

# Liz Krueger

New York State Senate | 28th District



March 2017

## Message from Liz...

March is the month of the budget dance between the legislative leaders and the Governor, and this year's negotiations will be particularly fraught as we must develop the budget in the shadow of uncertainty about what changes in federal policy will mean for New York. In the policy spotlight below I will discuss one of the ways the state can plan for this uncertainty, but I also want to highlight a number of concerns I have with the Governor's proposed budget, as well as some of his proposals that I think are well worth defending.

I am particularly concerned about proposed cuts to the MTA and senior programs, and an inadequate commitment to funding for both K-12 and higher public education. The Governor has proposed a couple of changes to transportation funding that break commitments to the MTA and are simply indefensible at a time of great strain on our transportation network. I am working with my colleagues to restore the \$65 million in funding through the Payroll Mobility tax to the MTA, and eliminate the \$121.5 million sweep of downstate transit funds.

The Governor has also proposed placing restrictions on \$17 million in Title XX funding currently used for senior programs. This funding would no longer be available for these programs, which would result in the closure of 65 senior centers and cuts to other vital senior programs in New York City. The fact that these cuts are even being proposed is a sign of the absurdity of the budget dance, as I am confident they will be opposed by legislators in both houses and on both sides of the aisle. But by making us fight to restore this funding, the Governor can try to get something else out of the legislature.

I am also deeply concerned about the Governor's plan for K-12 education funding, which would break a long-standing state commitment to address inequity in education funding. The Governor is proposing doing away with the Foundation Aid formula first enacted in 2007 to ensure adequate state support for high-needs urban and rural districts. The Governor's proposal would lock in inequities that have benefited wealthy suburban districts. I have joined my Senate colleagues in calling for full implementation of the Foundation Aid formula to be phased in over the next three years, with a \$2.1 billion increase for fiscal years 2017-18.

The Governor has offered a proposal to create a system of free tuition for families with annual incomes under \$125,000 who send their children to New York's public colleges. Addressing college affordability is an important issue, but I am concerned that this proposal is not accompanied by an

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investment in addressing the critical needs of these colleges, including funding for additional faculty, increasing Community College base aid, and adequately funding critical maintenance. In addition, the Governor has also proposed cutting college opportunity programs that help ensure college access for those most in need of financial and academic support. Cutting these programs is counter to the Governor's stated goal of improving access to education.

One proposal of the Governor's that I very much support would control prescription drug costs. Under the proposal, the state would establish a board to set a ceiling on what Medicaid would pay for high cost prescription drugs. In addition, drug companies would be assessed a surcharge if that ceiling price is exceeded for drugs sold to non-Medicaid consumers. The surcharge revenues would be used to reduce costs for private insurance plans. Not surprisingly, the pharmaceutical industry is lobbying hard against this proposal, but I believe it would be an important step forward in reducing the cost of our Medicaid program and helping ensure all consumers have access to the drugs they need.

And one final point about the budgeting process – all too frequently we put money in the budget but never get around to spending it. Last year the Governor included a \$2 billion appropriation for affordable housing and homeless services. Unfortunately, the Memorandum of Understanding that was supposed to allocate the money was never executed, so this year he included \$2.5 billion for the same purpose. But this money is supposed to be part of a \$20 billion plan over 10 years, meaning that after this year's budget we will be almost a year behind. We need get that money out the door.

Over the next few weeks these and many other issues will be negotiated, and unfortunately I fully expect that most of those negotiations will be conducted behind closed doors by legislative staff and the "three men in a room". I will be working with my Democratic colleagues to make sure our concerns about this budget are heard. Now more than ever, New York needs to be a leader in the fight for progressive policies that address the needs of our cities, our seniors, and all the people of our state.

## **POLICY SPOTLIGHT**

### *Contingency Budgeting*

The 2017-2018 budget is due April 1, and this is a particularly challenging year to accurately predict state funding needs. We are negotiating a budget in a period of great uncertainty about how changes at the federal level will impact New York. For instance, as I mentioned in a previous newsletter, the Governor's office has indicated that a repeal of the Affordable Care Act could cost the state up to \$3.7 billion, depending on the details of the repeal. Washington is discussing cutting Medicaid and Medicare and eliminating funding for family planning services. Federal funding for education, housing, legal services, the arts, transportation, and many other critical areas could also be cut, but when we pass the budget we will not know how severe those cuts will be.

