



Dear Neighbor,

This fall, we have witnessed a sea change in how our society is talking about and responding to reports of sexual harassment and assault. Since allegations about Harvey Weinstein were published in early October, it seems not a day has passed without a major revelation about abuse perpetrated by a powerful man. Women (and some men) have felt empowered to speak out about their experiences, and major media outlets are now giving them space to tell their stories.

As a woman who has long fought for the rights of other women to be free from sexual harassment and assault, I have found this time to be both deeply gratifying and deeply angering. I am gratified that women's stories are finally being given the weight that they deserve, and that men who perpetrate harassment and assault are facing at least some consequences for their actions. I am angered that it has taken this long for us as a society to care about these kinds of abusive behaviors, and that anyone can feign surprise or act as if these behaviors are somehow new. I cannot think of a single woman who has not experienced sexual harassment or assault, either at work or in their private lives, and for women, there is nothing surprising about these allegations; unfortunately, the only surprise is that people suddenly care.

It is especially important that most of the harassment and assault being reported occurred in the workplace, and that so many women who have been victimized report being so discouraged by their experiences that they left not just their jobs, but their fields altogether. It is becoming clear that we have been denied generations of female artists and leaders because of the abusive behavior of some men. It is essential that we continue to enhance employment protections for women and other victims of sexual harassment and assault, and create workplaces where victims are protected and supported when they report their experiences. We also need to expand the conversation beyond sexual harassment and assault, and examine all the ways in which gender discrimination can limit or derail a woman's career, whether it be choices about parenthood or simple sex discrimination. We should also expand the conversation on sexual harassment, which has largely focused on high-powered white women, to include the women who have long been the most affected by gender-based violence: women in the service industry, who are disproportionately women of color, and transwomen.

It should come as no surprise that the men who are alleged to have perpetrated harassment and assault cross all social categories — they include conservatives and progressives; white men and men of color; straight men and gay men. The pervasiveness of this kind of harassment reveals a problem that doesn't rest with any particular kind of man, but rather with society's image of virile masculinity in general. And for that reason, much of the work to be done to fix the problem of sexual harassment and assault lies with men. While women and their allies have fought for freedom from gender-based violence for decades, the burden should not be their's alone, especially when it is up to men to fix their own behavior.

Unfortunately, it has become clear that no industry is safe from harassment, but we all must continue to do our best to improve standards so harassment isn't tolerated, and victims have support and protections. When it became public that the Assembly arranged a secret payoff to protect an Assemblyman, the internal process for reporting incidents was dramatically altered to allow easier reporting for victims. The Assembly also changed policies regarding interns to ensure a safe workplace. As the recently appointed Chair of the Intern Committee, I take these responsibilities very seriously and continue to review policies to ensure a safe environment.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the women and men who have bravely come forward with their experiences. We have much work to do, but I am hopeful that we are finally ready to do it.

Sincerely,

Deborah

How Men Can Help

So, if you're a man, what can you do? Here are a few ways you can get started combating sexual harassment and assault:

- 1. Be an upstander.** If you see something, say something in the moment. A simple, direct comment such as, "What you're saying is making me feel uncomfortable" can be a signal to both perpetrators and victims that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Humor is crucial to our social interactions, but offensive and sexually demeaning jokes aren't funny. Don't feel you have to go along if it's a crude joke.
- 2. Talk to the women in your life and amplify their voices.** Prioritize their experiences, and ensure that they are represented in conversation about sexual harassment.
- 3. Don't ask others to do your research.** Women have carried this burden on their own long enough, they shouldn't also now have to educate you. There are many great groups, such as Holla Back (www.ihollaback.org) that provide resources and trainings.
- 4. Engage in serious reflection about yourself and your attitudes about gender and sexual violence.** How did you grow up thinking about these issues, and about women and trans- or non-binary people? What were you taught about sexual violence? Do you believe sexual violence is primarily about power? Why? Why not?

We all have room to grow, and if allies to women continue to grow, become educated and speak out, we might finally see a sustained change with how sexual harassment and assault are addressed by society.

