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New York State Senate | 28th District



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Message from Liz...

The legislative session begins January 9th and it is safe to say that we have a lot of important work to accomplish. Years of Republican control of the Senate have created a backlog of progressive legislation, much of which I expect we will be able to address this year. One of our priority issues is passage of the Reproductive Health Act (RHA), which will codify Roe v. Wade protections into New York State law. Action on the RHA is critical given the real threat that the Supreme Court could overturn Roe in the near future. Supported by both houses of the legislature and the Governor, I fully expect that the RHA will be enacted this month.

Assemblymember Deborah Glick and I have reintroduced the RHA (S240/A21), versions of which have consistently passed the Assembly for several years. New York's abortion law was last updated in 1970. It falls short of constitutional protections as defined by Roe v. Wade in 1973, and does not reflect current medical practices. The RHA will legalize abortion up to 24 weeks of pregnancy, or after that point if a woman's health or life are at risk or if the fetus is not viable. Currently, discrepancies between state and federal law often force critically ill pregnant women to leave the state in order to get the care they need. Additionally, the RHA rectifies obsolete statutes. It repeals outdated and unconstitutional criminal statutes prohibiting abortion, and moves the regulation of abortion into the public health law. This ensures that New York State law treats abortion as health care, not as a criminal act. The RHA also revises the abortion law to incorporate current medical standards of practice.

New York must be a national leader in protecting abortion access, ensuring that complex and personal decisions about reproductive healthcare are the sole responsibility of a woman and her medical providers. I look forward to seeing this important legislation finally pass the State Senate after so many years of waiting.

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POLICY SPOTLIGHT

Equal Rights Amendment

This month I will be reintroducing an inclusive Equal Rights Amendment to the State Constitution. New York State's equal protection clause was adopted in 1938, prior to the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the LGBT movement, the disability rights movement, and the many other challenges to discrimination in our state and nation. Women, LGBT people and people with disabilities currently do not have equal rights in New York State's Constitution and it is time to update our constitution to reflect a 21st Century understanding of equal rights.

The proposed amendment updates current equal protection language in the state constitution to prohibit denial of equality of rights on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, citizenship, marital status, age, gender, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, physical or mental disability or other immutable or ascriptive characteristics. The broadly inclusive language of the amendment surpasses the equal rights provisions of every other state in the nation, as well as that of the U.S. Constitution. No state has explicitly granted equal rights to LGBT people or people with disabilities.

Though the federal Equal Rights Amendment, which would have granted women equal rights in the U.S. Constitution, narrowly missed getting enough states to ratify it, 11 states, including California, Oregon and Illinois, have passed state ERAs pertaining to women. New York has not. Passing the Equal Rights Amendment at the Federal level remains an important goal of mine, but a progressive state such as New York can go further and include comprehensive protections in our state constitution.

Our rights are increasingly under attack from the Trump administration, and it is essential that we protect all New Yorkers from attempts to trample on their freedom. New York can and should be a national leader, both morally and legally, by updating our Constitution so all New Yorkers are recognized and respected as equals.

With the new progressive Democratic Majority in the State Senate, there is no reason we cannot pass this comprehensive amendment. Passing it this year would only be the first step, as amending the constitution requires both houses of the legislature to pass the amendment in successive legislative sessions, followed by a vote by the public. I will be working to ensure we take the first step in the amendment process this year.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Martin Luther King Day Serve-a-Thon:

Hunger Free America is sponsoring a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Serve-a-Thon. This year, they are hosting a week of service events starting on Monday, Jan. 14, 2019 and finishing up on MLK Day, Monday, Jan. 21, 2019. Help honor Dr. King's legacy as a civil rights and anti-poverty leader and activist by volunteering to help advance food security in our communities. To sign up visit <https://www.hungervolunteer.org/hv/volunteers> or email volunteer@hungerfreeamerica.org, with "MLK Day Serve-a-Thon" in the subject line.

Apply for Your Local Community Board:

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer is seeking applicants to serve on Community Boards. Applications are being accepted through February 8th. To apply, visit <http://manhattanbp.nyc.gov/html/community-boards/community-boards.shtml> or call 212-669-8300.

E-Waste Recycling Event on January 20th:

On Sunday January 20th from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm the Lower East Side Ecology Center is hosting an E-Waste recycling event at the 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Avenue at 92nd Street. They will accept working and non-working computers, monitors, printers, scanners, keyboards, mice, cables, TVs (all sizes), VCR & DVD players, land-line and cell phones, audio/visual equipment, and video games. For more information on the event, visit <https://www.lesecologycenter.org/programs/ewaste/ewaste-faq/> or call 212-477-4022.

