

Liz Krueger



New York State Senate | 28th District

October 2013

Message from Liz...

When you go to vote on November 5th, each ballot will include a number of proposed amendments to the state constitution for your consideration. Since these proposals do not get the attention or media coverage that the Mayor's race receives, I wanted to let you know what to expect and give you my thoughts on these proposals. I know from the experience of previous elections that many voters are surprised to find these measures on the ballot when they go to vote, so here is a little advance information.

Proposal One - Authorizing Casino Gaming:

This proposal has received at least some press attention, so hopefully many voters will know that this is coming. I am concerned that the wording of this amendment on the ballot is extremely misleading, in that it focuses more about economic development and job creation (the hoped-for after-effects) than what the amendment actually does, which is authorize casino gambling. This proposed amendment to section 9 of article 1 of the state constitution is to allow the legislature to authorize and regulate up to seven casinos.

I oppose this proposal for multiple reasons. First, I am deeply concerned that the previously-passed legislation authorizing casinos (which would go into effect if this amendment passes) does not ban political contributions from casino operators. I am deeply concerned that this opens up entirely new avenues for increased political corruption, as seen in other states. I also do not believe the legislation adequately addresses issues of local control over casino siting -- local zoning laws are overridden. There should be a community right to say no. I am also concerned that the division of gambling revenue to local governments under this proposal is not equitable. Finally, I do not believe the legislation adequately directs a percentage of revenue to addressing the impacts of increased problem gambling.

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Proposal Two – Additional Civil Service Credit for Veterans with Disabilities Certified Post-Appointment:

This proposed amendment would create an exception to the one-time-only additional credit rule in the civil service system. It would permit veterans who are certified disabled after having already received credit at one appointment or promotion (because of their status as veterans) to receive additional civil service credit one more time after certification of their disability.

I support this proposal.

Proposal Three – Exclusion of Indebtedness Contracted for Sewage Facilities:

The purpose of the proposed amendment to section 5 of article 8 of the state constitution is to continue to allow counties, cities, towns, and villages to exclude from their constitutional debt limits indebtedness incurred for the construction or reconstruction of sewage facilities.

I support this proposal, which provides needed flexibility to localities in ensuring access to clean water.

Proposal Four – Settling Disputed Title in the Forest Preserve:

This amendment would allow the legislature to settle 100-year-old disputes between the state and private parties over ownership of certain parcels of land in the forest preserve by giving up the state's claim to disputed parcels. In exchange, the state would receive land for incorporation into the forest preserve.

I support this proposal, which is necessary because of an esoteric constitutional prohibition on any changes to forest preserve land.

Proposal Five – In Relation to a Land Exchange in the State Forest Preserve with NYCO Minerals, Inc.

This amendment would allow the state to convey approximately 200 forest preserve acres to NYCO Minerals for mining. In exchange, NYCO Minerals would give the state as much or more land of at least the same value, with a minimum assessed value of \$1 million. This land would be added to the forest preserve.

I support this proposal, which, as with the previous one, is necessary because of an esoteric constitutional prohibition on changes to forest preserve land.

Proposal Six – Increasing Age Until Which Certain State Judges Can Serve:

The purpose of this amendment is to increase to the age of 80 the maximum age until which Justices of the Supreme Court and Judges of the Court of Appeals may serve, upon certification of need and competence.

I support this proposal, which recognizes the reality that people are living longer and

remaining active contributors to society at older ages. I generally do not support mandatory retirement ages, which I believe are a form of age discrimination, so this amendment is a step in the right direction.

If you need more information on any of these proposals, please feel free to contact my office. And whether you agree or disagree with my thoughts on these issues, be sure to vote!

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

New York State of Health: What You Need to Know about Health Care Reform

Join us for a forum on what the new federal health care law means for New Yorkers. Starting January 1, 2014, New York will run a health plan marketplace, called New York State of Health. Individuals, families, and small business owners will be able to enroll in new, affordable health insurance plans through the marketplace. This system will bring a tremendous number of uninsured New Yorkers onto the insurance rolls, and likely decrease most everyone's premiums.

