



Dear neighbor,

I hope the beginning of the holiday season has been treating you well and you are enjoying this time with your friends and family.

I am happy to report that a significant amount of my priority legislation has passed both the Assembly and the State Senate in 2025. From strengthening our democracy and voting access, to tackling the mental health crisis, these bills reflect the priorities I so often hear from my constituents. In this newsletter, you will find descriptions of these bills and where they currently stand in the lawmaking process.

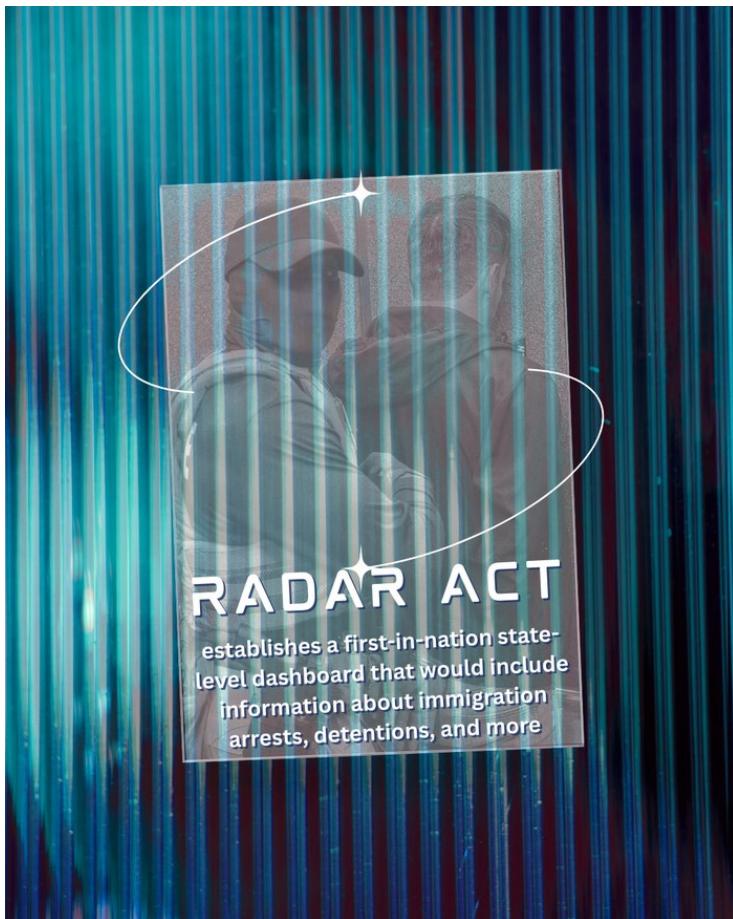
With ICE and the Federal Government increasing illegal activities without due process here in New York City, you will read about new legislation I have introduced to protect our freedoms and dignity, along with direct action I have taken.

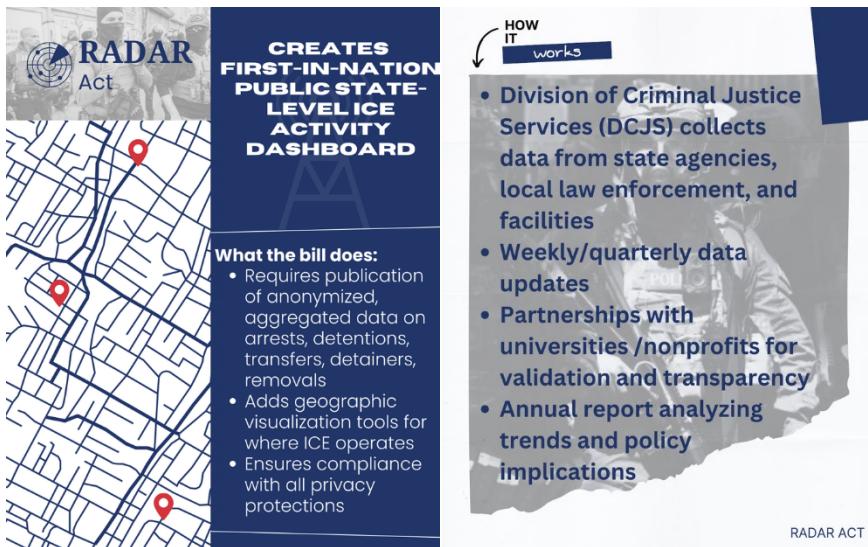


Photo from West Side Immigration Canvas training to ensure immigrant New Yorkers know their rights! Organized by: Indivisible Harlem, Chelsea Neighbors United, and Jesse Greenwald

I introduced the **MELT (Mandating End of Lawless Tactics) Act** ([A8908/S8462](#)) this summer in response to ICE and other law enforcement's use of masked tactics to sow fear and paranoia in all our communities, especially in immigrant and minority communities. As immigration enforcement efforts have ramped up this fall, I teamed up with State Senator Patricia Fahy once again to introduce the **RADAR (Reporting of Arrests, Detentions, Actions, and Removals) Act**. This will create a first-in-nation state-level dashboard that would include information about immigration arrests, detentions, and more.

