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New York State Senate
Albany, NY 12247



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
LIZ KRUEGER
26TH SENATE DISTRICT
KRUEGER.NYSENATE.GOV
LKRUEGER@NYSENATE.GOV
(212) 490-9535 / (518) 455-2297



*Reporting to residents of
Midtown and the East Side*

If you want more regular updates, please join my email list by sending a message to lkrueger@nysenate.gov with "join lizlist" in the subject line.

Dear Friend,

In the last year, there has been a number of important developments in transportation, education, land use and housing in the 26th District that I want to make sure you are aware of. Additionally, in this newsletter, I have included some information about upcoming community events I am hosting, as well as opportunities for you and your family to get involved. I hope you find this information helpful.

Liz

TRANSPORTATION

Select Bus Service Comes to the East Side

The East Side has been underserved by public transit, but starting October 10th, there will be an important new addition to our transportation options—Select Bus Service (SBS) along First and Second Avenues. SBS includes separate lanes and pre-boarding payment. This is a huge first step toward creating a real Bus Rapid Transit alternative to serve the communities far east of the Lexington Avenue subway line.

I have long advocated for the adoption of Bus Rapid Transit to improve transportation options on the East Side—as far back as 2004, I hosted a forum on the issue, which brought together the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), the City Department of Transportation (DOT), and community and transportation advocates to strategize about how to accomplish this goal.

This new system of buses should speed up travel times on these sluggish routes by over 20% and dramatically increase safety for all: motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and, especially, our senior population. SBS on Fordham Road in the Bronx, the first of the City’s rollout, has been hugely successful and led to an increase in ridership. This is a win-win for our community. We still have much to do in creating a bus system which will move at acceptable speeds. The DOT must look at this as a redesign of our streets, a real opportunity to change the landscape of the East Side with regard to bus and bicycle lanes. The Legislature must also actively support this project, which is why I have advocated for legislation for “bus lane cameras” to be installed, to prevent cars and trucks from illegally using bus lanes.

So while we celebrate our current victory, we also acknowledge that there is much to be done to ensure that this is not the last “stop,” so to speak, but rather a step in the right direction for New York City transportation policy.

Fighting to Maintain Bus Service



At the urging of myself, other elected officials, and community residents, the MTA and the New York City DOT have made a commitment to reinstate the SBS 49th/50th Street bus stop. This stop is currently being serviced by the M15 Limited Bus but was slated for removal in the original plans. This stop is crucial to the transportation needs of our East Midtown communities and I am proud to have fought long and hard for a successful restoration.

However, despite this restoration, recent service cuts to the M27, M50 and M104 bus lines, are leaving the neighborhoods of Turtle Bay and Sutton Place seriously underserved. I advocated against these cuts, and I am still working for the restoration of this service as soon as possible. Without cross town bus service outside of business hours in East Midtown, there is no alternative for travel to doctors’ appointments, senior centers and cultural institutions, which are vital parts of many constituents’ lives.

The recent reduction in bus service can be seen as a result of declining tax and fare revenues, the long-term underfunding of the MTA by the State and City, and questionable management practices by the MTA, which have allowed abuse of overtime, cost overruns on projects, and other wasteful practices.

The solution lies in a multi-pronged approach. There should be new dedicated revenue streams such as conges-

tion pricing or East River Bridge tolls, which will have the added benefit of reducing traffic in Manhattan and making our streets safer for pedestrians. At the same time, the MTA must become more efficient. While the current CEO has made some progress in addressing these issues, a recent State Comptroller's report documenting overtime abuses indicates much more needs to be done. There must be better external oversight. As a first step, last year the Legislature established new auditing powers, which my colleagues and I are refining to ensure full implementation.

