

State Senator Daniel Squadron's

Community Update

2015



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DANIEL SQUADRON**

26TH SENATE DISTRICT

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DANIEL SQUADRON
SENATOR, 26TH DISTRICT

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK

RANKING MEMBER
CODES
CITIES
COMMITTEES
CORPORATIONS, AUTHORITIES
& COMMISSIONS
FINANCE
INVESTIGATIONS AND
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
SOCIAL SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION

Dear Friend,

In April, I hosted my Seventh Annual Community Convention. Over 350 members of our community attended, discussing everything from social justice to affordable housing to how to protect against storms like Sandy. And much of the feedback my office received has shaped my priorities this year.

Each fall, I host town halls to discuss the progress we made and the work we are still pursuing. On the following pages, you'll find updates on many of the items you raised at the Convention. I work to make government work better for you – and engaging the community is critical to making that happen.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve, and thank you for taking the time to join these conversations. To stay involved, please call my office at 212-298-5565 or 718-875-1517. See you in the neighborhood!

Thank you,

Daniel Squadron
New York State Senator
26th District

Arts and Culture

The Arts and Culture discussion group was moderated by Catherine McVay Hughes and focused on keeping New York City affordable for artists as well as increasing access to arts and cultural programs.

Issues Raised:

- Increase accessibility to arts for seniors and students
- Make New York City more affordable, especially for artists
- Increase art installations in public spaces

What We've Done:

- Made clear that the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's (LMDC's) work is not complete until the long-promised World Trade Center Performing Arts Center is on track in testimony before LMDC.
- Led on stopping profiteering from tickets to charitable events, including urging Craigslist and eBay to remove listings for tickets to see Pope Francis, along with Cardinal Dolan, Senator Schumer, and Assemblymember Cusick.
- Brought the Department of Transportation to the table, together with local community members, to create design options for art and safety improvements coming to South Street's median.
- Provided local residents, particularly in co-ops, condos, lofts, and live-work quarters, with important resources on their rights as tenants at my town hall in SoHo, along with Attorney General Schneiderman and Borough President Brewer.
- Continued securing interim open space at Pier 42 for arts and community programming this summer.
- Succeeded in making Lunar New Year a public school holiday.
- Supported our local arts and cultural organizations' applications to receive funding from LMDC.
- Updated and expanded my annual Parent Resource Guide and Senior Resource Guide, providing even more information on local resources, including arts and cultural programs throughout the district.



Marching in this year's Lunar New Year Parade.

Civil Rights and Economic and Social Justice

The Civil Rights and Economic and Social Justice discussion group was moderated by Michael Czaczkes and focused on police/community relations and how to make our communities fairer for all.

Issues Raised:

- Pass comprehensive police reform
- Fight for LGBTQ rights
- Fight for pay equity and fairness
- Support middle class tax relief

What We've Done:

- Continued the push for the Gender Expression Non Discrimination Act, and worked with the Governor for executive action to protect transgender New Yorkers.
- Fought for greater transparency in and greater public access to policy body camera footage while ensuring privacy, along with Public Advocate James and Assemblymember Quart.
- Pushed to address our state's shocking failure to meet the right to a speedy trial by introducing Kalief's Law, and wrote a *Daily News* Op-Ed on the bill.
- Won a \$15 wage for fast food workers, along with the Fight for \$15 campaign, the Governor, and colleagues. I was the first state legislator to introduce a \$15 wage bill for large employers.
- Pushed Verizon to restore discounts for low-income Lifeline customers and pushed the Federal Communications Commission to provide multi-lingual service notifications, along with Councilmember Chin and colleagues.
- Supported 32BJ SEIU's successful effort to unionize contracted cleaners for WeWork.
- Continued the push for my bill to decriminalize small amounts of marijuana.
- Introduced legislation to allow employees to request flexible working arrangements in order to make workplaces more working-parent and family-friendly.
- Secured a popup IDNYC site in Chinatown, along with Councilmember Chin and colleagues.



Speaking at Albany rally to pass GENDA, with Senator Hoylman, Assemblymember Simon, and colleagues.

Education

The Education discussion group was moderated by Gigi Li. Participants spoke about school overcrowding across the district and the need for greater funding for all levels of education.

