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New York State Senate | 28th District



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## Message from Liz...

I am currently in the midst of hearings on the Governor’s Executive Budget. These hearings provide an opportunity for me and my legislative colleagues to question agency heads about the Governor’s proposals, and for stakeholders to share their expertise on the potential impacts of both the spending levels and the policy changes that are included in the budget.

One proposal that I was very happy to see included in this year’s budget is the Child Victims Act. The Governor’s proposal would eliminate statutes of limitations for all sex-related felony offenses when committed

against a person who is less than 18 years of age and extend the statute of limitations for civil claims to 50 years from the date of the offense. For years the Assembly has passed similar legislation but the Senate majority coalition has refused to bring the bill to the floor for a vote, largely because of opposition from religious institutions that oppose reviving old cases.

Many states have acted to remove or extend their statutes of limitations on child sexual abuse since revelations of the history of widespread abuse in the Catholic Church became public, and New York is increasingly an outlier in refusing to modernize its laws. Just in the past few years Georgia, Massachusetts, Florida, and Utah have passed bills that lengthened the time victims have to bring their cases to court. The current focus on the prevalence of sexual misconduct seems to have created new momentum for New York to finally take action to address this basic issue of access to justice for those who were victimized as children.

This is the first year the Governor has included the Child Victims Act in his budget, but that is only the first step. There will undoubtedly be pressure to remove these reforms from the final budget, and it is critical that Governor Cuomo resists that pressure. He will have allies in Assembly leadership and the Senate Democratic Conference, both of which have long supported the Child Victims Act. I am hopeful this is the year this critical proposal can become law.

The Child Victims Act would provide justice to past victims of sexual abuse, and ensure that future victims have access to the courts. But our laws dealing with child abuse have other problems, and I am particularly concerned that a loophole in our mandatory reporting law fails to protect children from abuse. Current law requires public school personnel to report suspected abuse of children – New York City policies are governed by state social services law and Chancellor’s regulations, and public

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schools outside New York City are covered by state education law. However, private schools are not subject to these same mandated reporting requirements.

I cosponsor two bills (S7372/A8485 Gallivan/Nolan and S4342/A5371 Brooks/Thiele) to close this loophole. This should be a no-brainer, and based on my conversations with representatives of private schools, they don't oppose this change. It helps protect students from abuse whether that abuse is happening at school or at home, and it helps ensure the schools that they can identify and remove any abusers they have on staff.

There are many major issues we need to address this year – I'll discuss some more of them in the policy statement below – but I believe that the #MeToo movement has created critical momentum for addressing a host of issues around sexual abuse and harassment. It is outrageous that it may take this broader movement to finally get New York State to act to protect and provide justice to children who have been sexually abused. Brave women and men have been speaking up on their experiences of such abuse for years, and the voices that are now joining them in telling their stories highlight that these experiences are part of much broader issues our society needs to address. I will be fighting to make sure that one of the outcomes of this powerful movement is passing the Child Victims Act and other legislation that will protect our children from abuse.

## **POLICY SPOTLIGHT**

### *Ethics and Campaign Finance Reform*

Last month, I joined my Senate Democratic colleagues in putting forward a series of bills to combat unethical behavior by public officials and help restore New Yorkers' faith in political campaigns. The Senate Republican/IDC Majority has repeatedly refused to act on any meaningful bills to reform political campaigns or curb the influence of deep-pocketed special interests on the electoral process

The nonpartisan and nonprofit Center for Public Integrity gave New York State a grade of D- for integrity of state government. This grade, which puts New York 31st in the nation for public accountability and transparency, reflects the limited access to public information, inadequate oversight, and shadowy state budget process. Additionally, no meaningful ethics reforms resulted from the arrests of both former Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, and former Senate Deputy Leader Thomas Libous. This low ranking for New York State on an issue as critical as good government is unacceptable, and that is why the Senate Democratic Conference has stepped up to clean up state government and the campaign finance process.

The legislation advanced by the Senate Democratic Conference would:

- **Prohibit and Punish Undisclosed 'Self-Dealing':** This bill, S.124, introduced by Senator Brad Hoylman, will establish criminal penalties for public servants who steer public contracts or funds to help benefit themselves, their families, and/or their business interests.
- **Close the LLC Loophole:** This bill, S.7149, introduced by Senator Brian Kavanagh, will make Limited Liability Companies (LLCs) subject to the existing contribution limits for corporations. This bill

would also increase transparency by requiring disclosure of the identity of individuals with membership interests in LLCs and attribute contributions to members of LLCs.

