

REPORT TO CONSTITUENTS SUMMER 2016

As the Ranking Member of the New York State Senate's Labor Committee, I've been fighting for the promotion of economic justice and worker's rights issues in Albany. This year, which many have referred to as the 'Year of the Worker,' has come with significant milestones, but there is still more work to be done.

I am proud to report that as part of this year's State budget, we passed a historic raise in New York's minimum wage to \$15 an hour into law. In New York City, this hike in the minimum wage will take place prior to the end of 2018, and will mean real opportunity for many New Yorkers who continue to struggle to make ends meet. I'm also proud to report that we passed the country's first Paid Family Leave program into State law this year. Reaching its full benefit by 2021, the State's Paid Family Leave program will allow workers to take up to twelve weeks off to attend to the healthcare needs of their families, which will include situations such as the birth of a child, or allowing an employee to attend to the caretaking needs of an ill parent. During this period of leave, employees will still be eligible to earn up to two-thirds of their wages. Employers are also prohibited from retaliating against an employee for exercising the option of using this benefit.

While we've made a lot of progress in the area of worker's rights, we must always strive for more success. That's why I introduced legislation to provide more predictable and fair work schedules to workers at large corporations in our State, such as 'big box retailers' and fast food restaurants. Under my proposed law, workers would receive a full seven-day advance notice of their work schedules, allowing them to plan accordingly for their needs at home, such as childcare or personal healthcare issues. 'On-call scheduling' has become far too normal and places many of the State's most vulnerable workforce members at risk of foregoing important necessities in their lives. Furthermore, my legislation would force employers to provide employees with a statement of the minimum number of hours an employee can expect to be scheduled for during a given month. This will provide real financial security to ensure that workers can appropriately plan a budget. Employers violating these provisions would face stiff fines and potential lawsuits from aggrieved employees.

I'm also proud to report to you that I sponsored a number of bills of direct significance to our community, that were passed by the State Senate, including:



- **Tougher Penalties on Human Trafficking:** signed into law as part of the Women's Equality Act package, my legislation increased penalties for perpetrators of human trafficking crimes within our neighborhoods, and across New York State. These acts are now higher level felonies, allowing the District Attorney to aggressively prosecute offenders, as well as provide needed services to victims who are forced to participate in illegal labor and sex work.
- **Stopping Assaults on Crossing Guards:** signed into law, it is now a felony for a person to assault school crossing guards – essential employees who go to work every day to keep our kids safe.
- **Cracking Down on Fake IDs:** a bill to increase penalties on 'ID mills' that continue to defraud our immigrant communities through sales on Roosevelt Avenue, as well as target our community members through increased acts of identity theft.
- **Organized Crime in the 21st Century:** a measure to include crimes such as identity theft and ATM card skimming as those that can be prosecuted under New York's organized crime statute. This is a commonsense plan to allow State Law to catch up to advances in technology.
- **Cleaning Up the Money Transmitter Business:** a bill to punish agents of transmitters who fail to transmit money in accordance with the terms of a contract, holding them liable for damages up to an amount three times that suffered by a customer who is defrauded.

As you likely know, I am the sponsor of the **DREAM Act** in the New York State Senate. I continue to push for the passage of this bill as my top legislative priority in Albany. While it has been frustrating to see the DREAM debate continue year after year, without seeing the Senate act on this issue, I am certain that we will ultimately prove successful in this fight. For far too long, the State has treated undocumented New Yorkers as second-class students by disallowing them from participating in the Tuition Assistance Program. These students were brought to New York as children, through no fault of their own. It is simply unjust for us to punish these students, as they seek to build better lives for themselves and their families. DREAM also makes perfect sense economically: over the course of a lifetime, a college graduate will pay about \$60,000 more in State taxes than a worker without a degree. The cost of DREAM would be only about \$20,000 to each of these students. *Everyone* wins when this DREAM becomes a reality.

Along the lines of higher education, I fought any attempts to defund any aspects of offerings provided by the **City University of New York (CUNY)**. CUNY has been a partner in our community for decades, providing our children with quality higher education at facilities such as Queens College, Queensborough Community College, the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and many other schools. CUNY students deserve parity with other public higher education students across New York State, and CUNY's faculty and staff deserve appropriate recognition for their work in the form of fair labor contracts and appropriate salaries and wages.