I believe that it is critical in times of uncertainty for our state to be prepared for a variety of contingencies. While state resources are limited, we should be making sure that we put at least some additional dollars away to address the most critical needs of New Yorkers should federal funding for meeting those needs be taken away. That is why I have joined my Senate Democratic Colleagues in calling for the creation of a contingency fund of \$1 billion. Such a fund cannot meet

every possible cut that might come down from the federal government, but it will dramatically increase our flexibility by creating the possibility of at least triaging the worst impacts.

The Governor's budget proposes adding \$150 million to the State's Rainy Day fund "if fiscal conditions permit." The fund currently stands at \$1.8 billion and has not been increased for years, so I am pleased that there is recognition by the Governor of the importance of increasing the fund. However the current financial realities require a significantly larger commitment of resources. It is a basic principle of budgeting that in times of financial uncertainty, more money needs to be put away for contingencies. I and my Senate Democratic colleagues will be working to encourage the Senate majority to adopt similar language in their budget, as prudent fiscal planning should not be a partisan issue.

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

### **Senator Krueger's Roundtable for Boomers & Seniors – Thursday March 9th:**

This 5-part program provides an opportunity for neighbors to come together to explore life issues that are relevant across the age span. At each session you will hear from and engage with professionals who are knowledgeable on topics that are of concern to the growing population of older adults in New York City.

This year our topic is "Controversies in Aging." Sessions will be held on:

- Social Security: Retirement Insurance or Social Safety Net?
- Aid in Dying in New York: Debating Proposed Legislation
- The Court System and Older Adults
- Medicare – Why Isn't Vision, Hearing and Dental Covered?
- Public Policy & the Gray Lobby – Making Government Work

The program meets one morning per month in November, December, March, April, and May.

**Sessions are from 8:30am to 10:30am at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th St.**

Session 3 – **Thursday March 9th:** The Court System – Elder Abuse and Services for Older Adults. This session will feature presentations by Judge Debroah A. Kaplan and Joan Levenson, Esq. from the Office of the Statewide Coordinating Judge for Family Violence Cases. Please RSVP by contacting my office at 212-490-9535, or via email at [liz@lizkrueger.com](mailto:liz@lizkrueger.com).

### **Medicare Rights Center Community Awareness Events:**

Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh and the Medicare Rights Center are holding a Community Medicare Awareness event on Thursday March 16th that I am cosponsoring. Learn about Medicare eligibility, costs, and coverage, Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs), programs that help pay associated Medicare costs and Extra Help for the Part D Prescription Drug Benefit. The event will take place from 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. at the Grand Street Settlement, 80 Pitt Street. For more information, contact Brian Kavanagh's office at (212) 979-9696.

In addition Assembly Health Chair Richard Gottfried and the Medicare Rights Center will be holding a similar event on Thur., March 23 from 3:00pm-5:00pm at Newman Conference Center Baruch

College, 151 E 25th St, Room 763, (Between Third & Lexington Avenues). For more information on these events, please call: (212) 807-7900

**Senior Resource Day at Church of the Incarnation, Sunday, March 26:**

The Church of the Incarnation, located at 209 Madison Avenue at 35th Street, will be holding a Senior Resource Day on Sunday March 26th from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Volunteers will be available to offer one-on-one tech help on email, Facebook, smartphones, tablets and other tech issues. Free hearing screenings will also be offered. To RSVP, call 347-886-6532. If you would like to volunteer at the event, call 212-689-6530 or email [adannhauser@churchoftheincarnation.org](mailto:adannhauser@churchoftheincarnation.org).

**Applications are open for the 2017 Summer Youth Employment Program through March 17:**

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) provides New York City youth between the ages of 14 and 24 with paid summer employment for up to six weeks in July and August. Participants work in entry-level jobs in a variety of industries including:

- Arts and Recreation
- Educational Services
- Financial Services
- Healthcare/Medical
- Hospitality/Tourism
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Marketing/Public Relations
- Media/Entertainment
- Real Estate/Property
- Retail

SYEP also provides workshops on job readiness, career exploration, financial empowerment, financial

literacy, and opportunities to continue education and social growth. Programs are located in community-based organizations in all five boroughs of New York City. Youth can apply for the program online

or at a community-based organization during the application period. Participants are selected by lottery

for the program. Online applications are available on the DYCD website at

<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/dycd/services/jobs-internships/summer-youth-employment-program-syep.page>.