- **Require the Disclosure of Bundlers:** This bill, S.1085-A, sponsored by Senator Gustavo Rivera, will define what an “intermediary” or “bundler” is in State law and require that these individuals or groups be disclosed to the State Board of Elections when bundling contributions for a candidate or authorized committee.
- **Require Shareholder Approval for Corporate Political Donations:** This bill, S.4111, introduced by Senator James Sanders, will require corporations to have a majority of their shareholders authorize any political spending.
- **Cap “Soft Money” Contributions:** This bill, S.4164, which I sponsor, will end the practice of special interests being able to dump unlimited funds into political committee campaign accounts and instead implement a cap of \$25,000.
- **Lower Campaign Contribution Limits:** This bill, S.3301, introduced by Senate Democratic Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris, would lower contribution limits for statewide candidates to \$6,000 for the primary and \$6,000 for the general election. Senate candidates would be limited to \$4,000 for the primary and \$4,000 for the general election and Assembly candidates would be limited to \$2,000 for the primary, and \$2,000 for the general election.
- **Require the Disclosure of Employer and Occupation for Large Donors:** This bill, S.7129, introduced by Senator Brian Kavanaugh, will require that campaign committees that receive more than \$500 from a single donor provide the State Board of Elections with that donor’s occupation, employer, and employer’s address.
- **Establish a Public Financing System for State Campaigns:** This bill, S.7593, sponsored by Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, will create an optional public financing system for state campaigns. Under this system, eligible contributions to candidates for statewide office up to \$250 would be matched at the rate of \$6 for every \$1. Participating candidates could only receive donations of up to \$2,000. Candidates who are unopposed in a general or special election may not receive public funds. All unspent public funds must be returned 30 days after the election.

The Senate Democrats also issued a report detailing where New York State stands compared with other states on issues like public integrity, outside spending on campaigns, public officials’ accountability, and other campaign finance and good government issues. The full report is available here: <https://www.scribd.com/document/370342204/COMBATING-CORRUPTION-AND-RESTORING-FAITH-SENATE-DEMOCRATS-FIGHT-FOR-HONESTY-AND-INTEGRITY-IN-NEW-YORK-POLITICS>

I am proud to support this package of bills to limit the corrupting influence of money on our political process. We need to take action now to restore power to everyday New Yorkers, and stop wealthy individuals, corporations, and interest groups from drowning our democracy with huge political spending.

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

### **Forum on Finding Solutions to Our Transportation Crisis March 1st:**

On Thursday March 1st I am joining State Senator Brad Hoylman in hosting a forum entitled “Finding Solutions to Our Transportation Crisis.” The evidence is clear: New Yorkers’ ability to get around their city is becoming increasingly compromised by poor subway service, equally shoddy bus service, and choking congestion. This forum will explore options for addressing the various elements of this crisis, including the possible implementation of congestion pricing. Panelists will include Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Transportation, Alex Matheissen of Move NY, Veronica Vanterpool, MTA Board Member, Nicole Gelinias of the Manhattan Institute, and Nick Sifuentes of the Bus Turnaround Coalition. The forum will take place from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the CUNY Graduate Center, Proshansky Auditorium, 365 Fifth Avenue between 34th and 35th Streets. RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/transportation-crisis> or by calling (212) 490-9535.

### **Roundtable for Boomers and Seniors Thursday March 8th:**

The Roundtable for Boomers & Seniors provides an opportunity for constituents to come together to explore life issues that are relevant across the age span. At each session, attendees hear from and engage with professionals who are knowledgeable on topics that are of most concern to the growing population of older adults in New York City. Over the course of five sessions, the Roundtable looks at a specific issue from different perspectives each month. This year’s series will focus on engagement. The third roundtable session will take place Thursday, March 8th from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street, and the topic will be employment and older adults. Speakers include Ruth Finkelstein, ScD, Executive Director of the Brookdale Center on Aging, Hunter College, Peter Gosselin, journalist, ProPublica, and Amy Scherber, CEO, Amy’s Bread. To RSVP visit <https://tinyurl.com/employ-older-adults> or call (212) 490-9535.

