



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Senator Avella and Idc Leader Klein Join Elected Officials and Community Activists to Commend Rejection of Pan AM Proposal

JEFFREY D. KLEIN July 9, 2015

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(**QUEENS, NY**) Today, State Senator Tony Avella and Independent Democratic Conference Leader Jeff Klein joined elected officials and community activists to praise the rejection of the Pan Am shelter proposal.

The proposal, returned by the Office of the Comptroller for concerns about health, safety, and fire code violations, has now been rejected for the second time in two months. The decision came just two days after Senator Avella, IDC Leader Klein, and other elected officials and community activists held a press conference to call for the contract's rejection.

"I applaud Comptroller Stringer in his decision to reject this disgraceful contract proposal to convert the illegal Pan Am shelter into a permanent facility. Today, the voices of homeless families and the community as a whole have been heard. While I thank the Comptroller for his leadership on this issue, our work is not yet done. We must continue to work to fix this broken system - I urge the Assembly to pass companion legislation to Senator Klein's bill to protect our neighborhoods going forward. We must ensure that our communities have a stage on which to raise their voices against future Pan Am sites," **said Senator Avella (D-Northeast Queens), Chair of the Senate Task Force on the Delivery of Social Services to New York City.**

Senator Klein's bill (**S. 4542-A**) would require that the New York City Planning Commission hold a public community forum prior to the approval, modification or denial of a shelter site or lease renewal. The bill would provide local community members, neighborhood associations, and community groups an opportunity to learn about and provide comment on

a proposed shelter before it has been established.

"New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer's decision to not award a \$42 million, five-year contract to Samaritan Village, is a win-win for residents in Elmhurst and homeless families living in the violation-riddled former Pan-Am hotel. I applaud Comptroller Stringer's review of the facts that drew concern from elected officials and the community and look forward to working with him in the future. While it's positive that the community's voice was heard in this case, far too many times it is not. In neighborhoods across the city, the Department of Homeless Services, fails to communicate with residents before moving a shelter into town. That's why the Senate overwhelmingly passed my legislation that requires community input and empowers the City Planning Commission to accept, modify or reject social service projects. I urge my colleagues in the Assembly to do the same," **said IDC Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester).**

"The Comptroller made the right call and I thank him for not moving to approve a shelter at this site. It is critical that we address the needs of the homeless in our city. But this site is not an appropriate location for a shelter. The many problems and poor conditions do not serve the homeless well, and the blatant lack of transparency has been a total snub to the community. Hopefully in the end, the contract for this facility will not be approved," **said U.S. Rep. Grace Meng (D-Queens), who wrote to Stringer urging him to reject the contract.**

"I appreciate the diligence and consistency used by City Comptroller Scott Stringer in rejecting the appeal submitted by Samaritan Village for operating the homeless shelter at the Pan Am Hotel site. Individuals in need of shelter deserve appropriate living conditions and I don't believe the Pan Am site satisfies those conditions," **said Senator Joseph Addabbo (D-Elmhurst).**

"I want to thank New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer for carefully considering the troubling conditions at the Pan American Hotel and reaching the same conclusion that I have—that the Pan Am Hotel is not meeting the needs of the families being housed there. The families at the Pan Am deserve a safe, clean and violation-free living space. I urge the Department of Homeless Services to use this time to find more suitable sites as well as more permanent housing for these families," **said Senator Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Elmhurst, Flushing).**

"I applaud the City Comptroller for making the critical decision of rejecting the proposed five-year contract to transform the Pan Am into a permanent homeless shelter.

Communities must be involved when the City decides to convert any property into a homeless shelter. At a bare minimum, the City needs to ensure the safety of facilities for homeless families who are seeking a place to live, as well as keep neighbors informed of what is happening within their own backyards," **said Senator Jose Peralta (D-East Elmhurst).**

"I commend Comptroller Scott Stringer for, once again, standing up for what's right. The 'deny' stamp should be used in instances when it is clear that the public interest is not being met. That criterion applies here. Samaritan Village has been unable to prove that it is capable of running the Boulevard Family Shelter adequately, putting our homeless families and our local residents at risk. Reports of unsanitary and unsafe conditions at the facility call into question Samaritan Village's ability to run the shelter. It is our duty to house the homeless with dignity and care. They deserve better," **said Assemblyman Francisco Moya (D-Jackson Heights).**

"Elmhurst United would like to thank Comptroller Stringer for again rejecting the \$42 million dollar Pan Am shelter contract. We appreciate that his office recognizes that these serious outstanding violations endanger the homeless residents and their neighbors. Samaritan Village and DHS should cease re-submitting this contract as the Pan Am shelter is too costly to upgrade in order to comply with state and local laws, in particular, providing a cooking facility in each living unit and a childcare facility at this site. We also would like to thank Senator Tony Avella and his staff for their continuing support and efforts on this matter," **said Jennifer Chu, President of Elmhurst United.**