

# Liz Krueger



New York State Senate | 28th District

January 2013

## Message from Liz...

A new legislative session starts this month. As many of you are no doubt aware, Senate Republicans (led by Senators Dean Skelos and Tom Libous) and the Independent Democratic Conference or “IDC” (Senators Klein, Smith, Savino, Valesky and Carlucci) have announced their agreement to form a “majority coalition” in the New York State Senate. And that’s all we have to go on. Skelos and Klein claim they’ll share power and take turns as president pro tempore, but no one knows how or even if this will work.

Klein and his group have highlighted the legislation they want from this “bipartisan” coalition – legislation that the real Democratic Conference overwhelmingly supports and that, for the most part, the Republicans have spent decades opposing. So, many of us are confused as to why the IDC believes there is a better chance of passing these bills by supporting Republican control. That the Republicans have been conspicuously silent or have expressed outright opposition to this policy agenda should not give New Yorkers confidence that this coalition will deliver the legislation we need.

In November, New Yorkers elected a Democratic majority with 58 percent of the vote. New Yorkers therefore have a right to expect the “Independent Democrats” to secure floor votes this session for the progressive agenda they’ve claimed to support, including stronger gun laws, a minimum wage increase, real public campaign finance reform, the Reproductive Health Act, the New York State DREAM Act, stop-and-frisk reform, real rent reform, full funding of education aid to live up to our obligations to New York’s children, and mandate relief for struggling local governments.

These are bills that the Senate Republicans failed to deliver in their decades in the majority. These priorities would also surely top the agenda for a unified Democratic majority in the Senate. If the IDC cannot pass them in this “coalition,” how can they justify their actions to the clear majority of New Yorkers who voted for Democratic leadership?

The reason given by Senator Klein and the Independent Democrats for the necessity of this deal is that the state can ill afford the “dysfunction” of Democrats in charge. But for those with short memories: Skelos, Libous, Klein, and Smith were the respective leadership teams for the Republicans and Democrats in 2009, the infamous year when Albany dysfunction reached its peak. Of course they weren’t the only players: the nightmare Senators who were the chief villains, Espada, Monserrate and Carl Kruger, are actually out of the Senate – never to return.

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I've been in the Senate minority before, and I know my job is to hold my colleagues accountable on these issues, and to ensure that watered-down or "one-house" legislation is not rammed through the chamber only to be falsely passed off as real progress while little or nothing is actually accomplished.

For now, the Republicans who instigated the 2009 coup and the Democrats who were too weak to prevent it are the ones in the driver's seat. If this coalition is earnest in its desire to work collaboratively with all legislators, I and my colleagues in the Democratic Conference will be here to work with them and support responsible, progressive policies.

However: if this "coalition" of Republicans, party-switchers, and past failed Democratic leaders winds up thwarting that agenda, we will be here to give New Yorkers – and the members of the IDC, if they find this coalition doesn't live up to the hype – a better option.

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

### **Senator Liz Krueger’s Roundtable for Boomers & Seniors:**

In the past century, U.S. life expectancy at birth has climbed from 47 to 77 years, and according to some statistics the average life span today may be as high as 85 years. America's 78 million baby boomers began turning 65 last year at a rate of one every 10 seconds (3 million to 4 million per year). By the middle of the next decade, the U.S. will become a society with more Americans over age 60 than under age 15.

This year’s 5 part Roundtable series is being devoted to discussions around “**The Challenges of Longevity.**” Our guest speakers will be introducing such topics as: Longevity and Its Impact on Society, Health Care Challenges, Work Place Challenges, and Aging as a Community Experience, including Family Challenges and The Role of Technology.

The Roundtable meets once a month over a five-month period. **The third session, “What To Do With All That Stuff,” will take place on Thursday, January 24, from 8:30 am – 10:30 am at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street.**

To RSVP or request additional information, contact Rebekah Glushefski, [rglushefski.nyc@gmail.com](mailto:rglushefski.nyc@gmail.com), or call our office at 212-490-9535.

