



E-News March 2015

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We've teamed up with the American Red Cross to help make our communities safer and more resilient. We have several initiatives in the works-- the home fire safety campaign and First Aid and CPR training. For more than a century, the Red Cross has been training people to respond to emergencies of all sizes - from the everyday to the large disaster. Knowing what to do in case of an emergency can save lives.

Dear Neighbor,

As the New York State Budget negotiations continue, I am proud to be among the 40 women currently serving in the [Assembly](#). Throughout our nation's history the women of New York State have been leaders not only in the fight for women to cast their vote and make their voices heard but also in the ongoing struggle for social justice and civil rights. As women's rights activist, [Gloria Steinem](#), noted "*The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights.*" Working together we can continue to raise awareness and take action. Everyone deserves fair and equal access to the educational, social, and economic opportunities that will improve their quality of life today and help secure a brighter tomorrow. Sincerely,

[Ellen](#)

[Paid Family Leave](#)

The New York State Assembly [passed the Paid Family Leave Act](#), legislation that allows New York workers to take paid leave to bond with a new child or care for a seriously ill family member. The New York Civil Liberties Union is among the advocacy organizations that have been pressing for years for the state to support New York's workers and families by passing the legislation. No one should have to choose between caring for a newborn or a family member and making ends meet. That's why I co-sponsored legislation ([A.3870](#)) to implement paid family leave benefits. Providing hardworking employees with paid time off to care for their families is not only good for hardworking families but also for the economy and our society as a whole.

[Cracking Down on Human Trafficking](#)

Human trafficking is simply modern-day slavery. It is unconscionable to let such widespread human suffering continue on any level in this day and age. The Assembly passed a series of bills that would help prevent human trafficking, strengthen protections for victims and increase penalties on traffickers. Another piece of the legislative package – **The Trafficking Victims Protection and Justice Act** ([A.506](#)), which I co-sponsored, would strengthen New York's existing human trafficking laws. We must send a strong, clear message to the contemptible people who engage in human trafficking that they will be held accountable and punished for their heinous crime.



Meeting in my District Office with Mary Young, CEO, American Red Cross Metro NY North Chapter



Did You Know?

Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross in 1881, at the age 60. She was one of the first women to be employed by the federal government. During the Civil War she risked her life bringing supplies and support to soldiers in the field. A former teacher and progressive visionary, Barton maintained her lifelong interest in education, prison reform, women's suffrage, and civil rights.

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International Women's Day

The first International Women's Day was held in 1911 to honor the Suffragists who fought hard for women's right to cast their vote. It is celebrated around the world on March 8th to recognize women's achievements and the ongoing struggle for women's equality.

A forum hosted by Natacha Francois-Audain, in Spring Valley, honored Rockland women and their leadership in our communities.

Women of Leadership and Vision

The *Women of Leadership and Vision* brunch at the Nyack Center honored [Dr. Lori Martin, \(pictured\)](#) Judith Johnson, newly-elected Regents; Dr. Sharon Quayle; and [Cynthia Hesdra, ex-slave, entrepreneur and abolitionist.](#)



Putting Families First by Supporting Working Women

I am proud to have co-sponsored legislation that raised the [NYS minimum wage](#) from \$8.00 to \$8.75 per hour and \$9.00 next year. The Current Federal Minimum Wage is \$7.25 per hour. The 2015-2016 Assembly Budget Proposal would further increase the state [minimum wage to \\$10.50](#) per hour starting Dec. 31, 2016, and to \$12.60 per hour beginning Dec. 31, 2018. The minimum wage for tipped workers in NYS will go up from \$5.00 to \$7.50 in December 2015.

Key Facts from the National Women's Law Center

- Women represent nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers.
- Twenty-two percent of minimum wage workers are women of color.
- Women are two-thirds of workers in tipped occupations.

According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, created by Amy Glasmeier, a professor of economic geography and regional planning at MIT, A single mother of two children making the federal minimum wage must work 125 hours a week to afford food, shelter and child care.

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