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News from STATE SENATOR  
**Liz Krueger**



**COMMUNITY  
BULLETIN**

**September 2009**

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**Message from Liz . . .**

The Senate will return for a session on September 10<sup>th</sup>, and I have been advocating for passage of ethics reform legislation at that time. I believe that it is critical that the Senate continue to take steps showing we are serious about setting higher standards for all public officials. The Assembly passed ethics reform legislation earlier in the session (A.9032/S.6064) which strengthens ethics oversight and financial disclosure requirements, and establishes a new Legislative Office of Ethics Investigations to ensure allegations of impropriety are appropriately reviewed. Passing this bill would be a good start, but I also think recent events have highlighted the need for more fundamental reforms.

There are three bills that I sponsor that I am pushing to be moved as well; as separate bills or incorporated into chapter amendments for the above bill:

- S.743 which defines permissible uses of campaign contributions to ensure they are used for electoral or governmental purposes only, and not to pay personal expenses;
- S.744 which requires disclosure by lobbyists of any financial or business relationship with a public official, and sets limits on the amount lobbyists can contribute to candidates; and
- S.1733 which denies pension benefits to any elected official convicted of a crime involving the performance of their public duties.

There are many other ideas for reform which other Senators carry and I co-sponsor, and if we can act on some of these measures on September 10<sup>th</sup>, there will be plenty of time for the Assembly to pass them when both houses come back to deal with the other big crisis we face – the deteriorating financial situation in the State. Addressing the budget crisis will be a real challenge given the divisions in the Senate, but it is clear there are going to have to be midyear reductions, perhaps to the tune of 2 billion dollars.

There are of course many other issues we need to deal with this fall as well, including same sex marriage, repealing vacancy decontrol and enacting other tenant protection legislation. These are critical issues for our State on which the Assembly has already acted, and my job is to continue to keep up the pressure on Senate leadership and on my Senate colleagues to recognize that we cannot miss the opportunity to enact this legislation before the end of the year.

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It is clear to me that we as a Legislature need to take strong action to break through the dysfunction and rebuild the public's trust in its government. This is also a moment when public outrage over the behavior of some of my colleagues is at a peak. As I push for reform within the Democratic Conference, the pressure from the public and the press is extremely helpful in making the case that real reform is necessary.

## **COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT**

### **"The Senator is In" Rotating Office Hours In the District**

#### **Upper East Side**

Date: Sunday, September 13th

Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Place: East 86<sup>th</sup> Street b/t 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues  
(in front of Gristedes)

Date: Saturday, September 26th

Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Place: 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue b/t East 75<sup>th</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> Streets  
(in front of Citarella's)

### **A Community Conversation with State Senator Liz Krueger**

A discussion of recent events in Albany  
Moderated by Councilmember Ronnie Eldridge

Date: September 16<sup>th</sup> 2009

Time: 6:00-8:00 PM

Location: Lighthouse International Auditorium  
111 East 59<sup>th</sup> Street (b/t Lexington & Park)

For more information call my office at (212) 490-9535.

**State Senator Liz Krueger's Senior Advisory Board**

**Presents**

**RESOURCE FAIR FOR SENIORS & CAREGIVERS**

**Date:** Thursday, October 29th

**Time:** 1:30pm –4:30pm

**Place:** Temple Emanu-El

One East 65<sup>th</sup> Street (at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue)

**No RSVP Required - Call (212) 490-9535 for further information.**

**Drop-Off Backpacks and School Supplies for Homeless Children:**

My office is participating in Project Back to School, a drive to collect backpacks and school supplies for homeless children, which runs through September 30<sup>th</sup>. You can drop off backpacks and supplies at my office and many other locations throughout the city. For more information on which supplies are needed, call (212) 776-2059. Backpacks can be dropped off at my office at 211 East 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 1300 (between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues).

