

# Liz Krueger

New York State Senate | 28th District



April, 2015

## Message from Liz...

This year's budget process definitely lived up to the old adage that laws are like sausages – it's better not to see them being made. In order to meet the budget deadline, the legislature passed a series of bills over the final days of March and into the early hours of April, mostly with "messages of necessity" from the Governor, meaning they didn't have to be in print for the usual three days before voting. I have always objected to the overuse of these messages, but they are particularly problematic for budget bills, which taken together totaled several thousand pages of text. It was clear from the Senate debate that in the rush to get these bills passed, even the Republican majority was unsure as to what was in some of the bills. Perhaps the "three men in a room" who signed off on the budget behind closed doors knew what was in it, but they shared little of that information with their members until the last possible moment.

And some of what was in the budget bills was deeply problematic. A couple of particularly outrageous provisions granted tax exemptions for yachts costing more than \$230,000 and for private airplanes. I voted against the bill containing these provisions. While these tax giveaways to the wealthiest were added to the budget, provisions increasing the minimum wage and enacting the Dream Act were removed. In addition, the final budget cut \$22.5 million in funding under Emergency Assistance for families in NYC homeless shelters. It is unconscionable for the state to be prioritizing the needs of those who can afford luxury items like private planes and expensive yachts over low-wage workers, immigrant college students, and the homeless. I have no problem with people choosing to buy themselves luxury items, but why should we give them tax exemptions when our state lacks the tax revenue to meet the needs of so many in serious financial trouble?

The group Hedgeclippers has identified seven top hedge-fund-billionaire contributors who gave over \$5 million in campaign cash to Governor Cuomo and the Senate Republicans in recent years. Between them, these men owned or controlled at least eight private planes, one helicopter and five yachts, including one worth \$37 million and another worth \$60 million. When I see ridiculous tax breaks for yachts and airplanes suddenly appear in the budget at the last minute, it certainly crosses my mind that there is some connection between these campaign donations and these bizarre budget

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items. And so I was even more disturbed about the extremely limited ethics reforms that were included in the budget. I will discuss this in greater detail in the policy spotlight below, but without meaningful reform to our campaign financing system, tinkering around the edges of state ethics laws will do little to address the public's belief that our state government is built upon corrupt models of "pay to play".

I also voted against the bill implementing the Governor's changes to education policy. There were a number of problems with these proposals, but I was particularly concerned about tying teacher evaluations to state test scores. The ever-expanding reliance on standardized tests has already distorted what goes on in the classroom, and the governor's proposals will only increase the incentives for teaching to the test. Furthermore, as discussed in last month's bulletin, linking a portion of state aid to the implementation of the governor's education agenda violates the educational requirements in the state constitution.

There were some positive things included in the budget as well. The budget provides \$477 million for affordable and supportive housing programs (only some of which is new funding), including \$100 million for long delayed and much-needed repairs at NYCHA developments, and \$50 million for new middle class housing and for repairs and renovations at our Mitchell-Lama developments. Funding for a number of SUNY and CUNY programs was increased by nearly \$70 million over last year's budget. I was also pleased that funding for the urban youth jobs program has been doubled to \$20 million, and \$4.5 million has been included in the budget for emergency food services and programs, which help more than 3 million New Yorkers each year.

But, overall, I see this year's budget process as a big step backwards. For the last several years, we have had on-time budgets without resorting to messages of necessity, which at least ensured legislators and the public had some opportunity to know what they were voting on. Also, in violation of budget law, we never completed the quasi public process of budget conference table meetings – where there are target amounts disclosed to be negotiated within specific priority areas of spending. And there were lump sum agreements for spending to be determined at later dates, likely with no public notice.

In an effort to rush the budget through, many additional issues that were discussed, such as mayoral control of New York City schools and more equitable property tax policies for owners and renters, were simply excluded from the budget. I hope when we do address these issues later this session we do so in a more deliberative and democratic manner than the way we addressed this year's budget.

It should be noted that that since passage of the budget, neither the Governor, his Budget Director, nor the majority legislative leaders have participated in any type of press availability to explain what is and is not in the final budget, and to answer press questions.

