



NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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New York State Senate
Albany, NY 12247

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NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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**FEBRUARY
2010**



REFORM: NEW YORK STATE SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2009-2010 SESSION

SENATOR VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY has joined Senate and Assembly colleagues to bring true ethics reform to Albany for the first time ever. The goal: giving New York a government as good as its people.

- Ethics Reform:**
Creates tough ethics, campaign finance and lobbying laws to reform Albany. Stops legislators from using public resources for personal use.
- Senate Rules Reform:**
Enacts strong new rules to create a more transparent, open and bi-partisan Senate Chamber.
- Public Authorities Reform:**
Delivers powerful oversight program to stop abuses and wasteful spending by public authorities, including the MTA.
- Rockefeller Drug Law Reform:**
Ends overly harsh, costly prison sentences for first-time, non-violent drug offenders. Drug treatment is now an option.
- Government Consolidation:**
Allows taxpayers to merge local governments by petition and referendum—even over the opposition of elected officials.
- Tier V Retirement Reform:**
Creates a new pension benefit for future state employees that will control spending, create new jobs and save vital programs.
- Bigger, Better Bottle Bill:**
Expands the state's environmentally-responsible "bottle bill" to include water containers, with handling fee increases to benefit environmental projects. Most notably, the law creates new job opportunities through the redemption centers.
- Anti-Shackling:**
Prohibits state and local correctional authorities from using restraints on a pregnant female inmate who is being transported for childbirth, during labor and delivery, and in post-natal recovery.
- Better Family Court Access:**
Proposed the creation of 21 new family court positions to improve access to justice for children; seven of the new judgeships are recommended for New York City.
- Budget Wins for Youth:**
Increased funding for after school programs, alternatives to incarceration for youth, and community based programs for New York's children and families.
- Green Jobs:**
Created the Green Jobs initiative that provides jobs in entry-level high-growth energy efficiency and environmental conservation industries. The program is aimed at helping unemployed and low-income individuals—particularly those facing barriers to employment—transition into living wage jobs.
- Transitional Jobs:**
Put in place a Transitional Jobs Employment Program that provides subsidized employment in fields such as child care, health care, social and human services, clerical/administrative assistance, transportation and construction and outdoor maintenance. Job preference is given to people who are unemployed, formerly incarcerated and youth between the ages of 18-24.
- Health Care Outreach:**
Established the Community Health Outreach program to help people obtain jobs in the public health care arena. Job preference is given to individuals who are unemployed or underemployed.

The Census is a count of everyone residing in the United States

Census forms will arrive in your mail during March 2010

We lose \$3,000 per person per year (that's \$30,000 lost over 10 years) for every person who does not complete and mail back the Census form!

Don't be afraid of the Census or revealing information it asks for

INS/ICE (immigration) does not have access to Census information

Do fill out your form accurately and mail it back promptly

Do exercise your right to be counted and heard!



Senator Montgomery with James C. Tillmon, Senior Partnership Specialist for Census 2010.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE COUNTED:

- Distributes over **\$300 billion** in federal funds and **even more** in state funds
- Plans for hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and the location of other **health services**
- Provides **transportation** needs for all residents
- **Funds services** for low-income residents
- Provides **emergency services** to households in need of assistance
- Delivers goods and services to **local markets**
- Determines areas eligible for **housing assistance** and **rehabilitation loans**
- Provides evidence in litigation involving **land use, voting rights, and equal opportunity**
- and **much more...**



COUNT ME IN!

www.nysenate.gov/census



◀ Senator Montgomery hosted a luncheon for Brooklyn Technical High School students who attended the 39th NYS Association of Black & Puerto Rican Legislators, Inc. Conference weekend in Albany. The Senator, who proudly told the students, "I am a Brooklyn Tech mom," talked with the students about the legislative process, their civic responsibilities as young adults, and the relationship between politics on the local, state and federal level.