Issues Raised:

- Fight to fix school overcrowding across the district
- Increase funding for CUNY students and staff
- Make Lunar New Year a public school holiday

What We've Done:

- Succeeded in making Lunar New Year a public school holiday.
- Pushed the Department of Education to work more collaboratively and creatively to solve the overcrowding crisis at PS 8.
- Succeeded in ensuring traffic enforcement agents will patrol busy intersections near Peck Slip School and Spruce Street School until a full time crossing guard can be hired, along with parents, colleagues, and Community Board 1.
- Convened town halls with parents, Department of Education officials, and other local elected officials on school overcrowding throughout Brooklyn, including PS 8, PS 29, PS 32, and PS 58, along with PTAs, CECs and colleagues including District Leader Bellenbaum, Assemblymember Simon, and Councilmembers Lander and Levin.
- Supported & advocated for increases in education funding, including:
 - \$1.4 billion in new education funding.
 - \$1.5 million in new afterschool funding.
 - \$6.2 million for Community College Base Aid.
 - Requiring state to cover salary raises and other fringe benefits for CUNY and SUNY employees.
- Updated and expanded my annual Parent Resource Guide, providing even more information on local resources, including arts and cultural programs throughout the district.
- Supported a number of local Universal Pre-K providers.



Welcoming students on the first day of classes at the new Peck Slip School, along with Councilmember Chin, Community Board 1, parents and community members.

Hospitals and Healthcare

The Health Care group was moderated by Eric Katz and focused on how to ensure affordable access to care.

Issues Raised:

- Create single payer healthcare system in New York
- Increase out of network provisions

What We've Done:

- Sponsored the Local Input in Community Healthcare (LICH) Act, along with Assemblymember Simon, to help ensure community healthcare needs and inputs are core issues when hospitals are threatened with closure.
- Advocated for \$100 million investment by the state to fund universal, evidence-based maternal home visiting programs such as Nurse Family Partnership.
- Highlighted home visiting programs, and the strong evidence behind them, in testimony to the Federal Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities.
- Sponsored free flu shot clinics for constituents, including on the LES and in Chinatown.
- Brought two Senate standing committees and a Deputy Mayor to the district for a hearing on home visiting programs and other prenatal to pre-k services.
- Co-chaired Early Child Development Task Force with Borough President Eric Adams.
- Secured \$3 million for the Community Health Advocates Program.
- Co-sponsored bills that would:
 - Require New York State of Health insurance plans to include out of network provisions.
 - Create a single payer healthcare system in New York.



I co-sponsored a Senate Social Services hearing on delivering services from prenatal to pre-k, and spoke on the importance of maternal home visiting programs.

Open Government: Campaign Finance and Ethics Reform

The Open Government group was moderated by Jarret Berg and focused on issues of campaign finance reform, ethics reform, and increasing voting accessibility.

Issues Raised:

- Implement a public financing system for elections in New York State
- Make government work more effectively for the average citizen by limiting influence of corporations in politics
- Fix corruption in Albany

What We've Done:

- Led the charge on the urgency of closing the LLC loophole, which allows corporations to contribute unlimited sums of money to state candidates: carried legislation, proposed a closure in the budget process, and joined the Brennan Center for Justice in filing a lawsuit in state court, along with colleagues.
- Continued my years-long fight to implement a robust statewide public financing system and lower limits for campaign contributions.
- Continued the urgent call for accountability and ethics from our elected leadership by introducing the motion on the Senate floor to remove Senator Skelos as Senate leader, after he was charged with federal crimes, after which he resigned.
- Fought for greater transparency in and greater public access to policy body camera footage while ensuring privacy, along with Public Advocate James and Assemblymember Quart.
- Pushed for my proposal for the Battery Park City Authority to be taken over by the City in order to allow for a stronger, permanent, community voice in decision-making.
- Successfully urged the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation to release an incident report and pursue repair cost recovery at Squibb Bridge.
- Pushed, successfully, for release of a public incident report on the India Street Pier landing failure.



Hosting a press conference to urge the Senate Republicans to close the LLC Loophole.

Parks, Open Spaces, and the Environment

The Parks, Open Spaces, and the Environment group was moderated by Trish Ceccarelli and focused on park funding as a social justice issue and how to preserve and protect current parkland.

Issues Raised:

- Ensure City follows through on commitment to Bushwick Inlet Park
- Oppose housing in Brooklyn Bridge Park
- Greater investment in green space

What We've Done:

- Succeeded in driving forward parks equity by linking the wealthiest conservancies to neighborhood parks most in need, with voluntary contributions from those conservancies and support from the city, as I originally proposed two years ago.
- Secured a second year of the Community Parks Initiative, inspired by my parks equity push, which provided funds and resources to the city's neediest parks.
- Sponsored legislation to use eminent domain to make Bushwick Inlet Park a reality, along with Assemblymember Lentol.
- Stood with the community to oppose the ill-conceived plan for luxury housing at Pier 6, and brought attention to alternative funding sources, along with colleagues.
- Brought constituent concerns about the height of the Pier 1 developments to the Department of Buildings.
- Protected Battery Park City ball fields for local little leagues, along with Councilmember Chin.
- Pushed for the new North Cove Marina operator to preserve access and amenities for our community, along with Community Board 1 and colleagues.
- Continued our successful advocacy for the park at Pier 42, including pushing for additional funding from LMDC with Senator Schumer.
- Expedited delivery of woodchips for dog runs in Hillside Park and McGolrick Park.



