



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

## Avella Demands Action Against Businesses Illegally Occupying City Streets

TONY AVELLA November 14, 2014

(COLLEGE POINT, Queens) Today, Senator Tony Avella joined local residents and members of the 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue Block Association in College Point at a press conference calling on the City to take action against commercial businesses who have taken over the street and sidewalk with construction materials and other debris.

Senator Avella first noticed this illegal activity during the Memorial Day Parade earlier this year. He subsequently received complaints of construction materials and refuse from nearby businesses overflowing into the sidewalk and street at 124<sup>th</sup> Street and 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue last spring. After contacting multiple City agencies and being assured of ongoing agency monitoring, a recent on-site visit by Senator Avella revealed that the problem had only worsened. Although Senator Avella had contacted numerous agencies regarding this problem, only the Department of Sanitation had bothered to investigate and issue summons.

“While I appreciate the Department of Sanitation’s response, clearly a few summons is not enough to resolve this problem. Whatever sidewalk was here has been completely destroyed and construction material and trash has taken over, leaving dangerous, unsanitary and unsightly conditions. It’s the residents that are forced to suffer – they have to see this every day, their children play in this area. The only thing that will make these business owners see the light of day is for the agencies to take action. That’s why I’m calling on the City to take a

real next step and seize the materials and debris that these businesses have deposited here,” **stated Senator Avella.**

“I’ve lived here for over forty years, and we have a right to use the sidewalks and streets in our neighborhood – these businesses have taken that from us,” **said 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue Block Association leader Jim Singletary.** “This situation is becoming dangerous. We had three near-accidents here in the last year. We’ve been fighting this since 2011, and if it wasn’t for Senator Avella, nothing would be done.”

Department of Sanitation enforcement agents were on-site, issuing additional summons at the time of the conference.

“Sanitation personnel informed me that they have issued summons to every business. That’s great that they are taking affirmative action – but the business representatives acknowledged that for these owners, fines are ‘just a cost of doing business’,” **noted Senator Avella.** “That’s why the City must seize these materials, which have been deposited on City property.”