So the process was exceptionally bad, and if I was grading all of us, we'd get a collective grade of D.

## POLICY SPOTLIGHT

### *Ethics*

The final budget included a number of modest ethics reform measures, but none of these so-called reforms address the major causes of recent Albany scandals. Among the measures included in the budget:

- *Enhanced disclosure requirements for outside income and disclosure of clients* if a legislator receives \$5000 or more in compensation from a single client, or \$10,000 or more in compensation from multiple clients. I am concerned that this provision has a number of exceptions that will continue to allow legislators to hide income sources. And disclosure should apply to the Executive Chamber as well as the two houses of the legislature.
- *Per diem reform*: require better documentation of legislative expense claims and the creation of an online database of legislators' per diem expenses.
- *Pension forfeiture*: a constitutional amendment that would extend forfeiture of pensions to currently sitting public officials if they are convicted of a crime after the amendment goes into effect. I have long carried legislation that would create a system of fines to accomplish pension forfeiture in a broader range of situations than this requirement.
- *Disclosure of Independent Campaign Expenditures*: Expands existing disclosure requirements to capture references to a specific candidate that do not specifically call for support.
- *Limits on Personal Use of Campaign Funds*: Somewhat stricter standards as to what campaign funds can be spent on. However, these requirements still allow far too many options for misuse of campaign funds, and have barely altered the existing law. For instance, a candidate could still buy clothes with campaign funds and say they were being used to campaign, and can still use campaign funds to pay legal fees for civil or criminal defense.

While all of these measures are slight improvements over existing law, none of them get at the root of the corrupt "pay to play culture" in Albany. What the final budget did not include was a host of campaign finance measures the Governor put in his original budget, including closing the LLC loophole that enables the same individual to use multiple entities to exceed any limits on donations. It also did not include the Governor's proposals for public financing of elections or lowering campaign contribution limits to candidate and "soft money" party committee accounts.

The influence of money over our political system is the problem that underlies everything that's wrong in Albany. I often say that it amazes me that so many legislators get arrested, given how much unethical behavior is perfectly legal. Without fundamental reforms to our campaign finance system, minor tinkering with our ethics laws will not address the problems we face in Albany.

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

### **Roundtable for Boomers and Seniors on April 16<sup>th</sup>:**

Senator Krueger's Roundtable for Boomers & Seniors is a 5-part program that provides an opportunity for constituents to come together to explore life issues that are relevant across the age span. This year we are looking at Caregiving and all its aspects.

The fourth session of this popular program will take place on Thursday morning, April 16<sup>th</sup>, at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70<sup>th</sup> Street. The program runs from 8:30 am – 10:30 am. We will discuss "End of Life Decisions" and "Ageism and the Dance of Marginality."

Bagels and coffee will be served. For more information, contact Alice Fisher by email at [alicefisher37@gmail.com](mailto:alicefisher37@gmail.com) or call 212-490-9535. RSVPs are required for this event.

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

I have filed a motion for committee consideration on my legislation (S.2556) that would ban the construction of any solid waste marine transfer station within 800 feet of public housing. This legislation would apply to the proposed East 91<sup>st</sup> Street site, as well as any other site near NYCHA developments. It is well established that economically under-served neighborhoods have higher asthma rates. For example, according to the City Department of Health, East Harlem has the highest rate of child hospitalization for asthma and other respiratory ailments in all of New York City. Many well-documented studies link air pollution to asthma attacks and other respiratory problems. Traffic, particularly truck traffic, is a major contributing factor to this type of pollution. The additional truck traffic generated by these facilities also poses a serious risk of pedestrian injuries to the many children and seniors who reside in public housing. The motion for consideration requires the chair of the environmental conservation committee to schedule a vote on the bill.

### **Proposed Changes to Zoning Regulations – WILL HAVE HUGE IMPACTS:**

Last month, I joined other Manhattan elected officials in writing to the Chair of the City Planning Commission regarding recently proposed changes to contextual zoning. We expressed concerns that the proposed citywide text amendment entitled "Zoning for Quality and Affordability" would undermine the principle of sound neighborhood planning, lead to a loss of rent regulated housing, and fail to address problems with the existing voluntary Inclusionary Housing program. The full text of the letter is available at <http://www.nysenate.gov/press-release/joint-letter-sen-krueger-and-elected-colleagues-proposed-changes-zoning-regulations>.

