



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Diane J. Savino

## April Leong

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*Women of*  
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HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*April Leong*

April Leong was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, and began her career in District 79 as an English teacher and family group advisor. As a young mother raised in poverty, Ms. Leong was determined not only to create a better life for her children, but also believed that what was good for her boys was good for everyone else's children. While at High School Redirection, she was responsible for creating many innovative programs in youth development and community service, and she did so with unmatched enthusiasm and vigor.

Ms. Leong was an integral member of the team that brought the nationally recognized Alternative H.S. Initiative, Diploma Plus, to New York City. As Assistant Principal, she successfully transformed two underperforming suspension sites and received awards of recognition for outstanding leadership from her staff, the principal and the superintendent. She was recognized with the Allan Houston My Teacher is My Hero Award, in recognition of her dedication to her students.

Ms. Leong continued with her mission, conceiving, developing and opening her own alternative high school; she is the founding principal of Liberation Diploma Plus High School. Here, she continues her work as a strong student advocate, educator, family and community supporter, and fearless leader. Due to her selfless acts to fight to keep her building open and help her community recover from Hurricane Sandy, she received the Daily News Hometown Hero Award in 2013. She is also the recipient of the Sloan Public Service Award of 2014.

Ms. Leong credits her success as an educator, leader and mother to key people at Baruch College and Greg "Jocko" Jackson (Brownsville Community Leader). She entered college as a teenage mother who would be the first college graduate in her family, and the support she received there was essential for her survival and success.