### **Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Clinics at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Senior Centers:**

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Legal Advocacy & Organizing department has partnered with and trained lawyers and legal assistants from the law firm of Paul Weiss and the Citi Legal Pro Bono Initiative in order to offer monthly clinics to low-income seniors who need assistance applying for and recertifying for SCRIE. Clinics are open to seniors citywide, but an appointment is necessary. Upcoming clinic locations and dates are:

Lenox Hill Senior Center, 343 East 70th Street, January 17th from 9-11AM. To make an appointment, call (212) 744-5022 ext. 1392.

Lenox Hill Senior Center at St. Peter’s Church, Lexington Avenue & East 54th Street, January 28th from 2-4PM. To make an appointment, call (212) 744-5022 ext. 1392.

### **Reinvent Payphones Design Challenge:**

The Reinvent Payphones Design Challenge offers all of us a chance to redesign New York City's payphones. Current payphone vendor agreements expire in 2014 and New York City is currently gathering feedback on the future of payphones. As part of this effort, the City is inviting students, urban planners, designers, technologists, architects, creators and legal and policy experts to build physical and/or virtual prototypes imagining a new public utility through payphone infrastructure.

Looking for a team to work with? Visit [collabfinder.com/reinventpayphones](http://collabfinder.com/reinventpayphones) to review ideas with potential partners. The City manages a telecommunications network of 11,412 public pay payphones throughout the five boroughs. Payphone use has decreased with mobile

device adoption, but payphones still serve the communications needs of thousands of New Yorkers a day, especially in times of emergency.

There will be an Open Information Session on January 23<sup>rd</sup> from Session, 5:30 - 7:00PM at 9 MetroTech Center in Downtown Brooklyn with City employees who manage payphone infrastructure and public space, and meet other interested participants.

Final submissions are due Monday, February 18, 2013 by 9AM EST. Submit digital files presenting your prototypes to [nyc.gov/reinventpayphones](http://nyc.gov/reinventpayphones). Up to 15 prototypes will be selected as semi-finalists and invited to participate in the Demo Day. Tuesday, March 5, 2013 Design Challenge Demo Day, 6:30 - 9:00PM. For more information or to register for updates, visit <http://www.reinventpayphones.splashthat.com>. (Thank you to Councilmember Gale Brewer to directing us to this exciting opportunity for civic participation).

### **Enriched Housing Available for Low and Moderate Income Seniors:**

The New York Foundation for Senior Citizens is currently accepting applications for those interested in its residence at 1850 Second Avenue, Manhattan. This location offers Section 8 eligible low/moderate income inhabitants comfortable living environments in modern, beautiful elevator buildings. Applicants must be age 65 or over and have some degree of functional impairment, but not require continuous medical, nursing care or supervision, and must receive an annual income of less than \$29,050 for single applicants and \$33,200 for couples.

Enriched Housing Program residents live as independently as possible with the assistance of a variety of home care and social services provided for them as needed. Supportive living arrangement and services offered to Enriched Housing Program residents include: food, shopping, housekeeping, meal preparation, daily nutritional hot meal served in congregate style, laundry, personal care, medication management and social service.

Each older person in the Enriched Housing Program has his or her own apartment. All apartments have fully equipped modern kitchens and private bathrooms. The buildings also feature lovely, comfortable socialization and recreation space.

Interested persons may obtain an application by writing to:

1850 Second Avenue Services Corp.  
C/O Brown Gardens  
225 East 93rd Street  
New York, NY 10128

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

44th Street Development LLC is now accepting applications for 41 affordable studio and 1, and 2 bedroom apartments under construction 260 West 26th Street in the Clinton Section of Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$492 to \$828 depending on income and unit size. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$18,789 and \$41,500, depending on unit and family size. Preference will be given to Community Board 4 residents for 50 percent of units, mobility-impaired persons for five percent of units, visual- and/or hearing-impaired units for two percent of units, and City of New York municipal employees for five percent of units. Preference for all units will go to New York City residents.

Applications may be downloaded from [www.26StreetAffordable.com](http://www.26StreetAffordable.com) or requested by mail from: 37 West 65th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10023. Please include a self-addressed envelope with your request.