Further addressing the needs of our ever-expanding and diverse population of immigrants across Senate District 13, I've also advocated for the funding of programs that strengthen those seeking to flourish in New York State. This includes proper funding for legal services provided by the New York State Office of New Americans, as well as increased funding for the State's Adult Literacy Education Programs. These services provide a bridge for immigrants to learn English and transition into a new career here in New York, which means better success for their families in all that their endeavors. I have also introduced legislation that will allow undocumented New Yorkers to apply for limited-use driver's licenses in New York: a handful of other states already allow this, and this program would require undocumented drivers to attend the same training regimen that other New York drivers must complete. This would result in safer streets in Queens, as well as allow all drivers on the road to carry insurance that would be triggered in the event of an accident.

I'm also proud to tell you that I have introduced over 80 bills to advance the interests of our community in Albany, some of which include:

- **Increasing Organ Donation Activity:** Queens has the lowest rate of per capita registered organ donors in the State of New York, at just 11% of eligible residents. This is in addition to the fact that New York State ranks dead last in the whole country on this figure, at just 25% of eligible residents. The national average exceeds fifty percent. In response, I've introduced a bill to allow New Yorkers to register as organ donors on a wide range of State forms, including annual tax returns that are filed every year, as well as applications for professional licenses, such as teaching certificates and applications to practice law and medicine. I've also introduced legislation to allow undocumented New Yorkers to give and receive kidney transplants as part of the State's Medicaid system. Currently, Medicaid will only pay for weekly dialysis appointments for undocumented persons who are suffering from renal failure. Covering transplants makes plain sense from a moral standpoint, as well as a cost savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars for each patient for New York State.



- **Promoting Public Safety:** In response to the high number of hit-and-run accidents occurring in our Borough, as well as the dangerous traffic conditions that continue to face residents, I have introduced several public safety measures that would bring real results home to Queens. Among these initiatives, I am proposing that the City's speed camera program be expanded beyond the 140 schools that are currently earmarked to include all school speed zones in New York City. The initial pilot program has proven extremely successful, as speeding was reduced by upwards of sixty percent where cameras were installed in just the first year of the program. I also believe that these cameras should be operational 24/7, as accidents are occurring around the clock. While I understand that traffic tickets are an annoyance, we must act to ensure that schoolchildren and pedestrians are as free from reckless driving as possible. I am also carrying legislation in the Senate that would require the City to post crossing guards at every corner where a school is located and in session, as well as mandating that the City start a pedestrian awareness campaign that highlights the dangers of cell phones and other devices that contribute to 'distracted walking.'



- **Continuing Economic Development in Queens:** As Queens continues to grow as a recognized tourism destination for those visiting New York, I am committed to delivering development opportunities for our Borough. This means ensuring that the work involved with the \$5 billion overhaul of LaGuardia Airport goes to local businesses that are available to provide services to the project, especially those that are owned and operated by minority business leaders and women. As we are poised to see thousands of jobs created in our District due to the 'new' LaGuardia, this is a very exciting time. I plan to also ensure that any proposed development at Willets Point takes into account the concerns of existing Queens residents, which must include more jobs and affordable housing opportunities. Finally, I have introduced a bill that would take 4% the occupancy tax that is already collected at Queens hotels and divert those funds – up to \$300,000 annually – to further promote tourism right here in Queens. While Manhattan has a lot to offer, it's not the only show in town

and Queens must be able to its own attractions, including Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, the Queens Museum, the Queens Botanical Garden, and the Museum of the Moving Image, to name just a few.

- **Addressing Issues Between Street Vendors and 'Brick-and-Mortar' Businesses:** In response to continued inaction on this issue by the City, I introduced legislation in Albany that would create a Street Vendor Policy Commission here in New York. It goes without saying that as the number of street vendors has increased in recent years, conflicts have developed between their retail activity and that of traditional storefronts. I propose to bring all sides of this issue to the table in the format of this Commission, where City officials and representatives of both street vendors and storefronts can attempt to reach an agreement on pending matters, including the cap on the number of vendor permits, distance restrictions between vendors and business entrances, designated vending areas, letter grades for food served by vendors, among other issues. Something must be done to address this issue sooner rather than later, and my proposed Commission provides exactly the forum to do this in.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Continuing in our longstanding commitment to community involvement, my staff and I have hosted a series of annual events and specific meetings to encourage participation in important government issues that affect each and every one of us.



Our annual Job Fair at Queens Center was originally intended to fight the recession. Every year since 2011, many job-seekers that participate in the event, walk out with a job offer.

