



# Queens Civic Congress

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## **Queens Civic Congress to Council: Can the toll tax; support smart revenues**

Testimony to City Council Committees on Transportation and Finance

Presented by Queens Civic Congress Vice President and Transportation co-chair Kathy Masi (Glendale Civic)  
City Hall, December 16, 2008

Queens Civic Congress, an umbrella organization of more than 100 neighborhood based civic organizations representing property owners, including those owning coops and condos, and tenants who reside in every part of Queens County, thanks the City Council and Chairmen John Liu and David Weprin for the opportunity to express the clear concern the Commission on MTA Financing seeks to use the crisis to introduce the toll tax on all free East and Harlem Rivers bridges – the child of the unfair, inequitable and inefficient congestion tax – into the discussion once again on how to make the MTA whole when it comes to resourcing the transit agency. Less than ten months ago at our forum featuring MTA CEO Eliot Sander Queens Civic Congress released a signature proposal to ensure adequate MTA funding. That simple proposal, unlike any of the toll tax/ congestion tax schemes, including this latest Ravitch toll/tax variant, involves almost no overhead and no new infrastructure.

Frankly, it takes an awful lot of chutzpah to include as a revenue measure anything that eats up two dollars of every five collected to its administration. The last dumb measure to do that, thoughtfully reduced to the scrap heap by your colleagues in the State Assembly, we and many others dubbed the congestion tax. In fact, at the Assembly hearing, Mr. Ravitch sought to recycle the same false and discredited claims congestion taxers tried to foist on New Yorkers.

As Queens Civic Congress several times this year and last, the best revenue plan – advanced by Queens Civic Congress – involves no *new* tax scheme. It reforms an old measure that would net nearly \$1.8 billion annually. Unlike any other proposal, this QCC revenue reform would raise hundreds of millions of dollars for the entire MTA systems that primarily serve non-city residents. The Queens Civic Congress sees nothing wrong with making out-of-staters and other non-city residents step up to the plate.” The analysis of last year’s commission indicates this solid (revenue) recommendation – involving true revenue sharing with the suburban counties – covered by the MTA, nets \$1,774,000,000. This plan involves a simple doubling of the then miniscule rates dating back to 1971, 0.45% of wages and salaries and 0.65% of self-employment income

As the Queens Civic Congress proposed, let the suburbs keep what their residents pay; the city can do rather well collecting its share from Connecticut, New Jersey and other out-of-staters. This should generate upwards of one billion for NYC projects and the revenue-sharing approach should enable the coalition needed to pass it in Albany. In past years, such organization’s as the Regional Plan Association supported this approach. We also understand the NYC Partnership just four years ago described this proposal as the preferred measure to resource mass transit (New York Times, December 4, 2004). At last week’s Assembly hearing, Mr. Ravitch also noted that he penned an op-ed that shared this view.

To every thing there is a season and certainly this season seems just the time for this Queens Civic Congress revenue reform to support transit.

The coalition Queens Civic Congress joined to oppose the congestion tax and which opposes its child, the toll tax, includes the non-resident income tax reform at the top of its [set](#) of recommendations.

Queens Civic Congress urges all of our elected officials including the Governor, the Mayor and our state and city legislators, to embrace this sound proposal. No Tolls!!

Thank you for your consideration.

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*Queens Civic Congress [Members](#) may be found below and on the web at:  
<http://queensciviccongress.org/organization/members.php>*

### **Queens Civic Congress Members**

*Association of Old Forest Hills ♦ Auburndale Improvement Association ♦ Bayside Civic Database ♦ Bayside Clear-Spring Council ♦ Bayside Hills Civic Association ♦ Bayswater Civic Association ♦ Bay Terrace Community Alliance, Inc. ♦ Bellaire-BellVill Civic Association ♦ Belle Harbor Property Owners Association ♦ Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association ♦ Bellerose Hillside Civic Association ♦ Bell Park Manor Terrace Community Council ♦ Bowne Park Civic Association ♦ Briarwood Community Association ♦ Cambria Heights Civic Association ♦ Civic Association of Utopia Estates ♦ C.O.M.E.T. (Communities of Maspeth-Elmhurst Together) ♦ Concerned Citizens of Laurelton ♦ Cornucopia Society ♦ Creedmoor Civic Association ♦ Deerfield Area Association ♦ Doug-Bay Manor Civic Association ♦ Douglas Manor Association ♦ Douglaston Civic Association ♦ Dutch Kills Civic Assn. of Long Island City ♦ East Elmhurst Civic Association ♦ East Flushing Civic Association ♦ Federated Block Associations of Laurelton ♦ Federation of Civic Associations of Southeast Queens ♦ Floral Park Community Council ♦ Flushing Heights Civic Association ♦ Flushing on the Hill Taxpayers Association ♦ Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce ♦ Forest Hills Crescents Association ♦ Forest Hills-Van Court Association ♦ Fresh Meadows Homeowners Association ♦ Georgetown Mews ♦ Glendale Civic Association of Queens ♦ Glen Oaks Village Owners, Inc. ♦ Greater Astoria Historical Society ♦ Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Association ♦ Harding Heights Civic Association ♦ Hillcrest Estates Civic Association ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #1 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #2 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #3 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #4 ♦ Hollis 11423 Block Association ♦ Hollis Hills Civic Association ♦ Holliswood Civic Association ♦ Hollis Park Gardens Civic Association ♦ Holly Civic Association ♦ Hyde Park Gardens Cooperative ♦ Jackson Heights Beautification Group ♦ Jamaica Estates Association ♦ Jamaica Hill Community Association ♦ Juniper Park Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Hills Homeowners Association ♦ Kew Gardens Improvement Association ♦ Kissena Park Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Bay Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Pines ♦ Long Island City Alliance ♦ Malba Civic Association ♦ Meadowlark Gardens Owners ♦ Middle Village Property Owners Association ♦ Mitchell Linden Civic Association ♦ Neponsit Property Owners Association ♦ Newtown Civic Association ♦ North Bellerose Civic Association ♦ North Flushing Civic Association ♦ North Hills Estates Civic Association ♦ Northwest Clearview Homeowners Association ♦ Norwood Civic Association ♦ Oakland Terrace/ Gardens Community Council ♦ Off Broadway Homeowners Association ♦ Our Neighborhood Improvement Association ♦ Our Neighbors Association of Ozone Park, Inc. ♦ Parkway Village Historical Society ♦ Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association ♦ Queens Colony Civic Association ♦ Queens Community Civic Corp. ♦ Queens Preservation Council ♦ Queens Village Civic Association ♦ Ramblersville-Hawtree Civic Association ♦ Richmond Hill Historical Society ♦ Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association ♦ Rockaway Park Homeowners/ Residents ♦ Rocky Hill Civic Association ♦ Rosedale Civic Association ♦ Royal Ranch Association. ♦ Southeast Queens Concerned Neighbors ♦ South Ozone Park West Civic Association ♦ Springfield/Rosedale Community Action Association ♦ Station Road Civic Assoc. of Auburndale ♦ Sunnyside Gardens/Harrison Place Homeowners ♦ Surrey Estates Civic Association ♦ Union Turnpike Merchants Association ♦ United Forties Civic Association ♦ United Neighbors Civic Association ♦ Waldheim Neighborhood Association ♦ Wayanda Civic Association ♦ West Cunningham Park Civic Association ♦ Westmoreland Association ♦ Woodside Community Council*