

Liz Krueger

New York State Senate | 28th District



September 2013

Message from Liz...

As the state and nation slowly recover from the last economic downturn, it has become increasingly clear that more and more Americans are being left behind. I am deeply concerned about what this means for us as a nation, and disappointed at the apparent inability of policymakers to respond in ways that allow broader participation in the recovery.

In April, the Pew Research Center released a study of the disparate impacts of the recovery from 2009 through 2011. It showed that the recovery is exacerbating income disparities between rich and poor. During this period, the wealthiest 7 percent of the population (those with assets of more than \$836,000 in 2011) saw household net worth increase by 28%, while the other 93 percent of Americans saw a decrease in net worth of 4 percent. Labor market data from the recovery also show greater growth in the lowest-paying economic sectors, which accounted for half of job growth from March 2010-2013, according to a study of the U.S. economy by the Royal Bank of Scotland. More recent data on labor market growth is no more encouraging. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, of the 953,000 jobs created in 2013, only 222,000 – less than a quarter – were full-time jobs.

The growing economic divisions we are seeing in the United States—which are even more extreme here in NYC – constitute a fundamental problem that must be addressed by policymakers. Make no mistake – these growing disparities threaten upward social mobility and the continued existence of a robust middle class, and with them, our overall economic health. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that we are responding effectively.

In previous community bulletins I have described the self-defeating minimum wage “compromise” that was enacted as part of the most recent state budget. The increase excludes many of lowest paid workers, and almost the entire cost of the increase is born by the state through a tax break that only applies to workers under 20 years old, and only as long as they earn just the minimum wage – not a penny more. So this policy incentivizes keeping workers at the minimum wage until they turn 20 and then firing them and

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replacing them with younger workers. *Salon* recently published an excellent article on how effective the National Restaurant Association has been at fighting increases in the minimum wage across the country, calling the New York deal a “cautionary tale.” The article is a great (if sobering) read, and is available here: <http://bit.ly/14qX6tw>.

The need to fight growing inequality and the forces that are fighting against efforts to address it are key reasons that the current effort to organize fast-food restaurant workers is so important. Over the last few months, I have joined workers at rallies as well as job actions at restaurants. The reality is that the decades where inequality dropped dramatically in the United States, and the economy thrived, were the decades when private sector unions thrived. As unionized manufacturing jobs with decent wages have been replaced by non-unionized, low-wage service sector jobs over the last several decades, wage rates have plummeted and inequality has skyrocketed.

I am extremely pleased to see that some in the union movement are now moving aggressively to organize sectors such as fast food and big-box stores. While these sectors are hard to organize because of their decentralized nature, it is clear to me that if these efforts are successful, they will provide new opportunities for lower wage workers to make enough to support themselves and their families. There are certainly other factors that contribute to the rise of inequality in America, but these organizing efforts are one major step toward confronting one of the defining problems of our time.

Note on voting in the upcoming Democratic and Republican primary elections on Tuesday September 10: There have been some poll site changes for this election. You should have received information from the Board of Elections on your poll site, but if you are unsure of where to vote, you can look up your poll site at <http://nyc.pollsitelocator.com/Search.aspx>.

You can also call my office at (212) 490-9535, and we will check for you.

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.

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

Thursday, October 17th, 2013

2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Temple Emanu-El

One East 65th Street

(at Fifth Avenue)

Over 50 Exhibitors Providing Information for Older Adults

Free Admission • Refreshments • Wheelchair Accessible

New Updated Senior Resource Guide Free

NO RSVP NECESSARY

For further information, contact alicefisher.nyc@gmail.com,
or call [\(212\) 490-9535](tel:2124909535)!

Update on the East 91st Street Marine Transfer Station:

Last month I joined Carolyn Maloney in calling on the Army Corps of Engineers to revoke the permit for the East 91st Street Marine Transfer Station due to the new evidence of flood risk to the site. After Superstorm Sandy, it's clear that we live in a new environmental reality. We don't have a full understanding of the potential flooding this site and the surrounding neighborhood can face, and we need to. Worse still, we already know that the current design plan for this marine transfer station puts significant working portions of the facility below FEMA's anticipated flood levels. Adding what we already know to what we still need to find out, it is obvious that this project must not be allowed to move forward without a full reassessment. I will continue to work with my colleagues to stop construction of this ill-conceived and potentially disaster-prone facility.

Free Screening of Gasland Part II on September 16:

On Monday, Sept. 16, 2013 The Mothers Project and Councilmember Gale Brewer are hosting a free screening of Gasland Part II, a documentary exploring the dangers of hydrofracking. Doors open at 6:15 PM for the 7 PM showing, which will be followed by a panel discussion. The screening will take place at Gerald W. Lynch Theater at CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 524 West 59 Street (between 10th/11th Ave). Registration required to attend. Register at <http://themothersproject-gasland2.bpt.me>.

