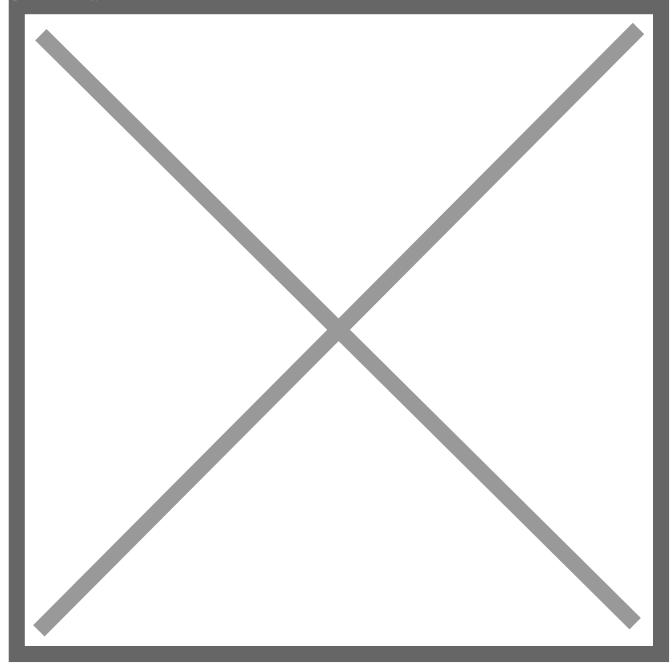# Senator Avella Holds Rally With Elmhurst United To Oppose "Warehousing Homeless" At Pan Am Shelter

ANDREI D. VASILESCU   October 11, 2015

| ISSUE: **HOMELESS**, **HUMAN RIGHTS**, **SHELTERS**, **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**, **SOCIAL SERVICES**

(QUEENS, NY) Today State Senator Tony Avella held a rally with Elmhurst United to oppose the conditions of the temporary homeless shelter in the building formerly known as the Pan Am hotel. The facility's inability to provide basic shelter necessities, and the array of violations have prompted sharp criticism and controversy.

In July of this year, New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer rejected the proposal to convert the former hotel into a permanent shelter for its third time. Stringer argued that the shelter had not yet rectified its violations, addressed the numerous complaints, nor demonstrated that the facility is a safe and proper site capable of being granted permanent status. Despite these blatant issues, Samaritan Village, an independent organization that runs the temporary shelter, has once again submitted a proposal to make the Pan Am shelter permanent.

The re-submission prompted Senator Avella and Elmhurst United to hold a rally outside of the site, asking the administration to no longer consider Samaritan Village's applications and to discontinue utility of the building as a shelter. Instead of "warehousing" the homeless, Avella argued, the City needs to provide appropriate shelters for those in need.

"The Pan Am shelter illustrates a fundamental problem in the City's services to homeless New Yorkers. When it comes to site selection, rather than proactively finding suitable buildings capable of housing the homeless population, it settles for the first warehouse that presents itself. This site also exemplifies the City's unwillingness to consult with the people in the community to come to a solution. The people in this system deserve better, they deserve kitchens, they deserve to be treated with dignity," **commented State Senator Tony Avella.**