Find out if you're eligible, how and when you can apply, what benefits and plan options are available, and details on the financial aid that's offered to help pay qualified New Yorkers' insurance premiums. Counselors will be on site to make an appointment with you to help you decide your options for enrolling in a plan.

Moderated by Senator Liz Krueger

Speakers:

Marcia Okon

Healthcare Exchange Counselor – Small Business Options
Manhattan Chamber of Commerce

Carrie Tracy, JD

Deputy Director, Health Initiatives
Community Service Society of New York

Alice Yaker

Director of Community Outreach
New York State of Health, NYS Dept. of Health

Tuesday, October 8

6pm - 8pm

Lighthouse International

111 East 59th Street (between Lexington & Park)

[RSVP online](#), or by contacting Susannah Pasquantonio:
spasquan@nysenate.gov or [212-490-9535](tel:212-490-9535).

Senator Liz Krueger's Seventh Annual Senior Resource Fair

Senator Liz Krueger's 7th Annual Resource Fair will take place on Thursday, October 17th, 2:00-5:00 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El, which is located at 65th Street and Fifth Avenue.

This year, for the first time, NYU's David Kriser Dental Center will be participating. They will be offering cancer screenings and pre-exam dental checkups. Other services that are available at the fair are blood pressure screening and prescription medication review by Lenox Hill Hospital.

Experts will be on hand to provide information on housing, healthcare and health insurance, long-term care, technology for seniors, cultural events, caregiver support, food stamps, transportation and much more. Each participant will receive a free copy our new, hot off the press, "Senior Resource Guide."

For more information, contact alicefisher.nyc@gmail.com or [\(212\) 490-9535](tel:2124909535). No RSVP required.

Free Flu Shots:

On Friday October 18th, I am hosting a free flu shot drive at Lenox Hill Senior Center at St. Peters Church, located at 619 Lexington Avenue at 54th Street from 10:00 a.m to 1:00 p.m. Shots are available by appointment only. There are a limited number of slots still open. Call [212-490-9535](tel:2124909535) to make an appointment.

I am also cosponsoring Senator Brad Hoylman's free flu shot drive on Thursday October 16th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 322 Eighth Ave., Suite 1700 (26th Street). RSVP to Hoylman's office [\(212\) 633-8052](tel:2126338052) or hoylman@nysenate.gov.

Medicare Rights Forum and Medicare Open Enrollment Period:

Assemblymember Richard Gottfried and I are cohosting a Medicare Rights Forum on Wednesday, October 30, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Baruch College, Newman Conference Center, Rackow Room 705, 151 East 25th Street. Representatives from the Medicare Rights Center will be there to talk about Medicare Rights and to answer your questions. The Medicare open enrollment period is running from October 15 to December 7, 2013.

Senator Liz Krueger's Roundtable for Boomers & Seniors

Senator Liz Krueger's Roundtable for Boomers & Seniors provides an opportunity for constituents to come together to explore life issues that are relevant across the age span. At each session, attendees hear from and engage with professionals who are knowledgeable on topics that are of most concern to the growing population of older adults in New York City. Over a five-session, five-month period, the roundtable looks at a specific issue from five unique perspectives. Past programs have addressed issues surrounding financial issues for older adults, caregiving, and employment. The 2012-2013 program examined Longevity and Its Impact on Society. This year's topic, How We Age, will look at issues around how we age physically, mentally, emotionally, creatively, and socially.

The first roundtable will take place Thursday, November 21st from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street.

Update on Proposed East Midtown Rezoning:

On Tuesday, Oct. 1st, I stood with the Multi-Board Task Force and many of my colleagues, including Councilmember Dan Garodnick, Councilmember Gale Brewer, and Senator Brad

Hoylman, to express deep concerns on Mayor Bloomberg's proposed rezoning affecting more than 70 blocks of East Midtown. This proposal has been properly described as flawed and incomplete, and as it currently stands it is not an appropriate plan for the future of our city's core business district.

This plan would supposedly money for transit and pedestrian improvements through the sale of new air rights, but the air rights it purports to sell are underpriced. Moreover, capital planning for these improvements – which are sorely needed today – cannot be contingent on unpredictable air rights windfalls from development that won't occur for years and isn't guaranteed to occur at all.

