



Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon

52nd District



Announcements & Upcoming Events

December 2017

A Message from Jo Anne...

The President and Congressional leaders recently pushed their ‘tax reform’ bill one step closer to law. I am extremely concerned about the impacts of this bill on New York State families and the state budget. Instead of helping hardworking people, the plan [will grow the deficit](#) by \$1.44 trillion and benefit the ultra-rich and giant corporations at the expense of everyone else.

Here in New York, decreasing or eliminating state, local and property tax deductions will hit middle-class families especially hard. The resulting deficit would also have [damaging implications](#) for our seniors through Medicare cuts, increase health insurance premiums, and increase the number of uninsured individuals.

A close look at the details of this plan show just how much the wealthy benefit while the majority of families and small businesses in my district—and across the country—don’t. It’s not only heartless but also bad policy to tell a teacher they can no longer get a tax deduction for buying extra school supplies, or to tell a new homeowner they can no longer deduct the interest they pay on their mortgage, or even the recent college grad drowning in student loan debt that they can’t deduct the interest they pay. The deductions that regular people routinely use will be eliminated in order to help pay for a huge corporate tax cut.

The state legislature returns to Albany in January to work on the state budget and we will face some very difficult choices if this bill becomes law. I will keep you updated as the Governor presents his budget proposal.

Time to Enroll in Health Care for 2018

New York’s Healthcare Marketplace, NY State of Health, is a way for individuals, families, and small businesses to find quality health insurance (the Marketplace isn’t for people who have Medicare). The 2018 enrollment period is open.

Need Financial Help? Financial aid to buy insurance is available for most consumers. You may qualify for an even more affordable option through the state’s Essential Plan, which covers essential health benefits and includes a either a \$20 monthly premium or nothing, depending on income. You may also be eligible for Medicaid.

How Do I Apply? Apply online at www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov, or call the Marketplace at 1-855-355-5777.

Need Free Help Applying? Trained navigators are available to walk you through the application process. To find a navigator near you and set up an in-person appointment, call the Marketplace or go to:

<https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/ipanavigatorsitelocations>

When Do I Apply? Apply by **Dec. 15, 2017** for coverage effective Jan. 1, 2018. Open enrollment for 2018 ends **Jan. 31, 2018** (Note: the federal deadline is Dec. 15, 2017, but New York has extended its deadline for our Marketplace). After that time, you may only apply if you experience a qualifying event, such as loss of your current coverage, pregnancy, job loss, marriage or divorce, or other event. Note: You may apply for Medicaid or the Essential Plan at any time.

What’s Inside:

- Time to Enroll in Health Care for 2018
- We Grow Community! District 15’s Garden Train
- End the MTA Subway Signal Failure
- PS 321 Testing Task Force Forum, 12/6/17
- Assembly Hearing on Higher Education, 12/12/17
- Curbside Electronic Waste Collection is Here!
- My Open House Holiday Event, 12/15/17
- Webinar: Nursing Home Quality, 12/19/17
- Java with Jo Anne, 12/19/17
- What is the NYC Rent Freeze Program?
- New Options for Section 8 Units

We Grow Community! District 15's Garden Train

I was thrilled to attend the launch of the District 15 Garden Train, the School Gardens Consortium – the first of its kind in New York City. School gardens are fertile ground for learning from and learning to respect others. They encourage students to work together and with nature, building understanding, empathy, communication, and tolerance. Garden Train is doing great work to build and support gardening programs at every school and strengthen the community. The first project is creating a Tool Lending Depot which will store shared gardening equipment. To learn more and get involved, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/GardenTrainD15/>.



End the MTA Subway Signal Failure.

In a time of unprecedented subway delays, it is critical that the MTA makes signal repairs a top priority. We now know that the leading causes of delays are signals that have not been updated since the 1930's. However, the MTA's subway rescue plan doesn't include any additional funding for signal modernization.

We must do the right thing and make signal repairs a top priority and ensure a fair and sustainable funding source for the MTA in the 2018 state budget. I am proud to join Council Member Brad Lander and my colleagues to launch SignalFail.com to urge transit riders to join the call fix the subway signals; document how signal failures impact your commute; and learn what we can do to modernize our signal system. Please join our efforts at SignalFail.com!

