



# *News from* STATE SENATOR **LIZ KRUEGER** New York State Senate • 26<sup>th</sup> District

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## SENATOR KRUEGER HOSTS UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FORUM

**(New York, NY)** – In an effort to help those constituents grappling with unemployment, State Senator Liz Krueger hosted an Unemployment Benefits forum on Wednesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. The forum, which included a panel of experts and resource tables operated by local agencies, was geared towards further educating the public on how to best navigate the tricky waters of unemployment benefits.

“Make no mistake, we are seeing unprecedented levels of unemployment in New York City right now and it is hitting Midtown and the East Side of Manhattan just as hard as other areas,” Senator Krueger told the assembled crowd. “So you are not alone in your struggles, nor are you the only one finding it difficult to figure out what resources are available to you during this difficult time.”

The panel, moderated by Senator Krueger, was made up of representatives from the NYS Department of Labor, The National Employment Law Project and the Community Service Society of NY. Each member took time answering questions from an audience of over 70 people, many of whom shared similar experiences and concerns in dealing with unemployment benefits. Three main points were:

- New York residents are eligible for 99 weeks of unemployment benefits, which includes federally subsidized extensions; however these extensions are set to expire at the end of the month. People should contact Congress by calling 202-224-3421 to lobby to extend the benefits through the end of the year.
- For those who think they are eligible for Cobra or Government subsidized healthcare but are encountering difficulties in applying for such services they should call the Community Service Society of New York’s hotline at: (212) 614 5400.
- Under the 599 Program within the Department of Labor, unemployment recipients who attend approved training courses/programs are excused from the requirement to look for work and may be eligible for up to 26 weeks of additional benefits.

Before and after the panel discussion people took time to visit the resource tables, which included representatives from: Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, NYC Department of Consumer Affairs, Office of the State Comptroller, F.E.G.S. and Eviction Intervention Services.

Senator Krueger also urged those in attendance to look into their eligibility to food stamps, information they can get from Lenox Hill Neighborhood House.

“We must get past the stigma of food stamps and see that it is a resourceful tool that is beneficial to all,” Senator Krueger said. “Food stamps help those in need while also stimulating our local economy, it’s a win-win situation.”

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