation I helped pass, the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act, requires health insurers to cover all

FDA-approved contraceptive drugs, devices and products when they are prescribed by a health care provider. The legislation does leave in place existing state law that allows religious employers to request an insurance policy that does not cover contraceptive methods. Further, the measure ensures coverage for emergency contraception, voluntary sterilization, patient education and counseling and all related follow-up care. Insurance companies would be prohibited from charging co-pays, co-insurance payments and deductibles for contraception and barred from imposing any restrictions or delays with respect to such coverage.

Not only is the right to choose under attack – this battle for equality stretches much further than that. Planned Parenthood is under attack, and basic health care is under attack, and I refuse to sit back and do nothing. It's up to New York State to be a leader and stand up for reproductive freedom. We can't allow the progress we've made in the fight for full women's equality to be undone.