Worse still, just ahead of the plan's formal approval by the City Planning Commission, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that new special provisions favoring two developers had been inserted into the plan. This is the kind of things that happen when complicated matters of public policy are rushed through behind closed doors and without a thorough vetting. The state government in Albany is notorious for this, but New York City residents are justified in expecting better than this at the city level. Now the plan moves to the City Council for its consideration, on a 50-day timeline.

Perhaps this plan can be improved within that timeline – but if it can't, then the Council should not shy away from pushing it back, so the city can start over and take the time to get it right. From its inception barely more than a year ago, the East Midtown rezoning proposal has been hurried by a mayoral administration supremely conscious of the fact that it is on its way out.

To learn more, check out the coverage of our Oct. 1st press conference from [CBS](#) and [DNA Info](#), or read [my testimony](#) before the City Planning Commission.

NYPD Free Shredding Event:

On October 7th from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. the NYPD 19th Precinct, located at 153 East 67th Street, will be hosting a large shred truck. Shredding sensitive documents is a great way to protect yourself against identity theft. Bring old bank and credit card statements, pay stubs, check books, and any other items that contain personal information.

Inside Schools Workshop on Applying to High School:

Confused about high school admissions? Have questions you need answered about particular schools, or how to fill out the 12-school application? Insideschools.org is offering a free workshop for parents on Oct. 9: High School Hustle: How to apply.

Leading the discussion will be Clara Hemphill, founding editor of Insideschools and author of New York City's Best Public High Schools. Joining her are other experts on high school admissions, including Jacquie Wayans, Insideschools assignment editor and Bronx parent of three public school students. They will present Insidestats, a new way to judge high schools, explain what to look for in a high school, talk about the various types of high schools and provide plenty of time for Q&A.

The event is sponsored by the Center for NYC Affairs at the New School. It will take place at the Theresa Lang Community & Student Center, Arnhold Hall, 2nd floor, 55 West 13th Street, from 6-8 pm on Wednesday, Oct. 9. It is free, but you must RSVP to <http://insideschools.eventbrite.com>.

Knowledge Is Power – Breast Cancer Awareness Fair:

The Evelyn H. Lauder Breast Center and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Imaging Center are hosting ***Knowledge Is Power: Breast Cancer Awareness Fair*** on Wednesday, October 16 and Thursday, October 17 from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm at 300 East 66th Street, between First and Second Avenues.

Learn about Memorial Sloan-Kettering's breast cancer screening program, fitness and nutrition, psychosocial and support services, managing treatment side effects, products at Memorial Sloan-Kettering's boutique for breast cancer patients, and much more. Mini educational seminars will also be provided. For more information, go to www.mskcc.org/breastcancerfair.

Second Avenue Subway Community Information Center

MTA Capital Construction has opened its Second Avenue Subway Community Information Center at 1628 Broadway, between 84th and 85th Streets. In addition to providing a convenient place for you to interact with community outreach and project staff, the facility is an educational center where you can learn more about the building of the Second Avenue Subway through interactive and static biannual exhibits. The current exhibit details the history of the Second Avenue Subway from attempts to build it dating back to the early part of the 20th century to the completion of the subway's first phase in December 2016.

We encourage you to stop by Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesdays from 1 to 8 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

STAR Property Tax Exemption Reapplication:

New York State is requiring all recipients of the STAR Property Tax Exemption to reapply by December 31, 2013 in order to continue to receive the exemption in 2014 and future years. This is a one-time reapplication and will not have to be done every year, though seniors receiving Enhanced STAR will continue to have to recertify their income eligibility ever year.

In late September or Early October, New York City residents will receive a letter from the New York State Tax Department outlining the procedure to reapply, but you can also reapply online at <http://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star13/default.htm>, or by phone at [\(518\) 457-2036](tel:5184572036).

9/11 Health Benefits Still Available:

If you suffer from an illness related to the attack on the World Trade Center, you still can qualify for free health benefits. The Oct. 3 deadline for those applying to the Victims Compensation Program covered financial compensation only. Those seeking free medical care under the World Trade Center Health Program have until 2016 to apply.

