



New York City Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum

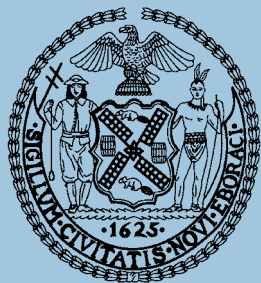


Improving Access to City Services
Annual Report 2007

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum

Annual Report 2007

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Betsy Gotbaum, elected in 2001, has worked tirelessly for six years as New York City's Public Advocate. With a long-standing love of helping New Yorkers, Public Advocate Gotbaum is committed to consistently fighting for some of New York's most underserved populations. Since being reelected in 2005, her leadership has increased access to health care, strengthened child and senior welfare services, supported affordable housing, and helped reform education.

Dear New Yorkers,

New York is the greatest city in the world. But New York City government? Sometimes it can be more of an obstacle than a tool to help New Yorkers.

That's where I come in. As Public Advocate for the City of New York, it's my job to help you. I can cut through the city's red tape and solve your problems, big and small.

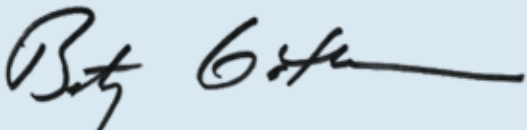
Over the past six years, my office has helped countless New Yorkers solve their problems with city government.

I've worked to help parents access school services. I've helped tenants take on deadbeat landlords. I've helped seniors and families access food stamps and a wide range of other vital city services.

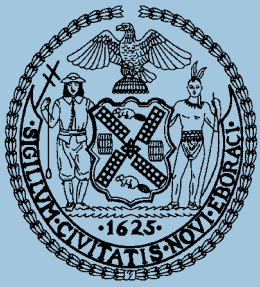
I've worked to improve our care for children with special needs. And I have successfully pushed for greater protections of vulnerable children and seniors in the city's child welfare and adult protective systems.

This report will share some of our accomplishments from the past year, including the reports my office has issued and the legislation I have introduced. But even more importantly, it will share some of the stories of people we have helped.

Thank you, New York, for allowing me to serve you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betsy Gotbaum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum



Supporting Students and Parents

In the last six years, the public school system has undergone seismic change. It has come under mayoral control and it has been subjected to three massive reorganizations. In the past year alone, Betsy Gotbaum fought tirelessly for parents' rights by opposing the cell phone ban and advocating for school safety. She called for a School Bus Bill of Rights after the Department of Education bungled the re-drawing of bus routes – in mid-winter, no less. Additionally, the Public Advocate was at the forefront of calling for improved Career and Technical Education programs, and intervened repeatedly, and effectively, to help the parents of students with special needs deal with an unwieldy, unresponsive bureaucracy.

“*I contacted the Public Advocate’s Office a few months ago after my daughter had been assaulted at school. She is a special education student, and the kids at her old high-school made fun of her and teased her constantly, to the point that she was being beaten up.*

I approached the school district and applied for a transfer, at which point they told me there was no room and I wasn’t qualified. Then I called the Office of the Public Advocate.

I talked with someone and explained my situation. Within 48 hours she had obtained a transfer for my daughter. I was really, really glad for all of you, and I recommend your office to everyone I meet. A lot of parents don’t know how to get better services, and I am happy to say my daughter is now doing really well.

Thank you!”

– Iris Febus, daughter Desiree, Bronx

In the News

END CELL PHONE BAN: GOTBAUM

New York Daily News,
November 15, 2006

“Mayor Bloomberg’s ban on cell phones for school kids shows he’s disconnected with parents, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum said yesterday.”

PUBLIC ADVOCATE SEEKS MEASURES TO PROTECT STUDENTS

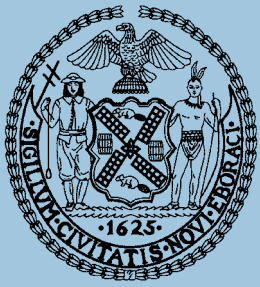
New York Sun, March 22, 2007

“Following recent reports of abuses in city schools, the Public Advocate yesterday called for the Department of Education to alter the way it protects students.”

GOTBAUM REPORT: PARENTS OF DISABLED STUDENTS GET RUNAROUND

Staten Island Advance, March 26, 2007

“The city’s school system is giving short shrift to parents of children with disabilities, according to a report released today by Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum.”



Helping Seniors

New York is home to more than one million seniors, and Betsy Gotbaum helps make sure they have access to the services they need. The Public Advocate exposed troubling lapses in the city office of Adult Protective Services, which is charged with protecting our most frail and vulnerable seniors. As a result, the city significantly increased the number of caseworkers to ensure that services are provided to those in need. Gotbaum, in recognition of the important work of caregivers, introduced a bill that would protect caregivers from employment discrimination. Additionally, she has helped seniors cut through Medicare and Medicaid red tape and access exemptions from rent increases and created a senior guide to provide seniors with crucial information about city services.

“ *I am 78 years old, and I live on Staten Island. I called the Public Advocate when I needed help with a long-standing Medicaid headache.*

I had spent months trying to arrange for Medicaid for my 17-year-old adopted daughter, who was then attending a therapeutic school in Alabama. But Medicaid wouldn't honor my claims. I felt I was being given the run-around, so I called Betsy.

They contacted the Medicaid office, and told me to fax the papers to an office in Albany. The staff there told me that my daughter's Medicaid benefits would begin in about 10 days. The Public Advocate's staff was amazingly helpful.”

– Ellie McShae, Staten Island

In the News

GOTBAUM: CITY NEEDS NEW POLICY FOR THE OLD

New York Post, January 11, 2007

“The city is neglecting thousands of vulnerable elderly homebound residents, Public Advocate Gotbaum charged in a study released yesterday.”

