



June 18, 2013

Dear Friend,

As the 2013 Legislative Session enters its final week, I am working with my colleagues in the State Senate Democratic Conference to ensure passage of many critical bills, including the *Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act* (GENDA), Governor Cuomo's full, 10-point *Women's Equality Act*, a moratorium on hydrofracking, a 30% rent cap for HASA's rental assistance program, the *NYCHA Real Property Public Review Act*, an act subjecting disposition of NYC public school property to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, election and campaign finance reform, the *Farm Workers Fair Labor Practices Act*, a legalization of medical marijuana and decriminalization of possession of small amounts of marijuana, among other issues.

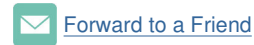
Please find below an update on my recent activities in Albany and the district. As always, please don't hesitate to contact me about any of these issues or other ideas or concerns you may have.

All best,

NYS Senator Brad Hoylman  
27th Senate District

**Assessing New York's Hate Crimes Law in Wake of Recent Wave of Anti-LGBT Violence**

On June 14, I held a public forum in my capacity as Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Investigations and Government Operations to assess the efficacy of New York State's 13-year-old [Hate Crimes Law](#), including how state and local government agencies are implementing and enforcing the Law and whether amendments should be considered to expand the data



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collection, statistical reporting, law enforcement training requirements and/or otherwise further the Law's goals.

Testimony was taken from a wide array of experts, including Adam Dean, Chief of the New York State Crime Reporting Program, New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services; Charles M. Guria, Executive Assistant District Attorney and Chief of the Civil Rights Bureau, Office of Kings County District Attorney Charles Hynes; Kristen Clarke, Chief of the Civil Rights Bureau, Office of the New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman; New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn; New York State Senator Daniel Squadron; New York City Councilmember Daniel Dromm; former New York State Senate Thomas K. Duane; the Anti-Defamation League; Council on American-Islamic Relations/New York City Chapter; New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project; the Sikh Coalition; Human Rights Campaign; the Michael Sandy Foundation; and Nicholas Porto, a recent crime victim.

Suggestions included amending the New York's Hate Crimes statute to mandate training for law enforcement personnel and community education, and requiring periodic reviews of the law's implementation. Several witnesses advocated for alternatives to incarceration for hate crime offenders and recommended passage of the proposed *Michael Sandy Act*, which would limit evidence of a defendant and hate crimes victim status as members of the same protected category. Written testimony provided by the witnesses is available for download [here](#) and [here](#).

### **Testifying in Support of Stronger Rent Regulations and Against Rent Hikes**

On June 10, the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) held a public hearing regarding its proposed amendments to the Rent Stabilization Code, the Tenant Protection Regulations and the State and New York City Rent Control Regulations. While I firmly believe that much more needs to be done to ensure all tenants have access to safe, affordable housing, and to combat landlord fraud and misconduct, the proposed amendments are a welcome improvement to the rent regulations. Please see my testimony [here](#).

Three days later, at the New York City Rent Guidelines Board's (RGB's) only public hearing on its proposed rent

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increases of up to 6.25% for one year lease renewals and up to 9.5% for two year lease renewals in rent stabilized apartments, I submitted testimony urging the RGB to impose a freeze on rents for all rent regulated apartments as well as for lofts, hotels, rooming houses, single room occupancy buildings and lodging houses. Please see that testimony [here](#).

### **Demanding a Vote on the *Women's Equality Act***

On May 15, I joined State Senator Liz Krueger, other Democratic State Senators, State Assembly Members and City Councilmembers, and leaders of the Women's Equality Coalition at a press conference restating our commitment to passage of Governor Cuomo's full 10-point *Women's Equality Act* in this year's legislative session. Just last week, I joined my colleagues in the New York State Bipartisan Pro-Choice Legislative Caucus in sending a letter to New York State Assembly Speaker Silver and New York State Senate Majority Coalition Leaders Skelos and Klein urging them to bring the full *Women's Equality Act* to the floor for a vote before the end of session this year.