▲ Senator Montgomery and Brooklyn Children Museum's (BCM) Board of Trustees bid farewell to former BCM president and chief executive officer Carol Enseki and welcome the Museum's incoming leader, Georgina Ngozi. Assemblywoman Joan Millman, Assemblywoman Annette Robinson and Senator Eric Adams took part in the festivities. The celebration took place at the home of Bill and Susan Rifkin in Brooklyn Heights.



▲ Senator Montgomery with Bergen Street friends Robert Florin, Gloria Ross, Senator Olga Alfred, Heloise Gruneberg, and Irene Van Slyke.



◀ Scot Medbury, president, Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG), gives Senator Montgomery a tour of BBG, including February's Visions of Nature exhibit featuring the work of talented artists who participated in BBG's Continuing Education program.

NEW LAW REIGNS IN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES SUCH AS MTA AND ESDC



After many years of fighting for Public Authority Reform, Senator Montgomery is happy to report that the legislature succeeded in passing a strong reform bill (S.1537-C/A.2209) that was signed into law by the Governor in December 2009.

For decades, public authorities have existed without having to either answer to the legislature or open up their books for inspection by the State Comptroller. Many authorities—and there are more than 1,000 in New York State—collect fees, such as the Thruway Authority, or fares, such as the

MTA and then spend revenue as they see fit. As you may know, several notorious scandals have come to light recently, from the MTA keeping two sets of books to hide an operating surplus to the sale of valuable Canal Corporation land for a fraction of its market price. The MTA has accepted a fraction of the value of Vanderbilt Rail Yards for the Atlantic Yards Project.

The main provision of the new law is the creation of an Independent Authority Budget Office (ABO) which would require Authorities to report 4

year financial plans and other financial information to the ABO. In addition, the State Comptroller is empowered to approve contracts over \$1 million if there is no requirement for competitive bidding. And finally, all future CEOs of public authorities will be subject to advice and consent of the State Senate. These include the Dormitory Authority, Power Authority, Thruway Authority, Urban Development Corporation (ESDC) and the Long Island Power Authority.

HELP KEEP AUTHORITIES ACCOUNTABLE

Senator Montgomery has planned a hearing to evaluate the performance of authorities that are specifically created to support economic development and jobs in the city and state.

For more information and/or to indicate your intent to participate, please complete the form below. You may also email Senator Montgomery at montgome@senate.state.ny.us.

SENATOR MONTGOMERY'S PUBLIC AUTHORITIES WATCHDOG CAMPAIGN

Please send me information about Senator Montgomery's hearing on public authorities and send me updates on the Senator's work on public authority reform.

