

CHRISTINE QUINN TO THE DISABLED: BANKRUPTCY & WELFARE!

An Open Letter to Speaker Christine Quinn • July 2009

Dear Speaker Quinn,

Remember me? I tried for more than three years to get you to respond to my e-mails, letters and phone calls? You *finally* responded — but only after I became a paparazzo and happened to be at a red carpet event that you attended (see photo). You *finally* acknowledged me after I asked you a question following your strut on the red carpet. Does this ring any bells?

In case you do not recall our meeting and brief conversation, my partner Vince is a Gay retired, disabled NYC manager. He's less than ten years older than you but he has retinitis pigmentosa, some chronic health issues and has had open heart surgery.

Back in January 2006 Michael Bloomberg stripped full prescription drug benefits from retired, disabled non-union NYC employees. Vince now spends one third of his New York City pension to pay for life-saving medications. As soon as Vince and I learned of your buddy's actions against the disabled, we embarked on our quest for help.

Attempt one: contact Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum's office. She and her staff were useless. Vince and I are still not sure what a public advocate's office does — they certainly don't help Gay, retired, disabled New York City managers. Do you think cutting the public advocate's office out of the City's budget would free up some money to restore prescription drug benefits to the disabled?

Attempt two: contact the mayor's office. His staff sent us a patronizing e-mail educating us about Vince's new "enhanced" prescription drug benefits. I guess "enhanced" means "stick it to the disabled!"?

Attempt three: contact you. You added us to your e-mail blast list to let us know the fabulous things you are doing for New York City. How thoughtful.

Attempt four: contact Vince's former union, D.C. 37, local 375. The union said that they would gladly consider reinstating Vince and provide him with union coverage, which would take care of his meds. Bloomberg said "absolutely not."

Attempt five: try to get Hizzonah's attention by attending one of the "public hearings" about your and Bloomberg's power-grab for a third term in office. I shared my experiences and explained to the mayor how his ignoring the voice of the working people of New York City — and his vendetta against the disabled — did not warrant his seeking a third term.

As I spoke to Bloomberg, he scowled and sneered. I could have sworn that he spit out of the corner of his mouth. Perhaps my imagination got the best of me but we both know Bloomberg's track record with the disabled. Wink, wink.

Attempt six: become a freelance paparazzo at red carpet events. I finally got your attention. Success!

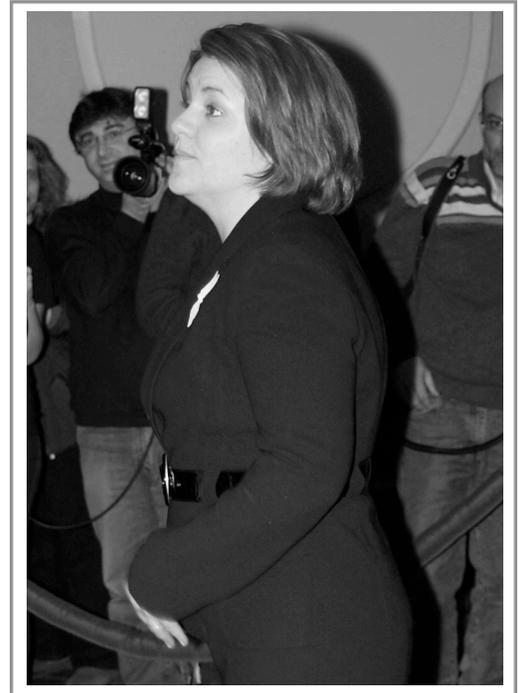
When we spoke during those brief few moments, I believed you were sincere. I thought that your public display of concern about my partner's health and well-being was real. Now, six months later, I am convinced that your concern was more about our conversation being overheard by the local television news media covering the event.

Since we met you have done *nothing* to help Vince. Oh, wait a minute. Silly me. I am forgetting that you *did* offer the assistance of one of your staff members. Vince pleaded with him to get you to get directly involved in this very complex matter. Apparently you had bigger red carpets to strut on.

He did, however, offer us some information:

- The mayor's office is adamant that retired, disabled non-union New York City employees deplete their savings to pay for life-saving medications.
- Your best advice (please forgive my paraphrasing) is for Vince to sell his heavily-mortgaged home, lose his meager savings, file for bankruptcy and apply for welfare programs.

My birthday, July 25 (the same day as your birthday, I believe), is fast approaching. My biggest birthday wish is that you make the effort to pick up your phone and take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to help.



Speaker Christine Quinn, "friend" of the LGBT community, struts her stuff on the red carpet.

Your meager action would show me that maybe you are indeed concerned about the LGBT community and your action would also make me very happy.

Your paparazzo pal,

Bob Johnson
New York City
Contact: www.bittenbyzebra.com

P.S. I would certainly help Vince financially but, in June 2008, I was fired from my last full-time job. I have filed a lawsuit against my former employer, Lebanese American University, that alleges that I was fired due to my sexual orientation (which has nothing to do with your lack of interest in helping Gay, retired, disabled New York City managers). I'm living unemployment check to unemployment check. If you know of any jobs out there that might be a good match for me, your help would certainly be a pretty cool second-biggest birthday wish.