Rallying at Bushwick Inlet Park.

Resiliency and Emergency Preparedness

The Emergency Preparedness group was moderated by Bill Losasso and focused on disaster planning and investing in long- and short-term infrastructure improvements.

Issues Raised:

- Funding for flood protection below Montgomery Street
- Improve emergency preparedness for the Lower East Side
- Advocate for comprehensive resiliency coverage district wide

What We've Done:

- Successfully fought for \$100 million from NYC for storm resiliency from Montgomery through the Battery, along with colleagues, Downtown Alliance, and CB1.
- Also successfully pushed for city and state funding of nearly \$15 million for Manhattan's southern tip, along with colleagues, Downtown Alliance, and CB1.
- Partnered with city to focus the city's next Housing and Urban Development Natural Disaster Resiliency Competition Application on Lower Manhattan.
- Submitted testimony to LMDC calling for coordinating LMDC efforts with ongoing resiliency projects.
- Urged coordination between city and the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project for resiliency efforts north of Montgomery Street, especially at Pier 42.



Handing out Emergency Preparedness kits at Smith Houses with Mayor de Blasio and Congresswoman Velazquez.

Section 8 and Public Housing

The Section 8 and Public Housing group was moderated by Jennifer Vallone and focused on speeding up NYCHA's repair process, safety, and concerns about privatization.

Issues Raised:

- Better security for NYCHA residences
- Create separate state funding line for public housing
- Increase funding to Department of Homes and Community Renewal
- Pass greater NYCHA oversight

What We've Done:

- Implemented \$450,000 grant for security improvements at Smith Houses, including 24 roof cameras on all 12 buildings.
- Implemented over \$240,000 grant for security improvements at Baruch Addition senior building, including an automatic door, intercom system, and keyless fob entry.
- Succeeded in pushing DOT and NYCHA to make nearly \$400K of sidewalk repairs around Rutgers Houses.
- Continued to oversee and streamline gas pipe repairs at Smith Houses, through Smith Gas Task Force with tenants, colleagues, and agencies.
- Submitted testimony for NYCHA Annual Plan calling for:
 - NYCHA to focus on its core role of building manager and landlord.
 - NYPD to have direct access to NYCHA security camera footage to enhance access to issues.
- Fought for NYCHA funding in state budget, which occurred for the first time in 20 years.
- Voted in favor of additional NYCHA oversight through the Authorities Budget Office.



Taking in a summer stickball game at Rutgers Houses.

Senior Citizens and Accessibility Concerns

The Senior Citizens and Accessibility Concerns group was moderated by Ptahra Jeppe and focused on more funding for senior programs and protecting seniors from financial abuse.

Issues Raised:

- More funding for senior programs
- Protect seniors from financial abuse
- Preserve senior housing

What We've Done:

- Pushed Verizon to restore discounts for low-income Lifeline customers and pushed the Federal Communications Commission to provide multi-lingual service notifications, along with Councilmember Chin and colleagues.
- Called for an increase in identity theft penalties for theft committed against seniors.
- Advocated for a senior fare on the East River Ferry and planned citywide ferry expansions.
- Advocated for a senior-friendly budget, and helped secure:
 - \$2.5 million for Community Services for the Elderly Program.
 - \$25 million for respite programs, which provide critical support to family caregivers.
 - \$8.2 million for the New York Connects and No Wrong Door programs, which provide free, objective and comprehensive information and assistance on long term care services and support.
- Supported legislation to address senior and vulnerable adult financial abuse and exploitation.



Honoring Lt. B.R. Kimlau American Legion Post 1291 as Veterans Hall of Fame Nominees in the Senate Chamber.

Small Business, Economic Development, and Innovation

The Small Business, Economic Development and Innovation group was moderated by Diana Switaj and focused on how to prevent commercial vacancies in neighborhoods and how to retain small business diversity.

Issues Raised:

- Make it easier for small businesses to get financing from banks
- Preserve neighborhood stores
- Support commercial rent reform

What We've Done:

- Fought for extension of Lower Manhattan tax programs that incentivize businesses relocating, including through energy savings, to continue the momentum of Lower Manhattan's recovery.
- Supported the launch of the SoHo Design District, which supports small businesses in the Broadway Corridor.
- Pushed for greater business access to small loans by sponsoring legislation to require the small business revolving loan fund to set aside a percentage of its funds for loans under \$25,000 and under \$5,000.
- Called for increased consumer protection by requiring travel agents to issue receipts before or immediately following payment for services.
- Pushed the Department of State to add more information about benefit corporations to its website. I authored the law to create benefit corporations in 2011.
- Sponsored legislation to provide a tax credit for the creation and development of open source software.



Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Essex Street Market with Borough President Brewer, Councilmember Chin, and community members.

