

April News from State Senator Brad Hoylman

NEWS FROM

NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
BRAD HOYLMAN

(D) 27TH SENATE DISTRICT



April 1, 2013

Dear Friend,

Throughout the night of March 26 and into the following morning, the New York State Senate voted on the final bills in the State's budget package for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. I was dismayed that the bills contained some glaring political gimmicks and severe cuts to programs for the state's most vulnerable residents as well as New York City's public schools, and lacked a robust minimum wage increase, funding for the Tenant Protection Unit, and funding for the Dream Act for immigrant families. As a result, I voted "nay" on several bills, including the Health & Mental Hygiene; Education, Labor & Family Assistance; Aid to Localities; and Revenue budget bills.

During the debate on the Senate floor, I questioned the wisdom of the Republican-led effort to require New York City to provide transportation for private school students after 4 p.m. (and drop them within 600 feet of their doorstep!), a provision that could ultimately cost our financially strapped school system \$100 million or more annually. I also spoke against cuts to the New York State AIDS Institute, given the stubbornly high rates of HIV infection in our state, especially among people of color. (You can view remarks I gave on the importance of the AIDS Institute [here](#).)

I also expressed my concerns with the revenue bill, which includes a so-called middle class tax rebate to families with children who make from \$40,000 up to \$300,000. Given that authorities like the Congressional Budget Office routinely dismiss the economic impact of tax cuts of this size, I noted that the refund checks seem to be less about the economic benefits than winning voter support during an election year, at a cost of \$410 million. I also enumerated numerous ways the money allocated for this tax cut could have been used to protect the most


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		<p>\$120 million in cuts to the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities to providing \$35 million to food pantries throughout New York State, to adding \$17.5 million in funding for the Advantage Aftercare Program that assists working parents with child care, to restoring \$5.4 million to the New York State AIDS Institute. (A transcript of my remarks on the revenue budget bill is posted along with streaming video on my website at hoylman.nysenate.gov)</p> <p>Despite the concerns that my Democratic colleagues and I raised that the State's Fiscal Year 2013-2014 budget package does not adequately address the needs of working families, seniors, immigrants, public school kids and the most vulnerable in our society, the Senate governing coalition led by the Republicans and Independent Democrats passed the bills without amendments.</p> <p>As always, if you have any questions about the budget or any other matter, please call me at (212) 633-8052.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>  <p>Brad Hoylman New York State Senator 27th District</p> <p><u>Opposing Devastating Cuts to NYC Public Schools</u> Earlier this month, the New York State Senate passed its one-house budget resolution for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. I joined 15 of my colleagues in voting 'nay' on the proposal, which was written behind closed doors by the Republican and Independent Democratic Conferences and rushed onto the Senate floor. Among other reasons, I opposed the budget resolution because of the unfair and inequitable way it treats New York City's school children. In fact, I was tapped to speak on behalf of the Senate Democratic Conference during the floor debate specifically on the measure's \$240 million in devastating cuts to New York City public schools. A partial transcript and video of my remarks are available here.</p> <p><u>Seeking to Prevent State from Sharing Sensitive</u></p>	<p>Union's Continued Commitment to Tuition-Free Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering Madeleine Polayes • Promoting Tax Filing Assistance 	

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		<p>Recently, I heard from a number of constituents who were very disturbed to read in a Reuters article that the New York State Education Department (NYSED) plans to share confidential student information with the non-profit corporation inBloom Inc., with which the agency contracted to provide a K-12 student database. The article noted that for-profit tech companies and other commercial vendors could have access to this data, and that the company “cannot guarantee the security of the information stored.” I immediately reached out to New York State’s Education Commissioner to clarify these plans and to urge that our State not proceed with any initiatives that could compromise the privacy of our public school students and their families. Please see the letter I sent to the Commissioner following up on that call here. I am currently drafting legislation to ensure that student privacy is protected.</p> <p><u>Voicing Strong Support for Speed Camera Legislation</u></p> <p>Earlier this year, New York State Assembly Member Deborah Glick introduced legislation (A4327) to establish a demonstration program to enforce maximum speed limits by means of speed limit photo devices, or “speed cameras,” in New York City. The program would include 20 to 40 cameras positioned where they are needed most: in intersections with high crash rates, near schools and senior centers and generally where the worst offenders go to speed. I am proud to add my strong support to this long-overdue bipartisan legislation, which is expected to be introduced in the State Senate by Senator Andrew Lanza. The data is clear: Speed cameras save lives. They are a critical law enforcement tool, and we will never get to zero traffic deaths without them. As NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly recently noted, motorists know there will never be a sufficient number of police officers to catch everyone who violates the traffic laws. Without the deterrence of speed cameras, they will continue to play the lottery with law enforcement, and with the safety of other motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. We need speed cameras now.</p> <p><u>Calling for Hearings on NYCHA’s Proposed Infill Development</u></p> <p>As you may be aware, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) has targeted 13 sites on eight public housing developments for infill development. NYCHA’s proposal calls for leasing publicly-owned land to private</p>		