Development is Not Public Open Space

The Hudson River Park (HRP) stretches along the West Side of Manhattan, which is one of the most park-starved communities in New York City. Unlike our neighbors in the other boroughs, where many very large city parks and numerous smaller neighborhood parks abound, we are squeezed into small spaces. Our residents pay very high property taxes and property values have been further accelerated with rampant real estate speculation, as well as the very existence of HRP. The City greatly benefits from these additional tax revenues, but the ability of neighbors to enjoy open space is diminished by major development, such as Hudson Yards, that is not accompanied by significant additional open space.

The Hudson River Park Act established the park in 1998 and outlines how the park will operate. The ultimate goal of the Hudson River Park Act was to create a park. Section 2(c) states “It is in the public interest to encourage park uses and allow limited park/commercial uses in the Hudson River Park.” People often state that the Act requires the Park to pay for itself. In fact, Section 2(e) of the Act states that “It is intended that to the extent practicable and consistent with the intent of [Section 2(c)], the costs of the operation and maintenance of the park be paid by revenues generated within the Hudson River Park and that those revenues be used only for park purposes. Additional funding by the state and city may be allocated as necessary.”

The Act also indicates that up to 20% of each pier is allowed to have park-dependent commercial activities, such as concession stands. Additionally, “commercial nodes” were established to be on Piers 40, Chelsea Piers, 76, 81, and 83 to allow for the park to take in modest revenue. For Piers 40 and 76, a minimum of 50% of the footprint of the piers must remain public open space regardless of commercial activity. Additional revenue sharing was supposed to be received from the Passenger Ship Terminal, Piers 88-94. However, this revenue sharing was waived for twenty years in a private arrangement between the Trust, the Bloomberg administration and the New York City Economic Development Corporation. Pier 57 was originally designated to be a public park, but changes have

been made to the Act to allow commercial activity with additional revenue to be generated there.

The community has long been told that the park needs more money to sustain itself. So, within these commercial nodes, and the commercial activity on park piers, the size of development is ever increasing, and the demands placed on the park are only augmented. These projects include not just proposals from the Hudson River Park Trust, but also the recent comments from the Governor that he would pay for the remaining build-out of the Park in exchange for Pier 55 moving forward. This is a never-ending cycle in which more development, in and outside of the Park, adds to the heavy use and creates more costly maintenance needs. This is an unacceptable paradigm that must finally come to an end.

Additionally, the larger the development, the longer a developer wants to hold a lease. Originally, the Act set lease terms at 30 years, with some extensions for specific piers added over time. Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to grant the developers of Pier 57 a 99-year lease. Such long lease terms effectively amounts to the disposition of public property. It is unlikely that lease terms today will negotiate an effective public good for that far into the future.

It is also important that HRP acts as an essential buffer for Manhattan’s West Side as water levels rise and storms become more intense. We need more open space to act as a means of absorbing water — not add to the problem of repairing damage to structures along the Hudson River. This responsibility should not be left to the Hudson River Park Trust alone, all New Yorkers benefit from appropriate resiliency measures being implemented, and the City needs to engage in protecting this infrastructure.

While Hudson River Park has become a destination park for all New Yorkers and tourists, it is still one of the few public open spaces to which much of our community has access. We must do better. While the State has made modest capital investments over the years, the City and State must be more committed to Hudson River Park and not continue to invest in it as only part of other major developments.

Saving with NY ABLE

Saving for disability expenses is an ongoing effort for many individuals and their families. It becomes even more difficult when there are limits on the accumulation of funds, which can interfere with other government benefits. That is why New York State’s Achieving a Better Life Experience (NY ABLE) program allows New York residents with disabilities to save for disability expenses without losing eligibility for benefits such as Medicaid and Social Security Insurance (SSI).

A NY ABLE account can be opened with as little as \$15. An individual can contribute up to \$14,000 annually, and can grow the account up to \$100,000. Savings can be accessed through an online account, by calling NY ABLE or by using a NY ABLE debit card or check. Investments into a NY ABLE account are exempt from taxes and can be withdrawn tax-free if used for qualified disability expenses. These expenses include education, health and wellness, housing, transportation, legal fees, financial management, employment training and support, assistive technology, oversight and monitoring, funeral and burial expenses, and personal support services.

To be eligible for a NY ABLE account, blindness or a disability must be present before age 26, and you must be entitled to SSI or SSDI because of your disability. An account can also be opened by a parent or legal guardian of the eligible individual, or a person granted power of attorney on behalf of the eligible individual.