You can hear more about it in my conversation with David Lombardo on The Capitol Pressroom. Listen [here](#).





As your Assemblymember, I have a duty to ensure the safety and well-being of every person in this state. That is only possible if we pass the MELT and RADAR Act's and put a stop to these secret police tactics. California has already enacted legislation similar to the MELT Act earlier this year. Our State must exercise its authority to protect New Yorkers from abuses of power by the federal government.

2025 YEAR END LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR HOCHUL:

SUPPORT Act

With Governor Hochul's signature, the **SUPPORT Act** ([A2440/S1744](#)) is now law. I introduced this legislation with State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, working closely with Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg. This law will mandate mental health care be offered to those found unfit to stand trial on misdemeanor charges and strengths reporting from the state in these cases. Ensuring care for people struggling with a severe mental illness after a minor charge will reduce the chances of more extreme crimes in the future, such as the tragic subway pushing of Michelle Go. I am grateful for Governor Hochul's leadership in combating the mental health crisis.

This new law comes on top of significant reforms we made to our laws around involuntary commitment during the last budget negotiation. We expanded involuntary commitment laws while protecting constitutionally guaranteed civil rights. If an individual poses a substantial risk of physical harm, or cannot provide for their own basic needs, action must be taken to keep the public and the individual suffering from mental illness safe.

As we return to Albany next month, further mental health reform will be at the top of my agenda.

Right of Publicity

The West Side is home to many SAG-AFTRA members and I was proud to partner with the union to expand protections around our right to publicity laws! I passed legislation with State Senator Mike Giannaris ([A8882/S8391](#)) that will protect deceased people's voice or likeness in expressive audiovisual works by requiring prior consent to use it from the deceased person's heirs. With the rapid emergence of unregulated uses of AI in creative works, protecting the voice and likeness of deceased performers has become even more important. It was an honor to join Governor Hochul and so many SAG-AFTRA members to sign this bill last week!



Major Tax Cut For Penn South

I was proud to deliver real results for Penn South! My tax-cut law ([A8651/ S7780](#)), with Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, will save Penn South \$2.3 million next year, helping keep this community affordable for generations to come. Failure to pass this bill for Penn South was not an option. I have often said, what we need in New York is more Penn Souths, and to do that, we must keep Penn South strong and affordable. As we confront the acute shortage of housing, one of the most critical tools we have is the preservation of existing affordable units. This bill does exactly that for Penn South. A special thank you to Governor Hochul for her steadfast partnership in keeping housing affordable



Voluntary Donations in Support of Municipal Animal Pounds or Shelters

When my husband Jason and I adopted our now departed fur baby, Radar, our lives changed in a transformative way. The unconditional love a dog brings to life is incomparable. It was for him and all rescue dogs like him that I introduced a bill to make it easy to donate to a local animal shelter when registering a dog.

We miss Radar every day. It is in his memory that we passed [A4910](#) alongside State Senator Jose Serrano to create an option on dog registration applications for a dog owner to donate to a local animal shelter. For the love of pets, I am so happy to share that Governor Kathy Hochul signed the bill!



Photo of Tony and Radar

Ballot Dropbox Chapter Amendment

With a long record of attacks on voting rights coming from the federal government, such as the effort to dismantle the Post Office and challenges to the Voting Rights Act, it is more important than ever to ensure all New Yorkers can safely and securely vote.

My pro-democracy bill with State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal ([A1014/S752](#)) passed the Legislature and has been signed into law by the Governor! This law will make it possible for early and absentee ballots to be returned at secure ballot drop-boxes, just as is already done in many states.

PASSED IN ASSEMBLY

Online Sample Ballots

I passed legislation [A6741](#) that requires state and county boards of elections to post

sample ballots online at least twelve days prior to the first day of early voting. This will make it easier for everyone to make an informed vote by knowing exactly what to expect when stepping into the ballot box ahead of time. This bill did not pass the State Senate this year.

VETOED BY GOVERNOR HOCHUL

Freedom to Read Act

In June, alongside State Senator Rachel May, I passed the Freedom to Read Act ([A7777/S1099](#)). This bill was passed in response to outrageous books in school libraries by radical school boards. The bill would have ensured that school library collections be set by professional practices relying on the expertise of library professionals, rather than political censorship. This issue is deeply important to me. As a closeted gay kid I found solace, inspiration and freedom through books. I am disappointed in the Governor's veto and the message it sends to those looking to impose their own viewpoints in what children can read. I will be renewing the push on this issue immediately on my return to Albany.

City Charter Commissions

Earlier this year, with State Senator Liz Krueger, I introduced a bill ([A3665A/S590A](#)) to end the mayoral "bump" power over local ballot proposals. This legislation repeals a long-criticized provision that has allowed mayors to suppress voter-initiated or City Council-backed proposals from appearing on the ballot. The bill was passed in the Assembly and State Senate, but was vetoed by Governor Hochul.

