

Liz Krueger



New York State Senate | 26th District

June 2012

Message from Liz...

Last month, the Bipartisan Pro-Choice Legislative Caucus held a roundtable on the **Reproductive Health Act** ([S. 2844](#) / [A. 6112](#)). I co-chair the caucus, and passage of the Reproductive Health Act is one of my top priorities for the final weeks of the legislative session. The roundtable offered an opportunity for legislators and experts to discuss the reasons we need the Act on the books, as well as strategies for building support. I am proud that the Caucus has brought together members of both houses and both parties to stand firm on access to reproductive health services in New York State.

In 1970, New York led the way for the reproductive rights movement and became the first state to provide broad legal protection for a woman's right to abortion. Unfortunately, our laws are now outdated, and we still regulate abortion as a potential crime instead of as an issue of public health and medical practice. Seven other states have already passed versions of the Reproductive Health Act, and it is time for New York to reclaim its place as a leader in the development of progressive reproductive health policies.

The Reproductive Health Act would also fix a troubling gap in New York's law and ensure that when abortions are necessary late in a pregnancy to protect the woman's health, upon advice of her doctors, she can make her own personal, private health care decision without worrying that it will be treated as a criminal matter. While some have claimed that the Act creates an unfettered right to abortion, in fact it maintains the current restrictions on abortions after 24 weeks, simply adding an exception in cases where the health of the woman is endangered.

Abortion opponents have made a number of other inaccurate claims about the Reproductive Health Act, including that it will require health care providers who receive state funding to provide abortions. In fact, the bill does nothing of the sort. It specifically states that nothing contained in the new law alters any existing legal or regulatory protections – state or federal – that permit a health care provider to refrain from providing abortions due to the provider's religious or moral beliefs. The Act also affirms New Yorkers' right to use (or refuse) contraception, regardless of what politicians in Congress decide.

Without a doubt, access to reproductive health care is under attack across the country. In 2011, more than a thousand provisions to restrict or ban reproductive health care services – including basic contraception – were introduced across the country. The U.S. House of

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Representatives held eight votes on choice-related issues (the most since 2000). So far, anti-choice House leaders have lined up five separate bills with anti-abortion provisions for floor action this session. **By passing the Reproductive Health Act, New York can help help stem this anti-woman agenda.**

In his State of the State message, Governor Cuomo stated his support for passage of the Reproductive Health Act this year. I will be working with the Caucus and advocates to keep up the pressure for action on this critical issue.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Update on Proposed Co-Location of Success Academy Charter School in Community School District 2:

Last month I sent a letter to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute expressing my opposition the Success Charter Network's application to co-locate two charter schools in District 2's already over-crowded facilities. The SUNY Charter Schools Institute is currently considering the charter school network's application.

A copy of the letter is available here:

<http://www.lizkrueger.com/2012/05/liz-stands-up-for-district-2-schools/#more-1714>

Second Avenue Restaurant Week:

Second Avenue Restaurant Week took place last week, sponsored by Shop 2nd Avenue in concert with the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce and the New York State Restaurant Association. Twenty-five Second Avenue restaurants offered discounts or *prix fixe* offers during the week-long promotion, which served as a boost to local business and a reminder that even though the subway construction continues, Second Avenue remains alive with great local businesses.

Last Wednesday night after we got back from Albany, Assemblyman Dan Quart and I joined Borough President Scott Stringer and Community Board 8 Chairman Nick Veist at *Doppio Senso* to participate!

Upcoming Elections and Registration Deadlines:

Tuesday, June 26th is primary day this year for federal offices. There is a statewide Republican primary for U.S. Senate, and Democratic Congressional primaries in the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th 13th, and 16th Districts in New York City. Note that there are no Democratic primaries for either of the congressional districts that overlap my Senate district.

Thursday, September 13th will be primary day for state offices – the date was moved to avoid having the primary on September 11th. Candidates for the state primaries have not yet been determined. The last day to register to vote in the September primary is August 17th and the last day to register for the November 6th General Election is October 12th.