Streets and Transportation

The Streets and Transportation group was moderated by Rebecca Bailin and focused on underserved areas of public transportation and how to increase pedestrian safety.

Issues Raised:

- Need for better bus service throughout the district
- Fix the East Broadway Subway station
- Fully fund MTA Capital Plan
- Improve street safety and congestion

What We've Done (on Transit):

- Surveyed all 53 subway stations serving my district, part of amplifying the call to fully fund the MTA's Capital Plan -- and an agreement to fund the MTA was reached.
- Got the MTA to extend the M1 and am continuing to push for increased M5 service.
- Successfully advocated for improvements at the East Broadway Station, including repainting of the station, installation of Help Points, and installation of wifi.
- Secured a Full Line Review of the A and C trains.
- Led the fight in the Senate budget debate for a fully funded MTA Capital plan.



Announcing the results of my Subway Station Survey with advocates and local community members.

What We've Done (on Street Safety):

- Continued to advocate for improved enforcement of my intercity bus law.
- Pushed DOT to install new pedestrian islands at intersection of Pitt and Delancey, along with new crosswalks, new stop sign, and more high-visibility markings, along with my colleagues and the community.
- Worked with local community to develop plans for safety improvements to Division Street.
- Secured a long-requested signal and safer crossing at Columbia and Congress.
- Brought the Department of Transportation to the table, together with local community members, to create design options for art and safety improvements coming to South Street's median.
- Advocated for additional bike lanes on Chrystie Street.
- Pushed for DOT to improve crosswalks on Clinton Street between Grand Street and East Broadway.
- Sponsored bill to allow police officers to arrest a driver hits a pedestrian or cyclist, regardless of whether or not the officer witnessed the accident. This bill has passed the Senate the past three years.

Tenants Rights and Rent Laws

The Tenants Rights and Rent Laws group was moderated by Harvey Epstein and focused on the expiring rent laws and the effect on communities.

Issues Raised:

- Provide more affordable housing
- Strengthen the rent laws and put rent laws back under city control
- Extend co-op tax abatements

What We've Done:

- Fought to extend and strengthen rent laws. Won slight improvements to the vacancy threshold, major capital improvement rent increases, and tenant harassment protections. Pushed for an end to vacancy decontrol and a limit on vacancy rent increases, but Albany came up short.
- Successfully worked on new policies requiring landlords to notify tenants of lead exposure and tell tenants how to get inspection results, along with colleagues and the city.
- Continued to work with tenants to protect tenants from landlord harassment.
- Proposed legislation to allow tenants to recover damages from the landlord if a tenant is forced to vacate their property due to neglect.
- Continued my call for policies to prevent landlords from discriminating against tenants based on source of income.
- Pushed my bill to restrict landlords from taking possession of units for personal use.
- Advocated for my bills to require landlords to provide a written receipt when rent is paid and reduce the amount of rent tenants would pay when landlords make an individual apartment improvement.
- Added my voice to bills that would:
 - Extend tax abatements for co-ops and condos.
 - Return rent laws to city control.



*Co-hosting a Tenant's Rights Forum in SoHo (above).
Speaking at rally to extend and strengthen rent laws (right).*



Zoning, Neighborhood Preservation, and Quality Of Life

The Zoning, Neighborhood Preservation, and Quality of Life group was moderated by Tobi Bergman and focused on how to protect neighborhoods from overdevelopment and nightlife.

Issues Raised:

- Stronger regulation and enforcement of liquor licenses
- Save the South Street Seaport
- Increase affordable food options

What We've Done:

- Pushed the City to end tourist helicopter flights at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport, including giving testimony in support of City Council legislation, along with Congressman Nadler and colleagues.
- Brought incoming State Liquor Authority Chairman Bradley to my district to meet with community boards and colleagues to ensure the SLA has a greater understanding of the impact of local liquor license issues.
- Worked closely with the community to push back against massively out of context development proposals for the LICH site.
- Stood with the community to oppose the ill-conceived plan for luxury housing at Pier 6, and brought attention to alternative funding sources, along with colleagues.
- Worked with community, CB3, and other elected officials to get Extell Development Company to agree to quarterly community update meetings on construction at 280 South Street.
 - Extell pledged to build a new supermarket to replace the former Pathmark.
- Urged EDC to adopt better construction practices at Pier 17 so as not to damage the Tin Building or New Market Building, along with colleagues.
- Brought constituent concerns about the height of the Pier 1 developments to the Department of Buildings.
- Joined an amicus brief in support of Assemblymember Glick's lawsuit protecting parks that were imperiled due to NYU expansion.



Speaking to residents at Extell Quarterly Construction Meeting.



Contact Me! My district office is open weekdays from 10am to 6pm, and I can always be reached at squadron@nysenate.gov or **212-298-5565 (MN)** or **718-875-1517 (BK)**.