While the proposed zoning text will make it easier to create new apartments in contextual districts, there is a real concern this will create development pressure on existing buildings. In order to build those new, market-rate units, rent stabilized tenants may have to be displaced, resulting in a net loss of affordable units. Therefore, we are troubled that this plan is being put forward without a corresponding plan for protection of rent stabilized tenants in contextual districts where new development is being directed. Without new protections, this proposal could unduly put those tenants at risk.

We also have serious concerns about increased height limits and their impacts on contextual zones in Manhattan. These contextual zones were mapped due to the hard work of community advocates, and were often the result of hard compromises: neighborhoods trading increased density for height

limits, or neighborhoods agreeing to large upzonings in one area in exchange for contextual protections in another. By increasing height limits across the board, this administration is undermining these agreements made between previous administrations and neighborhood residents.

While there are also some very positive aspects to the proposed zoning changes, we urged the mayor to ensure a robust public review process with ample opportunity for community boards and the public to weigh in on these proposals. The City Planning Commission has just begun the official environmental review process and is accepting comments on the draft scope of work until April 30, 2015. Additional details about the proposal, and information about how to submit comments, are available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/zoning-ga/zoning-for-affordability-1.shtml>.

*These issues can seem complex and arcane....but we urge everyone to think through them and work with your elected officials, community boards and civic organizations to build momentum to support the good and protest the bad parts of this proposal that will have a massive impact on our neighborhoods for decades to come.*

### **New State Law Protects Consumers From “Surprise Medical Bills”**

I am thrilled to announce that a new state law on surprise medical bills went into effect on April 1st. Too often, consumers are held liable for medical bills that they had no way to prevent because they didn't know that a doctor was out-of-network, or because they had to see an out-of-network doctor in an emergency situation. I have also heard from many of my constituents about the need for insurance companies to expand provider networks and the need for more transparency about which providers are in-network.

This law provides protections for people who get services from providers who they didn't know were out-of-network. This means that when you get a "surprise bill" for services you and your doctor planned ahead for, or a bill for emergency services from an out-of-network provider, you will only have to pay the amount you would have owed if the service had been in-network.

You are protected from “surprise bills” when: a participating doctor refers you to an out-of-network doctor without your knowing; you are treated by an out-of-network doctor at an in-network hospital, but were not told that she or he was out of your network; and for emergency care when you did not have a chance to do this kind of checking.

The law also provides an “external appeal” process, reviewed by an outside party, if you want to see an out-of-network doctor and your plan denies your request. The appeal must be for a medically necessary service when there is not an appropriate provider in the plan's network.

The best way to protect yourself from surprise bills is to plan in advance. Before you get care, check with your plan, your physicians, and any medical facilities involved to find out who is in your network. Keep written records of any phone calls and information that you get from websites.

The NY State Department of Financial Services (DFS) has an excellent resource on [Your Rights as a Health Insurance Consumer](http://dfs.ny.gov/consumer/hrights.htm) (<http://dfs.ny.gov/consumer/hrights.htm>), which includes details on the new law and your other protections. Here are highlights:

#### **1. Information Your Health Plan Must Give You:**

**Provider Directory.** Your plan must provide a listing by specialty, of the name, address, and telephone number of participating providers and facilities. It must also include doctor board

certification information, languages spoken and any affiliations with participating hospitals. The listing must be posted on your plan's website. The listing must be updated within 15 days of the addition or termination of a provider from your plan's network or a change in a doctor's hospital affiliation.

## **2. Information Your Provider Must Give You:**

**The Health Plans in Which Your Provider Participates.** This must be given in writing or through a website before you receive non-emergency services and verbally when you schedule an appointment.

**Hospital Affiliations.** This must be given in writing or through a website before you receive non-emergency services and verbally when you schedule an appointment.