Taxi Sharing

I am pleased that after advocacy from my office, the Taxi and Limousine Commission has implemented a taxi sharing program from several locations, including joint rides beginning at 72nd St. and 3rd Ave. going to 42nd St. for \$4 per passenger, and beginning at York Ave. between 71 St. and 72nd St. going to lower Manhattan for \$6 per passenger. These stands supplement the existing stand at 79th St. and York Ave. My office has worked closely with the community to ensure that these stands remain mixed use for the community at large, so individual riders going to other locations are also able to get the rides they need.

EDUCATION

Construction Begins on P.S. 59

In May, I joined NYC Schools Chancellor Joel Klein, other elected officials, and community members in breaking ground on a brand new mixed-use development, which will house two public schools. Located at 250 East 57th Street, the \$500 million development will house modern facilities for P.S. 59 and the High School of Art and Design, which will open to students in September of 2012. Construction of the schools will be paid for by private developers as part of a partnership with the Department of Education's Educational Construction Fund (ECF), which develops mixed-use real estate projects featuring new school facilities. The 57th Street complex is the largest ECF project to date. I worked closely with the City and the developers to ensure the financing for this important project was secured.

The new P.S. 59 will be expanded to accommodate 730 students, up from 500 students now, and the High School of Art and Design will accommodate 1,400 students. As designed, P.S. 59 and the High School of Art and Design will frame an expanded open space, providing children with a safe, controlled environment for recreational activities. A new side yard setback along 56th Street will create additional outdoor play areas for the schools. Along with the two schools and a residential tower, Whole Foods will lease space on the property.

The development of P.S. 59 is a win-win situation for students, parents, and the community. Not only are we creating a state-of-the-art school in a community which desperately needs new seats, but we are doing so at minimal cost to the City of New York. This goes to show how rewarding a good-faith partnership between the City and the private sector can be, and I hope we continue to maximize these mutually beneficial opportunities.



Senator Krueger speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for the New P.S. 59 and High School of Art and Design.

New School Planned for East Midtown

Despite delays in construction on the former Con Ed sites in the East 30s along First Avenue, I am happy to report that plans are moving ahead for building a K-through-8 school at the 35th Street site, to be known as P.S./I.S. 281. As you probably know, the school was planned as part of the large scale rezoning of that area. As of now, the 640-seat school is scheduled to open in 2013 and is crucial to reducing overcrowding on the East Side of Manhattan.

LAND USE

Construction of Tennis Bubbles in Central Park Stopped

In April, after I and several Senate colleagues wrote to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation expressing our opposition to plans to construct four 35-foot high tennis bubbles in Central Park between the Reservoir and the North Meadow, the Parks Department withdrew its request for bids on the proposal. A coalition of environmental, preservation, and park advocacy groups had also expressed their opposition to this proposal. In my letter, we expressed a number of concerns regarding the private use of park space, the environmental impacts of the proposal on air quality due to the use of diesel generators for power, and significant effects on views both from and into the park.

Court Upholds Landmark Status of City and Suburban First Avenue Estates

In June, the New York Appellate Court upheld the landmark status of the City and Suburban First Avenue Estates on Manhattan's Upper East Side. I testified in favor of landmark status for these buildings, and with leadership from Councilmember Jessica Lappin, the buildings were landmarked in 2007. Unfortunately, the owner of the complex, who hoped to demolish the buildings, sued the City in an attempt to overturn the buildings' landmarked status. The City and Suburban Homes Company was the most successful of the privately-financed, limited-dividend companies that attempted to address the housing problems of the nation's working poor at the beginning of the twentieth century. These buildings, which served as national examples for the "model tenement" movement, were designed around an inner courtyard to ensure that every apartment had access to substantial light and air. The fifteen-building complex is one of only two full-block developments of light-court tenements in the country.

East River Waterfront

For far too long, the waterfront along the East Side of Manhattan has been neglected and cut off from the surrounding communities. Anyone who witnessed the transformation of the once similarly dilapidated West Side waterfront into thriving parks and open space in recent years understands the potential that exists along the East River. While there are many significant monetary and geographic hurdles that must be overcome before we can see a similar transformation of the East Side's waterfront, I am pleased to report that progress is taking place on numerous fronts.