This was a good government bill meant to ensure the charter revision process enshrines equal access to the ballot. The actions of past mayors and undoubtedly future mayors have shown the necessity of ending the mayor's power to bump other competing charter proposals off the ballot. I am disappointed by this veto and will continue working towards reform in the new year.



Assemblymember Simone Speaking At City Hall to Strengthen Democracy

Stronger Unemployment Benefits

I was proud to have voted to increase the Unemployment Insurance Maximum Weekly Benefit from \$504 to \$869 in this year's budget. These critical investments will surge resources to the New Yorkers who need it most and reduce costs for small businesses. The increase in weekly unemployment benefits is yet another sign that New York State delivers for New Yorkers. By responsibly paying off our Unemployment Trust Fund debt in this year's budget, we are now in a position to put more money in the pockets of workers when needed, build up reserves, all while decreasing contribution rates for businesses. I applaud Governor Hochul, Speaker Heastie and Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins for their responsible fiscal stewardship of the unemployment trust fund.



Casinos Defeated

A major win to look back on as we close out the year was the Caesars Palace Times Square and The Avenir Community Advisory Committees voting down the casino proposals.

Throughout the process leading up to these votes, I made it clear I have long been personally opposed to the idea of a casino on the West Side, and in the years we have discussed this issue, I heard from thousands of constituents via public hearings, emails, phone calls, and conversations on the street. This was an incredibly open and democratic process. The results reflected the clear fact that an overwhelming majority of our community opposed a casino. Immediately following the votes, I held a rally alongside community members in Times Square to celebrate the wishes of constituents. At this rally, residents made clear that they opposed the casinos and had a different vision for the West Side. That vision includes affordable housing, parks, public safety, and schools. We live in one of the most dynamic neighborhoods in the country, one that is always growing and changing. I am excited to work with all of you to focus on future plans that are in line with the future our community needs. Thank you to everyone who contacted my office to make your voice heard in this process!



Launching Campaign for Free Child Care

The cost of childcare remains an extreme burden on too many New Yorkers. I am optimistic that this legislative session will be the year we begin to lower the costs for so many families. I joined New Yorkers United for Childcare to celebrate progress made and organize for the new year.



HAPPENINGS AROUND THE WEST SIDE



My mobile pet adoption event with Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal and NYCACC was a massive success. West Siders grew their families by rescuing cats, dogs, kittens, and puppies. Eight cats were adopted at the event, including a hero family who adopted an eight year old senior kitty with some health issues. To everyone who adopted a new member of your family, I hope they bring you as much love and joy as my Radar did.



I had a wonderful and insightful time attending the West Side Tenant Conference. Huge thanks to HCC, WSNA, AG Tish James and Assembly Housing Chair Linda Rosenthal for standing up for tenants every day. We'll keep fighting for stronger protections, real affordability, and a city where every New Yorker can stay housed.



ASSEMBLY MEMBER
TONY SIMONE

**Statement from Assemblymember Tony Simone
on Antisemitic Terror Attack in Australia**

As my Jewish brothers and sisters around the world gathered to celebrate the first night of Chanukah, the first of those who began to celebrate in Bondi Beach were met with a cowardly, evil terrorist attack. I am outraged and saddened by this act of antisemitic violence and murder.

Reject antisemitism always.

Thank you, Governor Kathy Hochul, for putting the New York State Police on alert.

As Menorahs are lit tonight, NYC will have this tragedy on our minds and the victims in our hearts.





I was honored to celebrate the Chelsea Shul at their gala. Rabbi Chezky Wolff and this warm, welcoming community bring so much light to the West Side. Grateful for all you do to lift up neighbors and keep our community connected.



I went to the W400 Block Association's annual tree lighting, joined by Vanderbilt's Vice Chancellor James Kellerhouse's recital of *Twas the Night Before Christmas*. Thank you to W400BA for hosting this perfect event to ring in the holiday season.



Thanks to the kindness and generosity of neighbors from across the West Side, we collected dozens of winter gear items, including coats, hats, gloves and more, to redistribute back to New Yorkers in need. In these uncertain times, having a community of people who truly care about each other is more important than ever. Thank you to all who

donated items and a special thanks to my former intern John Garcia Aquino for organizing coat collections all across the city!

The holiday season is truly one of my favorite times of the year to serve the West Side. Our strong community comes together to celebrate our accomplishments, lend a hand to those in our community who need it, and celebrate our shared New York experience.

Thank You!

Thank you so much for reading our Community Update! I hope you were able to learn something of value about our work and found some helpful information about happenings in our district. As always, my office and I are here to serve you so if you need any assistance with a state agency, unemployment benefits, tenant issues, or have an idea for new legislation, please email us at simonet@nyassembly.gov or call us at 212-807-7900.

In service,
Thank you!
Tony

Keep up with me on social media!