**Cost of Services.** If your provider does not participate in your plan, your provider must tell you the estimated amount your provider will bill you *if you ask*.

## **3. Access to Care:**

### **Right to Go Out-of-Network When Your Health Plan Does Not Have An In-Network**

**Provider.** Request an out-of-network referral when your plan does not have a provider with the appropriate training to meet your health care needs. This will be at no additional cost beyond what would you pay to see an in-network provider.

**Network Adequacy.** Health plans must have a network of providers adequate to meet the needs of members.

For a detailed policy brief on the new law, please contact my health care staffer, Susannah Pasquantonio, [spasquan@nysenate.gov](mailto:spasquan@nysenate.gov).

### **Roundtable on Moving a Pro-Transit Agenda In Albany:**

On Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 p.m., the Riders Alliance is hosting a lively evening of drinks, free pierogies and a special one-time conversation with three pro-transit allies in the New York State Assembly. They'll have a behind-the-scenes discussion about how Albany works and how a grassroots group can win better public transit. Featured speakers will be Assembly Members Erik Dilan, Robert Rodriguez and Nily Rozic. The event will take place at Solas bar, 232 E 9th St (btw. Stuyvesant St & 2nd Ave in East Village). To RSVP, go to [http://salsa.ridersny.org/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event\\_KEY=81776](http://salsa.ridersny.org/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=81776).

### **Town Hall on the Right to Counsel in Eviction Hearings:**

On Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, a coalition of tenant organizations and elected officials is holding a Town Hall on supporting legislation for the right to counsel in housing court. Currently, over 90 percent of landlords have legal representation in housing court cases, while less than 10 percent of tenants do. The Town Hall will take place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Goddard Riverside Community Center, 593 Columbus Avenue at West 88<sup>th</sup> Street. You must register on-line to reserve a seat, go to: <https://manhattanrighttocounsel.eventbrite.com> ; or call 212-799-9638 ext 210. For more information on the Right to Counsel <http://www.righttocounselnyc.org>

### **Upcoming Tenant Workshops:**

**Tenants and Neighbors** is hosting several tenant workshops in April and May:

#### **ORGANIZING A TENANT ASSOCIATION WORKSHOP: Monday, May 11, 2015**

**from 5:45-7:45pm.** Join Subsidized Housing Lead Organizer Jen Berkley for a workshop about tips and guidelines for starting and maintaining a powerful tenants association. RSVP to Jen at [JBerkley@tandn.org](mailto:JBerkley@tandn.org) or 212-608-4320 ext. 311.

All workshops take place at the Tenants & Neighbors office at 236 W 27th St. 4th Floor.

**RGB TESTIMONY WORKSHOP: Monday May 18 from 5:45-7:45pm.** Interested in testifying at RGB Public Hearings? Come prepared and powerful! Join us for a workshop on how to build a powerful testimony and let your voice be heard! RSVP to Darren at [Darren@tandn.org](mailto:Darren@tandn.org) or 212-608-4320 ext. 316.

**Lenox Hill Neighborhood House** is also hosting the following tenant events in May:

**Landlord Buy-Out Offers: A Legal Roundtable Discussion**

Friday, May 8, 2015 at 1:00 pm at the Senior Center @ St. Peter's Church, Lexington & East 54<sup>th</sup> Street.

Tuesday, May 12, 2015 at 4:15 p.m. at the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Navigating Housing Court**

Monday, May 11, 2015 from 11:00 am to 12 noon at the Senior Center @ St. Peter's Church, Lexington & East 54<sup>th</sup> Street.

Thursday, May 14, 2015 from 10:00 am to 11:00 am at the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Save the Date: Rally to Save One Million Homes on May 7:**

The Alliance for Tenant Power and Real Rent Reform Campaign are hosting a rally on May 7<sup>th</sup> at 5PM to fight for renewing and strengthening New York's rent regulation laws. Location to be determined. For more information contact Darren at 212-608-4320 or [Darren@tandn.org](mailto:Darren@tandn.org).

**Free Document Shredding and E-Waste Collection Event:**

Come join the NYPD's Crime Prevention Section to shred your documents containing your personal / sensitive information. This is a FREE service. You can also register your electronic devices with the NYPD's Operation ID Program.