### **Radical Age Movement Series on Age Discrimination:**

The second session of the Radical Age Movement’s two-part series titled “Age Justice in the Workplace: Addressing Age Discrimination” will take place Wednesday, February 21st, and will feature Phyllis Weiss Haserot, President of the Practice Development Counsel and Marci Alboher, V.P. of Marketing and Communications at Encore. The session will take place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at The NY Society for Ethical Culture, West 64th Street at Central Park West. To RSVP, email [joseph.radicalagemovement@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.radicalagemovement@gmail.com).

### **2018-2019 Pre-K Enrollment Period:**

From February 5th through March 30th all New York City families with children born in 2014 are eligible to apply to pre-K for the 2018-2019 school year. This includes children with disabilities and children whose native language is not English.

A list of programs is available in the Pre-K Directory, which is accessible at [schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/PreK/Resources/default.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/PreK/Resources/default.htm). Printed copies will be available at district schools, NYCDOE Pre-K Centers, NYCEECs, Family Welcome Centers, and other locations (e.g. libraries, city agencies, community centers, etc.).

Families can apply online at [www.nyc.gov/prek](http://www.nyc.gov/prek), over the phone by calling 718-935-2067 or in person at a Family Welcome Center. The Family Welcome Center for District 2 is located at 333 Seventh Avenue, 12th Floor; Room 1211, New York, NY 10001 and is open 8am to 5pm, Monday through

Thursday, and 8am-3pm on Friday except Friday, February 16, Monday, February 19 and Friday, February 23.

**Free Tax Preparation Assistance:**

IRS-trained volunteers are available to provide free tax preparation assistance throughout New York City. I encourage you to take advantage of these services, which can save you money and ensure you avoid getting caught in “Refund Anticipation Loan” scams that many for-profit tax preparers engage in.

AARP is sponsoring a number of locations on the East Side, and there are no age or income restrictions to receive this assistance. Here are some sites in the 28th Senate District where you can get free assistance with your taxes:

58th Street Library, 127 East 58th Street  
Telephone: 212-759-7358  
Site Hours: Wednesday and Saturday, 10:00am-2:00pm

67th Street Library, 328 East 67th Street  
Telephone: 212-734-1717  
Site Hours: Friday, 10:00am-2:00pm

Community Church of New York, 40 East 35th Street  
Telephone: 212-683-4988  
Site Hours: Thursday, 9:30am-1:00pm

Epiphany Library, 228 East 23rd Street  
Telephone: 212-679-2645  
Site Hours: Thursday, 10:00am-2:00pm

Grand Central Library, 135 East 46th Street  
Telephone: 212-621-0670  
Site Hours: Saturday 10:00am-2:00pm

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street  
Telephone: 212-744-5022  
Site Hours: Wednesday, 9:00am-1:00pm

Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL), 188 Madison Ave @ 34th Street  
Telephone: 917-275-6975  
Site Hours: Monday, Wednesday 1:00pm-6:00pm, Friday, Saturday 1:00pm-5:00pm..

Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center, 415 East 93rd Street  
Telephone: 212-360-7620  
Site Hours: Friday, 9:00am-2:00pm

Webster Branch Library, 1465 York Avenue  
Telephone: 212-288-5049  
Site Hours: Monday, 11:00am-3:00pm except 2/19

New York City also offers free tax preparation either in person or online for individuals making \$64,000 or less.

You can file in-person at a NYC Free Tax Prep site. Filing is completely free and includes e-filing and direct deposit of your refund. Some sites have income limits. For most sites, you must have earned \$54,000 or less in 2016 to use In Person service. Some NYC Free Tax Prep sites have special services if you are self-employed, are applying for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, you are a senior over age 60 with pension or retirement-related question or you need to file or change your return from a previous tax year. At these sites, you will drop off your documents and pick up the completed return later.

You can also complete your tax return online at certain NYC Free Tax Prep sites with help from an IRS certified VITA/TCE volunteer preparer. You must have earned \$64,000 or less in 2016 and have a valid email address to use the Assisted Self-Preparation service.

You can access a map of tax preparation sites at each site and find out which required tax documents you need at [nyc.gov/taxprep](http://nyc.gov/taxprep).