CITY SERVICES TO SENIORS FALLING DOWN: POLS

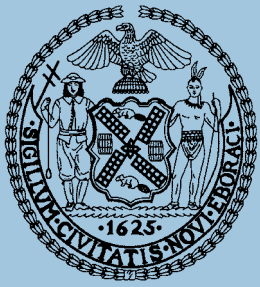
New York Daily News, June 15, 2007

“They are not able, not willing, or can't service those clients,' said Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum, who said APS caseworkers handle 81 clients each.”

PUBLIC ADVOCATE GOTBAUM RELEASES NEW GUIDE TO HELP SENIORS ACCESS CITY SERVICES

August 23, 2007

“Public Advocate Gotbaum said, ‘This guide gives seniors all of the information they need to get help. New York is a great place to grow old – and we want to make sure all our seniors have access to the services they need to be safe and healthy.’”



Improving Access to Benefits

Betsy Gotbaum is committed to ensuring that New Yorkers break through any roadblocks they may face in accessing important benefits offered by city agencies, such as mammograms, pre-natal care, and food stamps. Toward that end, Public Advocate Gotbaum, with the help of the Brennan Center for Justice, Make the Road by Walking, and New York City AIDS Housing Network, introduced REACT, the Ready Access to Assistance Act. REACT would help New Yorkers applying for food stamps, cash assistance, Medicaid and other public benefits. The REACT bill would allow advocates to set up information tables in the halls, lobbies and waiting areas of public benefit offices, and would be especially helpful to those whose primary language is not English. The Public Advocate currently has the support of more than 32 City Council members, and hopes to see the bill passed by 2008.

“I called the Public Advocate’s Office when my four-year-old son’s food stamps were discontinued unexpectedly.

For some reason, my file had been transferred to a center that processes benefits for single adults, even though I have a child receiving benefits. I



was unable to get an answer regarding this situation from anyone I contacted. Until I called the Public Advocate’s Office. They immediately recognized the mistake that had been made and were able to get in touch

with the right office so that immediate steps could be taken to re-enroll my son. I am so grateful that this agency exists. We, the people of this wonderful city, need to know that this very valuable office is here to provide help to New Yorkers in need. The Public Advocate’s office is like a suit of armor, to help protect us.”

– Jadranka, son Kadir, Bay Ridge

In the News

GOTBAUM ANNOUNCES FREE MEAL SITES FOR CHILDREN

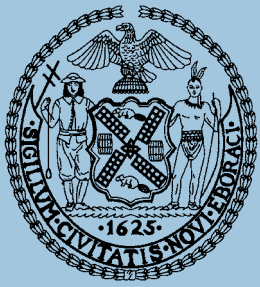
Manhattan Times, July 6, 2006
“Working with the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum last month unveiled a list of over 500 free Summer Food Service Programs that will provide meals for children under 19 years of age.”

PUBLIC ADVOCATE STUDY SHOWS LONG WAIT FOR LOW-COST MAMMOGRAMS

NY1 News, August 31, 2006
“A study by Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum indicates there’s still a long wait for the free and low-cost mammograms at some public facilities.”

EFICIENCIA EN SERVICIOS DE PROTECCION

El Diario, January 16, 2007
“No obstante, un reciente reporte de la Defensora del Pueblo, Betsy Gotbaum encontró que la burocracia y la ineficiencia están impediendo que los trabajadores sociales presten servicio de alta calidad.”



Protecting Tenants

New Yorkers deserve decent and affordable housing in safe neighborhoods. Betsy Gotbaum has fought on behalf of tenants across the city to get landlords to fix dangerous and unsanitary living conditions. She has exposed the prevalence of toxic mold and plans to introduce legislation that would force landlords to remediate mold.

Additionally, the Office of the Public Advocate has intervened in tenant/landlord disputes, assisted with heat and hot water issues, and helped with rent increase exemptions for the disabled.



“*I have lived in a rent-controlled apartment for almost 30 years, and I had an electrical fire in my apartment last November. The fire forced me into a shelter*

while the property manager supposedly repaired the damage. But when I got back to my apartment after almost five months,

I found paint, rubbish and soot left behind by the landlord. It made my apartment almost unlivable. That’s where Betsy Gotbaum came in.

Betsy joined local advocates and the law firm, Jenner & Block, to protest my treatment. Having Betsy stick up for me was great, and with their help we’re making sure what happened to me doesn’t happen to thousands of other New Yorkers.”

– Ms. Wright, Harlem

In the News

‘SLUM BUM’ HIT WITH RICO SUIT

New York Post, July 12, 2007

“Gotbaum said Pinnacle is waging a coordinated plan to harass tenants and then flip the apartments at market rate.”

MANHATTAN: CALL FOR MORE CITY HOUSING LAWYERS

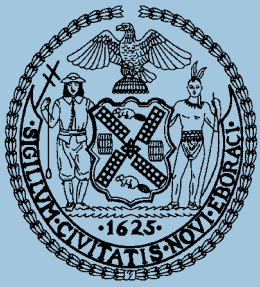
The New York Times, March 7, 2007

“The New York City public advocate, Betsy Gotbaum, testified yesterday that the city’s housing agency was ‘overwhelmed by its responsibility to enforce housing maintenance code violations and protect tenants from irresponsible landlords.’”

CONSTRUCTION ZONE

New York Daily News
November 5, 2006

“Unscrupulous businessmen, seeing the opportunity for high-density, high-profit development in these neighborhoods slip away, are rushing to launch out-of-scale, out-of-character projects before the rezoning takes effect,’ Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum testified at an Assembly Hearing in September.”



Reports Fiscal Year 2007 July 2006-June 2007

Testing the Waters: A Look at Safety at City Pools – July 2006

Investigators dispatched by Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum found violations of city and state codes and other hazardous conditions at city pools.

The Hunger Hotline: Help's Not Often On The Menu – August 2006

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum released a study of the Hunger Hotline—which provides hungry New Yorkers with the information they need to access emergency food at soup kitchens and pantries—and determined that it provides inaccurate and insufficient information much of the time.