In June, I joined other elected officials and Community Board 6 in co-hosting a Town Hall meeting to discuss the potential to construct a waterfront esplanade that would close the gap in the East Side Greenway between 38th and 63rd Streets. New York City Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe and Economic Development Corporation Vice-President Madelyn Wils presented the benefits and costs of various proposals to a highly engaged audience of close to 200 community residents. While no decisions have been made at this point, I look forward to continuing an active dialogue with community members, my fellow East Side elected officials, and City and State agencies.

I am also pleased to be a newly formed East River Esplanade Task Force that is dedicated to improving the condition of the decaying waterfront esplanade north of 59th Street. The Task Force, which had its first meeting earlier this summer, will be working with community groups and City, State, and Federal agencies to assess the damage to the esplanade, estimate the cost of repairs, secure funding sources, and develop a timeframe for transforming the esplanade into the waterfront amenity it was meant to be.

In addition to these efforts, the Department of City Planning is currently in the process of developing a comprehensive waterfront plan for the entire city. The agency hosted workshops in each borough earlier this summer to hear from the public, and will be making its draft plan available on its website in September. You can find information about future public meetings and the draft plan at www.nyc.gov/waterfront.

East 86th Street Neighborhood Network

This summer, a new coalition was formed to coordinate community responses to issues on East 86th Street, which faces a unique combination of quality of life concerns, overcrowding and new development. My staff and I are working closely with this new group and other electeds to address issues impacting the area, including safety, the proliferation of street vendors, traffic, parking, sanitation, and subway access.

HOUSING

Illegal Hotels

In late July, Governor Paterson signed my legislation which makes it clear that hotels cannot legally operate in residential buildings, and provides New York City enforcement agencies with the tools they need to crack down on illegal hotels. The new law goes into effect on May 1,

2011. Illegal hotel operations have already been reported in more than 300 buildings in Manhattan and Brooklyn. If you live in a building where you suspect illegal hotel activity is taking place, you should call 3-1-1, the City's central complaint line, and specifically say the phrase "illegal hotel." 3-1-1 operators have been trained to ask particular questions of individuals filing complaints regarding illegal hotels in order to obtain information that will be most helpful to enforcement agencies. Shutting down illegal hotel operators will improve the safety and quality of life of residents, and help return residential units to the City's extremely limited housing stock.

Cooperative and Condominium Owners

Over the years, my office has received countless inquiries from constituents who were confused and frustrated about their rights and obligations as cooperative shareholders or condominium owners. In response to these concerns, I hosted two community forums this year where constituents had the opportunity to hear from, and ask questions of, representatives from the New York State Attorney General's Office and some of New York City's most experienced cooperative and condominium attorneys. Both events were standing room only, and revealed just how difficult it is for residents to comprehend and navigate the extremely complex series of laws, regulations, individual building by-laws, and other corporate documents, which dictate the rights and obligations of residents of cooperatives and condominiums. The overwhelming turnout and wide range of problems discussed made it apparent to me that there is a need to investigate if there are legislative changes that should be made to the State's laws governing cooperatives and condominiums.

One of the questions asked most frequently by residents of cooperatives and condominiums is whether there is a government agency that can help them understand their rights and/or resolve minor disputes with their Board of Directors or neighbors. Unfortunately, because no such agency exists in New York, residents too often lack adequate knowledge and are left without options other than litigation if serious problems develop. Several other States with large numbers of condominiums, such as Florida, Nevada, Texas, and New Jersey have created condominium ombudsman offices, which educate condominium owners, Board Members, and property managers; provide mediation services and other forms of alternative dispute resolution; and offer monitors to oversee Board elections. After evaluating the successes of these various offices, I introduced legislation (S.7958) that would create a Cooperative and Condominium Ombudsman's Office within the Office of the New York State Attorney General.