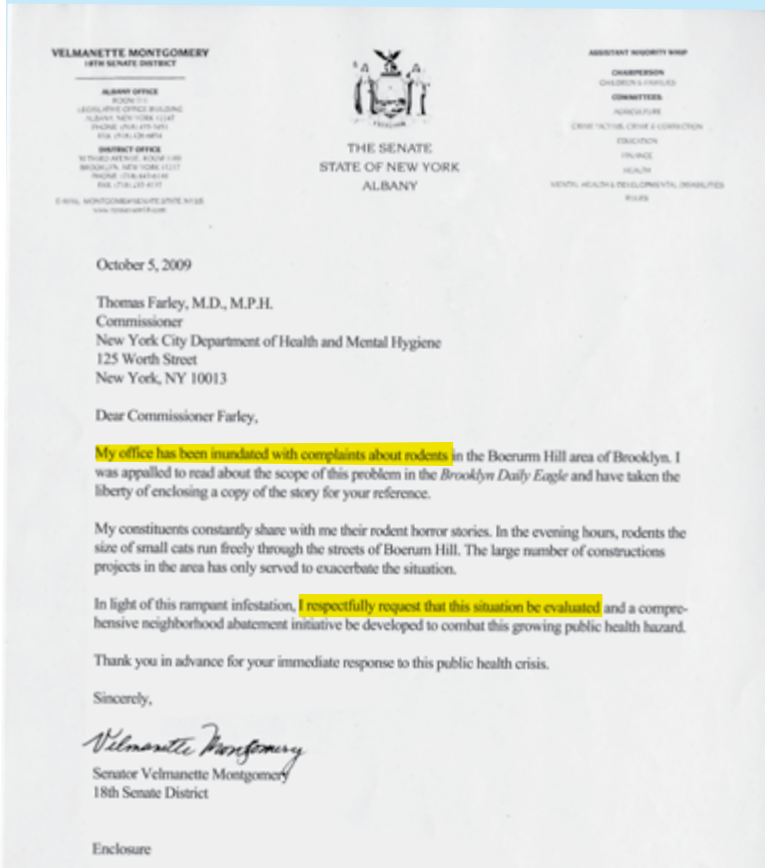
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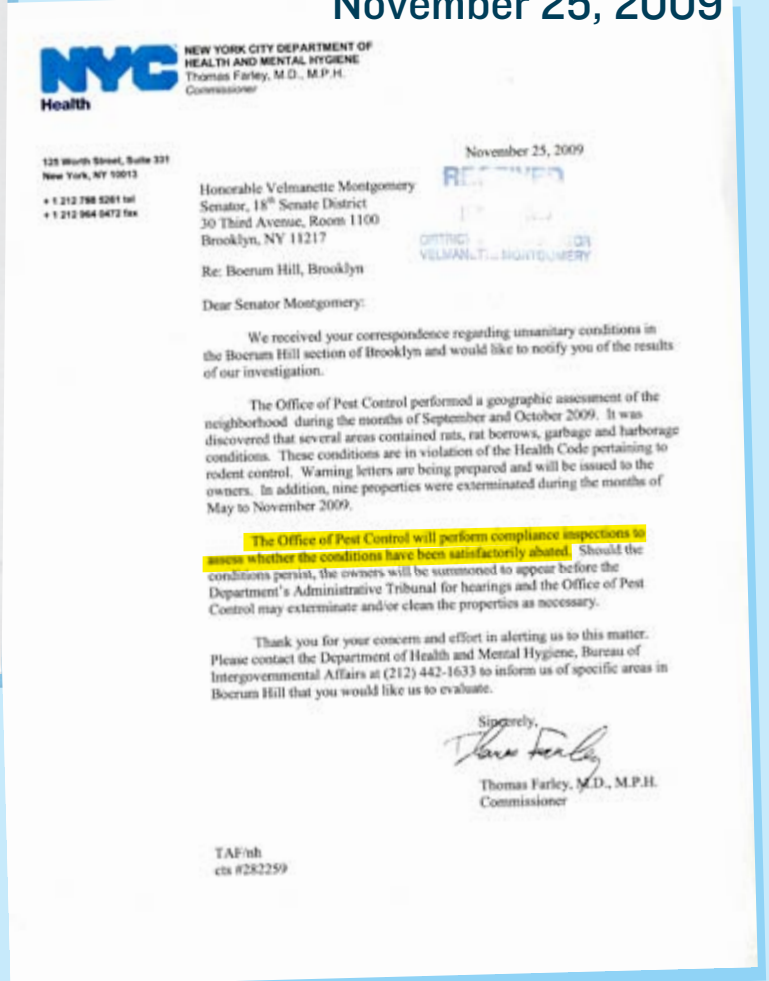


“My office has been inundated with complaints about rodents... I respectfully request that this situation be evaluated...”

**—Senator Velmanette Montgomery
October 5, 2009**

“The Office of Pest Control will perform compliance inspections to assess whether the conditions have satisfactorily abated.”

**—Thomas Farley, M.D., M.P.H.
November 25, 2009**



TEXTING TIDBITS



Text4baby is a free mobile information service designed to promote healthy birth outcomes among underserved populations. An education program of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB), Text4baby will help women have safe and healthy pregnancies by providing information they need to give their babies the best possible start in life.

Women who sign up for this service by texting BABY to 511411 (or BEBE for

Spanish), will receive free SMS text messages each week, timed to their due date or baby's date of birth. These messages focus on a variety of topics critical to maternal and child health: birth defects prevention, immunization, nutrition, seasonal flu, mental health, oral health, and safe sleep among others. Text4baby messages also connect women to early prenatal care as well as a variety of existing resources available to them.



PLEASE PLACE POSTAGE HERE

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