Open Enrollment for Healthcare Marketplace Coverage:

The Open Enrollment Period for the Healthcare Marketplace in New York will run through January 31, 2019. As was the case last year, the Trump administration decided to significantly shorten the Open Enrollment Period. New York has its own marketplace, however, and therefore is able to determine the length of its Open Enrollment Period.

2019 health insurance plan details are now available. If you would like to consult with a trained representative at no charge prior to selecting your health insurance plan, Navigator Sites are an excellent resource. The following is the contact information for a local Navigator Site:

Community Service Society of New York
633 Third Avenue, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10017
Phone: 888-614-5400

Before selecting your plan, it is important to check the following:

- Will your primary physician, OB/GYN, and any specialists accept the insurance? This is important to verify, even if you are not changing plans. Health insurance companies are using narrower provider networks than before, which may cause reductions to their list of in-network providers. Please note that a new search tool has been added to the New York State of Health marketplace website: <https://pndslookup.health.ny.gov/>. This tool allows you to search by medical provider to see what health insurance plans s/he accepts. It also allows you to search by health plan to see which medical providers are in-network.

- Will any regularly prescribed medications be covered under the plan? Each health insurance plan has a list of pharmaceuticals that are covered. If you are concerned about prescriptions being

covered, this is important to verify before you enroll in the plan. Navigator Site representatives can provide assistance with this.

- Which plan will be the most affordable while providing the amount of coverage you need? Research has shown that many people do not take the time to comparison shop before selecting a health insurance policy. It is worth taking the time to consider your healthcare needs and assess which plan will give you the greatest savings based on premiums charged, co-pays, and deductibles. Navigator Site representatives can also provide assistance with doing a comparison of plan costs.

NYC Tree Hub Tracks Tree Planting Schedule:

NYC Parks' street tree planting program is part of a citywide initiative to green the streets of New York City. Street trees make the city more livable, improve the environment, enhance public health, and are a key element of the City's OneNYC initiative to make the city more sustainable as our population grows.

New street trees are planted by service request from any New Yorker seeking a tree for their home, block, or neighborhood. You can request a tree by calling 311 or visiting <https://www.nycgovparks.org/services/forestry/request/submit?tab=tree-planting-request> Additionally, NYC Parks is continuing to plant trees in areas with low tree canopy and high population density to ensure all communities enjoy the environmental, economic, and social benefits of our urban forest.

As part of Local Law 65, NYC Parks makes information about upcoming and recently completed forestry work available to the public through a new online tool: The Tree Work Hub. You can find out about street tree planting in their neighborhood, by visiting the Street Tree Planting page on the Tree Work Hub at nyc.gov/parks/treework. Users can view where trees have been planted in the previous planting season, and where new trees are scheduled to be planted.

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 January 19th, 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
PetSmart, 1107 Broadway b/t 24th and 25th Streets

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

Sparkling Wellness and Creativity through Art for People with Dementia:

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House is offering a five-session program designed for individuals with mild to moderate cognitive impairments, including dementia, which will explore the use of art to spark creativity, expressive outlets and cognitive stimulation. The person-centered process will focus on each individual's strengths and the development of their own creative style. No previous art experience required.

The program will take place over 5 Tuesdays from January 8th to February 5th from 3:00pm-4:30pm at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House. 331 East 70th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues, 4th Floor Conference Room. There is a fee of \$150 for the program and pre-registration is required. To register visit <http://www.lenoxhill.org/arttherapy>

For More Information Contact Leah Gable at 212-218 0481 or <http://www.lenoxhill.org/careprogram/>.

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. Arrive by Noon.

- Mondays from 9am to 3pm at Bellevue Hospital Ambulatory Care Pavilion, First Avenue between 26th and 27th Streets, 3rd Floor. Arrive by 2pm.

- January 11th and 25th from 10am to 1pm at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Casa Mutua Clinics at 159 East 102nd Street. Arrive by Noon.

First come, first served. Bring proof of identity, income information, utility bill, proof of housing costs, information on any dependents, proof of immigration status for non-citizens, and if you are 60 or over or on SSI/SSD, information on medical costs. For more information, call [212-218-0503](tel:212-218-0503), option 2.

- SCRIE Clinics: Walk-in Clinic. The next clinic will take place Tuesday, March 5 from 10:00 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.

- DRIE Clinics: By Appointment only. If you are receiving disability benefits, 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 DRIE. For more information, please email DRIE@lenoxhill.org or call 212-218-1503, option 0.

- Tenants Rights Advice Clinic: Walk-in clinic, now at 2 locations.

- February 7 from 10am to 1pm at 331 East 70th Street. First come-first Served, arrive by Noon.

- March 7 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Casa Mutua Clinics at 159 East 102nd Street. First come, first served, arrive by 4 p.m. Please bring all relevant housing-related documents with you.

