

NEWS FROM

NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
BRAD HOYLMAN

(D) 27TH SENATE DISTRICT



March 2013

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Dear Friend,

Below is an update on some issues of interest.

If you have any ideas, questions, or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (212) 633-8052 or via email at hoylman@nysenate.gov and please visit my website at hoylman.nysenate.gov for updates.

Sincerely,

Brad Hoylman
New York State Senator
27th District

In This Issue:

- [Urging Swift Passage of the Reproductive Health Act](#)
- [Calling for Immediate Action to Increase – and Index – the Minimum Wage](#)
- [March 21 Rally Against Gun Violence](#)
- [Making the Case for Comprehensive Campaign Finance Reform](#)
- [Continuing the Ban on Fracking](#)
- [Expressing Dismay over State Senate Vote to Permit Mixed Martial Arts](#)
- [Supporting Professor Jenny Rivera’s Confirmation to the Court of Appeals](#)

Urging Swift Passage of the *Reproductive Health Act*

I am a strong proponent of Governor Cuomo *Women's Equality Act*, announced in his State of the State address, which would guarantee pay equity for women, strengthen human trafficking laws, stop sexual harassment in all workplaces and codify a women’s right to choose, among other provisions. It is a groundbreaking effort to end discrimination and inequality based on gender and I am fully committed to working with Governor Cuomo and my colleagues in the State Senate to

get it passed this year.

I was recently asked by a reporter from the Albany TV news program "Capital Tonight" if I would be open to breaking out the *Reproductive Health Act* from the rest of the women's equality bill. As I explained, I would only do so if it meant securing quick passage of that legislation. "I'm for getting it passed in the most expeditious way possible. If breaking it out were to achieve that then I would of course be supportive. The most important thing is this is now on the table. It's been stalled for years by the former leadership of the State Senate and now I'm hopeful that we in the Democratic conference...can provide the support and the leadership to make it happen."

To read coverage of my comments on the *Reproductive Health Act* and link to video of my full interview with "Capital Tonight" (video requires a Time Warner Cable ID), please go [here](#).

Calling for Immediate Action to Increase – and Index – the Minimum Wage

As President Obama said in his State of the Union address, "corporate profits have rocketed to all-time highs, but for more than a decade, wages and incomes have barely budged." Here in New York, Governor Cuomo has proposed increasing the minimum wage to \$8.75 per hour to help address the growing gap between the rich and poor in our state. I strongly support the Governor's efforts, but also believe we need to index future increases to inflation for a sustained impact.

On March 5, to their great credit, the NYS Assembly passed legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour, and index future increases to inflation. Regrettably, some members of the Senate have used the President's call for action as an excuse for inaction. They have argued in recent weeks that New York State

- [Being Recognized by NYLCV as an Environmental Leader](#)
- [Fighting to Save the Old Chelsea Post Office](#)
- [Rallying for Good Jobs & Responsible Development](#)
- [Urging Meningitis Vaccination for Men who have Sex with Men](#)
- [Celebrating Grand Central Terminal's Centennial Anniversary](#)
- [Welcoming Stein Senior Center to its New Permanent Home](#)
- [Telling Boy Scouts of America to End Anti-Gay Discrimination](#)
- [Calling for Robust Community Engagement on NYCHA's Proposed Infill Development](#)
- [Organizing for Safety and Security in Public Housing Communities](#)

should not increase its own minimum wage at all, and instead should wait and see what the federal government passes. I disagree.

Under the current minimum wage, a family of two in New York would earn approximately only \$15,000 annually, which is below the poverty level. The minimum wage is a targeted tool in the fight against income inequality. Studies show that raising it will increase the incomes of working families while boosting consumer spending. I believe we should follow President Obama's lead and heed New York State Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' call for an increase in the minimum wage that is indexed to inflation, which ten states have already done.

On February 27, I joined Senator Stewart-Cousins and other members of the Senate Democratic Conference at a press conference calling for immediate action to raise the New York State minimum wage and index future increases to the rate of inflation. If New York is truly to regain its status as the progressive capital of the nation, we must act now and pass this long-overdue increase.