Annual Events

- Annual Coat Drive – For years, my office has sponsored an annual coat drive with businesses and community organizations across the District to ensure that Queens residents can stay warm during the harsh winter months. This event has grown in its success every year, and I'm glad to share that this January, we were able to provide people with over 1,800 coats.
- Black History Month Celebration – Every February since 2011, I have hosted a celebration of Black History Month at the Langston Hughes Library in East Elmhurst. This is an opportunity for us to come together to recognize the important contributions of African-Americans to our community, and to our nation. Each year, I am proud to honor several leaders who have made a difference in Senate District 13. This past February, I recognized four African-American leaders, Andrew P. Jackson, Larinda Hooks, Jim Galloway, and Wayne Edwards. The event was a great success, and New York City Public Advocate Letitia James addressed the crowd as this year's keynote speaker.

- **Women of Distinction Celebration** – In March, we pause to observe Women’s History Month and the great achievements that women have made since the dawn of society. This is also a time to recognize the great steps forward that we have made in improving issues on women’s equality, as well as stepping back to contemplate all of the important work that’s still left to be done. Beyond my legislation on this issue, I’m proud to recognize local women who are leaders in our community at this time of year. Last year, it was my pleasure to recognize Carmencita Gutierrez, Nora Espitia, Rosana Becerra, Sarinya Sriskakul, and Priscilla Carrow. The event’s keynote speaker was 2015 Miss Universe, Pauline Vega from Colombia.
- **Annual Job Fair** – In partnership with Queens Center, I have hosted an annual job fair event since the community elected me to represent them in the New York State Senate in 2011. Originally created in response to the economic uncertainty created by the Recession, this event also grown in its size and success year after year. In August 2015, over 1,200 people attended the job fair and over fifty were hired on the spot. The event generated hundreds of interviews to be conducted at a later time, as well as more hiring that was a result of this process. My office is already hard at work on planning this year’s event and I encourage anyone who is currently unemployed, or simply seeking a career change, to visit us this year.
- **‘Back to School’ Backpack Giveaway** – Coming up on its 7th year, I host an annual giveaway each August to prepare our community’s schoolchildren for the year ahead. This past year, we proudly distributed over 2,100 backpacks filled with school supplies to help students in their academic efforts. As we all recognize that education is the path to success, this event is one of the most important my office coordinates every summer. This initiative is the largest of its kind in Queens.



- **Thanksgiving Turkey Drive** – For over a decade, I have held an annual turkey drive, both while serving as your Assemblymember and now as your State Senator. Every November, I team up with local grocers and business sponsors to provide a holiday feast for those who have fallen on challenging times. This year, together with local community organizations, we were able to bring over 500 turkeys to families in our District’s several neighborhoods.
- **Annual Toy Drive** – Also in cooperation with Queens Center, my office and I have worked with local nonprofits for several years to secure funding to make sure that all children have a set of toys to receive during the holiday season. Regardless of our varying, and very vibrant faiths, we all agree that the holidays are a time for cheer, and it’s my great honor to participate in this annual event.
- **Community Shredding Events** – As identity theft is on the rise and we all must be careful to safeguard our personal information, I’m glad to host several community-based ‘shredding festivals’ through the course of the year. At these events, my constituents can typically bring up to three bags of mail, receipts, or other documents containing sensitive information to be shredded free of charge.

Special Events

My office continues to make a consistent effort to respond to emerging issues in a prompt manner, bringing current events from newspaper headlines to the community for its input and dialogue.

In the past year alone, I have sponsored a number of events with the purpose of fostering the involvement of my constituents, including the following:

- Airplane Noise Forum – In response to increasing complaints regarding the noise created in our community by airplanes departing and arriving at LaGuardia Airport, I teamed up with U.S. Representative Joe Crowley, Assemblymembers Francisco Moya and Michael DenDekker, and New York City Councilmember Daniel Dromm to give constituents an opportunity to address representatives from the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey and the Federal Aviation Administration. At this widely attended event, officials engaged constituents directly on this pressing issue in our community, as well as collected suggestions aimed at promoting a higher quality of life in Jackson Heights and surrounding areas.



- Town Hall Meeting on Homeless Shelters – In recent years, Senate District 13 has become the location of several homeless shelters that opened in reconverted facilities, mostly buildings that previously operated as hotels. Operated by vendors that are contracted by the New York City Department of Homeless Services, it has always been my position that we, as a community, are not opposed to giving the homeless a helping hand. However, the level of communication concerning shelter openings in the District has been less than productive with elected officials and my constituents often left out of the calculus. Last summer, I put together a Town Hall Meeting between community leaders and the Department of Homeless Services

where several issues were discussed, including public safety, the effect of shelters on property values, and the need for community involvement. While I remain skeptical of the Department's level of engagement to us, I am hopeful that meetings such as these convey the message that our neighborhoods stand ready to play a more active role on these issues.