Making the Team: Gender Inequality in New York City PSAL Sports Teams – August 2006

Girls do not have the same opportunity as boys to participate in Public Schools Athletic League sports.

Missing the Mark: HHC Mammogram Wait Time Off Target – August 2006

Women who seek a free or low-cost mammography screening offered by the City's Health and Hospitals Corporation are likely to face a wait far longer than the seven-day target maximum set by Mayor Bloomberg.

A Dangerous Cycle: Attorney Turnover at ACS Leaves Children Unprotected – September 2006

The Administration for Children's Services is losing Family Court attorneys at an alarming rate, putting children at risk and costing the city millions of dollars. ACS Family Court attorneys are dangerously overworked, inadequately trained, and undervalued by the agency.

UPDATE: In response to the findings of this report, the city added \$3.4 million to ACS' budget for Family Court Attorneys – a 30% increase – for FY2008. Since the release of the report, there has been a 28% increase in the number of Family Court Attorneys and attrition has declined by over 40%. ACS reports that the average caseloads of attorneys with more than one year on the job have decreased by over 22%.

Help Wanted: Department of Education Misses Opportunities to Connect Students with Health Care Careers – November 2006

The Department of Education has failed to connect high school students with the growing number of careers in the health care industry.

Giving Birth In The Dark: City Hospitals Still Failing To Provide Legally Mandated Maternity Information – December 2006

As the rate of Cesarean section births continues to rise, the Public Advocate found New York City hospitals are still failing to provide legally mandated information on C-section deliveries.

UPDATE: As a result of the report, and other efforts of the Office of the Public Advocate, all 44 hospitals with labor and delivery wards in NYC have complied by assembling the information required by law.

Unhealthy Exposure: Mold In New York City Homes – December 2006

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum urged the City to take action to protect New Yorkers from the health risks associated with household mold growth, calling for updated building and housing maintenance codes, stepped-up enforcement of existing regulations and stiffer penalties for landlords who fail to correct violations.

Unprotected: Adult Protective Services Struggles to Serve Vulnerable Clients – January 2007

The City's Adult Protective Services unit often fails to provide adequate care to many of its mentally and physically impaired clients, according to a report released by Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum.

UPDATE: In response to the report, APS announced the addition of 37 caseworkers.

Between Policy and Reality: School Administrators Critical of Department of Education School Safety Policy – February 2007

A survey released by Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum calls into question the accuracy of the Department of Education's school incident data and finds that only 25% of school officials believe they have the necessary resources to keep students safe.

No Shot at Prevention: HPV Vaccine Unavailable at Many City Health Clinics – March 2007

None of the City's STD clinics or HHC child and teen health clinics offers vaccinations against the human papillomavirus, the virus that is responsible for 70 percent of the country's cervical cancer cases.

Planning for Failure: How the Department of Education's Capital Plan Undermines its Own Goals for Increasing Graduation Rates – March 2007

The City's plan for building new public high schools falls tens of thousands of seats short of the capacity needed to meet the Department of Education's 70 percent graduation rate goal.

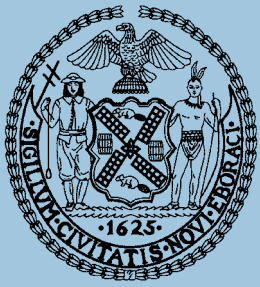


Public Advocate's Guide to the Earned Income Tax Credit & Free Tax Preparation Services in NYC – March 2007

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum released a guide to obtaining the Earned Income Tax Credit, as well as the most comprehensive list of free tax preparation sites.

Conflict Unresolved: DOE Fails to Recognize What Works in School Safety and Student Achievement – May 2007

The Department of Education's (DOE) school safety policies are undermining its own efforts to improve student achievement and failing to identify the cause of conflict.



Reports Fiscal Year 2007 continued

Waiting For Help: Parents of Students with Disabilities Find Little Assistance Navigating New York City's Special Education System – March 2007

The City is failing to provide basic information to parents of special education students – and ignoring phone calls asking for help.

Twelve for 2030 Responses to PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York – April 2007

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum responded to the Mayor's call for a green New York City with both optimism about his commitment to environmentalism and with hope for success in this endeavor in the future. This report is the response of 12 advocates and scholars to the Mayor's 2030 plan.

21st Century Learning: Career and Technical Education Prepares NYC Students for Future Success – May 2007

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum released a white paper on the successes, such as higher graduation rates and better test scores, of state-approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

Hurdles to a Healthy Baby: Pregnant Women Face Barriers to Prenatal Care at City Health Centers – May 2007

Women face significant barriers when trying to access basic prenatal care from Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) facilities.

Dangerous Mistakes: Analysis of ACS Corrective Actions Involving Child Fatalities in 2005 – June 2007

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) was struggling to perform basic child protective functions, such as conducting timely and thorough investigations, during the year leading up to the tragic death of Nixzmary Brown.

Left in the Dark: Citywide Council on Special Education Survey Finds DOE Not Informing Parents of Educational Opportunities for Children with Disabilities – June 2007

The Department of Education (DOE) fails to provide parents of children with disabilities information on special education services or respond to their concerns about their children's transportation, according to a survey of parents with children in District 75, released by Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum and the Citywide Council on Special Education (CCSE).

Introduced 5/9/2007

Int. No. 575 – in relation to requiring the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to post on its website in a user-friendly format and disseminate certain information mandated by the Maternity Information Act of 1989 (New York State Public Health Law § 2803-j).

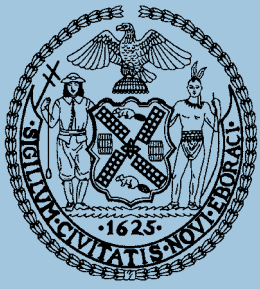
Legislation Introduced by the Public Advocate

The proposed legislation would create a citywide, online searchable database of vital maternity information, including the percentage of C-sections, epidurals, and episiotomies performed annually at the city's hospitals. This bill would also require DOHMH to develop a pamphlet in multiple languages compiling such information for every area hospital.