Please see video of my remarks [here](#). Please join me in the fight for an increased minimum wage by signing the petition on my website [here](#).

March 21 Rally Against Gun Violence

I urge you to join New York Voices Against Gun Violence in a rally against gun violence starting at 4:30pm on Thursday, March 21 at the Harlem State Office Building, 163 West 125th Street (just east of Seventh Avenue). In my last report, I mentioned how proud I was to have voted for the NY SAFE Act of 2013, which enacts the toughest assault weapons ban in the nation. Its passage broke the gun lobby's decades-long grip on the legislature and, not surprisingly, the gun lobby is organizing opposition and mounting challenges to

the law. We must send a message to Albany and Washington that the vast majority of New Yorkers support common sense gun control measures. For more information on the rally please click [here](#).

Making the Case for Comprehensive Campaign Finance Reform

Helping end Albany's naked "pay-to-play" culture through comprehensive campaign finance reform was a core theme of my candidacy. We need a campaign finance system supported by Governor Cuomo in his State of the State address that includes public financing, matched contributions and lower contribution limits for candidates for state office. You can read my op-ed on the topic, "Reform Albany's Campaign Finance System" that appeared in last week's *The Villager* newspaper [here](#).

Continuing the Ban on Fracking

On February 12, Governor Cuomo's administration took a positive step in the fight against hydrofracking in New York State. Per a request made by the Commissioner of the State Department of Health (DOH), the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced that it would delay the finalization of its environmental impact statement on hydrofracking until the ongoing study of the potential health impacts is completed. This delay effectively continues the prohibition on hydrofracking, as no permits can be issued before the final environmental impact statement is released.

I strongly believe that hydrofracking should be prohibited throughout all of New York State and support the New York State Assembly bill passed last week that would institute a two-year moratorium. In my first days in office, I submitted comments on DEC's draft hydrofracking regulations in which I urged the agency to halt permitting tracking until the health study had been completed.

Last month, I also joined Assembly Member Barbara Lifton and many of our colleagues in the Legislature in sending a letter to Governor Cuomo expressing concerns about the lack of transparency in DOH's health impact study and urged DEC to withhold adoption of the final environmental impact statement pending the completion of a robust and public health impact review. While I continue to have reservations about the lack of transparency of the health impact study, I am pleased that DOH and DEC have agreed to slow the process down. The only way to ensure that this review is credible is to make the process by which it is conducted as open and transparent as possible.

Expressing Dismay over State Senate Vote to Permit Mixed Martial Arts

On March 6, the New York State Senate passed legislation (S2755) to legalize Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) in New York State. I spoke out on the Senate floor in opposition to this brutal "sport," whose primary aim is to cause harm to opponents, and joined 13 of my colleagues in voting against the bill. There are a multitude of arguments on why we should not sanction or glorify MMA's violence, especially given the impact it would have on our children. But I am most concerned with the health and well-being of the fighters. MMA, like boxing, is linked to long-term acute brain injury, such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and dementia. The bill will now go before the Assembly, where its fate is uncertain. Please see a statement that I released after the vote [here](#).

Supporting Professor Jenny Rivera's Confirmation to the Court of Appeals

On February 11, the New York State Senate approved the nomination of City University of New York School of Law Professor Jenny Rivera to the New York Court of Appeals, the State's highest court. I am proud to have spoken forcefully in

support of Professor Rivera at a hearing on her nomination, as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. My comments defending her qualifications against Republican criticisms were cited in news sources including the [New York Law Journal](#), [Reuters](#) and [Albany Times Union](#).

