



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

Scam Prevention, Housing Protections Discussed in Senator Metzger's COVID-19 Community Conversations

JEN METZGER May 20, 2020

| ISSUE: **COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS, SCAM PREVENTION, HOUSING PROTECTIONS**

Hudson Valley and Catskills, NY...State Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42) welcomed two attorneys from Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV) **last evening** to inform the public of scams amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and discuss housing protections as many New Yorkers deal with job loss and economic insecurity. Scammers are common during emergencies, and as many people are isolating at home during this public health crisis, Senator Metzger's latest **Community Conversations** episode set out to spread awareness about bad actors trying to take advantage of area residents over the phone and online, alleging they represent utility companies or debt collectors.

Providing examples of a variety of scams as well as tips to avoid them, LSHV's Jenny Turpin underscored that unless people can verify that unsolicited calls and communications are from a legitimate source, they should not engage or share any personal information with potential culprits. Turpin works primarily with senior-citizen clients and indicated that phone-call and text scams, as well as email and online phishing, are on the rise.

"Unfortunately, scams have become much more prevalent during this pandemic as unscrupulous actors take advantage of people's economic insecurity and isolation at home," **said Senator Metzger.**

“Seniors, who are particularly vulnerable, are being preyed upon, and I am grateful to Legal Services of the Hudson Valley for helping us make more people aware of these deceptive practices.”

In recent weeks, the Small Business Administration (SBA) reported that scammers targeting small business owners were on the rise, specifically with respect to the SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (EIDL). At the end of April, State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli **announced** a joint effort with the Orange and Ulster County District Attorneys to protect the public from internet scams.

Also in **Tuesday's conversion**, LSHV's Senior Attorney Jaime Samarel shared legal information regarding renter and homeowner rights, and how individuals can navigate tumultuous interactions with landlords and lenders during the pandemic. Samarel clarified stipulations of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Orders pertaining to renters regarding non-payment proceedings and late-fee forgiveness.

Rachel Simons, the Attorney-in-Charge of Legal Service's Newburgh and Monticello offices said, “At Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, we help low income individuals and families with free civil (non-criminal) legal counsel to protect their basic necessities of life, including shelter, freedom from physical abuse, medical care and access to legal protections and supports that are guaranteed by law, but not always provided. LSHV has 10 physical offices within Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan and Ulster counties. We are experienced attorneys, volunteers and advocates passionate about our credo – Protecting Rights, Promoting Justice.”

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Senator Metzger's [Community Conversations](#) series streams live on Thursdays at 5:00 PM on [her Facebook page](#), and [previous episodes](#) all feature local experts addressing COVID-19 topics important to Hudson Valley and Catskill communities. May 21's topic is [The Food Supply Chain and NY Agriculture](#), and additional topical episodes in the series will be announced as New York State continues to grapple with the novel coronavirus global pandemic.

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