In front of NY Sports Club, 151 East 86th Street, New York, New York 10028 on Sunday, May 17, 2015 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Bring old computers, laptops, printers, LED/LCD screens (not tube screen), keyboards, mice, cables, cell phones, tablets. All working devices received will include FREE data destruction services. Businesses are limited to 2 bankers boxes – Commercial accounts please call 718-575-5466

**Auto-enrollment for Certain Dual Eligible Medicaid/Medicare Enrollees Begins April 1:**

Seniors and people with disabilities who are "dual eligibles" -- who have both Medicare and Medicaid -- and who receive Medicaid *managed long term care* ([MLTC](#)) services and live in New York City have big changes coming. Enrollment in a new type of health insurance program, **Fully Integrated Duals Advantage** (FIDA) plans, will become *automatic* starting on April 1, 2015 for many MLTC members. Those automatically assigned to a FIDA plan are those MLTC members who have not "opted out" or chosen to voluntarily enroll in FIDA.

**What is FIDA?** With FIDA, enrollees can get all of their Medicare and Medicaid benefits from one health insurance plan, among other benefits. However, FIDA impacts current Medicare services like choice of doctors and prescription drugs, so it's important to determine if FIDA is right for you or your loved one. People have the right to disenroll from FIDA and go back to Original Medicare or Medicare Advantage, with MLTC, at any time.

NYLAG Caregiver Fact Sheet on FIDA is available for download at <http://www.wnyc.com/health/afile/166/522/>. The fact sheet is also available in Spanish (<http://www.wnyc.com/health/afile/202/527/>), Russian (<http://www.wnyc.com/health/afile/202/529/>), and Chinese (<http://www.wnyc.com/health/afile/202/531/>).

**Does this Affect Me?** MLTC members received notices explaining FIDA and the right to opt out since late December 2014. The notices inform them which FIDA plan they will be assigned to if they don't choose and enroll in a plan or *affirmatively opt out* of FIDA. Those who opt out will remain in their MLTC plans for Medicaid home care and other Medicaid services, and keep their separate Medicare coverage - either [Original Medicare](#) plus a [Part D plan](#) OR a [Medicare Advantage plan](#). Those in FIDA will have ONE PLAN for all Medicare and Medicaid coverage.

**Will everyone who has not opted out of FIDA be assigned to a FIDA plan on APRIL 1st? NO.** The first 7100 people will be enrolled in FIDA on April 1st. In each following month, another 7000 - 8000 people will be auto-assigned to FIDA plans. The schedule is based on birthday for people receiving SSI, and the date Medicaid authorization expires for everyone else.

#### **How to Learn More About FIDA:**

1. Call [NY Medicaid Choice](#), the State's FIDA and MLTC enrollment broker for more information, or to opt out: [1-855-600-3432](tel:1-855-600-3432). NYS official FIDA brochures are posted here: <http://nymedicaidchoice.com/program-materials>.

2. The [Independent Consumer Advocacy Network](#) (ICAN) has a network of non-profit organizations helping people choose whether or not to enroll in FIDA and also help with MLTC problems. NYLAG Evelyn Frank Legal Resources Program is part of the ICAN network: [212-613-7310](tel:212-613-7310), or [eflrp@nylag.org](mailto:eflrp@nylag.org). Community Services Society is ICAN's central headquarters: [1-844-614-8800](tel:1-844-614-8800), or [ican@cssny.org](mailto:ican@cssny.org).