It's unconscionable for the legislature not to act in a decisive and comprehensive manner and address the disparities that exist for millions of women across New York State, whether it be in pay equity, workplace discrimination, reproductive freedom, or domestic violence safeguards. Governor Cuomo has crafted a comprehensive package of legislation to help end gender-based discrimination and inequality. Enacting it will send the message that New York is finally getting serious about gender equality. It's incumbent upon the Senate leadership to allow an open floor vote now.

### **Calling for a Moratorium on Hydraulic Fracturing**

On May 22, I joined the Senate Democratic Conference to call for action to enact a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing and require a comprehensive health impact study. The moratorium will provide experts more time to assess concerns about the potential impacts hydrofracking will have on New York's environment and economy. I am co-sponsoring [S.4236-A](#) along with my Senate Democratic colleagues to demand a moratorium on fracking until a comprehensive health impact assessment is completed.

### **Making the Case for a 30% Rent Cap for Low-Income**

### **People with HIV/AIDS**

Because of a loophole in state law, the New York City HIV/ AIDS Services Administration's (HASA) rental assistance program doesn't cap participants' rent contribution at 30 percent of their income, unlike every other low-income housing program in New York State. This means that approximately 10,000 permanently disabled, low-income people with HIV/AIDS end up paying upwards of 70 percent of their monthly fixed income on rent – forcing them to choose between paying their rent and satisfying other essential needs. I've introduced legislation ([S.3022](#)) that would close this loophole and bring HASA into line with other rental assistance programs in the state. Please see my recent *Gay City News* op-ed making the case for passage of this critical bill [here](#).

### **Joining Senator Schumer in Pushing Amtrak to Add Bike Cars on New York Lines**

On June 17, I joined U.S. Senator Charles Schumer and my colleague, New York State Senator Little (*R*-Queensbury), at a press conference calling on Amtrak to add baggage cars capable of carrying bicycles on their Adirondack and Ethan Allen trains, which run from Penn Station to Albany and Saratoga, and other points north. There presently is not room on those lines for passengers to bring their bicycles, but Senator Schumer revealed that Amtrak is currently building new baggage cars that could be configured for bike storage at a facility in Elmira, NY. Moreover, Amtrak already has successful "Bring Your Bicycle On Board" programs on its Boston-Portland line, New York-Charlotte line, and in California, where the program is so popular that Amtrak had to begin requiring reservations. I was proud to join Senator Schumer and Senator Little in promoting this convenient and affordable new way for my constituents to access the beautiful bicycle trails of the Adirondacks and surrounding areas. This initiative will generate revenue and create a new tourism link between New York City and Upstate, as well as promote bike vacations, one of the healthiest and most environmentally friendly forms of recreation. The *Wall Street Journal* ran an Associated Press item on our efforts, which you may read [here](#).

### **Educating Constituents about Identity Theft and Consumer Fraud**

On May 28, I held a forum on Identity Theft & Consumer Fraud at Roosevelt Hospital. In New York State alone, 82,289 people filed consumer fraud complaints last year.

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in America.

I am grateful to the many constituents who attended and the panelists from the offices of New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr., as well as the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs and the New York Better Business Bureau. For information on whom to contact if you are a victim of identity theft, please see my downloadable brochures on protecting yourself from identity theft and knowing your rights as a consumer [here](#) and [here](#). I also encourage you to contact my office at (212) 633-8052 if you have been a victim of consumer fraud or identity theft and need assistance or have any questions.

We were also joined at the forum by a representative from New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli's Office of Unclaimed Funds, who helped more than a dozen individuals identify and submit claims for funds due to them. You may do your own search for lost money or funds by visiting the Comptroller's website [here](#).

### **Supporting Parents' Call for Transparency in State's High-Stakes Tests**

At the request of parents in my district, I recently wrote a letter to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) regarding the high-stakes standardized English Language Arts and Mathematics tests that the agency has contracted with Pearson PLC (Pearson) to design. Given the legitimate questions about Pearson's reliability, I urged NYSED to require Pearson to release to parents or legal guardians of every child who took this past April's State Assessment Exams a copy of the individual student's completed and graded exam. Parents deserve to see first-hand whether their children's exams were graded correctly and whether the questions asked align with material their children had been taught. Please see my letter [here](#).