Completed applications must be returned by regular mail only to a post office box that will be listed on the application and must be postmarked by January 30, 2013. 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 MetroCard and Pay-Per-Ride MetroCard, and refill MetroCards and Reduced-Fare MetroCards. Buses and vans will be in my district on the following dates and locations:

- January 15, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 St & 2 Ave – Van
- January 16, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 St & 3 Ave – Bus
- January 16, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 St & York Ave – Bus
- January 16, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 St & York Ave – Bus
- January 17, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 St & 2 Ave – Van
- January 22, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 St & Lexington Ave – Bus
- January 22, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 St & Lexington Ave – Bus
- January 24, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 69 St & Lexington Ave – Bus
- February 1, 9 - 10 am, 57 St and 1 Ave – Van
- February 1, 10:30 - 11:30 am, 57 St and 3 Ave – Van
- February 6, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 St & 3 Ave – Bus
- February 6, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 St & York Ave – Bus
- February 6, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 St & York Ave – Bus
- February 7, 7 - 9:30 am, 90 St & York Ave – Van
- February 7, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 St & 2 Ave – Van
- February 7, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 St & 2 Ave – Van
- February 12, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 St & Lexington Ave – Bus
- January 22, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 St & Lexington Ave – Bus
- February 14, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 69 St & Lexington Ave – Bus

The full mobile Metrocard schedule is available at <http://mta.info/metrocard/mms.htm>.

### **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.

## POLICY SPOTLIGHT

### Gun and Ammunition Regulation

Last month I joined more than 50 of my Senate and Assembly colleagues in writing to legislative leaders requesting action on a comprehensive package of legislation to address gun violence. In the wake of the senseless murders in Newtown, CT and so many other similar incidents, we simply cannot wait any longer to take meaningful action on guns. Much of this action should take place at the federal level, but there are still many steps New York State can and must take to strengthen our gun laws.

When I hear some of my colleagues at the state and federal levels say we don't need the types of common sense legislation discussed below, and that we just need to increase penalties for illegal use of guns, I actually feel my stomach churn. Can you name (or even imagine) one senseless act of gun violence where **"if only the perpetrator had stopped to read the criminal code and understood how serious the penalties were"** they would not have gone forward with their actions?

The outrage that has been provoked by the killings in Newtown have created more momentum for meaningful gun law reform than I have seen in my ten years in Albany, and it is critical that the legislature and Governor Cuomo act now. Among the measures that we must enact are:

#### **Require Universal Background Checks on the Sale of all Guns:**

- Require all gun sales to go through a licensed firearms dealer where a background check can be performed and proper records kept.
- Require criminal background checks on all gun dealer employees handling guns.

#### **Strengthen Assault Weapons Ban**

- Broaden the definition of assault weapon to ban any weapon that has one prohibited characteristic rather than two as specified in current law. Include a provision for Superintendent of State Police to review new assault weapons and add them to a list of banned weapons if they meet statutory criteria.
- Ban possession and sale of all assault weapons – no grandfathering.

#### **Strengthen High Capacity Ammunition Magazine Ban**

- Ban possession and sale of all high capacity ammunition magazines over 10 bullets.

#### **Microstamping Legislation to Help Law Enforcement Solve Gun Crimes**

- Require all semi-automatic handguns sold or delivered in New York to be equipped with a new technology that imprints a unique code onto the shell casings every time a gun is fired.

#### **Require Gun Licenses to be Renewed Every 5 Years**

- Require 5-year renewable licenses for all those owning handguns statewide. Currently licenses are only required to be renewed in New York City, Long Island and Westchester.

### **Improve Gun Dealer Regulations**

- Require gun dealers to have stringent recordkeeping, submit inventory to law enforcement, store firearms safely, and report lost or stolen firearms.

### **Regulate Ammunition Sales**

- Require background checks or showing of a permit on all ammunition sales. Look into types of ammunition sold if one does not have a handgun permit.

### **Limit people to the purchase of no more than one handgun per month.**

- Give law enforcement better tools to arrest and prosecute those who possess or share “community guns.”

Achieving passage of this package of legislation should be a priority for the Senate, and will be a good first test of the new majority coalition. It is also critical that we not squander this opportunity for meaningful legislation by passing watered-down bills riddled with loopholes or bills that just tweak sentencing requirements for existing crimes in an attempt to “look tough” without actually making our streets safer. I will be advocating for the strongest possible package of new gun and ammunition regulations.