**Update on Cherokee Station Post Office Closing:**

As many of you know, the US Postal Service has included the Cherokee Station Post Office at 1483 York Avenue on its closure study list. I strongly oppose closure of this post office, which is the only station easily accessible to the Far East Side. I joined Congresswoman Maloney and other elected officials in writing to the Postal Service to express my opposition to this proposal. This Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, the Manhattan Postmaster will be attending a meeting for the East 79<sup>th</sup> Street Association, and this is an important opportunity for the community to be heard on the importance of Cherokee Station to this neighborhood. The meeting will take place on Thursday, September 10 at 6:45 PM at the City University of New York, 535 East 80<sup>th</sup> Street at East End Avenue, in the first floor board room. If this issue is important to you, I urge you to attend.

**Lighthouse International Hosts Vision Technology Expo:**

On Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 to 4:30, Lighthouse International will be hosting *Lite 2009*, the Lighthouse International Technology Expo, Showcasing Assistive and Everyday Accessible Technologies That Make Life Easier for People with Vision Loss. The event is free and will take place at 111 East 59<sup>th</sup> Street. For more information including updates, seminar reservations and sighted guide assistance, visit [www.lighthouse.org/lite](http://www.lighthouse.org/lite) or e-mail [lite@lighthouse.org](mailto:lite@lighthouse.org).

**Flatiron District Safety Forum:**

The Flatiron 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Partnership is hosting a forum about safety and security issues in and around the Flatiron District. New York Police Department Manhattan South Bureau Chief Raymond Diaz and 13<sup>th</sup> Precinct Commanding Officer Timothy Beaudette will be there to discuss community policing practices and current crime trends and quality of life issues. The event will take place on Thursday, September 24 from 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM at Bid on the City, 226 Fifth Avenue at 27<sup>th</sup> Street. To attend, please RSVP by September 21<sup>st</sup> to [events@flatironbid.org](mailto:events@flatironbid.org) or (212) 741-2323.

### **Mammogram Van Coming to the Upper East Side:**

On Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup> the Scan Van Mobile Mammogram Program will have a van at All Soul's Church at 1157 Lexington Avenue at 80<sup>th</sup> Street, beginning at 12 Noon. This program provides mammograms for women 40 and older who have not had a mammogram in the past year. Medicaid, Medicare and other insurance plans accepted, and the service is free for uninsured women 50 and older. An appointment is necessary. Please call (800) 564-6868 to make an appointment.

## **SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY**

### **Telecommunications Taxes**

On August 12<sup>th</sup>, I held a roundtable focused on the creating a more rational and transparent tax structure for the telecommunications industry. Tax policy experts from around the country came to Albany to discuss with my Select Committee on Budget and Tax Reform ways to bring New York State's telecommunications taxes into the 21st century.

Recognizing how New York tax policy has created inequities in the telecommunications industry by failing to keep pace with its rapidly-changing technology and practices. Roundtable participants included tax policy experts representing service providers such as Time Warner Cable, Cablevision, Verizon, AT&T, DISH Network and DirectTV. Also attending the meeting were experts who have worked with the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Council on State Taxation in drafting blueprints for equitable state telecommunications tax methods for the 21st century.

Almost 15 years have passed since New York last gave its telecommunications taxes an overhaul. To usher in that reform it took an appellate court ruling which said a section of the State's Utilities Tax discriminated against interstate and foreign commerce.

Although the 1995 reforms addressed the issues raised by the court ruling, a subsequent New York State Department of Taxation and Finance report noted the "current system results in some taxpayer inequities" and "competitive changes within the industry will exacerbate these inequities." Taxpayers confront these inequities when they shop for telecommunications services and realize that similar voice, video and data services are more heavily taxed primarily because their providers are subject to different articles of New York's Tax Law.

Something seems amiss when Telecom X says the taxes on its services are vastly higher than taxes on similar services offered by Telecom Y.

Another factor contributing to these inequities is the complexity of New York's telecommunications tax system. Highlighting the extent of this complexity, in the State Budget passed earlier this year, the Senate directed the Department of Taxation and Finance, in consultation with the Public Service Commission, to perform a full accounting of the State's telecommunications taxes. The results of this study will be issued in a report by October 1st.

The challenge for New York State is not only to catch up with where we are now, but to also have the foresight to frame tax policy in a way that is conducive to telecommunications in the years to come.