

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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A column from State Senator Pam Helming

Embracing Gratitude this Thanksgiving Season

by Senator Pam Helming

Thanksgiving is the perfect time to pause, reflect, and embrace the power of gratitude. This season, I want to share my heartfelt appreciation for the people, organizations, and communities in the 54th Senate District who inspire me every day.

I am deeply grateful for the outstanding businesses, individuals, and organizations that make a difference not only in our district but across our state and nation. These are the people leading the way in shaping the next generation of leaders, people like Mari Potter, a McDonald's owner-operator, and a NYS Senate Woman of Distinction. Through her Archways to Opportunity program, Mari provides McDonald's employees with invaluable educational opportunities, including earning a high school diploma, learning English as a Second Language, and receiving college tuition assistance. Her work reminds us that empowering others changes lives and builds stronger communities.

I'm also thankful for organizations like Wayne County Community Schools, which bring together public, private, and non-profit resources to provide critical services to students and families. This year, our office hosted *Pathways to Prosperity*, a conversation with local business leaders on how Community Schools can foster partnerships that create opportunities for students while supporting the local economy. The connections forged during this event will open doors and help put our youth on the path to success.

Businesses across our district are also worthy of our gratitude. Companies like LSI Solutions, whose medical devices are making more minimally invasive surgeries possible. GW Lisk, which makes parts found on nearly every aircraft in flight today. Optimax, whose lenses are on every rover NASA has sent to the surface of Mars, and Seating Inc., which supplies innovative chairs to NASA. Sydor Optics and

other local suppliers who are key drivers of success for New York's burgeoning semiconductor industry. And the many farms and small businesses that are the backbone of our communities.

On a personal note, this year has been especially meaningful for my family. My daughter and her husband returned to New York State, allowing my husband and me the joy of seeing our grandchildren more often. My son married his beautiful wife this summer, and we celebrated their love with friends and family in a wonderful celebration. Most humbling of all, the residents of the 54th District once again entrusted me with the honor of serving in the New York State Senate. For all of this, I am profoundly grateful.

While there is much to celebrate, there is also much work to do. New York continues to struggle with rising costs, inflation, and concerns over public safety. Our rural communities deserve parity in healthcare and education funding, and our state must become a place where small businesses can thrive. Energy mandates continue to create uncertainty for homeowners and businesses alike, and I remain steadfast in advocating for solutions to these pressing issues.

But as I carry these challenges into the year ahead, my heart is full of gratitude. Gratitude for the resilience and ingenuity of the people in this district, for the partnerships we've built, and for the privilege of serving as your Senator. Together, I am confident we can tackle these challenges and continue building a brighter future for all.

Wishing you and your loved ones a warm, joyful, and peaceful Thanksgiving.

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