In November and December I plan to hold a series of community forums and roundtable discussions with experts on the laws governing cooperatives and condominiums to discuss how a Cooperative and Condominium Ombudsman's Office could best be created in New York, as well as what other legislative changes could be made to improve the management, governance, and transparency of cooperatives and condominiums.

Dealing With Bedbugs

Bedbugs have become a growing problem in New York City, with a recent *Daily News* survey suggesting 10% of

New Yorkers have had an infestation in their homes at some point, and there have been numerous reports of them spreading to stores, theatres and the subway. While bed-bugs do not generally carry diseases, their bites are painful and can produce allergies in some people. Because of their small size, fast reproduction, and resistance to some pesticides such as foggers, they can be extremely difficult to eliminate. The New York City Department of Health has a useful pamphlet, "Preventing and Getting Rid of Bed-bugs Safely," which is available online at <http://home2.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/vector/bed-bug-guide.pdf>. You can also call my office to request a copy.

This year the Senate did pass two bills to help address bed-bugs. The first, S.7316-B, would have tightened regulations on the sale and transport of used bedding, a potential source of infestation. Unfortunately, this bill was vetoed by the Governor, who was concerned about the cost of enforcement. A second bill, S.8130, would require landlords to disclose a history of bedbug infestations to potential tenants. This bill has not yet been delivered to the Governor for his approval or rejection.

Senior Spotlight

Do you know an extraordinary Senior Citizen? Someone who has gone above and beyond to help enhance his or her community or a local organization? If so, he/she may be a perfect candidate for the Senior Spotlight Award, Senator Krueger's new program to honor local Seniors whose presence lights up the community.

To nominate a special senior please visit Senator Krueger's website at krueger.nysenate.gov.

Our first Senior Spotlight shines on Lou Stallman. Lou Stallman is a special Upper East Side senior who has recorded over five hundred songs, including "Treasure of Love," "Round and Round," "It's Gonna Take a Miracle" and the New York Yankees' official theme song. Lou is very active in the community and attends many senior and community events. In addition, he has mentored a number of young artists, including Jerry Potente, with whom he is currently working on a cartoon project called CARHEADS™. He is also currently working on writing the script for a full length animated film. We are honoring Mr. Stallman for his commitment to the arts and his community.



Senator Krueger presents Lou Stallman with a proclamation recognizing his accomplishments and years of giving back to his community.

Events

"Fourth Annual Senior Resource Fair"

Thursday, October 7, 2010

1:30 p.m. – 4:30 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
Free Senior Resource Guides

NO RSVP NECESSARY

For further information, contact
alicefisher.nyc@gmail.com, or call (212) 490-9535.

Mammogram Van Coming to the Upper East Side

On Friday, October 15th, the Scan Van Mobile Mammogram Program will have a van at All Souls Church at 1157 Lexington Avenue (at 80th Street) beginning at 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 will be accepted and co-payments will be waived. The service is free for uninsured women 40 and older. An appointment is necessary. Please call (800) 564-6868 to make an appointment.

Senator Liz Krueger's Senior Roundtable

A Program for Boomers & Seniors
"It's 10:00 PM. Do You Know Where Your Parents Are?"
A DISCUSSION ABOUT CAREGIVING

This will be the first of a three-part discussion for
caregivers and the older people in their lives.

Thursday, November 18, 2010

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.*

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House

311 East 70th Street

(between 1st & 2nd Avenues)

with special guest
Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli

NYC Department for the Aging
*Continental Breakfast will be served

PLEASE RSVP – SPACE IS LIMITED

To RSVP or for further information, contact
alicefisher.nyc@gmail.com or call (212) 490-9434.

Youth Civics Project

Do you know a high-schooler interested in learning more about how government really works? Democracy 101, my Civics Education project for 11th and 12th graders begins this fall. Call my office for more info: (212) 490-9535.