The proposed legislation results directly from a report that the Office of the Public Advocate issued in December 2006, "Giving Birth in the Dark: City Hospitals Still Failing to Provide Legally Mandated Maternity Information." The report was a follow-up to an investigation the Office conducted in 2005 to determine whether city hospitals readily provide expectant mothers with a pamphlet containing hospital-specific statistics on delivery procedures, as required by the New York State Maternity Information Act (MIA). At that time and in 2006, not one of the 44 city hospitals offering labor and delivery services was in compliance with the MIA.

Public Advocate Gotbaum said, "Information is essential – especially when you're dealing with the health of mothers and children. The City should give women greater access to information they can use to protect themselves and their families. An online database will allow mothers to find hospital information quickly and easily, and help them make safe, informed decisions."

In 2007, Public Advocate Gotbaum continued to work intensively with hospitals to make this information available and her efforts paid off. All 44 hospitals that offer labor and delivery services have made pamphlets with their C-section delivery rates and other birthing statistics available as required by the MIA.



Introduced 11/29/2006

Int. No. 483 – in relation to requiring notices relating to the rights of mobile phone consumers.

This bill would require point-of-sale signage informing cell phone customers of (1) their consumer rights (including free porting of phone numbers from another wireless carrier or landline); (2) important policies (including trial period with refund, early cancellation fees, store-specific fees, and availability of corporate discounts); (3) whether store is a corporate store or an authorized dealer; and (4) additional monthly government taxes and surcharges.

The Office of the Public Advocate issued a comprehensive guide in April 2005, informing consumers which cell phone plans offered the best reception, what kinds

Legislation Introduced by the Public Advocate continued

of contracts were offered by the various companies, and how to recycle old cell phones. It also provided the pros and cons for selecting various service contract lengths and for buying at a storefront or directly from the provider. In creating this guide, the Public Advocate's Office found discrepancies between the average fees charged by wireless service providers and those fees charged by authorized dealerships. In addition to the established fees set by national providers, the majority of authorized dealerships the Office surveyed had hidden and additional cancellation and restocking fees. Cancellation fees can range from \$50.00 to as much as \$400.00. This proposed legislation would require mobile phone merchants to disclose all costs associated with each mobile phone and service plan.

"It's important for consumers to know the full extent of the costs and fees involved in buying a cell phone plan. I have introduced a bill to eliminate the element of surprise for consumers. It will help protect consumers from being blindsided by double cancellation fees."

– Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum



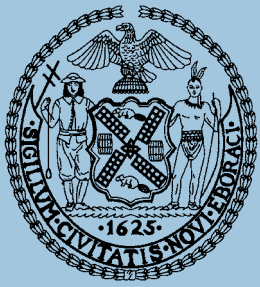
Introduced 4/23/2007

Int. No. 565 – in relation to prohibiting employment discrimination based on an individual’s actual or perceived status as a caregiver.

The New York City Human Rights Law, one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the nation, fails to expressly protect New Yorkers caring for loved ones from discrimination in the workplace. To close the major loophole in the law, Public Advocate Gotbaum introduced legislation to guarantee caregivers new protections from employment discrimination.

According to a 2004 report, the Family Caregiver Alliance determined that there were 1.9 million people in New York State providing informal care to loved ones. Notably, more workers are filing federal lawsuits alleging family responsibilities discrimination (FRD), with New York State having the greatest number of such lawsuits. It is evident that as the number of New Yorkers requiring informal care increases, and in turn the population of informal caregivers grows, the City’s Human Rights Law must be amended to extend employment discrimination protection for New Yorkers who are actual or perceived caretakers of children and other dependents.

Public Advocate Gotbaum said, “New Yorkers caring for loved ones deserve our protection and support. They have enough to worry about – and that shouldn’t include losing their job because they love their parents or their children. This bill will make sure that all New Yorkers are protected from job discrimination and can fulfill their family responsibilities.”



Int 341-2006
(Enacted 4/23/2007 – Local Law 20)

In relation to prohibiting the use of non-wood bats.

Int 396-2006

In relation to requiring the New York City Department of Education to report on the implementation of Billy's Law.

Int 401-2006

In relation to establishing taxicab stands.

Int 444A-2006
(Enacted 10/17/2006 – Local Law 41)

In relation to increasing the maximum qualifying income for the Disabled Homeowner's Exemption.

Int 445A-2006
(Enacted 10/17/2006 – Local Law 42)

In relation to increasing the maximum qualifying income for the Senior Citizen Homeowner's Exemption.

Int 471-2006

In relation to establishing a temporary commission to conduct a review of New

Int 502B-2007
(Enacted 5/1/2007 – Local Law 23)

In relation to the contents of a lobbyist's statement of registration, and to repeal subdivision (g) of section 3-213 of the administrative code of the city of New York, relating to the mailing of forms by the city clerk.

Int 508-2007

In relation to requiring the Director of the Mayor's Office of Veterans' Affairs to send annual written notice to all veterans within New York City informing them of Federal, State, and City benefits to which veterans and their families are entitled.

Int 516-2007

In relation to requiring the Police Department to submit reports concerning the discharge of firearms to the Council.

Int 530-2007

In relation to licensing and regulating furniture retail stores.

Int 553A-2007
(Enacted 5/29/2007 – Local Law 24)

In relation to alteration permits.

Legislation Co-Sponsored by the Public Advocate

York City's child welfare system and offer recommendations for reform.

Int 473-2006

In relation to priority queue status for alternative fuel taxicabs.

Int 486A-2006
(Enacted 12/28/2006 – Local Law 58)

In relation to the establishment of an affordable housing fund and to benefits pursuant to section four hundred twenty-one-a of the real property tax law.