### **Upcoming Pet Adoption Events:**

Animal Care Centers of NYC (ACC) is sponsoring several Pet Adoption events around the district in December. Upcoming dates and locations are:

Saturday, February 17, Noon – 4:00 p.m., Biscuits and Bath – Dogs Only  
1064 First Avenue at 58th Street

Upcoming events are also listed at <http://nycacc.org/Events.htm>

### **Free Financial Empowerment Workshop:**

In partnership with Neighborhood Trust Financial Partners, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House is offering a free Financial Empowerment Workshop. See your credit report, meet one-on-one with a financial advisor, open a free savings account and learn about reaching your financial goals. The next session is open to everyone and will take place on Tuesdays, February 27th – March 20th (4 sessions), from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at 331 E 70th Street. Registration is required. Space is limited. Register by Friday, February 16th. To enroll, please contact Lauren Bernstein: 212-218-0413 or [lbernstein@lenoxhill.org](mailto:lbernstein@lenoxhill.org)

### **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 [212-218-0431](tel:212-218-0431).
- SCRIE Clinics: Walk-in Clinic. The next clinic will take place Thursday, February 8 from 9:30 a.m to 1:00 p.m at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street. You must arrive before Noon to ensure you can be seen. If you are 62 years or older, live in a rent regulated apartment and have an annual household income of \$50,000 or less you may be eligible for the Rent Freeze Program. Find out if you are eligible and get assistance applying or recertifying for SCRIE.
- Tenants Rights Advice Clinic: Walk-in clinic, first Thursday of every other month. The next Clinic

will take place March 1 from 10am to 1pm at 331 East 70th Street, First come-first Served. Please bring all relevant housing-related documents with you.

- End-of-Life Planning/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](tel:212-218-0503).
- Health Care Access/Medicare/Medicaid: call [212-218-0503 ext 3](tel:212-218-0503). Find out about Medicare Savings Programs, Medicaid home care, Medicare Part D, Medicaid Spend-down, EPIC and if you are eligible for Medicaid.
- Health Insurance Enrollment: call [212-218-0432](tel:212-218-0432). Assistance with finding and enrolling in an affordable health insurance plan.

### **Affordable Housing Opportunities in Manhattan:**

**515 West 36th Street Apartments** is now accepting applications for 63 affordable studio, 1- 2- and 3-bedroom apartments newly constructed at 515 West 36th Street in the Chelsea neighborhood in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$613 to \$2,733 depending on income and unit size. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$22,903 and \$124,020 depending on unit and family size. Asset limits also apply. Preference will be given to Community Board 4 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/440.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](http://www.nyc.gov/housingconnect) and select "Apply for Housing." To request an application by mail, mail a self-addressed envelope to: Affordable Housing Dept. 515, 1357 Broadway, Box 309, New York, NY 10018.

Applications must be submitted online or postmarked by April 3, 2018. Applicants who submit more than one application may 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:

February 13, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
February 13, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
February 13, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
February 15, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
February 15, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
February 15, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus  
February 21, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
February 21, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus

February 21, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
February 27, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
February 27, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
February 27, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 1, 7 – 9 am, 91 Street and York Avenue - Van  
March 1, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
March 1, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
March 2, 9 - 10 am, 57 Street and 1 Avenue – Van  
March 2, 10:30 - 11:30 am, 57 Street and 3 Avenue – Van  
March 2, 12:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street and 1 Avenue – Van  
March 7, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus  
March 7, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
March 7, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus

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.

### **Heat Season Rules:**

The City Housing Maintenance Code and State Multiple Dwelling Law require building owners to provide heat and hot water to all tenants. Building owners are required to provide hot water 365 days a year at a constant minimum temperature of 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Between October 1st and May 31st, a period designated as “Heat Season,” building owners are also required to provide tenants with heat under the following conditions:

- Between the hours of 6AM and 10PM if the outside temperature falls below 55 degrees, the inside temperature is required to be at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Between the hours of 10PM and 6AM the inside temperature is required to be at least 62 degrees Fahrenheit. Note that there is no longer any outside temperature requirement for night hours

Tenants who are cold in their apartments should first attempt to notify the building owner, managing agent or superintendent. If heat is not restored, the tenant should call the City’s Citizen Service Center at 311. For the hearing-impaired, the TTY number is (212) 504-4115. The Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.