First responders and volunteers who participated in the rescue, recovery or cleanup effort after 9/11 may qualify for free medical screening, treatment and medication even if they show no signs of illness. Others who lived, worked or attended school in Lower Manhattan and downtown Brooklyn also can receive screening and care at no charge, but only if they experience symptoms. People are eligible regardless of immigration status.

Since the attacks, more than 1,100 people who were near the World Trade Center in the months following 9/11 have been diagnosed with cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Others exposed to toxins at the site suffer from respiratory

disease, digestive ailments such as GERD and other illnesses, including mental health conditions.

Many of those affected do not realize their disease is related to the time they spent near Ground Zero, and since symptoms may not be apparent for years, hundreds, if not thousands, more may be at risk of developing 9/11-related illnesses in the future.

You can apply for health benefits or get information in Spanish, Chinese and Polish, as well as English, at <http://nycosh.org/wtc>. Information also is available by calling 855 4WTC-AID.

Crime Victim Services Program at Stein Senior Center:

The Crime Victim Services program is absolutely free of charge and is able to assist minors, adolescents, adults, seniors, and the disabled who are innocent victims of crime. Crime Victims must meet certain requirements for eligibility.

The Crime Victim Services at Stein Senior Center is located at 204 East 23rd Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10010. If you or someone you know has been or is a victim of a crime please feel free to contact this office at [646-395-8083 x113](tel:646-395-8083) for assistance.

New Website Lists Civilian Job Opportunities with NYPD:

Over 17,000 civilians already serve with the NYPD and there are opportunities for many more. A new web site, NYPDCivilianJobs.com, makes it easier to search and apply for jobs within the Department.

The site focuses on three of our most frequently available positions: School Safety Agent, Traffic Enforcement Agent and 911 Operators. All of these offer the many benefits of working with the NYPD. For more information, visit NYPDCivilianJobs.com or call: 212-RECRUIT.

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:

- October 8, 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- October 8, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- October 8, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- October 16, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus
- October 16, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus
- October 16, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus
- October 17, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
- October 17, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
- October 22, 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- October 22, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- October 22, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus

- November 5, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus
- November 5, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus
- November 5, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus
- November 6, 7:00-9:00 a.m., 90th Street and York Avenue - Van
- November 6, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
- November 6, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
- November 7, 9 - 10 am, 57 Street and 1 Avenue – Van
- November 7, 10:30 - 11:30 am, 57 Street and 3 Avenue – Van
- November 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>.

POLICY SPOTLIGHT

Instant Runoff Voting

This month's sparsely attended runoff election for Public Advocate once again highlights the need to update our city elections process, which is neither democratic or cost efficient. I have long carried legislation (S. 3250) that would address this problem by authorizing New York City and other localities to utilize Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) in local elections. IRV would provide greater opportunities for voters to express their preferences while at the same time reducing costs for elections.

One reason IRV can be so crucial is because it negates the need for separate primary runoffs, which are tremendously expensive. This year, New York City spent \$13 million to hold a Democratic primary runoff election for Public Advocate. Not only was this costly, it was also anti-democratic, since only about 7 percent of eligible voters participated – far fewer than the number who participated on Primary Day. There has to be a better model for running our elections.

Instant Runoff Voting would allow voters to indicate their top choices of candidates for an office by ranking them first, second, third, etc. If no candidate receives 50 percent of the first-choice votes, then the candidate receiving the fewest votes is eliminated, and their voters' second choices are counted. This process is continued until a candidate receives 50 percent of the vote. This eliminates the need for separate runoff elections while still ensuring that a marginal candidate does not win with a very small percentage of the vote in a race with many candidates.

There are several potential benefits to the IRV method. First, voters are free to mark their ballot for the candidate they truly prefer without fear that their choice will help elect their least preferred candidate. Second, it ensures that the elected candidate has true majority support. In addition, the instant runoff voting method avoids the problem of voter drop-off, whereas runoffs conducted after election day usually have dramatically lower turnout than the initial vote., Finally, this method may encourage positive campaigning, because candidates will seek second-choice and third-choice votes from voters and will therefore be less likely to launch nasty attacks on other candidates and risk alienating potential voters.

S. 3250 actually passed the Senate in 2010, and I am hopeful that current anger over this recent wasteful runoff will result in more support among lawmakers in both parties and both houses for this basic reform when we return to Albany in January.