Int 496A-2007
(Enacted 6/14/2007 – Local Law 26)

In relation to mandating that the Commissioner of the Fire Department promulgate rules requiring certain building owners to file a list with the Fire Department indicating the number of each floor of the building.

Int 501A-2007
(Enacted 3/28/2007 – Local Law 11)

In relation to domestic partnerships.

Int 555-2007
(Enacted 6/14/2007 – Local Law 27)

In relation to the establishment of the Court-Livingston-Schermerhorn business improvement district.

Int 561A-2007 (Enacted 6/14/2007 – Local Law 29)

In relation to an alternative enforcement program by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development for violations of the housing maintenance code and multiple dwelling law.

Int 585-2007

In relation to the establishment of the Sunnyside business improvement district.

Int 586-2007
(Enacted 7/03/2007 – Local Law 34)

In relation to campaign finance.

What New Yorkers are saying about the Public Advocate

Ms. Gotbaum,

I want to take a moment to thank you for your help. More importantly I want to point out that you have a star on your staff, I am sure you are aware of that already. Her name is Jessica Burgos. Jessica has all the up-to-date facts on my case and is always checking in just to see how I am doing. She brings great comfort to me, knowing someone cares. Jessica has been unrelenting and always helpful. She has helped me to keep my head on straight and not feel so alone out here. She is a true professional and I wish there was some other way of rewarding her besides this note. She deserves more praise than I can heap on her.

Thank you for your time,

G.H.

Dear Betsy Gotbaum,

My family and I want to thank you for assisting and supporting my family during our crisis with the Board of Education/Office of Pupil Transportation Yellow Bus Catastrophe. My family and I cannot begin to express the gratitude and appreciate you all have given us during our time in crisis

Sincerely Yours,

K.M.



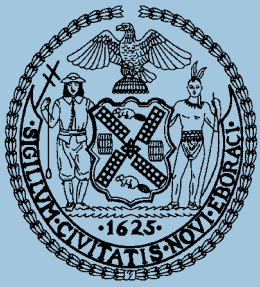
Dear Public Advocate Staff Member:

I wanted to send you a note of thanks for the time you advocated on my son's behalf. Since your involvement, I am happy to report that the case was dismissed. That same week my son was offered a job and is now working. Needless to say, we can finally put that nightmare behind us and have a good night sleep.

On behalf of our family, we thank you for your support, professionalism, prompt response and dedication to your people in New York City.

Sincerely,

L.D.V.



Community Affairs



The dedicated Community Affairs (CA) staff at the Office of the Public Advocate work with community-based organizations and individuals to identify and solve local residents' problems. As the Office's eyes and ears in their communities, CA liaisons work to help shape policy proposals that reflect their deep knowledge and understanding of community challenges.

Bronx

As a former Parks Commissioner, Betsy Gotbaum has always been committed to promoting and protecting green space and the environment for New Yorkers. In the Bronx, Betsy Gotbaum supported innovative environmental initiatives such as air quality improvements and space for urban agriculture. She is also working to clean up one of the worst toxic sites in New York State in the Soundview section of the Bronx.

Brooklyn

All New Yorkers deserve decent, affordable housing in clean and safe neighborhoods. In Bushwick and East New York, Brooklyn, Betsy Gotbaum has visited public housing developments to talk with tenants and met with Tenant Association presidents to learn first-hand about the problems they encounter. She also worked repeatedly with NYCHA to fix tenants' housing problems. These face-to-face meetings and close connections with her constituents and city agencies help define the Public Advocate's

approach to public housing and strengthen her ability to help solve problems.

Queens

Betsy Gotbaum is committed to ensuring that the school system meets the needs of all students. In Queens, she hosted an education forum at the Queens Public Library to focus on a number of important issues affecting Queens students including bilingual education, special education services, school safety, and career and technical education. The Public Advocate's education forums in the borough and around the city allow parents to have a place to voice their concerns and raise questions, and help to create a productive dialogue so that parents are more involved in the education process.

Manhattan

In Manhattan, and across the boroughs, Betsy Gotbaum has been active on a key issue that affects all New Yorkers – transportation. She has called for a comprehensive review of MTA spending to cut waste and divert impending fare hikes.



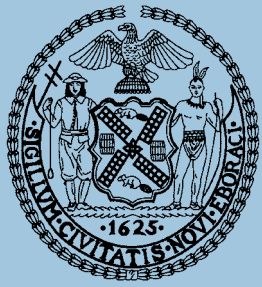
"On behalf of the tenants of Boulevard Houses, I would like to thank the Public Advocate and her Community Affairs staff for coming out to help us with issues that we have been facing. We were about to have the heart of our community – our common space, the place where our children run and play – taken away. Betsy stood up for us and we are grateful."

**– Inez Rodriguez,
Boulevard Houses Tenant
Association President**

Gotbaum also urged the MTA to update their pumping systems to address flooding problems, and confront other issues related to a crumbling transportation infrastructure, including improving and modernizing communication systems.

Staten Island

As the only city-wide female elected official and only the third woman in the city's history to hold city-wide office, services for women are of great concern to Betsy Gotbaum. She worked to bring free and low-cost mammograms to Staten Island by calling on the city to fund the first city-run mammogram facility in the borough. Staten Island currently has the highest breast cancer mortality rate in New York City. Betsy Gotbaum has also urged the City Council to make funding available to New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) to reduce mammogram wait times at HHC facilities across the city.



Constituent Services

Elizabeth Blaney: A QUARTER CENTURY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

For over 25 years, Elizabeth Blaney has been a part of the fabric of New York City government. Starting her career path at the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit (CAU) in 1980, she served as liaison to Southeast Queens communities. Liz's personal warmth, empathy, and sincere approach to individual and community concerns made her a clear choice for the Community Assistance Unit.

During this period, Liz helped bring several key capital projects to fruition and resolved many local service delivery issues. Her unit also helped to ease racial tensions that escalated during a period of demographic transition in Southeast Queens.