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		<p>in NYCHA's capital budget. Regrettably, NYCHA's land disposition is not subject to New York City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) but is instead regulated under Section 18 of the U.S. Housing Act, which does not afford the community a meaningful public review process. That is why I joined my colleagues in State and City government in sending a letter to NYCHA Chairman John Rhea calling for a number of specific actions to ensure greater public engagement and transparency prior to the issuance of any Requests for Proposals (RFP).</p> <p>Separately, this week I joined New York State Senator Adriano Espaillat, the Ranking Member of the Senate's Housing, Construction and Community Development Committee, in calling for a Senate hearing on NYCHA's infill development plans. Given that NYCHA's plans for engaging input on infill development largely disenfranchise residents, it is critical that elected officials provide meaningful oversight. While infill development has the potential to generate much-needed revenue to pay for long-overdue capital projects, NYCHA will only score a win for the communities it serves by truly listening to residents and advocates before determining whether and how to proceed.</p> <p><u>Demanding a More Comprehensive Review of the East Midtown Rezoning Proposal</u></p> <p>I recently joined U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney, New York State Senator Liz Krueger, and New York City Councilmember Dan Garodnick in sending a letter to Deputy Mayor Robert Steel outlining many important conditions that must be met before we consider the rezoning of East Midtown. In our letter, we echo the Tri-Board Task Force on East Midtown Rezoning's Principles for a New East Midtown, calling for a commitment from the City for much-needed infrastructure improvements as well as a comprehensive public realm plan that addresses the whole study area's needs. We believe the City should also conduct an extensive review of the potential environmental impacts such as special requirements for hotels, a broader landmarks transfer alternative outside of the Grand Central Subdistrict and alternative funding structures to the District Improvement Bonus.</p> <p><u>Supporting ST/PCV Tenants' Rent Reduction Claims</u></p> <p>Residents in Stuyvesant Town-Peter Cooper Village</p>		

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		<p>that they had come to rely upon, and since Hurricane Sandy hit four months ago, many residents have also been without basic services such as functioning key-card systems, intercoms, full elevator service and laundry equipment. In early February, the ST-PCV Tenants Association (TA) decided that it had waited long enough for management to restore those services and it filed a reduction of services complaint for all 110 buildings with New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR). On February 13, I joined New York City Councilmember Dan Garodnick and the TA in going door-to-door in some of the complex's hardest hit buildings to encourage individual tenants to sign onto the TA's claim so that they would be eligible to collect any rent reduction HCR approves. As a result of our direct outreach and the TA's efforts to get application packets to every apartment, more than 900 tenants have filed complaints.</p> <p>I have subsequently spoken directly to HCR Commissioner Darryl Towns to urge a fair and expeditious review of the ST/PCV claims. Furthermore, on March 19, I joined State Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh, City Councilmember Garodnick, U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer in sending a letter to Commissioner Towns asking for a clarification and justification of the agency's policy regarding rent reduction effective dates. Generally, HCR grants rent reductions that are only retroactive to the date in which the agency provided notice of the complaint to the landlord. It is our belief that HCR should follow the Rent Stabilization Code and grant any due rent reductions for the entire period for which the services have not been maintained. The processing of paperwork at HCR should not shortchange tenants.</p> <p><u>Urging Immediate Action on PCB Remediation at PS 87 and Schools Across NYC</u></p> <p>On March 8, I joined New York State Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal, U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler, New York State State Senator Jose M. Serrano, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, other local elected officials, and PS 87 Parent-Teacher Association co-president Ann Binstock at a press conference to express our outrage at the New York City Department of Education's (DOE) woefully inadequate handling of a PCB leak discovered in a PS 87 light fixture last December 7</p>		

