

FROM THE POINT

Senate Dems need LI guides

After Thursday's massacre of moderate New York City Democrats who caucused with Republicans to help give them a State Senate majority, the chamber will tilt more to the left next year. With the Independent Democratic Conference obliterated, Senate Democrats only have to pick up one Republican seat to take control of the chamber — and it's increasingly likely that person could come from Long Island.

Long Island Democrats are trying to figure out how a State Senate filled with younger, progressive members (it's unlikely any city candidates will lose in the fall) — all of whom made big promises to their constituents — will shake up the dynamics.

They say that if Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Democratic leader, wants to take the gavel and keep it for a long time, she must understand the needs of Nassau and Suffolk. As a representative from Westchester, she knows suburban needs don't always align with city ones.

So she is getting together with many Democrats. On Friday morning, she met with local union leaders representing the construction trades, guided by Sen. John Brooks (D-Seaforth), and Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach) will take her to an ABLI event on Thursday. And on Sept. 24, she will dine with Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, Hempstead Town Supervisor Laura Gillen and other elected officials at the home of county party chair Jay Jacobs. "I want everyone to know Andrea and start a working relationship," Jacobs told The Point.

"We need to talk about our tax assessment problems, NIFA and 100 other things," Kaminsky told The Point.

And in case Stewart-Cousins didn't know what the important issues are for Long Island, the Senate Republican campaign committee will be sure to remind her, every day, until Nov. 6.

— Rita Ciolli

Pedestrians, cyclists should obey the law

I constantly see pedestrians walking with traffic right alongside or across from perfectly serviceable sidewalks. I also see bicyclists riding on roads while facing traffic, even in bike lanes with arrows showing the proper direction, though they are required to move with traffic. I also see them unnecessarily driving on sidewalks.

Our state's laws require pedestrians to use sidewalks when they are available and make it illegal in those places to walk in the road. And when there is no sidewalk, pedestrians walking along and on a highway shall, when practical, walk only on the left side of the road or its shoulder facing traffic.

Lenny G. Ancona,
Centereach

Clean up after block parties and yard sales

Earlier this summer, I was stopped midway down my block by yellow caution tape strung across the width of my street. Some neighbors had decided to have yet another block party. The detour was a small price to pay, I thought, for community harmony.

But the next day, the tape was cut from one pole, and yards and yards of it were blowing in the wind, littering the street, interfer-

JUST SAYIN'



Cyclists properly ride on the right side of the road while passing a solar farm on Edwards Avenue in Calverton in 2015.

STEVE PFOST

ing with traffic and getting tangled in the tires of vehicles.

So people had time to bring out tables and chairs, set up tents and kiddie pools and riding toys, prepare food, and then break everything down, but not one person had a moment to snip the tape off the pole and throw it away?

This is what I call the yard-sale syndrome. Months and even years after a yard sale ends, the flyers and posters and signs and ads are still flapping in the breeze from poles and trees, defacing our communities.

Is it any wonder that "the rules don't apply to me" attitude is so pervasive? How will our children learn to pick up after themselves and take responsibility for their ac-

tions if they have no example set for them?

If you take it out, put it back. If you tack it up, take it down. That is common courtesy. People whose yard sale signs are up 24 hours after the event should be cited. And how easy that would be? The addresses are all over the signs.

Penny Reich,
Wantagh

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OPINION

What everyone gets wrong about single moms

BY NANCY KAFFER

Want to explain why and how America is going off the rails? No data point is a neater shorthand for social breakdown, the death of the traditional family and bad outcomes for American children than the growing number of single moms.

It's a familiar complaint that got a particularly nasty turn from the Rev. Jasper Williams. In his eulogy for the late Aretha Franklin, the clergyman condemned single mothers like Franklin in harsh terms, calling single-parent households "abortion after birth." (Williams seems to have a particular

gripe against single mothers of sons, who he says simply can't raise boys to become men.)

But the numbers most often used to show that more mothers are raising kids alone — bereft of fathers and the stability of a two-parent home — don't actually show that.

While most American kids continue to live in two-parent homes, the number of single-parent households — the statistic cited most often to quantify the rise of single motherhood — has nearly tripled since 1960, U.S. Census data show. (There are single dads, of course, but they're vastly outnumbered by single moms, and I've yet to see them blamed for social collapse.)

The single-parent households numbered by the census are just that: Homes in which a presently unmarried parent lives with a biological or adopted child of whom that person holds primary custody.

None of which means the other parent is, necessarily, absent. To use those metrics as a stand-in for parental abandonment is to read conclusions into the data that aren't there.

Divorced parents who share custody, both present in a child's life? That's a single-parent household, per the Census.

A deadbeat dad who never sees his kids? Also a single-parent household.

An unmarried couple in a

long-term relationship, living with their biological children? A single-parent household.

"Also not captured in some of this data are parents who are remarried to a step-parent. We're not completely capturing a child's upbringing and experience by looking at a single data point," says Alicia Guevara-Warren, Kids Count in Michigan Project Director.

That's why it's important to obtain qualitative data, she says — details about people's lived experience. "People are messy. We often don't fit into boxes. That's why is important to have that qualitative piece."

That's not a problem with the Census; its purpose is to quan-

tify.

While the vast majority of such children living in single-parent households (three out of four) don't live in poverty, more than 25 percent of children who live with a single parent do — a much higher rate than the children of married parents.

And that's the problem that misconceptions about single moms fuels: attacking single moms, or single parents of any gender, looks past the real problems parents face — and that means solutions to those problems will continue to elude us.

Nancy Kaffer is a *Detroit Free Press* columnist.