For further information about the program, or to open an account, please visit mynable.org, email clientservices@mynable.org, or call 1-855-569-2253 Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.– 8:00 p.m. If you have additional questions, please call my office at 212-674-5153.



Happy to join colleagues and allies in advocating for faster, more reliable bus service, including the implementation of all-door boarding on buses.



Ms. Magazine has been an instrumental feminist resource for 45 years, and I was thrilled to join Gloria Steinem in the celebration for the co-naming of Ms. Magazine Way. Special thanks to Councilmember Rosie Mendez, and the Women’s Caucus of the Council for making this a reality.

The Fight for Unionization

In recent decades, our country has experienced a rapid rise in economic inequality, as wages have stagnated while owners and shareholders have taken home more and more of the profits produced by their workers. Economic inequality became a flashpoint in the 2016 presidential election and has continued to be, with much of the focus being put on the effects of globalization and how to entice corporations to bring jobs, especially manufacturing jobs, back to the United States. This focus is reflected in the tax plan currently being put forth in Congress, which would benefit corporations and the wealthiest Americans while raising taxes on middle-income Americans, under the guise that somehow those benefits would lead to job creation.

While the loss of manufacturing jobs has certainly impacted the American economy, the focus on globalization has also served as a distraction from one of the most important contributors to the dissipation of the middle class: the undermining of unions. Union membership has dropped precipitously in the last 40 years, from roughly three in ten workers in the 1970s to one in ten today. Research shows that the loss in union membership has negatively affected wage growth for unionized and non-unionized workers alike; a recent Economic Policy Institute report found that non-union workers' wages would be 5-8% higher if union density had remained what it was at its peak. In fighting for proper working conditions and compensation, unions lifted all boats; as their ranks have lessened because of the persistent corporate and political attacks, the effects have been harmful for all workers.

One example of the crucial role unions still have to play can be seen in the fight being waged by graduate students at universities across the country who want to unionize. These students are generally required to teach, hold office hours, and do research with professors, and are paid like normal employees. However, they have historically had little to no say over their working conditions, like their low pay or how they're assigned to teach classes, or to remedy sexual harassment. Universities have maintained that these duties are part of being a student, while graduate students have maintained that they play a vital role without which universities wouldn't be able to function, and that they deserve to be recognized as employees and have a seat at the table. Last year, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) agreed with the graduate assistants, issuing a decision that graduate students are in fact employees and therefore have the right to unionize. Most universities are fighting this decision tooth and nail, refusing to recognize graduate student unions when they form and fighting each individual graduate school union's certification from the NLRB. The fight against graduate school unions is a sign of just how much power unions can hold, and the threat they pose to powerful interests who would prefer total control over their workers to a collaborative process where workers have a strong voice.

The threats to unionization are numerous. Conservative forces and large corporations continue to fight them both on the ground and in the policies they propose. This past fall, the closure of two vital community resources, DNAinfo and Gothamist, after their writers unionized served as a chilling reminder of how far management will go. It is up to all of us to recognize that unionized or not, American workers need unions to fight for the rights of us all, and to make our support of unions known through the actions that we take each day.

Sharing the Road Safely

We live in a fast-paced city where pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers converge, sometimes resulting in serious accidents. As we see increased traffic on the streets and sidewalks, we do not need to see increased accidents.

If you're in a car (including taxis)

Take greater care when turning by looking out for bike riders and pedestrians. Traffic light patterns and light timings change regularly, so don't assume you have the right of way. Never open your door without looking for a bicycle approaching alongside your car.

If you're on foot

Always keep in mind that cars and cyclists sometimes don't follow the rules. Don't step off the curb until traffic light changes and cars stop and always look both ways before crossing, even on a one-way street. Be particularly careful to observe turning vehicles and don't start to cross the street if it's obvious that you can't get the entire way across before the light changes.

If you're on a bike

The City has invested a lot of money and space into creating additional bike lanes throughout the City. They provide the safest way for bicyclists to travel, and should be used when possible, but only traveling in the same direction as traffic. If they are not an option, make sure to travel with traffic, follow traffic lights and do not ride on sidewalks or the wrong way down one-way streets. Be careful of car and truck door openings and turning vehicles. And always wear a helmet.