#### **To File Complaints About MLTC OR FIDA:**

NYS Dept. of Health MLTC and FIDA Complaint Line: [1-866-712-7197](tel:1-866-712-7197) or [mltctac@health.ny.gov](mailto:mltctac@health.ny.gov)

CFEEC COMPLAINTS (if fail to schedule assessment in 7 days, etc.):  
[CF.Evaluation.Center@health.ny.gov](mailto:CF.Evaluation.Center@health.ny.gov)

Send a copy of your complaint to the ICAN Ombudsman Program: [ican\\_complaints@cssny.org](mailto:ican_complaints@cssny.org)

*Thanks to NYLAG information on FIDA.*

#### **Credit Report Settlement:**

Attorney General Eric Schneiderman recently reached a settlement with the three leading national credit reporting agencies to improve credit report accuracy, increase fairness in resolving consumer disputes of credit report errors, and protect consumers from unfair harm to their credit histories due to medical debt. It has been widely reported over the last few years that there are gross inaccuracies that can be found on the average consumer's credit report. Mistakes like these can misrepresent a consumer's creditworthiness and routinely block people's access to housing and jobs, particularly low income people and people of color. The Attorney General's agreement will reform the entire industry and provide vital protections for millions across the country. For more information and tips for consumers looking to check their credit report, visit <http://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-groundbreaking-consumer-protection-settlement-three-national>

### **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](tel:212-759-7358)

Site Hours: Wednesday 11:00am to 3:00pm and Saturday, 10:00am-2:30pm

67th Street Library, 328 East 67th Street

Telephone: [212-734-1717](tel:212-734-1717)

Site Hours: Friday, 10:00am-2:00pm

Community Church of New York, 40 East 35th Street

Telephone: [212-683-4988](tel:212-683-4988)

Site Hours: Thursday, 10:00am-2:00pm

Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL), 188 Madison Ave @ 34th Street

Telephone: [917-275-6975](tel:917-275-6975)

Site Hours: Wednesday, 10:00am-2:00pm.

Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center, 415 East 93rd Street

Telephone: [212-360-7620](tel:212-360-7620)

Site Hours: Friday, 10:30am-3:00pm

Stein Senior Center, 204 East 23rd Street

Telephone: [646-395-8083](tel:646-395-8083)

Site Hours: Thursday, 9:30am-2:30pm

Webster Branch Library, 1465 York Avenue

Telephone: [212-288-5049](tel:212-288-5049)

Site Hours: Monday, 11:00am-3:00pm

Yorkville Branch Library, 222 East 79<sup>th</sup> Street

Telephone: 212-744-5824

Site Hours: Friday, 10:30am-3:00pm

### **Filing Complaints Against Tax Preparers:**

New York State is one of only four states that regulates tax preparers. The State Department of Taxation and Finance Office of Professional Responsibility oversees tax preparers, and will investigate complaints about misleading advertising, fees, or fraudulent practices. To file a complaint, call 518-530-HELP or visit <https://www8.tax.ny.gov/TPCF/iflowStart>.

### **NY’s Health Plan Marketplace – Special Enrollment Period:**

NY State of Health, the State's official health plan Marketplace, has established special enrollment period (SEP) for individuals and families who had to pay a federal penalty for 2014 and had not been aware or had not understood that they would have to pay a penalty for not having health insurance coverage. This announcement follows similar statements made by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for the Federally-Facilitated Marketplace and other state-based Marketplaces.

The SEP will start on March 1 and end at 11:59 p.m. on April 30, 2015. Consumers who do not enroll during this period and do not meet the criteria for other SEPs will not be able to purchase coverage during the remainder of 2015 and may be subject to a federal tax penalty when they file their 2015 federal income taxes. Individuals who are eligible for Medicaid and Child Health Plus can continue to enroll throughout the year.

To be eligible for this SEP, individuals must attest that when they filed their 2014 federal tax return, that they paid a penalty for not having health insurance in 2014, and that they first became aware of or understood the implications of not having health insurance in 2014 when they filed their federal tax return.

**How Do I Apply?** For more information, or to apply for a plan, call the Marketplace at [1-855-355-5777](tel:1-855-355-5777) or go online to the Marketplace's website at <http://www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/>.

**Need Assistance?** For a complete list of certified health care navigators and counselors, go to <http://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/IPANavigatorSiteLocations> or call the Marketplace at [1-855-355-5777](tel:1-855-355-5777). These services are free for you. In my district, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House has a certified application counselor who can help you understand your options and enroll in a plan. Call to make an appointment: 212-218-0432 (no walk-ins). Please feel free to call my office at 212-490-9535 with any questions.