- **Town Hall Meeting on Safety for Parents and Schoolchildren** – Over the winter, news broke that a man attempted to abduct a ten-year old girl as she was heading to school in the morning. Coupled with the recent rise in so-called 'slashing' incidents in the City, I convened a Town Hall Meeting with elected officials from our community to provide safety tips and considerations to parents and schoolchildren. Community Outreach Officers from the New York City Police Department gave a great demonstration of effective ways for children to avoid danger. Overall, the forum was a great success and I am proud to report that our community remains among the safest in the City when it comes to these incidents.
- **Benefit Concert for Ecuadoran Earthquake Victims** – Uniting New Yorkers for the benefit of those affected by the massive 7.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Ecuador in April 2016, I teamed with relief organizations to hold a fundraiser at La Boom, right here in Queens. In an afternoon filled with an outpouring of support, we were able to raise over \$10,000 that went directly to supporting Ecuadorans in this crucial time of need.

Renovating the 110th Precinct and Establishing a Flushing Meadows-Corona Park Substation

For years now, employees of the New York City Police Department and community advocates have complained of dilapidated building conditions that curb effective law enforcement at the 110th Precinct stationhouse. Built in 1940, this facility has not seen a major overhaul since the time of its construction, and this reality is immediately apparent to anyone who visits the facility. That's why I am leading an initiative to secure \$60 million in funding to bring the 110th Precinct into the 21st Century, by providing police officers with the technology and workable space that they need to protect our community.

Additionally, as we have all seen an unfortunate rise in crime in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, I am further proposing that a permanent substation of the 110th Precinct be constructed within its boundaries. The Park is poised to be an economic boom to our District, through the infusion of growth not only generated by events involving the U.S. Open and the New York Mets, but also through tourism dollars attracted by the museums located therein. The Park also serves as a serene place for our families to enjoy a weekend day in the warmer months, and this experience shouldn't be hampered by any threats of crime. Finally, as we expect to see development continue at the Willets Point site in the coming years, strategically placing a substation in the Park will allow the N.Y.P.D. to quickly respond to future tenants and certainly encourage the interest of businesses in the area.

Ongoing Engagement of the Community

My staff and I regularly engage constituents through active participation in regularly scheduled monthly meetings within our community, including at Queens Community Boards 1, 3 and 4, and at meetings of the Community Councils associated with the 110th, 114th and 115th Police Precincts. By attending these meetings and maintaining communications with stakeholders, my office and I stay in tune with the eyes and ears of the District and are able to promptly respond to issues as they arise.

In my role as the Ranking Member of the State Senate Labor Committee, I'm also committed to ensuring that hardworking families are given their due at the local level. As workers across our District are all too often involved in labor disputes with their employers, I am proud to stand up for what's right in the workplace. When circumstances dictate, I can be found joining alongside workers in the picket line, as well as attending rallies to bring attention to ongoing problems. To name a few of the pressing concerns currently facing workers in our community, I am proud to have participated in events calling for fair wages and benefits for the many airport workers at LaGuardia, as well as advocating on behalf of communications workers who are experiencing less than fair conditions at Verizon.

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Every month, hundreds of my constituents stop by my District Office in an effort to resolve a wide range of problems they are facing, as well as to seek information on available government services. On a daily basis, my staff and I seek to help the community navigate programs that can admittedly be very challenging at times.