- January 16 and February 20 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the East Harlem Health Action Center, 158 East 115th Street. First come, first served, arrive by 4 p.m. Please bring all relevant housing-related documents with you.

- Health Care Access Project: call [212-218-0503](tel:212-218-0503). Assistance with Medicaid, Medicare Savings Program Medicare Part D, Epic and health insurance through the New York State of Health Marketplace.

VOLS Legal Clinics for Seniors:

The VOLS Elderly Project will be at one location in my district this month. The Elderly Project staff and pro bono attorneys provide free legal advice, information, document drafting, and other brief services to low-income Manhattan residents aged 60 and over, and to the social workers and advocates who assist them. Their schedule includes

Friday January 11th - 2:00 pm, Legal Clinic,
Burden Center for the Aging, 415 East 73rd Street (b/t 1st and York)

Friday, January 18th - 10:00 am, Legal Clinic,
Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center, 415 East 93rd Street

Monday January 28th - 10:00 am, Legal Clinic,
Encore Community Services Center, 239 West 49th Street (b/t Broadway and 8th Ave.)

And, just across the Park on the Westside: Monthly Housing Clinics and Workshops:

Council Member Helen Rosenthal, Goddard Riverside's SRO Law Project, and the Urban Justice Center co-sponsor monthly housing clinics and workshops at the Goddard Riverside Community Center, 593 Columbus Avenue (between 88th and 89th Streets). On the first Wednesday of each month, from 6pm – 8pm, the clinic offers a presentation on a variety of topics, followed by a question and answer session. Each evening, at least one staff attorney will meet with individuals who are seeking specific legal advice.

For questions, contact the Office of Council Member Rosenthal at (212) 873-0282 ext. 206 or Helen@helenrosenthal.com. Sign-up sheet starting at 6pm each evening.

February 6, 2019: DHCR II: Failure to Provide a Lease and Rent Overcharge applications

March 6, 2019: When a landlord wants you to go: Harassment, Construction Harassment and Buyouts

April 3, 2019: Eviction Prevention: Residency Challenges, Clutter, Unapproved Alterations, Nuisances

May 1, 2019: Succession Rights I: Family, Partners and Others

June 5, 2019: Succession Rights II: Apartment Sharing, Roommates, Sublets, Short-term rentals

Affordable Housing Opportunities in Manhattan:

1980 Amsterdam Avenue Apartments is now accepting applications for 5 affordable studio, 1-bedroom apartments newly constructed at 1980 Amsterdam Avenue in the Washington Heights neighborhood in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments are \$1900. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$65,143 and \$108,550 depending on family size. Asset limits also apply. Preference will be given to mobility-impaired persons for 5% of units and visual- and/or hearing-impaired persons for 2% of units. A full description of the building and application process is available at

<https://a806-housingconnect.nyc.gov/nyclottery/AdvertisementPdf/650.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: 1980 Amsterdam Avenue Apartments, C/O Reside New York, 381 South 5th Street Unit #1 Brooklyn NY 11211.

Applications must be submitted online or postmarked by January 17, 2019. Applicants who submit more than one application may be disqualified.

Central Harlem Apartments is now accepting applications for 68 affordable studio, 1- 2- and 3-bedroom apartments newly renovated at 111 West 131st Street, 116-118-120 West 129th Street, 410-418 West 128th Street, 157 West 122nd Street, 23-27 West 119th Street, and 244 Lenox Avenue in the Central Harlem neighborhood in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$8968 to \$1,339 depending on unit size. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$32,606 and \$72,600 depending on unit and family size. Asset limits also apply. Preference will be given to mobility-impaired persons for 5% of units, and visual- and/or hearing-impaired persons for 2% of units. A full description of the building and application process is available at <https://a806-housingconnect.nyc.gov/nyclottery/AdvertisementPdf/651.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: CENTRAL HARLEM APARTMENTS c/o Bronx Pro Group 1605 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Bronx, NY 10453.

Applications must be submitted online or postmarked by March 5, 2019. 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:

January 8, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
January 8, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
January 8, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
January 16, 9 – 10:30 am, 79 Street & Third Avenue - Bus
January 16, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus
January 16, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus
January 17, 8:00 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
January 17, 11:30 am - 2:00 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
January 22, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
January 22, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
January 22, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
February 1, 9 - 10 am, 57 Street and 1 Avenue – Van
February 1, 10:30 - 11:30 am, 57 Street and 3 Avenue – Van
February 1, 12:30 - 2:00 pm, 68 Street and 1 Avenue – Van
February 6, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & Third Avenue – Bus
February 6, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus
February 6, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus
February 7, 7 – 9 am, 91 Street and York Avenue - Van
February 7, 8:00 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
February 7, 11:30 am - 2:00 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.

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.