

Liz Krueger

New York State Senate | 28th District



June, 2015

Message from Liz...

In recent bulletins I have talked about the issues we must deal with before the end of session, such as rent law renewal, the coop tax abatement and Mayoral control of New York City schools. As the final weeks of session approach, I fully expect these issues will be addressed. But I remain extremely disturbed by how many important issues are falling by the wayside. Advocates have been working hard to bring attention to important bills such as GENDA, paid family leave, the Dream Act, public campaign financing and ethics reform, but the messaging from the Governor and legislative leaders is that we don't have time to do anything beyond what they define as the necessities.

One issue that is largely being ignored in Albany right now that should be a necessity is funding the \$32 billion MTA capital plan. The 2015-2019 plan currently has a \$14.8 billion funding gap at a time when growing ridership is straining existing infrastructure beyond capacity. The need for an aggressive repair and replacement program is obvious to everyone who rides the subway and experiences the chronic delays resulting from signal problems and other equipment malfunctions. The need for expanded capacity on the subway is certainly evident for anyone who tries to catch a downtown 6 train at 77th Street, and problems are nearly as bad at many other stops on the Lexington line and many other lines across the city.

Ridership is at record levels. Daily subway use passed 6 million for the first time in 2013 and has exceeded that level 26 times already this year. But if we don't maintain the system we can expect ridership to drop as the subways and buses become an increasingly unreliable way of getting around. The negative economic and environmental costs of declining subway reliability would be significant, and must not be allowed to occur.

Our transportation system has faced a similar crisis in the past, when decaying infrastructure and cancelled expansions in the 1970s undermined rider confidence. Fortunately at that time both the state and city stepped up to the plate with significant support for capital improvements when the Capital Program was created in 1982, and under the leadership of then Chair Richard Ravitch, the system improved dramatically.

That commitment by the city and particularly the state has been lacking in more recent years, forcing the MTA to rely on borrowing, unpopular specialized taxes and fare increases to meet its capital needs. The state provided 19 percent of the first two Capital Plans, but as of now has pledged to fund just over 3% of the 2015-19 plan. That pattern must end!

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While proposals like the Move NY bridge tolling plan could help with a portion of the budget gap, without a significant reengagement by the state, the MTA will have to impose even greater fare increases just to meet critical infrastructure upkeep needs, and system improvements will be eliminated. The MTA has said that the first to go will be the next phase of the Second Avenue Subway from 125th to 96th Streets. If that is not built, subway crowding on the Lexington line will continue to be a major problem. Those who live/work on the far East Side from 60th to 96th Street have lived with the construction chaos for nearly a decade – we need a full length Second Avenue Subway!!

As the legislative session grinds to an end with little talk of addressing the long-term needs of the MTA, I will continue to remind my colleagues and the Governor that the economic vitality of New York City depends on a functional public transportation system, and that the state is failing to do its part to support that system.

P.S.: As some of you know, Alice Fisher, my long-time Director of Community Outreach, is retiring from my staff, but not from her commitment to activism. At the end of this newsletter is a little “Message From Alice” where she shares her experiences and details on the next exciting chapter of her life.

POLICY SPOTLIGHT

Insurance Access During Pregnancy

Last month I introduced legislation to make pregnancy a qualifying event triggering a special enrollment period for the state health insurance exchange, allowing pregnant women to enroll in a health plan at any time. In a unanimous vote, the State Senate Insurance Committee referred [S.4639](#) to the Finance Committee, moving it one step closer to passage. The legislation was also introduced in the Assembly ([A.6780](#)) by Assembly Member Aravella Simotas.

Under current law, eligible New Yorkers can enroll in health plans through the New York State of Health Marketplace only during a designated open enrollment period, unless they experience a qualifying event triggering a special enrollment period. Qualifying events include marriage, divorce, gaining citizenship, and giving birth, among others. However, although birth is a qualifying event, becoming pregnant is not. This bill would fix this oversight in the law, allowing women who become pregnant to apply for insurance on the marketplace at any time.

Every woman should have access to adequate healthcare during pregnancy. The Affordable Care Act has been a boon for millions of New Yorkers, but the failure to recognize pregnancy as a qualifying event has left some women out in the cold at the time when they most need coverage. This bill will close a glaring loophole in the current law, and make New York a leader in women’s healthcare.

New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer recently released [a report](#) examining this issue, highlighting the health benefits of prenatal care for pregnant women and newborns and the potential for prenatal care to lead to long-term cost savings for the state’s healthcare system. Babies born to mothers who received no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at low birth weight, and five times more likely to die, than those whose mothers received prenatal care. Diseases that pose health risks to pregnant women can be mitigated by maternity care, including preeclampsia, placental abruption,

diabetes, heart conditions, and Graves' disease. Further, a study in the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine found that prenatal care for teen mothers would save between \$2,369 and \$3,242 per pregnancy. Without insurance, the cost to a prospective parent of prenatal care and delivery, even for an uncomplicated birth, can average \$20,000.

