



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Toby Ann Stavisky

Queens Senators Successfully Negotiate Hochul's Zoning Takeover Out of the 2023-24 NYS Budget

TOBY ANN STAVISKY May 3, 2023

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ALBANY- This week, after months of negotiations, New York State lawmakers passed the State budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year. This legislative session, negotiations were particularly arduous with the Legislature taking a hard stand against a number of Governor Kathy Hochul's budget proposals. Among those was a controversial statewide Housing Compact that would have had a significantly negative impact on the Queens community.

The housing proposal would have made sweeping changes to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs). An ADU is an additional unit, whether in a basement, attic or backyard, built by a homeowner. The proposal would have allowed homeowners to build these units while ignoring current local zoning laws. Hochul's proposal would also mandate local governments to have developers construct new residential buildings, regardless of zoning, within one-third of a mile of a subway or LIRR station. Senators Toby Ann Stavisky, John Liu, Leroy Comrie, and Joseph Addabbo- all Queens representatives- heard great concern from constituents who believe local zoning, land use and other related matters are issues for the City Council and the Mayor's office, not the state. Working with their colleagues, the Senators were able to make sure these proposals did not make it into the final budget.

"We need to allow local government to use their regional expertise to tackle affordable housing shortages," **explained Senator Toby Ann Stavisky (D- 11th District)**. "For instance, in my district, The Douglaston Civic Association is campaigning to have the abandoned former Pride of Judea Community Services building on Northern Boulevard retrofitted into affordable housing units. We need to enable and incentivize our local officials and community boards to move forward with projects like this that are unique to their neighborhoods and circumstances."

“We also know that basement apartments can be dangerous if not locally and appropriately zoned in flood prone areas,” **Senator Stavisky continued.** “I witnessed this first hand in the deadly aftermath of Hurricane Ida. New York City already has regulations on basement apartments and we need to make sure the Department of Buildings is using all of its resources to enforce the current regulations.”

"While I am encouraged that the Housing Compact was removed from the budget process, we must challenge neighborhoods around the state to thoughtfully consider solutions to the housing crisis moving forward," **said Senator Leroy Comrie. (D-14th District)** "With more time to deliberate, we can have a thorough, balanced and well nuanced approach and come up with a better plan. I encourage local community advocates who successfully rallied alongside us to remain engaged as part of a working group to coalesce around housing solutions that make sense for our neighborhoods."

“We have to take into account the worries and concerns of our constituents when it comes to these sweeping changes, which is why we opposed the overarching language of the statewide Housing Compact in the budget,” **said State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. (D- 15th District).** “New York City, and each of its communities, has very unique conditions compared to other parts of the state, so it wouldn’t be fair to enact the same rules for all localities across the board. However, it is imperative that we address the need for affordable housing — which includes credible assistance for tenants and landlords — and I am optimistic that the legislature can come to an agreement before the end of session in June.”

“There can be no one-size-fits-all approach to housing in New York,” **said Senator John Liu (D- 16 District).** “Each community has its own carefully crafted zoning laws that take into consideration the unique characteristics of that neighborhood, often on a block-by-block basis. Unfortunately, the Housing Compact attempted to override local zoning and community planning without ever even trying to propose an incentive. I’m proud that Queens legislators, along with our civic and community leaders, were wholly united and unrelenting in opposition against this attempt to paint our communities with such a broad brush.”