In 1984, Liz Blaney was named Assistant Director of the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit. She went on to become Deputy Director of the CAU in 1990, under Mayor Dinkins.

In 2001, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum tapped Liz to serve as Deputy Public Advocate for Ombudsman Services, a position she had held under the city's first Public Advocate, Mark Green. Liz's

department handles more than 10,000 complaints a year and is actively involved in efforts to make government more accessible to New York City residents.

Liz Blaney has served as adjunct faculty in the Urban Studies Department at Queens College and as field faculty to CORO, a foundation that trains individuals for careers

in public affairs. She is a recipient of numerous community service awards and is a member of several organizations, including Neighborhood Housing Services of Jamaica and the Queens Chapter of the Madam C.J. Walker Foundation.



"It's important for government to listen. Sometimes people just need to be heard, even if you can't solve their problem, if they are given a sense that somebody has heard them, and understood them, it makes all the difference."

– Liz Blaney

"Liz Blaney is a true professional," said Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum. "She carries out the core mission of this office and has helped countless New Yorkers over the years. She takes the mystery and the inefficiencies out of government with her grace, compassion, and intellect. New York City is lucky to have someone with this level of dedication and commitment to public service."

Liz's selfless commitment to the communities she lives and works in reflects the real definition of public service. Liz's dedication and her life's work have helped to shape a model of government that improves the lives of those it serves.



The Public Advocate's Ombudsman Services Unit helps New Yorkers who have complaints, problems, or questions about city government and services. The unit provides information and referrals, working with city agencies to help solve problems.

Helping New Yorkers:

Dear Ms. Gotbaum,

Thank you for listening to the voice of the parents, we have been voicing our issues about the lack of functioning SLT's for a long time. Thank you for bringing accountability to the DOE and even more importantly keeping parents in the loop of the conversation.

Again, thank you.

Z.A.

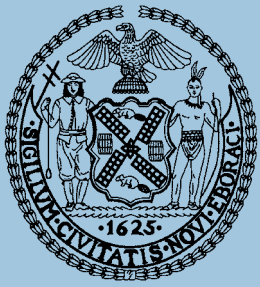
Dear Public Advocate,

I want to thank you for the help that was given to me on a matter I was having problems with concerning my public assistance. Your office not only responded to my situation quickly, but they made sure my situation was resolved. This is the third time I have needed the assistance of the Public Advocate's Office, and the third time I was impressed with their help.

Thank You!!

N.L.

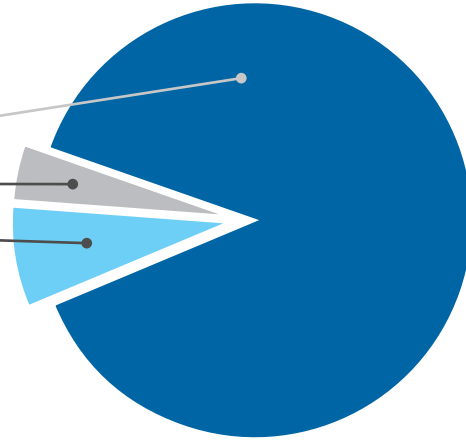
Constituent Complaint Resolution



Record of Complaints Fiscal Year 2007

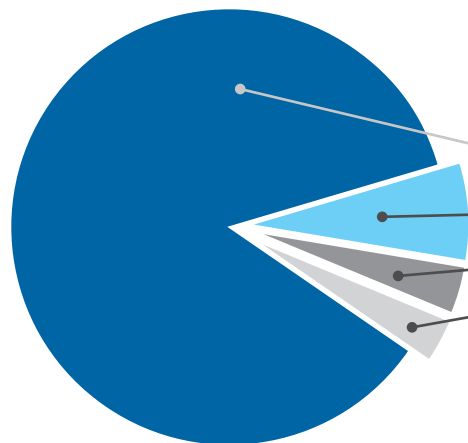
Complaints by referral

City – 9,076 (84%)
State – 1342 (12%)
Federal – 427 (4%)
Total Complaints = 10,845



Complaints by type

Verbal/Telephone – 9,315 (86%)
Written/Email – 784 (7%)
In Person/Walk In – 400 (4%)
Senior Action Line – 346 (3%)
Total = 10,845



Customer Satisfaction

At the Office of the Public Advocate, we like to know how we are doing. To find out, we conducted a customer satisfaction survey of 270 constituents who called our office for help during the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

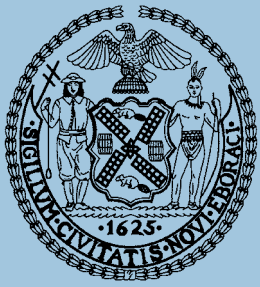
- 81% said we were able to help them;
- 79% said they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with our services;
- 83% said our ombudspersons were very or somewhat courteous.

Federal Agencies

AGENCY	Closed Favorable	Closed Unfavorable	Referred	Agency's Unit Total	TOTAL	% of Total
Attorney General	1				1	
Agriculture Department	1				1	
Census Bureau	2	1			3	
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	4	1	5		10	
Education Department	1	1	1		3	
House of Representatives	3		1		4	
Housing & Urban Development	26	11	2		39	
Justice, US Department					69	
*Immigration Services	42	12	4	58		
*Other	4	3	4	11		
Postal Service, US	28	8	3		39	
Commerce Department						
Commission on Civil Rights	1				1	
Comptroller Currency	5		1		6	
Consumer Protection Safety Board	1				1	
Federal Emergency Management Protection	1		1		2	
Federal Aviation Administration	4	1	5		10	
Federal Bureau of Investigation	4	1			5	
Federal Communications Commission	6	2			8	
Food and Drug Administration	3		2		5	
Health Care Financing Administration	5				5	
Homeland Security	1		1		2	
Department of the Interior		1			1	
Internal Revenue Service	3	2	4		9	
Department of Labor	1		1		2	
Nat'l labor Relations Bd	1				1	
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp	1				1	
Securities and Exchange Commission	2		1		3	
Social Security Administration	78	9	1		88	
Department of State					28	
*Passports	14			14		
*Other			14	14		
FTC	35	3	10		48	
Department of Transportation	1		1		2	
US Armed Forces	6	2	1		9	
Veterans Administration	12	3	1		16	
United Nations	1				1	
Treasury Department	1		1		2	
White House	2				2	
Total	301	61	65		427	

*Agency with sub-units that handle specific issues.