For more information, call 311 or DYCD Youth Connect (1-800-246-4646).

**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, March 11, 11-3PM:

Biscuits & Bath Sutton Place, 1064 1st Avenue at East 58<sup>th</sup> Street

Saturday, March 25, 11-3PM:

Biscuits & Bath Sutton Place, 1064 1st Avenue at East 58<sup>th</sup> Street

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

**Learn Computer Skills with Search and Care's Silver Circles Program:**

Want to learn more about what a computer can help you do or learn, but were afraid to ask? Search and Care's new Silver Circles program helps people (age 65+) learn and use basic computer skills based on your needs (connect with family using email, how to use the Internet as a resource). Come to our office for one-on-one tutorials, or we can consider coming to your home if getting out is a hardship. If you don't own a computer and need in-home instruction, we may come to you with our iPad. If you're interested in participating as a student – or in becoming a Search and Care Silver Circles volunteer to coach others – please contact our Connectivity Coordinators, Herbert Duran ([duan@searchandcare.org](mailto:duan@searchandcare.org)) or Tegan Rein ([rein@searchandcare.org](mailto:rein@searchandcare.org)) or by phone at 212-289-5300. Search and Care programs and services are fee-free.

**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 11:00am to 3:00pm 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, 10:00am-2:00pm

Epiphany Library, 228 East 23rd Street

Telephone: 212-679-2645

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

Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center, 415 East 93rd Street

Telephone: 212-360-7620  
Site Hours: Friday, 9:30am-2:00pm

Webster Branch Library, 1465 York Avenue  
Telephone: 212-288-5049  
Site Hours: Monday, 11:00am-3:00pm except 2/16

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 an 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).

### **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: call [212-218-0503 ext. 6](tel:212-218-0503) 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 2nd and 4th 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 59th Street and on Roosevelt Island.
- 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:**

Dorie Miller Apartments is now accepting applications for 40 affordable studio and 1-, 2- and 4-bedroom apartments newly renovated at 304 West 152nd Street, 232 West 149th Street, 2797 Frederick Douglass Boulevard & 2472 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard in the Harlem neighborhood in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$822 to \$1,371 depending on income and unit size. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$30,069 and \$76,104, depending on unit 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. A full description of the building and application process is available at <https://a806-housingconnect.nyc.gov/nyclottery/AdvertisementPdf/326.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: Dorie Miller Apartments, 87-14 116th Street Richmond Hill, NY 11418.

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 March 31, 2017. Applicants who submit more than one application may be disqualified.

### **VOLS Legal Clinics for Low-Income Residents Over Age 60:**

The Volunteers of Legal Services (VOLS) Elderly Project provides pro-bono legal services to low-income people over age 60 who live in Manhattan. VOLS conducts legal clinics each month at senior centers where seniors can discuss their legal concerns in confidence, receive legal advice and, where appropriate, obtain referrals to a volunteer lawyer for representation. Areas of legal assistance include wills, medical directives, powers of attorney, housing, consumer matters and Medicaid. Over 150 lawyers serve on their Elderly Project volunteer attorney roster.

Burden Center for the Aging, 1484 First Avenue (between 77th & 78th Streets) — 2 pm — second Friday of each month, except 4<sup>th</sup> Friday this April (March 10, April 28). Call Velda Murad at 212-879-7400 for information.

Stanley Isaacs Senior Center, 415 East 93rd Street (east of 1st Avenue) — 10 am — third Friday of each month (March 17, April 21). Call Khristel Simmons at 212-360-7620 ext, 158 for information.

Encore Community Services Senior Center, St. Malachy's Church - 239 West 49th Street (between Broadway and 8th Avenue) — 10 am — fourth Monday of Each Month (March 27, April 24). Call Narobe Arias at 212-581-2910, ext 125 for information.

### **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:

March 14, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 14, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 14, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 15, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus  
March 15, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
March 15, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
March 16, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
March 16, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
March 21, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 21, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 21, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
April 5, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus  
April 5, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
April 5, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
April 6, 7 – 9 am, 90 Street and York Avenue - Van  
April 6, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
April 6, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
April 7, 9 - 10 am, 57 Street and 1 Avenue – Van  
April 7, 10:30 - 11:30 am, 57 Street and 3 Avenue – Van  
April 7, 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>.