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 every 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).

Cellphone and Rechargeable Battery Recycling:

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation has named Call2Recycle the first battery recycling plan under the New York State Rechargeable Battery Act. This implements legislation I sponsored that passed the Senate in 2010. Call2Recycle is a no-cost battery and cellphone collection program. You can identify recycling sites near you by visiting <http://www.call2recycle.org/locator/>.

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. Upcoming Clinic dates and locations are below:

- Burden Center for the Aging, 1484 First Avenue (between 77th & 78th Streets) — 2 pm — second Friday of each month (September 13th, October 11th). Call Velda Murad at [212-879-7400](tel:212-879-7400) for information.
- Stanley Isaacs Senior Center, 415 East 93rd Street (east of 1st Avenue) — 10 am — third Friday of each month (September 20th, October 18th). Call Amy Loewenberg at [212-360-7620](tel:212-360-7620) for information.
- Encore Community Services Senior Center, St. Malachy's Church - 239 West 49th Street (between Broadway and 8th Ave.) — 10 am — (September 23rd, October 28th). Call Sister Margaret Rose at [212-581-2910](tel:212-581-2910), ext 118 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:

- September 10, 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- September 10, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- September 10, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- September 18, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus
- September 18, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus
- September 18, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus
- September 19, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
- September 19, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
- September 24, 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- September 24, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- September 24, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus
- October 2, 9 - 10:30 am, 79 Street & 3 Avenue – Bus
- October 2, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus
- October 2, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus
- October 3, 7:00-9:00 a.m., 90th Street and York Avenue - Van
- October 3, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
- October 3, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van
- October 4, 9 - 10 am, 57 Street and 1 Avenue – Van
- October 4, 10:30 - 11:30 am, 57 Street and 3 Avenue – Van
- October 4, 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>.

Affordable Housing Opportunities in Manhattan:

Related Affordable Housing Group is now accepting applications for 78 affordable studio, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments under construction at 500 West 30th Street in the Chelsea Section of Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$525 to \$873 depending on income and unit size. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$19,920 and \$42,950, depending on unit and family size. Preference will be given to Community Board 4 residents for 50% of units, mobility-impaired persons for 5% of units, visual- and/or hearing-impaired units for 2% of units, and City of New York municipal employees for 5% of units.

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 and select "Apply for Housing." To request an application by mail, send your complete name and mailing address, including apartment number and zip code, to: RW30, 328 8th Avenue, Box 240, New York, NY 10001.

Completed applications must be submitted online or returned by regular mail only the address that will be listed on the application. Applications must be and must be submitted online or postmarked by September 30, 2013. Applicants who submit more than one application will be disqualified.

525 West 28th Street Apartments is now accepting applications for 142 affordable studio, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments under construction at 525 West 28th Street and 282 11th Avenue in the Chelsea Section of Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$520 to \$1049 depending on income and unit size. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$19,749 and \$51,540, depending on unit and family size. Preference will be given to Community Board 4 residents for 50% of units, mobility-impaired persons for 5% of units, visual- and/or hearing-impaired units for 2% of units, and City of New York municipal employees for 5% of units. A general preference will be given to New York City residents.

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 and select "Apply for Housing." To request an application by mail, mail a post card only to: 525 W. 28TH STREET APTS, 303 Park Avenue South, PMB 1122, New York, NY 10010.

Completed applications must be submitted online or returned by regular mail only the address that will be listed on the application. Applications must be and must be submitted online or postmarked by October 10, 2013. Applicants who submit more than one application will be disqualified.

POLICY SPOTLIGHT

Hydrofracking

The hydrofracking bubble may be about to pop. A recent *Bloomberg News* article pointed to significant industry write-downs and under-producing, unprofitable wells as a sign of trouble in the industry. This is good news for those of us who see unacceptable risks in potential hydrofracking in New York State.

I have strongly supported legislation establishing a moratorium on hydrofracking, which has caused significant environmental damage in states where it has been allowed. Supporters point to the potential economic benefits, but even these claims are questionable, given industry troubles as well as research by ProPublica showing that landowners are receiving far less than expected from drilling leases on their land.

Governor Cuomo has indicated that he is awaiting a final report on health impacts before making a decision about whether to allow hydrofracking in New York state, and such a report could come at any time. I am hopeful that when it does it will not be unduly influenced by the massive campaign expenditures put forth by lobbyists pushing to allow this dangerous activity, which I discussed in detail in last month's bulletin. Those efforts seem to have been successful in stopping moratorium legislation from passing the State Senate up to this point, so it is critical that the governor stand strong against drilling interests and protect the health of New Yorkers by continuing to prohibit fracking in our state.

And if you want to learn more about the dangers of hydrofracking and efforts to stop it, you can attend the free screening of *Gasland Part II*, mentioned earlier in this bulletin.