

Keep NYC Free notes the opposition of Flushing Assembly Member Grace Meng to the congestion and toll taxes (See end of this page). Coalition member the Queens Chamber of Commerce organized the program.

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## Meeting focuses on tax concerns

BY JESSE LEON

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Stressing downtown Flushing's importance in fostering small business, Assemblymember Grace Meng addressed a symposium at New York Hospital Queens (NYHQ).

Over 20 owners and employees attended the Small Business Update Symposium on Friday, November 13, organized by the Queens Chamber of Commerce.

"We like to have elected officials come out and host different meetings, whether they're on small business or identity theft or whatever interests people, and meet their clientele," said Bill Martin, co-chair of the chamber's communications and public affairs committee.

Meng expressed her interest in small business, which comprises the largest source of non-farm jobs in New York State.

"As someone who grew up as the daughter of a small business owner and as someone who represents hundreds of small business owners, it's something that's very near and dear to my heart," Meng said.

She updated the crowd on recent and upcoming legislative efforts on behalf of small businesses, and stressed Flushing's central role as a haven.

"Flushing is often underappreciated," Meng said. "But as a transportation hub, with thousands of people passing through every day, Flushing needs to be paid more attention to and we need to create solutions for people and businesses here."

Attendees pressed Meng on taxes that small business owners face. Chamber member Joshua Bienstock expressed concern over new discussions about congestion pricing, a measure that would create tolls at all East River crossings.

**"Early on, Queens elected officials were against congestion pricing because we heard from local businesses about how much it would cost them," Meng said. "I am committed to working against that."**

“Small business owners have expenses and are trying to survive and achieve their American Dream, and local residents don’t always like the way small businesses are being run,” Meng said.

“A lot of what we do is training local workers and work with local businesses,” said Jerri Lynn Fields, program manager at the office of continuing education at Queensboro Community College. “This is the perfect place for people like me to come and figure out who I’m going to be working with.”