### **Urging Robust Community Input in Future of Bayview Building**

As you may know, New York State's Fiscal Year 2013-14 Budget approved the closure of Bayview Correctional Facility, a former medium security women's prison located at 550 West 20th Street. While I am strongly opposed to our State's Prison-Industrial Complex and support the

Governor's efforts to right-size our prison network, I am concerned about the impact of Bayview's closure, which will pull the women who were incarcerated there farther away from their families and support networks, increasing the chances of recidivism. I have been working with other elected officials and members of CB4 to urge Empire State Development, which has been tasked with the sale of the building, to include us in the discussion about the future of the building. My office recently organized a tour of the facility for CB4 and others to assess its historic significance and possible community uses. I will continue to fight to ensure that the building remains publicly owned and that the community is included in planning for its future.

#### **Keeping Commuter Buses off of Residential Streets**

Recently, the residents of West 44 Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues have been experiencing a significant increase in the number of empty commuter buses driving, parking, double-parking, and idling on their street as they travel to and from the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT). Such buses are required by law to access the bus terminal using "Through" or "Local Truck Routes" streets making their use of the block illegal. On May 6, I joined New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and other area elected officials in writing to Patrick Foye, the Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), and the various bus carriers who use the PABT demanding that they address the issue immediately. I was pleased to receive a letter from Mr. Foye informing me that the PANYNJ had reached out to the bus carriers advising them of their obligation to uphold the law, but we need to keep the pressure on them. I will continue to work with the PANYNJ, my colleagues in government and the West 44<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association to ensure residents' quality of life is not unnecessarily harmed by commuter bus traffic. Ultimately, as I have said, we need a new bus garage to meet the increased demand created by the growth of the industry.

#### **Expressing Concerns about the Proposed East Midtown Rezoning**

On May 13, I testified before the Multi-Board Task Force on East Midtown Rezoning at its hearing on the New York City Planning Commission's proposed rezoning of East Midtown. In my comments, I highlighted my belief that any plan to rezone East Midtown must include protections for the many historically and architecturally important

buildings in the area as well as a concrete plan to finance the much-needed improvements to the area's transportation infrastructure in a timely manner. I also stressed that such a consequential proposal, which will transform a large swath of the heart of Manhattan and draw new workers and visitors into an already overburdened transit hub, requires rigorous analysis, deliberation and planning through a robust and comprehensive community-driven review. Please see my testimony [here](#).

### **Envisioning the Next Chapter for Beacon School**

#### **Building**

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) has asked Manhattan Community Board 7 (CB7) and other Community School District 3 (D3) stakeholders to develop a plan to open a new public school or schools in the current Beacon High School building, located at 227 W 61st Street, once it is vacated in the summer of 2015. CB7 Chair Mark Diller has coordinated a working group, comprised of various D3 stakeholders, to develop this plan. On May 16, I attended a public hearing organized by the working group to solicit community input on the issue. As a parent, I was impressed by the turnout, which demonstrates the community's investment in the education of its children. I commend the working group members, and especially Chair Diller, for their efforts to ensure that the next use of the building reflects the needs and wants of the entire community. As I stated at the hearing, whatever determination is made, I will work to make sure DOE honors this democratic process.

### **Rallying for the Former CHARAS/EI Bohio Community Center**

On May 15, I joined the SOCCC-64 coalition, Councilmember Rosie Mendez, Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh, members of CB3, and Lower East Side residents in marching and rallying to save the former CHARAS/EI Bohio Community Center located at 605 East 9 Street from being converted into student dormitories. Together, we delivered the message loud and clear to Gregg Singer, the current owner of the building, and Jamshed Bharucha, the president of Cooper Union, that the community does not want dormitories in our former community center. For decades, CHARAS/EI Bohio Community Center was a cherished public space for Lower East Side residents and I will continue to work with allies to return the building to community use.

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