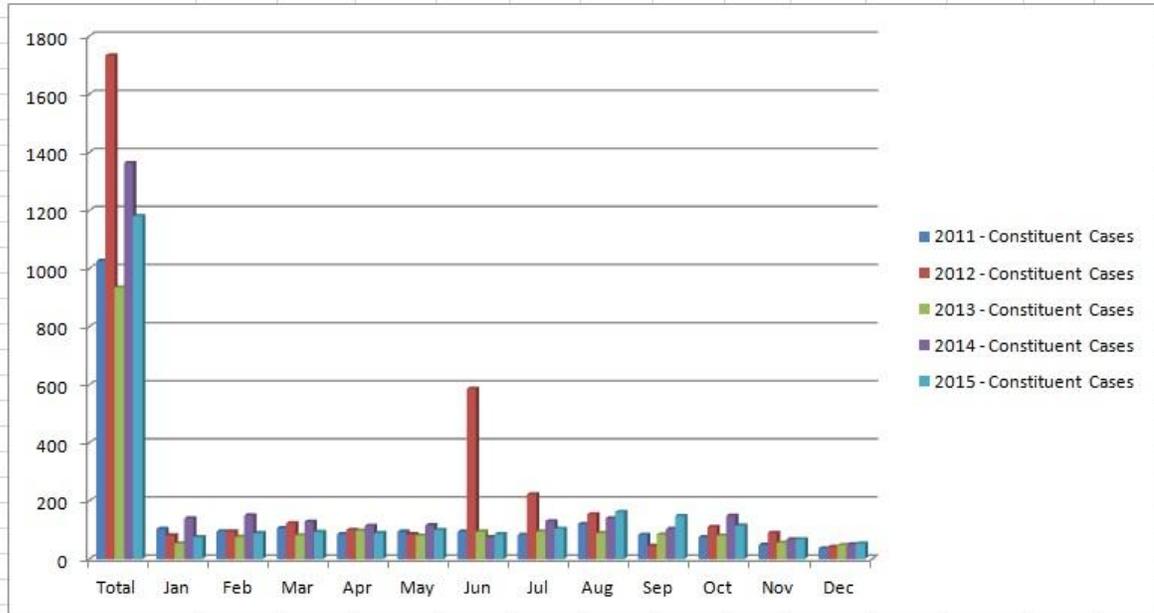
It's my privilege to report that we typically address over 1,000 cases per year in my office. Since you elected me to the State Senate in 2011, my staff and I have directly assisted over 6,500 constituents.

While the array of issues that we provide help on varies a great deal, some of the more common subjects that we encounter are those involving housing, immigration, general government services (e.g., SNAP and SCRIE benefits), referrals to legal services organizations and programs to assist our community's senior citizens. If we are unable to provide you with the solutions you need, chances are that we can point you in the direction of a community partner who can help.

As always, please feel free stop by my office if my staff or I can be of assistance to you. We're located at 32-37 Junction Boulevard in East Elmhurst. Alternatively, please feel free to give us a call at (718) 205-3881, or send me an e-mail at jperalta@nysenate.gov.

Total Count of Constituent Cases

Constituent Cases Year	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2011 - Constituent Cases	1026	103	95	106	86	94	94	83	121	83	75	49	37
2012 - Constituent Cases	1733	82	94	123	100	85	586	222	154	45	110	90	42
2013 - Constituent Cases	935	53	76	82	97	81	94	94	89	84	81	56	48
2014 - Constituent Cases	1363	140	150	128	114	116	75	130	140	103	149	67	51
2015 - Constituent Cases	1181	75	89	93	89	100	85	104	162	148	115	68	53
2016 - Constituent Cases	533	104	111	108	107	103							
Overall	6771												



HEADLINES

Below is a compilation of some of the news coverage regarding some of my legislative and constituent work to build stronger communities and a stronger State.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

[Roosevelt Avenue, a Corridor of Vice](#)

-The New York Times

[Campaign against human trafficking in Queens](#)

-New York Daily News

[Roosevelt Avenue Is 'Epicenter' of NYC Sex Trafficking, Officials Say](#)

-DNAInfo

[Peralta decries human trafficking](#)

-Queens Chronicle

[Inside the New Times Square: A Look at Prostitution on Roosevelt Avenue in Queens](#)

-WNYC

CROSSING GUARDS:

[State will toughen penalty for assaults on school crossing guards and Housing Authority workers](#)

-New York Daily News

[CBS 2 Investigates: Why Are There No Crossing Guards Outside Jackson Heights School?](#)

-CBS 2

[School crossing guards protected by legislation](#)

-Times Ledger

FAKE IDs:

[Fake-ID sellers face cell time](#)

-New York Post

[Inside the Black Market for Fake Green Cards](#)

-Vice.com

[Daily News reporter easily snags fake ID in Queens hotspot for phony documents](#)

-New York Daily News

[Legislation that cracks down on fake IDs market passes Senate](#)

-Times Ledger

DREAM ACT:

[DREAM Act killed in New York state Senate](#)

-New York Daily News

[The Undocumented Need Not Apply](#)

-Village Voice

[Sen. Jose Peralta to wear t-shirt to Senate sessions to push for DREAM Act passage](#)