PS 321 Testing Task Force Forum - Testing: Past, Present & Future, 12/6/2017

Please join PS 321 on Wednesday, 12/6/2017 at 6:30pm, 180 Seventh Avenue, to hear the latest in state testing policies and a discussion on how the tests affect kids across NYC. Principal Liz Phillips will be joined by NYS Regents and other NYC educators for an exploration of the relationship between state tests and educational equity. Sign up [here](#) to be added to the Testing Task Force email list. [Click here for more details.](#)

Assembly Public Hearing on Higher Education, 12/12/2017

You are invited to testify at the Assembly's hearing on higher education. This hearing will examine the implementation of the scholarship programs included in the 2017-18 State Budget, the Excelsior Scholarship and the Enhanced Tuition Awards Program (TAP), and examine the impact they are having on New York State families and institutions of higher education. This hearing is specifically seeking testimony from students on the overall experience of applying for an Excelsior Scholarship or an Enhanced TAP and any impact it has had on a student's ability to attend college in the 2017-18 academic year. The committee is also seeking testimony from colleges and universities on the impact the programs are having on the higher education sector.

The hearing will take place in Roosevelt Hearing Room C, Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY on Tues., Dec, 12, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. [Click here to view more details](#) and the hearing notice, or contact Charlotte Moller, Assembly Committee on Higher Education, (518) 455-4881, mollerc@nyassembly.gov.

Curbside Electronic Waste Collection is Here!

Residents who live within Community Board 2 (Boerum Hill, Brooklyn Heights, Downtown BK, DUMBO, Vinegar Hill) & other North Brooklyn neighborhoods can now make an appointment to have their electronic waste picked up by the NYC Department of Sanitation. To schedule a pick-up and view a list of items, visit: nyc.gov/electronics.

Join me for my Annual Open House Holiday Event! 12/15/2017

When: Friday, Dec. 15th, 4:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Where: My district office, [341 Smith Street, Brooklyn NY](#)

What to Bring: Yourself, friends, neighbors and kids. If you would like, feel free to bring an unwrapped toy or book for children ages 12 and younger for our Toys for Tots Drive (organized in coordination with the Park Slope Civic Council) or supplies for hurricane relief in Puerto Rico. You can drop off a toy to my District Office any time 9:30am-5pm, Mon-Fri. through Jan. 5th, 2018.

What to Expect: Enjoy cookies and refreshments with your neighbors.

Webinar: How to Access Information on Nursing Home Quality and Staffing on the Internet, 12/19/2017

Nursing home residents, families and those who work with them need to have good information about the quality of care in their facilities. In this program, the Long Term Care Community Coalition (LTCC) will discuss how to access relevant information on the federal Nursing Home Compare website as well as the on LTCC's website, www.nursinghome411.org. LTCC provides free educational programs for residents, families, ombudsman & advocates. For more information, call LTCC at 212-385-0355, email sara@ltccc.org or [visit their website here](#).

Java with Jo Anne, Tues. 12/19, 9-11AM

Is there a community issue you're passionate about? Let's talk about it! Tuesday, Dec. 19th kicks off the next "Java with Jo Anne." Join me for a cup of coffee at Brooklyn Roasting Company, 25 Jay St., in Dumbo from 9am to 11am.

What is the NYC Rent Freeze Program? The Rent Freeze Program, which includes the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Program and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) Program, helps those eligible stay in affordable housing by freezing their rent. SCRIE freezes the rent for head-of-household seniors 62 and older or people with disabilities who live in rent-regulated apartments (check the below website below for additional housing and disability criteria for DRIE). Your annual household income must be \$50,000 or less and you pay more than 1/3 of your monthly income for rent. To apply & for more details, call 311 or go to <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/index.page>

Update from NYC Finance Dept. If Your DRIE Housing Benefit Recently Expired: If your DRIE benefits expired within the last 6 months and you are still eligible for DRIE, you may be entitled to have these benefits reinstated. Submit a renewal application to the NYC Dept. of Finance by **Jan. 19, 2018** online: www1.nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/tools/drie-forms.page or visit a Business Center. The Brooklyn Center is located at the Brooklyn Municipal Building, 210 Joralemon Street.

New Options for Affordable Housing & Section 8 Units

- A.M.S. Realty, which manages Section 8 buildings, has re-opened the waiting lists for the following developments: Green Avenue - 80 Greene Avenue, Brooklyn (1 Bedroom); Caribe Gardens - Boerum, Humboldt Street, Brooklyn (2 Bedrooms); Sutter Gardens - Sutter, Blake Ave. & Barbey St., Brooklyn (2 Bedrooms); Tri-Block - St. Felix St. & Ashland Pl., Brooklyn (1 & 2 Bedrooms), Fulton Park- Utica & Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn (2 & 3 Bedrooms). If you are interested in applying, you can contact their office by mail: A.M.S. Realty Company, 98 Cutter Mill Rd., Suite 240 S, Great Neck, NY 11021. You can also call 516-466-6520 ext. 24. All applications must be received by **12/20/2017**.
- For additional affordable housing opportunities, go to nyc.gov/housingconnect.

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Sign up for my email alerts: Email simonj@NYassembly.gov or go to my Assembly webpage.