



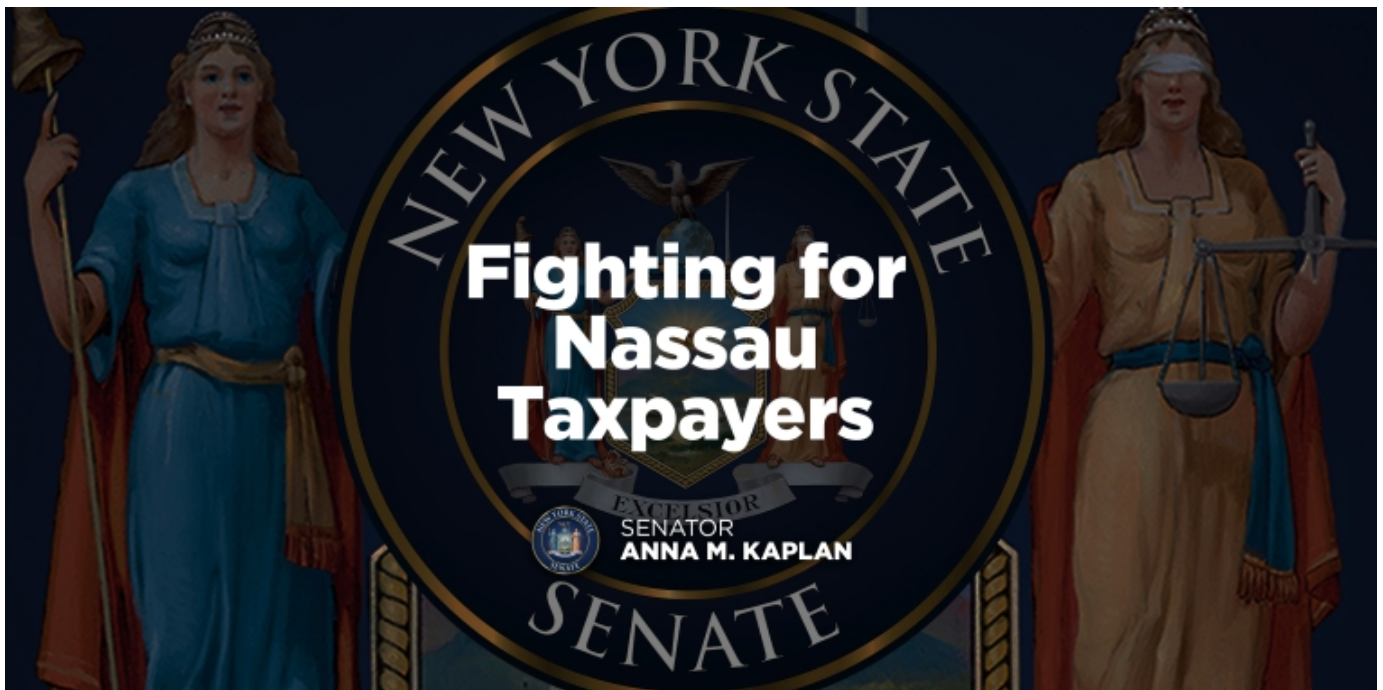
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anna M. Kaplan

## State Lawmakers Call on Bruce Blakeman to Reverse Course on Defunding Pandemic Relief Program for Nassau Taxpayers

SENATOR ANNA M. KAPLAN May 12, 2022

| ISSUE: [NASSAU COUNTY](#), [COVID RELIEF](#), [COVID-19 RELIEF](#)



*In a letter sent to County Executive Bruce Blakeman, Senators and Assemblymembers say it's "unconscionable" that he would "take money out of the pockets of taxpayers" at a time when the cost of household goods is rising*

*Under the program, qualifying Nassau households are eligible to receive \$375 stimulus checks. Over 300,000 Nassau families are currently eligible but have yet to sign up due to lack of promotion by the County.*

**NASSAU COUNTY, NY - (May 11, 2022):** Today, in response to Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman's unilateral decision to defund and eliminate the Household Assistance Program (HAP), which was created to give Nassau County taxpayers relief as we recover from the pandemic era, State Lawmakers from Nassau County sent a letter to the County Executive urging that he reverse course and fix the program to help Nassau families.

"At a time when the cost of gas and so many common household goods has risen, Nassau families need relief more than ever. It's unconscionable that at a time like this you would choose to take money out of the pockets of taxpayers without even having a plan for how you will spend the money instead," reads the letter, which is signed by **Senator Anna M. Kaplan, Senator Jim Gaughran, Senator Kevin Thomas, Senator John Brooks, Assemblymember Michaelle Solages, Assemblymember Chuck Lavine, Assemblywoman Judy Griffin, and Assemblywoman Gina Sillitti.**

As Newsday has reported, Blakeman announced that he would end the program on May 15th due to "low participation" in the program, noting that approximately 70,000 payments have been sent out while approximately 400,000 Nassau families were eligible. Despite the apparent urgency on behalf of the County Executive to take this action and defund the program, he has yet to inform the public of what he intends on doing with this significant sum of taxpayer funds.

"As the County Executive, the buck stops with you when a program is failing, and any low participation in this program is a direct result of your failure to properly promote and administer it. There are still over 300,000 eligible households who need this relief, and it's your job to get it in their hands as quickly as possible," the letter continues.

Under the program, Nassau households with a combined income of up to \$76,050 are eligible to apply for \$375 relief payments, an amount that Blakeman called "peanuts" in a campaign ad attacking the former County Executive for creating the program. Since taking office in January, there has been little effort on behalf of the County to advertise the program and ensure that all eligible households were aware of its existence.

"With so many families still struggling, the County must keep this vital program going, and do its job to get the word out to eligible families. Anything less would be a dereliction of duty to the people we represent," the letter concludes.

[Click here to read the full letter.](#)