### **Bereavement Support Group:**

SPOP/Service Program for Older People has a few openings in Bereavement Support Groups starting this month. The program is offered entirely free of charge and groups meet on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Each group is facilitated by trained volunteer facilitators, with supervision by a clinical social worker. Groups meet for ten weeks and are generally comprised of 6-10 participants. SPOP offers groups specializing either in loss of a spouse or partner, or in a significant loss of another kind, such as a close friend or family member. This program has no religious affiliation and is open to adults of all ages and backgrounds. To learn more please visit [www.spop.org](http://www.spop.org) or call 212-787-7120 ext. 514

### **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 59<sup>th</sup> 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.

**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. The funding is provided by the Housing Preservation Initiative of the New York City Council. Each evening, at least one staff attorney will meet with individuals who are seeking specific legal advice.

For questions, contact the Urban Justice Center at (646) 459-3017 or the Office of Council Member Rosenthal at (212) 873-0282. Sign-up sheet starting at 6pm each evening.

**May 6, 2015:** SCRIE and DRIE

**June 3, 2015:** Succession Rights, Preferential Rights and Non-Primary Residence

**Affordable Housing Opportunities in Manhattan:**

**Riverside South Apartments** is now accepting applications for 55 affordable studio, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments under construction at 40 Riverside Boulevard in the Lincoln Square neighborhood in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$833 to \$1,082 depending on unit size. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$30,240 and \$50,340, depending on unit and family size. Preference will be given to Community Board 7 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 <http://housingpartnership.com/40riversideboulevard/>.

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: Riverside South Apartments, c/o Housing Partnership Development Corporation, 242 West 36th Street, 3rd Floor, New York, 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 April 20, 2015. *Applicants who submit more than one application will be disqualified.*

**133 Equities** is now accepting applications for 31 affordable studio, 1-, 2 and 3-bedroom newly rehabilitated apartments at 66 West 137th Street, 119 West 133rd Street and 229 West 121st Street in the Harlem neighborhood in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$1,155 to \$2,464 depending on unit size, family size and income. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$48,160 and \$138,440, 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.

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: 133 Equities, LLC, 316 West 118<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10026.

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 April 20, 2015. *Applicants who submit more than one application will be disqualified.*

**Prospero Hall** is now accepting applications for 32 affordable studio apartments newly constructed at 100 East 118<sup>th</sup> Street in the East Harlem neighborhood in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range is \$539. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$23,520 and \$35,280. Preference will be given to Community Board 6 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 <http://housingpartnership.com/40riversideboulevard/>.

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, send a postcard or self-addressed envelope to: Prospero Hall c/o Arete Management LLC, 42 West 39 Street, 14 Floor, New York, 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 May 5. *Applicants who submit more than one application will be disqualified.*

**160 Madison Avenue** is now accepting applications for 64 affordable studio, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments under construction at 40 Riverside Boulevard in the Lincoln Square neighborhood in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$565 to \$900 depending on unit size. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$20,743 and \$43,150, 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 <http://housingpartnership.com/40riversideboulevard/>.

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: One Sixty Madison, c/o Common Ground, PO Box 3620937 New York, NY 10129.

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 June 1, 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:

April 14, 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
April 14, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm, 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
April 14, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
April 15, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus  
April 15, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
April 15, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
April 16, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
April 16, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
April 28, 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
April 28, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
April 28, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
May 6, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus  
May 6, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
May 6, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
May 7, 7 – 9 am, 90 Street and York Avenue - Van  
May 7, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
May 7, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
May 8, 9 - 10 am, 57 Street and 1 Avenue – Van  
May 8, 10:30 - 11:30 am, 57 Street and 3 Avenue – Van  
May 8, 12:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street and 1 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, if the temperature outside falls below 40 degrees, the inside temperature is required to be at least 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

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. Complaints can also be submitted online at <http://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/service/1813/heat-or-hot-water-complaint>.

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District Office: 1850 Second Avenue | New York, NY 10128 | (212) 490-9535 | Fax: (212) 490-2151

Albany Office: Legislative Office Building, Room 905 | Albany, NY 12247 | (518) 455-2297 | Fax: (518) 426-6874

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