Several other states, including California, Washington, and the District of Columbia have already expanded the list of qualifying events beyond those laid out in the federal Affordable Care Act. Passage of [S.4639/A.6780](#) would make New York the first state in the nation to create a special enrollment period for pregnancy.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Tenant Rallies: Harlem on June 6th and Albany June 9th:

Please join Mayor Bill de Blasio, Assembly Housing Committee Chairman Keith Wright, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, tenants and tenant supporters, at a rally for stronger rent laws this Saturday, June 6 at 12:30 pm in the Harlem State Office Building Plaza, 163 West 125th Street. Closest subway stations: 2 or 3 to 125th Street, or A, B, C, D to 125th Street.

In addition, the Alliance for Tenant Power and Real Rent Reform Campaign are organizing buses to Albany on June 9th for the final push to renew and strengthen New York's rent regulation laws. For information on departure locations and to reserve a seat, contact ava@metcouncilonhousing.org.

Update on Efforts to Fight the Proposed Marine Transfer Station (MTS):

I continue to advocate with the State Department of Environmental Conservation to schedule a comment period and hearing regarding the renewal of the operating and construction permits previously approved for the East 91st St. Marine Transfer Station. These permits expired last year, and I and other opponents of the MTS have pointed out that vastly altered environmental conditions, including the impact of Superstorm Sandy and resulting changes in the flood zones, require a full review by DEC.

I have also written to the Mayor reiterating my opposition to the MTS, while voicing my support for moving the ramp that is currently planned to cut through Asphalt Green to 92nd Street if our efforts to stop the MTS are not successful. Under the current plan, the ramp cuts Asphalt Green in half, directly beside a public playground. The one million pedestrians who cross 91st Street each year to access Asphalt Green's pool, playground, and soccer field, would be forced to directly contend with over 100 garbage trucks per day. Studies have shown that garbage trucks are disproportionately hazardous to pedestrian safety and pose a greater risk of fatality than everyday vehicles. Moving the ramp one block north would prevent perilous and potentially life threatening encounters.

Asphalt Green has worked with independent transportation experts to redesign and identify a new location for the access ramp. Alongside DSNY and DOT, they have carefully created a new plan to relocate the ramp to 92nd Street. The redesigned ramp would allow pedestrians to safely cross 91st Street, avoiding any interaction with garbage trucks entering the MTS facility, and leaving the Asphalt Green playing fields completely intact.

Update on the 30th Street Men's Shelter:

My fellow electeds and I have reached out to the Mayor and Department of Homeless Services with a series of letters asking them to improve communication and address community concerns regarding the operation of the 30th Street Men's Shelter. We have been disappointed by the lack of responsiveness from the Department of Homeless Services to issues related to the shelter and have urged them to provide a public opportunity for community input in the near future. I will keep you apprised of their response.

“Live Your Best Life After 60” Conference:

On Friday June 12th, Alice Fisher will be the Keynote Speaker at a conference entitled “Live Your Best Life After 60.” The event will include panels on Creativity in Aging: The Art of a Healthy Life; SNAP, SCRIE, and MSP, Oh My: Making Sense of Income Support Acronyms; and You Are as Young as You Feel: Tips for Healthy Aging. The conference will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Senior Center at Saint Peter's Church, 519 Lexington Avenue at 54th Street. Continental breakfast and lunch will be served. Space limited. Please RSVP to Lauren O'Neill at 212-218-0481 or loneill@lenoxhill.org.

Upcoming Rent Guidelines Board Meetings:

The Rent Guidelines Board Public Hearing on proposed rent increases will take place from 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. on Monday, June 8, at the CUNY Graduate Center, Elabash Recital Hall, CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street.

Last month, the NYC Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) adopted a proposed range of increases for NYC rent-stabilized apartments between 0 and 2% for 1-year leases and between 0.5% and 3.5% for 2-year leases. If approved, these increases will negatively impact millions of low- and middle-income New Yorkers, many of whom are still recovering from Hurricane Sandy and pay more than 50% of their income in rent. I will be submitting testimony in opposition to these increases.

You can also submit your views in writing instead of speaking at the hearing by addressing them to the Chairman, or any Board member, c/o the NYC Rent Guidelines Board, 51 Chambers St., Suite 202, New York, NY 10007 or via email to this address: chair@nycrgb.org.

The final vote on proposed increases will take place on June 24 at 6:00 p.m. at the Great Hall at Cooper Union, 7 East 7th Street.