Whether you are in a car, on a bike or walking, pay attention and stay off your phone. If you need to use your phone, pull over or step to the side of the sidewalk.



Delighted to participate on a panel with State Senator Persaud at the CUNY's Annual Women's Conference where we discussed what it's like to be a woman in elected office.

Support Local Food Banks this Holiday Season

While many of us will sit down this holiday season to eat and spend time with family and friends without the threat of food insecurity and chronic hunger, there are too many New Yorkers who don't have this same luxury. Unfortunately, 1 in 5 children struggle with food insecurity and come from families who cannot reliably find sufficient food for everyone in the family. To make matters worse, the Trump Administration's proposed budget slashes funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), sometimes called "food stamps," by nearly \$200 billion in the next decade. This puts more and more families in a desperate and perilous situation. Earlier this year, the Assembly fought to create a 25% tax credit on qualified food donations that farms make to food banks, and made it easier for school districts and universities to donate leftover food. Individually, we can also help by giving to local food banks and food pantries that will see higher demands during this time of the year.

Please feel free to contact my office if you would like a comprehensive list of food banks in the area.

If you are in need of food this season, here are a few local food banks:

Middle Collegiate Church
20 East 7th Street • 212-477-0666

Ascension Outreach
12 West 11th Street • 212-254-8620

NYC Rescue Mission
90 Lafayette • 212-226-6214

Salvation Army of New York
132 West 14th Street • 212-337-7467

Protect the Merchant's House Museum

In 2014, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) approved an 8-story hotel on the lot immediately next to the Merchant's House Museum, an 1832 historic row-house at 29 East 4th Street that is landmarked both for its exterior historic quality as well as its interior. The building was the first individually designated landmark structure in New York when the LPC was created in 1965, and has received landmark status on all Federal, State, and City registries. Despite these protections, the building is in danger as major new development is proposed immediately adjacent to the Merchant House.

Since the Merchant's House is the sole remaining row-house on what was a block of low rise walk-up structures, the underpinning and shared wall are at risk if construction starts on the next lot. The Merchant House hired engineers, who estimate that even a quarter-inch shift in the overall structure could irreparably damage the structural integrity of the centuries old building, interior plasterwork, and other historic qualities, thus putting the entire museum and building at risk.

It is unacceptable that despite landmark status, individual buildings cannot assume that they will be properly protected from rampant development. It seems like there is at least one active construction site on every block. And while many contractors are responsible, we have seen the news of some of those who are not — cranes breaking, scaffolding falling, facades crumbling, and adjacent properties damaged. We cannot solely rely on Department of Building's issuance of permits as a guarantee that construction is taking place in the most appropriate way. As such, small, older buildings are most vulnerable as they are less likely to have the same resources as a major new development, and are particularly vulnerable to vibrations and other impacts.



I joined Councilmember Rosie Mendez, State Senator Brad Hoylman and Councilmember-elect Carlina Rivera at a tour of the Merchant's House Museum.

Developers must be forced to implement and comply with the highest standards of protections and construction mitigations, especially when in a historic district.

I oppose the development on the lot adjoining the Merchant House and will endeavor to ensure that it is protected. To receive updates and stay informed of the progress at this site, please contact the Merchant's House Museum at 212-777-1089 or visit www.merchantshouse.org.

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Deborah Glick's



NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

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HOW TO REACH US:
Call 212-674-5153 or
email glickd@nyassembly.gov

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Join Our Email List

While I am thrilled to be able to mail out these newsletters a few times a year, I also send out a monthly e-newsletter. In addition to updates from my office, news about community events or initiatives, I also send occasional emails with critical information about city services and safety concerns. Please visit my website, <http://nyassembly.gov/mem/Deborah-J-Glick/enews> to sign up for my e-newsletter and start receiving regular updates.

The Dog Days of Winter

I know we all love our furry companions, and as we are tasked with ensuring their well-being, I wanted to remind people of a few things. Once temperatures drop, make sure your dog is appropriately dressed to go outside. Not all dogs have thick fur coats, and may need you to give them an extra layer. As salt starts to be used, booties are also important to ensure that they don't get the salt stuck in their paws, and helps protect them from stray electricity that is common during the winter. And, just because there is snow on the ground, doesn't mean you shouldn't clean up after your dog. Only snow melts.

