



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Senator Squadron's Community Convention Draws 400 Participants

DANIEL L. SQUADRON May 7, 2009

More than 20 Discussion Groups Elicit Input, Ideas and Priorities from Senator Squadron's Constituents

New York, NY--400 constituents from Brooklyn and Manhattan joined State Senator Daniel Squadron on Sunday at his first-ever 25th Senate District Community Convention, helping Senator Squadron take a vital step toward a more open, transparent and accessible state government.

The attendees came not to listen but to speak--after a welcome by Senator Squadron and his colleagues at the City, State and Federal levels, the 400 participants split into 22 small discussion groups to focus on a range of topics including rent regulation, pedestrian safety, health care, and other community concerns. Each discussion group produced a set of notes on the participants' ideas, recommendations and community and legislative priorities, which Senator Squadron is now compiling into a report to be distributed in the district.

"This convention is one step toward open and accessible government," Senator Squadron

told participants on Sunday. "Gatherings like this are what public service is about: people choosing to spend their time with their neighbors, talking about community issues and sharing new ideas with their elected representatives. We couldn't have done this if we didn't have a shared faith that we can accomplish great things when we engage in the political process. Thank you for taking that leap of faith with me."

In addition to 400 of his constituents, Senator Squadron was joined by Congress Members Jerrold Nadler and Anthony Weiner, Borough President Scott Stringer, Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh and Council Member David Yassky.

The complete list of discussion topics included:

- Buses, Subways, MTA Funding and MTA Issues
- Criminal Justice and Civil Rights
- Disability Access
- Education, School Overcrowding and the Role of Parents
- Election Access and Participation
- Emergency Preparedness
- Environmental Sustainability and Alternative Energy
- Ethics, Rules and Campaign Finance Reform
- Health and Health Care
- Jobs, Workers' Rights and Economic Development
- Marriage Equality and LGBT Civil Rights
- Mitchell-Lama, Section 8 and Tenants' Rights
- Parks and Open Space
- Pedestrian Safety, Street Changes, Bicycle Lanes and Traffic Control

- Public Assistance and Social Services
- Public Housing
- Quality of Life: Nightlife, Public Safety and Construction
- Rent Regulations
- Senior Citizens' Concerns
- Zoning, Neighborhood Preservation and Community Development

There were also discussion groups in Spanish and in Chinese.

Senator Squadron collected more than 50 pages of notes from the discussions, as well as 400 constituent input sheets from the event's participants.

"It's going to take me a little while to get through all the comments we received, but this is the kind of assignment I like--these notes are brimming with new ideas and sincere, direct input from constituents. I'm excited to work with the people in my district to turn these ideas into action," Senator Squadron said.

As a next step, Senator Squadron will be compiling the notes and ideas he received into a report to be distributed in the district.

"I'm thankful to everyone who participated," he said. "Making democracy work means working for democracy. If this weekend's turnout was any indication, the people of the 25th Senate District are ready to do work alongside me. I say: let's do it."