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We helped stop congestion pricing, vow to find other solutions

Many people join the Queens Chamber of Commerce for different reasons. Some join for the networking opportunities where they can meet potential buyers and sellers of various goods and services. Some join to learn about important business topics at our conferences and seminars.



From The QCC President
Albert F. Pennisi

Some join to receive the exclusive benefits and savings available only to our members.

However, an often-ignored reason is the Queens Chamber of Commerce's vital legislative advocacy and government relations function. The defeat of congestion pricing is just the latest victory for small business in Queens, championed by the Chamber.

This month's cover story features the demise of Congestion Pricing and the role the Queens Chamber played in getting this unfair tax scheme defeated. The odds were against us and proponents spent millions of dollars in advertising, but the majority of members from the Queens delegations in the City Council, State Assembly and State Senate withstood the political pressure and helped kill this onerous bill. We will not forget those who stood up for our Queens businesses, and we truly thank them for their strength.

The Queens Chamber has been rallying against congestion pricing for well over two years. Our members attended press conferences and rallies. They wrote Op-Ed pieces and letters to all our legislators. They spoke at public events and at our meetings, reminding our membership just how costly passage of this ill conceived plan would be. I would like to thank all of those who worked so hard on this cause. I know our meetings with legislators on the city, state and federal level played an important role in this ultimate victory for the residents of Queens County. Our legislative advocacy and government relations committees were a recognized leader in this fight and our legislators sincerely listened to our concerns.

Defeating congestion pricing in no way diminishes the serious problem of congestion in and around Manhattan. Traffic costs businesses money and creates economic hardships. Our opposition was never about the need to relieve congestion, our opposition focused on how the administration chose to deal with the problem, and frankly, their solution was not only wrong, it wouldn't have worked. Now is the time to deal with real solutions. We urge those truly concerned to review some our recommendations and those of the Queens Civic Congress. Our solutions are viable and will actually work to reduce traffic, improve air quality and will not unfairly burden only outer borough businesses and residents.

The Queens Chamber of Commerce is not a political organization. We do not endorse or contribute to candidates. However, we do support those who support us and our pro-business agenda. Once again, we offer a hearty thank you to Speaker Sheldon Silver and the members of our legislative delegations who supported this tremendously important effort. The Queens Chamber will not soon forget your friendship and political courage.

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We look forward to continuing to highlight the outstanding business persons, services and activities that make our borough unique. We welcome your letters, manuscripts, etc. Please send materials to the Queens Chamber of Commerce at 75-20 Astoria Boulevard, Suite 140, Jackson Heights, NY 11370 or call (718) 898-8500 for more information. We reserve the right to edit for space limitations.

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