Free Eye Screenings on June 10th:

Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital is offering free General Eye Chart & Intraocular Pressure Tests. One in eight Americans has a common eye condition such as glaucoma, cataracts or age-related macular degeneration. More than ever, it's important to take care of your eyes and get the vision care you need. The free testing will take place on Wednesday, May 13 from 10 AM to 2 PM at 210 East 64th Street, New York, NY 10065 Great Hall (1st Floor). To schedule an appointment, call (212) 702-7676.

Fair Housing Symposium June 18th:

The NYC Commission on Human Rights and HPD are hosting a Fair Housing symposium on June 18 at Brooklyn Law School. Panelists will include people from government and community organizations. The focus is on fair housing rights for people with disabilities, immigrants and LGBTQ people. The Symposium will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Brooklyn Law School, 205 State Street, Brooklyn. Continental breakfast will be provided. To rsvp email BUCKLEYA@hpd.nyc.gov or call

212-863-8033. For more information, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/fhnyc/html/news/news-events.shtml>.

Training on New York City Human Rights Law:

The Commission on Human Rights offers free training sessions for employers, business owners, and housing providers on their responsibilities under the New York City Human Rights Law. There are a number of sessions throughout June, at each CHR borough community service center. Each session runs approximately two hours. The next Manhattan session will take place June 30, 2015 at 6:00 pm at the Commission's Manhattan Community Service Center, 100 Gold Street, 4th Floor. Please email TRAININGS@CCHR.NYC.GOV to register for one of the following sessions.

Legal Advocacy Clinics At Lenox Hill Neighborhood House:

The Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Legal Advocacy Center Offers assistance on a number of different issues. Here is a list of their ongoing programs and clinics:

- **SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) Clinics:** Wednesdays from 10am to 1pm at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street. First come, first served. Bring proof of identity, income information, utility bill, proof of housing costs, information on any dependents and if you are 60 or over or on SSI/SSD, information on medical costs. For more information, call 212-218-0503 x 3.
- **SCRIE Clinics:** call 212-218-0503 ext. 6 for assistance in applying or recertifying for the Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program. The SCRIE clinic is open to tenants city-wide. *Please note that due to the volume of calls, it sometimes takes up to two weeks for staff to respond to messages.*
- **Eviction Prevention:** Walk-in clinic, every third Monday of the month, from 10am to 1pm at 331 East 70th Street, for tenants who live, work, or go to school on Manhattan's East Side above 59th Street and on Roosevelt Island.
- **Advance Directives:** volunteer attorneys may be able to assist you with one-on-one counseling and individualized drafting of Advance Directives including Health Care Proxies, Living Wills, Powers of Attorney, and simple, low-asset Wills. If you are interested in being screened for a possible appointment, call the intake hotline at 212-218-0503 ext 4.
- **Health Care Access/Medicare/Medicaid:** call 212-218-0503 ext 3. Find out about Medicare Savings Programs, Medicaid home care, Medicare Part D, Medicaid Spend-down, EPIC and if you are eligible for Medicaid.
- **Medicaid: Is it for you?** Learn about financial eligibility rules and what services Medicaid covers, including care at home: Thursday, April 9, 2015 from 10:00 am to 11:00 am at the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, and Monday, April 13, 2015 from 11:00 am to 12 noon at the Senior Center @ St. Peter's Church.

Affordable Housing Opportunities in Manhattan:

West 42nd Street Apartments is now accepting applications for 235 affordable studio, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments newly constructed at 605 West 42nd Street in the Clinton neighborhood in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$868 to \$1124 depending on unit size. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$31,132 and \$51,780, depending on unit and family size. Preference will be given to Community Board 5 residents for 50% of units, mobility-impaired persons for 5% of units, visual- and/or hearing-impaired persons for 2% of units, and City of New York municipal employees for 5% of units. A full description of the building and application process is available at <https://a806-housingconnect.nyc.gov/nyclottery/AdvertisementPdf/172.pdf>.

Households may elect to submit an application by one of two methods: EITHER online OR by mail. To submit your application online now, please visit NYC Housing Connect at www.nyc.gov/housingconnect and select "Apply for Housing." To request an application by mail, mail a self-addressed envelope to: West 42 Street Apartments, 357 Broadway, Box 460, NY, NY 10018.

Completed applications must be submitted online or returned by regular mail only to the post office box that will be listed on the application. Applications must be submitted online or postmarked by July 13, 2015. *Applicants who submit more than one application will be disqualified.*

Lemor Realty Corporation is now accepting applications for 50 affordable studio, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments newly renovated at 151-155 West 145th Street and 2468 Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. in the Harlem neighborhood in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$922 to \$1682 depending on unit size and income. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$32,983 and \$94,930, depending on unit and family size. Preference will be given to Community Board 10 residents for 50% of units, mobility-impaired persons for 5% of units, visual- and/or hearing-impaired persons for 2% of units, and City of New York municipal employees for 5% of units. A full description of the building and application process is available at <https://a806-housingconnect.nyc.gov/nyclottery/AdvertisementPdf/176.pdf>.