Constituent Complaint Resolution



Record of Complaints Fiscal Year 2007

State Agencies

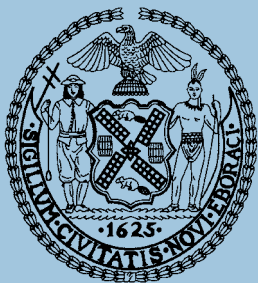
AGENCY	Closed Favorable	Closed Unfavorable	Referred	Agency's Unit Total	TOTAL	% of Total
Aging, New York State Office of	1		0		1	
Agriculture, NYS Department of	2	2	2		6	
Assembly	4				4	
Attorney General, NYS	30	8	21		59	4%
Banking, NYS Department of	28	11	13		52	4%
Departmental Disciplinary	19	1			20	2%
Committees						
Cemeteries, NYS Division	3	4	1		8	
Comptroller, NYS	5				5	
Consumer Protection	2	1	8		11	
Convention Center						
Development Corporation						
Children & Family Services	1	1			2	
Crime Victims Board, NYS	3	1			4	
Criminal Justice Services	2	2			4	
Development Corporation Empire State	1				1	
Division of Human Rights, NYS	5	4	1		10	
Community Dispute Resolution Centers	6		8		14	1%
Corrections, Department of	12	2	7		21	2%
Education, NYS Department of					30	2%
*Office of Professional Discipline	5		8	13		
*Propriety Schools, NYS Bureau of	1			1		
*Other	11	4	15	30		
Environmental Conservation, Department of					6	
*Bottle Bill Law	1		1	2		
*Other	4			4		
Health, NYS Department of					109	8%
*Office of Professional Misconduct	7	2	3	12		
*Other	62	16	19	97		
Higher Education, Board of	1	4			5	
Housing & Community Renewal, Division of					310	24%
*Code	18	2	1	21		
*Discrimination	1	1		2		
*Harrassment	60	13	3	76		

State Agencies

AGENCY	Closed Favorable	Closed Unfavorable	Referred	Agency's Unit Total	TOTAL	% of Total
*Legal/Eviction	14	2	1	17		
Other Code Rent	37	13	10	60		
*Other	90	38	6	134		
Housing Court	15	8	4		27	2%
Insurance, Department of	34	11	6		51	4%
Labor, Department of	46	14	11		71	5%
Division of Labor Standards	7	1	4		12	
Legal Issues	144	46	94		284	21%
Licensing, NYS Division of	10	2	6		18	1%
Liquor Authority	6	2	2		10	
Lottery	3	2			5	
Mental Retardation & Development Disabilities, Office of	12				12	
Metropolitan Transit Authority	18	3	4		25	2%
Mental Health, NYS	5	4	1		10	
Motor Vehicles					62	5%
*Repair Shops	2			2		
*Other	41	15	4	60		
Office of Parks, Recreation						
Division of Parole		2			2	
Port Authority of New York & New Jersey	2		2		4	
Public Service Commission	16	2	1		19	2%
Secretary of State	1	1	1		3	
State Governor	3				3	
State Senate	1				1	
Social Services, Department of					5	
*Visually Handicapped, Commission	1			1		
*Other	4			4		
Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance	2				2	
Taxation, NYS Department of	9	2	4		15	1%
Transportation, Department of	3		2		5	
Workers Compensation	13	3			16	1%
Total	834	250			1,344	

*Agency with sub-units that handle specific issues.

Constituent Complaint Resolution



Record of Complaints Fiscal Year 2007

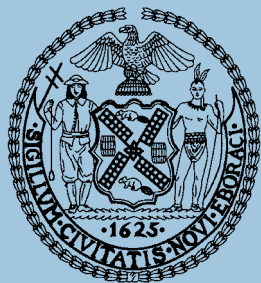
City Agencies

AGENCY	Closed Favorable	Closed Unfavorable	Referred	Agency's Unit Total	TOTAL	% of Total
Art Commission		1			1	
Department for the Aging					125	2%
*Home Energy Assistance Program	15	1	1	17		
*Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption	21	2		23		
*Other	73	7	5	85		
Board of Standards and Appeals	6	1	1		8	
Borough Presidents	3	2			5	
Buildings Department	183	52	19		254	3%
Center for Animal Care & Control	12	5	1		18	
Children Services Administration for					371	5%
*Agency for Child Development	51	6		57		
*Foster Care	189	66	37	292		
*Other	12	1	5	13		
City Council	13	4	5		22	
City Planning Commission	16	3	2		21	
City Clerk	13	1	3		17	
City Registry	4	2			6	
City University of New York	11	6	1		18	
Citywide Administrative Services, Department					37	
*Department of Personnel	5	3	1	9		
*Other	20	5	3	28		
Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)	16	6	5		27	
Civil Service Commission	3	2	3		8	
Community Boards	25	9	2		36	
Comptroller's Office	33	6	4		43	
Conflict of Interest Board	1	2	3		6	
County Clerk	3				3	
Department of Corrections	15	11	4		30	
Department of Consumer Affairs	102	34	41		177	2%
Department of Cultural Affairs						
*Museum City of New York	1		1		2	
Design and Construction, Department	1	3			4	
District Attorneys	21	3	13		37	
Division of Business Services	7	1	1		9	
Economic Development Corporation, NYC	3		2		5	
Department of Education	594	127	27		748	10%
Board of Election	22	2	3		27	
Department of Environmental Protection					406	5%
*Environmental Control Board	64	11	6	81		
*Water Meter	42	20	2	64		
*Air	23	9	1	33		
*Basin Cleaning	16	1	1	18		

