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YEAR-END STATEMENT FROM STATE SENATOR JOHN LIU

As 2024 draws to a close, I want to wish you and your family a joyous holiday season and a healthy, happy New Year! Serving as your state senator is a privilege I hold with the deepest gratitude, and I'm proud to share some reflections on the progress we've made together this year and the work that lies ahead.

One of the big stories of the past year was the sudden rise in news about squatters taking over private property. These incidents hit a raw nerve for many in our community, whose homes are their life savings. State housing law is often complicated and nuanced, so we made sure to update the law with my legislation in simple and straightforward language to define the term squatter and make it crystal clear that squatters are not entitled to tenant protections.

The past year saw some crime rates drop following their pandemic highs, but retail thefts continued to rise. To help support our small businesses, we strengthened law enforcement measures to protect retail workers by making assaulting them a felony and cracked down on repeat offenders by charging for the total amount of goods stolen over time.

We also tackled environmental challenges by improving and extending the green roof tax abatement program, which enables building owners to save up to \$200,000 in taxes while reducing stormwater runoff and mitigating the urban heat island effect. This initiative aligns with our commitment to creating a greener, more sustainable future.

In response to repeated 'car takeovers' in our area's private parking lots, we passed legislation to crack down on reckless driving, making it easier for law enforcement to step in and stop dangerous driving like donuts and burnouts in private parking lots.

In the coming year, public school funding will take center stage. As the Chair of the Senate's Committee on NYC Education, I look forward to thoroughly analyzing our long-outdated school funding formula, known as Foundation Aid, so that it better reflects the needs of today's students and schools. The existing formula hasn't been updated since 2007, despite dramatic changes to how our schools operate.

Finally, as we prepare to enter the Year of the Snake, also known as the Baby Dragon, a symbol of wisdom, enlightenment, and longevity, let us resolve to build a stronger, and unified New York. For my part, I will continue to advocate for policies that uplift our communities, strengthen our education system, and improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers.

Wishing you and your loved ones all the best in 2025!

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