Professor Rivera, who is also founder and director of CUNY Law's Center on Latino and Latina Rights and Equality, has had a long and distinguished career in public service law, including as a staff attorney at the Legal Aid Society of New York City, as an Associate Counsel for the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, and as a law clerk to the Honorable Sonia Sotomayor at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. She was also Commissioner of the NYC Commission on Human Rights from 2002 to 2007 and spent 18 months in the Office of New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo as Special Deputy Attorney General for Civil Rights. I commend Governor Cuomo for selecting such an exceptional candidate and I congratulate Justice Rivera on her confirmation. You can watch video of my comments during Justice Rivera's Judiciary Committee Hearing [here](#).

Being Recognized by NYLCV as an Environmental Leader

I am honored to have recently been named one of the New York League of Conservation Voters' "[New Generation 2013](#)" – a group of 13 first-year Senators and Assembly Members who "have strong environmental credentials and concrete plans to help make our state a green leader." I am looking forward to working with the League and my colleagues to demand full funding for our state's Environmental Protection Fund, to defend our state from environmental threats—from climate change to hydrofracking—and to fight for proactive measures to ensure a more sustainable future.

Fighting to Save the Old Chelsea Post Office

In late January, my office heard from a number of constituents concerned about the potential sale by the United States Postal Service (USPS) of the Old Chelsea Station, which is located at 217 West 18th Street. They had seen a letter posted in the station's lobby from USPS to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) seeking input on a Preservation Covenant for the building, which is listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places, in the event that it is sold. I confirmed that the aforementioned letter was not, as many had feared, an indication that sale of the building is imminent. USPS did indicate that it plans to sell the building and relocate to a smaller space within the community that would provide equivalent services; however, its regulations stipulate that such a move could only occur after an extensive public review process. I am working alongside U.S. Representatives Jerrold Nadler and Carolyn Maloney, Borough President Scott Stringer, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, State Assembly Members Glick and Gottfried as well and community members and the New York Metro Area Postal Workers Union to ensure a truly open public process and to save our postal facility, the services it provides, and the historic building that houses it.

Rallying for Good Jobs & Responsible Development

On February 26, I joined "Build Up NYC," an alliance of public officials, labor unions and advocates, at a rally advocating for safe and responsible development that provides good wages and benefits. Developers who receive public support – whether in the form of public funds, tax abatements or zoning changes – have an obligation to provide safe, good-paying jobs with affordable health insurance and retirement benefits for their employees. The rally, which took place in my district on 54th Street and Eighth Avenue, specifically targeted a real estate developer which

has used non-union labor at a nearby, problem-plagued development site as well as at its other development sites across the city. I will continue to stand with organized labor, which negotiates wages and benefits and provides training and apprenticeship programs in the effort to strengthen New York's middle class.

Urging Meningitis Vaccination for Men who have Sex with Men

On March 6, the New York City Health Department issued a new recommendation that men, regardless of HIV status, who hook up online or at a bar or party, get vaccinated against invasive meningococcal disease – commonly known as meningitis.

According to the Health Department, four new cases of meningitis among men who have sex with men have been reported since the beginning of January, bringing the total to 17 cases since 2012. There have been 22 reported cases in New York City – including seven fatal cases – since 2010. Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley explained that meningitis can be fatal if not treated right away and that “vaccination is the best defense.”

All men who meet the criteria above should first ask their health care providers if they have the vaccine. For those who cannot obtain the vaccine from their health care providers, Health Department clinics can administer the vaccine. Locations are listed at the Health Department's [Site Locator](#). The Health Department's press release announcing the recommendation and providing more information about meningitis and its symptoms can read [here](#).

Celebrating Grand Central Terminal's Centennial Anniversary

On February 1, I was honored to attend the Centennial Anniversary celebration of Grand Central Terminal (GCT), which I am proud is within

my Senate District. Since its opening on February 2, 1913, GCT has served hundreds of millions of passengers and remains one of the City's most treasured and iconic landmarks. At the time it was completed, GCT was the largest construction project in New York's history—costing more than \$2 billion in today's dollars. Landmarked in 1967, GCT has faced near demolition on more than one occasion. Thanks to the efforts of preservationists, forward-thinking elected officials and, in particular, the Municipal Art Society and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, GCT continues to serve the City and more than 750,000 daily visitors.

