



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## OpEd: The Voices of my Constituents by Senator Shelley Mayer

SEN. SHELLEY MAYER September 27, 2018

| ISSUE: **GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION, HEALTH INSURANCE, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

# The Voices of my Constituents



**SHELLEY MAYER**  
State Senator

Shortly after I was sworn-in as your new State Senator for the 37<sup>th</sup> Senate District, I sent a districtwide newsletter to residents introducing myself and outlining some of my priorities. In the newsletter, I included a section **asking residents to identify the top three issues they would like me to prioritize as their new State Senator**. Over 125 residents mailed back the completed survey to my District Office. For those who did not get a chance to complete the survey, I made it available on my **Senate website**. I also made it available on my social media platforms and my e-newsletter. In total, over 200 constituents took the time to make their

voices heard. Their responses – and their priorities – are instructive. They continue to shape my views and guide my actions.

The top 5 issues selected by constituents are:

1. Gun Violence Prevention (95)
2. Affordable and Accessible Health Insurance (83)
3. Environmental Protection (82)
4. Holding the Line on Property Taxes (73)
5. Delivering for Public Schools (54)

Each of these signifies the need for real reform – which we in the Legislature can and must achieve in the coming Legislative Session.

On gun violence prevention, we must enact Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), strongly supported by our District Attorney Anthony Scarpino and thousands of other leaders, which will reduce the ability of individuals who are a danger to themselves or others from possessing a firearm. In addition, I am a co-sponsor of a bill to prohibit teachers and other staff from carrying guns on school grounds unless they are a law enforcement officer, school resource officer, or security guard.

Second, it is clear that accessing and maintaining quality and affordable health care are incredible challenges throughout the district, state and our nation. Frustration with our health care system is ever present and I believe, it has grown as the federal government's commitment has wavered, but there must be substantial commitment in NYS to expanding access, ensuring affordability and reducing barriers.

We also have a lot of work to do to protect our environment, and address and mitigate the effects of climate change. We have made progress, but there is much more work to do in Albany, including passing the Climate and Community Protection Act, which will help reduce emissions and increase resilience.

I am also working with my legislative colleagues to identify new ways to alleviate our property tax burden, without undermining the services residents appreciate in their communities. Many of our municipalities are grappling with the SALT workarounds we proposed last year to address the Trump tax bill, and I'm hopeful we can make these tools effective ways to reduce property tax burdens. At the same time we must increase state funding for our local schools, which will ease the burden on local property taxpayers and help ensure our school districts can deliver the education our children need and deserve.

Government works best when voters make their voices heard, not just on Election Day, but throughout the year. Our obligation as elected officials is to do our best to listen- and then to act. Disagreements are inevitable, but our democracy requires a thoughtful, civil and practical approach to solving problems. I will work with my colleagues, on whatever side of the aisle, to do just that.

**Shelley B. Mayer**

**State Senator**

**37<sup>th</sup> District**

The 37<sup>th</sup> State Senate District includes the Villages of Bronxville, Larchmont, Harrison, Mamaroneck, Port Chester, Rye Brook, and Tuckahoe; the Towns of Bedford, Eastchester, Harrison, North Castle, Mamaroneck, and Rye; and the Cities of Yonkers, White Plains, New Rochelle, and Rye; and the unincorporated places of Katonah, Bedford Hills, and Armonk.