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		<p>administrators until March 4. It's distressing that nearly five years after dangerous levels of PCB contamination were first discovered in a half-dozen New York City public schools, the DOE continues to shirk transparency and accountability. I spoke forcefully on behalf of the PS 87 community and urged immediate passage of Assemblymember Rosenthal's legislation (A988A/S3774) that, among other provisions, requires DOE to replace within two years lighting ballasts and lighting fixtures in school buildings constructed during the period when PCBs were widely used.</p> <p>Senator Serrano and I also sent a joint letter to the DOE and the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) echoing the call by PS 87's Parents Association for the agencies to initiate a comprehensive regimen of air quality tests for PCB contamination at the school and, if the levels exceed federal guidelines, to begin remediation as expeditiously as possible. Please see our letter here.</p> <p><u>Encouraging Participation in April 11 Public Meeting on Old Chelsea Station</u></p> <p>As you may know, since late January, when I became aware that the United States Postal Service (USPS) was contemplating the sale of Old Chelsea Station, located at 217 West 18th Street, I have been working with U.S. Representatives Jerrold Nadler and Carolyn Maloney, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and New York State Assembly Members Dick Gottfried and Deborah Glick to save our postal facility, the services it provides, and the historic building that houses it.</p> <p>On March 21, I joined my colleagues in issuing a joint statement updating the community on our efforts. We noted that, "As representatives of the Chelsea community served by the Old Chelsea Post Office, we are extremely concerned by the lack of public outreach and transparency with which USPS has operated regarding the proposed sale of the facility. After considerable back-and-forth between elected officials and USPS, and very understandable outrage and confusion among community members, we have successfully obtained an agreement from USPS to hold a public meeting on April 11th."</p> <p>I urge everyone who cares about Old Chelsea Station to</p>		

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		<p>Community Board 4, on Thursday, April 11th, starting at 6:30pm at the Fulton Center Auditorium, at 119 Ninth Avenue. USPS will present its plans, answer questions and gather public feedback.</p> <p>I have also joined my colleagues in expressing our outrage that the public comment period on the proposed sale began without any direct communication to the public from USPS regarding its plans and the process for public engagement, either in an official release to the community or at a public meeting. We called on USPS to restart its 60-day public comment period when the meeting is held and urged USPS to take immediate steps to inform the public of its plans and of the process for public engagement. We are deeply disappointed that USPS has only extended its public comment period to April 26th, allowing community members just 15 days to comment following the April 11th presentation.</p> <p>I assure you that I will continue to fight for more robust public review on this proposal and against the sale and relocation of services presently at Old Chelsea Station.</p> <p><u>Hailing Cooper Union’s Continued Commitment to Tuition-Free Education</u></p> <p>I was very pleased to hear that Cooper Union's Board of Trustees has voted to continue the school's historic commitment to providing tuition-free education at its school for the Advancement of Science and Art for the incoming class and all currently enrolled students through graduation. As you may know, the Cooper Union, which has been tuition-free since its founding in 1859, has been struggling economically in recent years. The Board of Trustees will continue to review options to address the school's financial troubles. I look forward to working with the entire school community, including students, faculty and the administration, to ensure that it holds true to the vision of its founder, Peter Cooper, for free quality education.</p> <p><u>Remembering Madeleine Polayes</u></p> <p>I was saddened to learn that on February 25, Madeleine Polayes, a founder of the Coalition for a Livable West Side, passed away. Madeleine was a fearless and monumental Upper West Side community activist who will always be remembered for her leading role in the fight to defend our neighborhood from overdevelopment—on the</p>		

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		<p>elsewhere. She was similarly on the front lines of the struggle to secure affordable housing so those who built our community could remain living in it. She was also a pioneering public school teacher and a guidance counselor. My thoughts are with her daughter, Debbie, son, Jonathan, grandchildren Rebecca, Janet, Jason and Justin and her countless friends and fellow activists, who loved her dearly. On behalf of the thousands of New Yorkers whose lives she bettered, I honor and pay tribute to Madeleine for her incredible contributions.</p> <p><u>Promoting Tax Filing Assistance</u></p> <p>Tax season is upon us once again and there are several options available for those who need but cannot afford to pay for help filling out their tax forms. If you have access to a computer and made less than \$57,000 last year, you may file your taxes online for free through the City of New York's website. If you prefer in-person assistance and earned less than \$18,000 as an individual or \$50,000 with children, you may be eligible for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA), a free service for low- to moderate-income people in which volunteers provide assistance on both federal and New York State returns. For more information about these options, including locations and required documents, call 311 and ask for tax preparation assistance or visit http://nyc.gov/taxprep.</p> <p>follow on Twitter friend on Facebook forward to a friend</p> <p><i>Copyright © 2013 Hoylman for Senate, All rights reserved.</i></p> <p>unsubscribe from this list update subscription preferences</p>		