-New York Daily News

[Peralta Honors Graduating DREAMers](#)

-Queens Gazette

[Kudos to Sen. Jose Peralta](#)

-Times Ledger (editorial)

[Peralta Pushes for Dream Act](#)

-PBS

ORGAN DONATION:

[State senator wants to increase organ donations in New York](#)

-New York Daily News

[Peralta's Bill To Extend Organ Transplantation](#)

-Queens Gazette

[Peralta urges Queens residents to donate organs](#)

-Times Ledger

[Casey Seiler: DREAM Act for kidneys](#)

-TimesUnion

[Undocumented Immigrants Could Get Kidney Transplants Under New Bill](#)

-DNAInfo

PUBLIC SAFETY:

[Officials Call For Safety Upgrades After Queens Teen Killed In Hit-And-Run](#)

-CBS 2

[Two lawmakers call for expansion of speed cameras in school zones](#)

-TimesLedger

[You Could Lose Your Car Registration for 5 Camera Violations Under New Bill](#)

-DNAInfo

[School crossing guards must be hired to fill approximately 200 vacancies the NYPD says exist citywide](#)

-New York Daily News

[Queens pol pushes city to put speed camera at busy intersection](#)

-New York daily News

[Nearly a Dozen Western Queens Schools Lack Crossing Guards](#)

-DNAInfo

[Cries For Safer Streets After Teen's Death](#)

-Queens Tribune

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

[Construction Plans for La Guardia Airport Don't Faze Its Neighbors](#)

-New York Times

[Queens lawmaker seeks more state funding to promote outer borough tourism](#)

-New York Daily News

[Queens Officials Want Cut Of Tourism Revenue To Help Attract Visitors](#)

-CBS 2

STREET VENDORS:

[Queens pol says he has a way to make both street vendors and restaurants happy](#)

-New York Daily News

[NYC FOOD CARTS MIGHT SOON GET LETTER GRADES LIKE RESTAURANTS](#)

-ABC 7

[It's time to act on street-vendor crisis](#)

-Crain's New York

[Peralta To City: Deal With Street Vendor Issues](#)

-Queens Gazette

[City Should Boost Number of Street Cart Permits, Politician Says](#)

-DNAInfo

COAT DRIVE:

[Coat Drive Helps Families In Need](#)

-NY1

[Peralta hosts seventh annual coat drive](#)

-TimesLedger

WOMEN OF DISTINCTION:

[Women of Distinction honor awarded to founding member of Make Queens Safer](#)

-TimesLedger

[Queens street safety advocate honored](#)

-Queens Chronicle

[Makes Queens Safer founding member honored at state Capitol](#)

-Queens Courier

ANNUAL JOB FAIR:

[Job Seekers Attend Career Fair at Queens Mall](#)

-NY1

[Dozens of employers to be featured at job fair at Queens Center](#)

-Queens Courier

[Peralta's 5th annual jobs fair expecting 2,000 job seekers](#)

-TimesLedger

BACK TO SCHOOL:

[Thousands of Queens Kids Get Free School Supplies](#)

-NY1

[Peralta Holds Annual Back To School Supplies Giveaway](#)

-Queens Gazette

ANNUAL TOY DRIVE:

[Peralta Distributes Hundreds Of Toys At Queens Center](#)

-Queens Gazette

TURKEY DRIVE:

[Sharing The Bounty](#)

-Queens Gazette

ECUADOR BENEFIT:

[Woodside Concert Raises Money for Ecuador Relief Efforts](#)

-NY1

[Come to a special Woodside concert on Sunday to help the victims of the Ecuador earthquake](#)

-Queens Courier

AIRPLANE NOISE:

[Airplane Noise in Jackson Heights Draws Hundreds to Town Hall](#)

-DNAInfo

[Noise concerns heard at town hall](#)

-Queens Chronicle

[Town hall meeting scheduled in Jackson Heights to address plane noise](#)

-Queens Post

PUBLIC SAFETY:

[Peralta, Moya, DenDekker Host Safety Town Hall](#)

-Queens Gazette

[Uptick in Slashings Prompts Safety Meeting in Jackson Heights](#)

-DNAInfo

110th POLICE PRECINCT:

[Lawmakers seek \\$70M to make Queens' dumpy 110th Precinct presentable, add extension site](#)

-New York Daily News

[Pols call for NYPD substation in FMCP](#)

-Queens Chronicle

[Advocates Push for Renovation of Queens NYPD Precinct](#)

-NY1