

in case you missed it . . . NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
THIS WEEK IN THE NEWS

Week of November 17, 2008

this week at the council**Rebate Checks Will Be Sent Out**

A day after saying the city could not afford to send out [\\$400 rebate checks](#) to homeowners, Mayor Michael Bloomberg struck a far softer tone on Thursday, saying he would cooperate with the City Council, which has been urging him to release the checks. On Monday, after the City Council spoke with the Mayor's side about the checks, administration officials admitted that the Mayor did not have the legal authority to withhold the checks because they were part of the budget for this fiscal year, approved by the Council and signed by the mayor.

First Hearing on Clinic Access Bill Held at City Hall

On Tuesday, the City Council considered a bill sponsored by Speaker Christine Quinn that would make it easier for [city clinics to crack down on protesters](#) who harass patients and block their paths. "They're violating your personal space. They're screaming at you. They're yelling the word 'murderer' in your face and making it difficult for you to enter the clinic or the building where the clinic is," said Quinn. Access to clinics has been an issue for years. Clinics say anti-abortion protesters routinely intimidate patients. Currently, it's nearly impossible in New York City to arrest a protester without the cooperation of the woman entering the facility. The new bill would give more weight to complaints of clinic employees or other witnesses.

Council Votes to Allow Drivers to Park at Broken Meters

Wednesday, The City Council voted in favor of allowing drivers to park at [broken meters](#) for the entire time normally allowed in the parking zone. The old law limited the time to one hour. City Council Speaker Christine Quinn says New Yorkers cannot afford to pay for unfair parking tickets due to confusing rules.

More City Greenmarkets Accepting Food Stamps

New Yorkers are now able to buy fresh produce thanks to an electronic system scanning [food stamps at greenmarkets](#). A shift from paper coupons to paperless cards in 2000 made many farmers' markets unable to accept food stamps. But in 2006, scanners were added to four greenmarkets in the city. Because of the successful turnout, the City Council has increased the number of farmer's markets accepting food stamps. "We're not only helping low-income New Yorkers eat healthy, we're also pumping money back into local area farmers," said Council Speaker Christine Quinn.

Speaker Quinn Encourages Women in Top Politic Positions

Hillary Rodham Clinton, a first lady turned senator turned almost-president, is now transforming herself again, this time into the nation's top diplomat. But she is also back to a role she cannot seem to shake: a canvas for [women's highest hopes](#) and deepest fears about the workplace. "If she mishandles a negotiation between two disputing nations, she can't blame that on somebody else," said Christine C. Quinn, "She will be the one on the line, just as she is as a senator."


 THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
 CHRISTINE C. QUINN, SPEAKER