Today, at 100 years old, GCT is the largest train station in the world and home to the Metro North Rail Road, five subway lines and soon, the Long Island Rail Road through the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's East Side Access project. As we mark the 100-year anniversary, we must invest in maintaining GCT as one of the world's premier train stations, not forgetting its history and importance to the infrastructure of the City of New York. I will be introducing a resolution in the State Senate to mark this anniversary.

Welcoming Stein Senior Center to its New Permanent Home

I am very pleased that on February 4, Stein Senior Center opened the doors to its new home at 204 East 23rd Street between Second and Third Avenues, after having spent just over a year in temporary quarters at the East End Temple. The newly renovated, 5,000 square-foot space includes a cafeteria, kitchen, computer lab, activity room, and lecture room as well as staff offices. The Center is open from 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday, and is offering area seniors a wide range of activities and services as well as serving lunch from 11:45am to 1pm daily.

I wish to extend my thanks to Congresswoman

Carolyn Maloney, New York State Senator Liz Krueger and former State Senator Tom Duane, New York State Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh, New York City Councilmembers Rosie Mendez and Dan Garodnick, New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, New York City Council Aging Committee Chair Jessica Lappin, and New York City Department for the Aging Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, without whose tremendous efforts the Center's new home would not have been possible. I look forward to working with them and the Stein Senior Center board and staff to ensure that the center has the resources to help our community's elderly thrive for years to come.

Telling Boy Scouts of America to End Anti-Gay Discrimination

As you may know, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) recently announced that it is considering rescinding its nationwide policy of banning gay young men from membership and gay and lesbian adults from leadership positions. However, rather than bringing discrimination within its organization to an end across the nation, BSA plans to authorize local chapters to establish their own discriminatory policies. As the only openly-gay New York State Senator and as an Eagle Scout (Troop 70, Lewisburg, WV), I wrote to the Boy Scouts to urge the organization to act forcefully and unequivocally to remove any and all barriers to participation organization based on sexual orientation. I also mobilized others to add their voices to mine by signing onto a letter to BSA that I hosted on my website. Please see my letter [here](#).

Calling for Robust Community Engagement on NYCHA's Proposed Infill Development

On February 20, I joined CB3, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, New York City Councilmember Margaret Chin and other local elected officials in sending a letter to Mayor

Bloomberg and New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Chairman John Rhea calling for greater transparency and community engagement in the City's proposed infill development plan. As you may know, the City has proposed leasing NYCHA-owned land on eight public housing developments to private developers so that they may build private residential housing with modest affordable housing components. Under the current proposal, the revenue collected from these leases would go towards meeting capital obligations at public housing developments across the City.

I firmly believe that any leasing or disposition of NYCHA land, which would significantly impact thousands of NYCHA residents, should not proceed without robust community engagement. Many NYCHA residents have expressed concern that they have not been briefed on the proposal and that little or no information has been provided to them. In our letter, we urged NYCHA to publicly disclose all plans and studies related to this proposal, to formally collect feedback from the relevant community boards, tenant leaders, community based organizations, and elected officials, and to withhold all related Requests for Proposals until this community dialogue can occur. Please see our letter attached.

Organizing for Safety and Security in Public Housing Communities

On February 13, I addressed a forum on Public Safety in Public Housing organized by the resident associations (RAs) of six lower Manhattan NYCHA developments: Campos Plaza, Baruch Houses, Smith Houses, Rutgers Houses, Vladeck Houses and Fulton Houses. The event brought together NYCHA residents, elected officials, community-based organizations and representatives of the New York Police Department to collaborate on identifying solutions to end the rise in crime within NYCHA developments. I spoke of the need for stronger relationships between residents of public

housing developments and their broader communities and the imperative for NYCHAs and their neighbors to share resources. I strongly believe that our communities are better served and safer when residents from all walks of life are mutually invested. The forum, with its large and diverse crowd, was a step in the right direction, and I will continue to work with all stakeholders on the full range of strategies needed to stop the violence plaguing public housing.

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