Households may elect to submit an application by one of two methods: EITHER online OR by mail. To submit your application online now, please visit NYC Housing Connect at www.nyc.gov/housingconnect and select "Apply for Housing." To request an application by mail, mail a self-addressed envelope to: Lemor Realty Corporation 167 West 145th Street New York, NY 10039.

Completed applications must be submitted online or returned by regular mail only to the post office box that will be listed on the application. Applications must be submitted online or postmarked by August 3, 2015. *Applicants who submit more than one application will be disqualified.*

Metrocard Bus and Van Schedule:

The MTA offers MetroCard-related services throughout New York City through mobile buses and vans. Buses provide a full range of services, including applying for or refilling a Reduced-Fare MetroCard, buying or refilling a regular MetroCard, or getting answers to a MetroCard-related question. Vans sell Unlimited Ride MetroCards and Pay-Per-Ride MetroCards, and they refill MetroCards and Reduced-Fare MetroCards.

Buses and vans will be in my district on the following dates and locations:

June 9, 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
June 9, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm, 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
June 9, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
June 17, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus
June 17, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus
June 17, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus
June 18, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
June 18, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
June 23, 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
June 23, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
June 23, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
July 1, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus
July 1, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus

July 1, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus

July 2, 7 – 9 am, 90 Street and York Avenue - Van

July 2, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van

July 2, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van

The full mobile MetroCard schedule is available at <http://mta.info/metrocard/mms.htm>. Please note that MetroCard buses and vans do not take credit cards.

Message From Alice

“Once you’re on Team Krueger, you are part of the team forever.” How many times I’ve heard Liz use these words when staffers are about to move on, taking the richness of their experience on the Senator’s staff with them. I always teased our chief of staff, Brad Usher, that he should hire older people because he was never getting rid of me! My constituent portfolio is made up almost entirely of older adults, and during the years I’ve been with Liz, I have myself become an “older adult”. I guess one could say I have grown into my job. I will turn 70 on my next birthday, and I am moving on.

Like other staff members who move on from Liz’s office, I leave with more than I came with. I take with me a suitcase filled with the rich experience of working for and with some very extraordinary people who have allowed me to mold my position as a political social worker. I leave with seven Senior Resource Fairs in my suitcase. Each year I think it can't get better or bigger, yet it does. Organizing this signature event has created contacts and friends for me throughout the New York City world of Seniors. It has also given me the opportunity to connect our many older constituents to the best resources we can find. A program that I am particularly fond of is Senator Liz Krueger’s Roundtable for Boomers & Seniors. This program allows us to look at issues that affect both cohorts of older adults from multiple perspectives. The older (and younger) adults I have had the privilege to work with over the years have enriched me as a person and a professional. During this time I have learned about the triumphs and struggles of the growing number of older people living in our city.

The work of constituent services, along with community outreach, forums, and workshops that our office sponsors, takes place while the chaos that is our state legislature permeates the air around us. I worked in Liz’s office for a year as a social work intern before I officially became a New York State Senate employee. The day I went up to Albany to fill out my employment papers was the day of the “coup.” You remember that, right? Two of the “4 amigos” decided to leave their Democratic caucus and align themselves with the Republicans. Today, as I am leaving, the political turmoil continues, and I am constantly amazed at the leadership Senator Krueger exhibits in her calm, optimistic way, and always with a sense of humor. Her transparency and integrity have been lessons for me as I move on...another enormous gift that I take with me.

I am not leaving to retire, rather I am leaving to give my full attention to my own initiative, The Radical Age Movement. Our mission is to bring attention to the insidious ageism that is endemic to our American culture and build a movement to transform the way that old people are perceived and treated in today’s society. The goal is for every human being, regardless of age, to be able to live a full life, whatever that means for each person. The Radical Age Movement would not be a reality if I hadn’t spent the past seven years of my life journey as part of Team Krueger.

For the past two years, with Liz’s blessing and the support of our remarkable staff, I have been developing this initiative. The Radical Age Movement is growing faster than I imagined; and so, after

a lot of soul searching, I am leaving Liz's office at the end of this month to devote my full time to building the Movement.

It would be impossible for me to thank everyone who has come into my life as part of Team Krueger. They all know who they are. When I sat down to talk with Liz about leaving, she looked me in the eye and said; "You have to go do this!"

I will be leaving the office of Senator Liz Krueger at the end of this month with a full suitcase and a full heart. But, then again, nobody really ever leaves Team Krueger.

Alice

Alice Fisher, MSW