



Old Astoria Neighborhood Association (OANA)  
www.OANA-NY.org

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OANA greatly supports the policy initiated the Queens District Attorney, Melinda Katz, providing a tool to protect small business against the lawlessness that may prove to be as great an impediment to their survival as the Pandemic itself.

We have seen both major and small retailers close their stores as they cannot conduct business in a safe, secure, profitable way. Theft especially has even forced basic items such as toiletries behind locked shelf windows, to be unlocked every time there is a transaction. This is not a recipe for the health of our retail sector.

[Press release](#); “Through the program, a participating business contacts the local precinct when such an individual is disrupting business. The responding officers can issue a trespass notice and warn the individual that their continued presence, or return to the location”.

This tool has proven to be effective in Jamaica, and we look forward to similar results in Astoria.

We also advocate for the further changes in our criminal enforcement.

Locally, In Old Astoria, local business Astoria Express Transit has suffered from the lack of respect for our laws. This 40-year business has had its very existence threatened by vandalism: Equipment badly damaged by teens, who have not faced any repercussions from their actions. Check out the [Astoria Transit Express's story](#) at the May 24th OANA Meeting.

The biggest issue we feel is the lack of consequences to individuals committing crime, especially non-violent property, and theft. This is especially troubling with our young people. Life long-attitudes and morality is established at an early age and are carried throughout life. Because of this, without proper guidance and training, today’s shoplifter’s path could lead to more severe criminal activities, leading to a life in and out of incarceration.

By instilling ethics, morality, and the difference between right and wrong, we can inoculate our society against many of the ills we now deal with. While morality should be established by family, too often a family structure does not exist, and it falls on society to deal with this.

What consequences should society create? We are firmly against incarceration in a jail such as Ryker’s Island except in extreme cases. This only furthers an individual immersion in a criminal lifestyle.



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Tools such as job training, mentoring programs, development of language and writing skills, family engagement, health services, and other positive reinforcements that can make real change should be increased if already existing, created if not, and utilized.

We cannot continue down the path leading to lack of respect for the rule of law and society in general...

And remember, repeating the same actions and expecting better results is foolhardy. We need to take positive action!