City Agencies

AGENCY	Closed Favorable	Closed Unfavorable	Referred	Agency's Unit Total	TOTAL	% of Total
*DEP Construction	3	1	1	5		
*Hydrant	11	0		11		
*Noise	46	13	1	60		
*Sewer/Basin Repair	37	4	3	44		
*Water Leak	26	2		28		
*Other	42	19	1	62		
Finance, Department of					387	5%
*Parking Violation Bureau	160	54	5	219		
*other	141	23	4	168		
Fire Department					48	
*Emergency Medical Services	4	2		6		
*other	28	11	3	42		
Department of Health					227	3%
*Vital Records	58	18	2	78		
*Pest Control	31	5	5	41		
*Other	72	24	12	108		
Health & Hospitals Corporation	41	23	19		83	1%
Housing Development Corp	2	1			3	
Department of Housing Preservation & Development					545	5%
*Code	142	43	9	194		
*Landlord	4	4		8		
*Legal	3	3		6		
*Alternative Program	9	7		16		
*No Heat/Hot Water	82	22		104		
*Housing	20	11	1	32		
*Rent Housing Maintenance	12	10	1	23		
*Other	111	39	12	162		
NYC Housing Authority					1,137	11%
*Applications	178	46	3	227		
*Maintenance	196	44	24	264		
*Personnel	3			3		
*Tenant/Management Relations	81	32	1	114		
*Community Relations			8	8		
*Other	162	58	3	223		
Section 8	198	98	2	298		4%
Homeless Services	176	45	10		231	3%
Human Resources					1,220	15%
*Income Support	527	67	1	595		
*Division of AIDS Services	11	1	1	13		
*Medicaid	131	18	1	150		
*Food stamps	82	20		102		
*Child Support	89	10	1	100		
*CASA	48	16	2	66		

Constituent Complaint Resolution



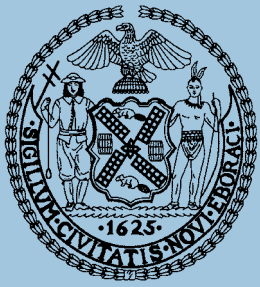
Record of Complaints Fiscal Year 2007

City Agencies						
AGENCY	Closed Favorable	Closed Unfavorable	Referred	Agency's Unit Total	TOTAL	% of Total
*Protective Services for Adults	67	15	2	84		
*Other	91	17	2	110		
Human Rights Commission, NYC	15	3	3		21	
Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dept.	18	8	11		37	
Investigation, Dept of	8	2	13		23	
Juvenile Justice Department	1	1			2	
Labor Relations, Office of	19	7	3		29	
Landmarks Preservation Commission	16	1	3		20	
Law Department, NYC		2	4		6	
NYC Libraries	10	4			14	
Lower Manhattan Development Corporation	5	1	1		7	
Marshal	17	6			23	
Mayor's Office	32	5	4		41	
Emergency Management	1				1	
Medical Examiner, Office of	7	0			7	
Mental Health, Retardation, and Alcoholism Services	5	2	3		10	
Metropolitan Transportation Authority					280	
*Triboro Bridge & Tunnel Authority	1			1		
*Transit Authority, New York City	58	3	4	65		2%
*Access-A-Ride	44	6	0	50		
*Other	142	21	1	164		
MISCELLANEOUS:	46	16	6		68	1%
Parks & Recreation, Department of					239	3%
*Forestry	55	3	3	61		
*Parks Maintenance	2	0	0	2		
*Recreation	8	1	2	11		
*Other	144	12	9	165		
Payroll Administration, Office of	15	0	2		17	
NYC Pension System					54	
*NYCERS	23	16	2	41		
*Fire Pension Fund	1			1		
*Board of Education		2		2		
*Police	2	2	1	5		
*Teachers	3	1	1	5		
* Transit	2	1	1	4		
Police Department					549	7%
*Housing Bureau						
*Police (Street)	417	97	32	546		
*Transit Bureau	2	1		3		
Probation, Department of		1			1	
Public Administrator	13	1	1		15	
Public Advocate=Report/Inquiries	423	20	9		452	

City Agencies

AGENCY	Closed Favorable	Closed Unfavorable	Referred	Agency's Unit Total	TOTAL	% of Total
Records and Information Services, Department of	2	0	2		4	
Rent Guidelines Board	6	1			7	
School Construction Authority	5	0			5	
Sanitation, Department of	91	16	5		112	1%
Sheriff's Department	4	1	1		6	
Taxi & Limousine Commission	24	18	3		45	
Department of Transportation					281	4%
*Traffic Enforcement	9			9		
*Other	215	41	16	272		
Trade Waste Commission	2				2	
Unions	6	10	1		17	
Utilities	250	60	11		321	
Youth & Community Development					7	
*CDA	7			7		
*Youth Services	0			0		
Voters Assistance	1				1	
Total	6941	1634	501		9076	

*Agency with sub-units that handle specific issues.



Managing Editors:

Anat Jacobson, Chief of Staff; John Collins, Press Secretary

Editor: Sarah Krauss, Deputy Press Secretary

Contributors: Mark Benoit, Deputy Chief of Staff; Liz Blaney, Director of Ombudsman Services; Mary Mastropaolo, General Counsel; Laurel Tumarkin, Director of Policy; Kristina Mazzocchi, Assistant Legal and Policy Analyst; Elba Feliciano, Director of Administration

Photography: Bill Lyons, Gia Storms

Office of the Public Advocate

1 Centre Street, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10007

General Inquiries: 212-669-7200
Ombudsman Services: 212-669-7250
Email: ombudsman@pubadvocate.nyc.gov

www.pubadvocate.nyc.gov