You can register to vote or update your voter registration by mailing in a form to the Board of Elections. The form is available here, at the City Campaign Finance Board's voter registration resource center: <http://www.nyccfb.info/public/VRC/registeringToVote.aspx>

Update on East Midtown Waterfront Project:

The East Midtown Waterfront Project has established a website to provide updates and solicit feedback on plans for the creation of a greenway on the East River between East 38th and East 60th Streets. Please visit the project web page for information and updates: www.nycedc.com/project/east-midtown-waterfront

If you have comments or questions, you can email EastMidtownWaterfront@nycedc.com.

New York Public Library Offers Free English Classes:

This summer, the New York Public Library is offering free English language classes at many branches throughout the city. There are classes targeted both at speakers of other languages, as well as reading and writing classes for English language speakers. If you are interested in participating, you must attend an information session first.

The Manhattan information session will take place on Tuesday, June 19th at 5:00 PM at the St. Agnes Library, 444 Amsterdam Avenue b/t 81st and 82nd Streets. For more information, call [212-790-3432](tel:212-790-3432) or visit www.nypl.org/events/classes for details on other information sessions in other boroughs.

Affordable Housing Opportunities in Manhattan:

101 Avenue D Apartments is now accepting applications for 39 affordable studio and 1 bedroom apartments under construction AT 101 Avenue D on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$461 to \$1818 depending on income and unit size. To be eligible, applicants must have incomes between \$17,760 and \$116,200, depending on income and family size. Preference will be given to Community Board 3 residents for 50 percent of units, mobility-impaired persons for five percent of units, visual- and/or hearing-impaired units for two percent of units, and City of New York municipal employees for five percent of units. Preference for all units will go to New York City residents.

Application may be requested by Email 101avenueD@cmpconsultants.com, or mail a self-addressed envelope to:

101 Avenue D Apartments
c/o CMP Consultants, Inc.
PO Box 1180
Valley Stream, NY 11582

Completed applications must be returned by regular mail only to a post office box that will be listed on the application and must be postmarked by June 19th, 2012. Applicants who submit more than one application will be disqualified.

POLICY SPOTLIGHT

Tenant Blacklisting

The New York State Office of Court Administration is taking a key step to end the practice known as “tenant blacklisting.” The names of individuals named as parties in housing court actions will no longer be sold in electronic form by the New York State Unified Court System as of June 1, 2012. Information regarding individual cases will continue to be available through the Unified Court System’s eCourts website and in the Housing Court clerks’ offices.

The previous, unrestricted sale of this data in electronic form to tenant screening companies created what are known as tenant blacklists – databases used by landlords and real estate management agents to discriminate against potential tenants. The availability of these blacklists, maintained by hundreds of tenant screening companies across the country, has meant that any landlord could easily discriminate against potential tenants, purely on the basis of their having been named in previous New York City Housing Court proceedings. I, along with a coalition of New York City elected officials and tenants’ advocates brought the issue to Judge Prudenti’s attention earlier this year.

Individuals can end up blacklisted without having done anything wrong. Thousands of tenants are named as parties in Housing Court cases each year because their landlords face foreclosure, as the result of a government agency failing to pay a rent subsidy on time, or as the result of an error. Even when these cases are quickly dismissed, the tenants’ information remains in the system and is sold to tenant screening companies, causing long-term damage.

In addition, with New York City’s tight rental market and soaring property values, unscrupulous landlords routinely bring Housing Court proceedings to harass rent-regulated tenants and drive them from their homes. With the practice of blacklisting, a landlord could merely threaten to name a tenant as a defendant in housing court, and win or lose, that tenant would be faced with a black mark that could make it difficult or even impossible to secure housing in the future.

In practice, tenant blacklisting has had a chilling effect on tenants’ ability to exercise their legal rights. Tenants who are legally entitled to withhold their rent to enforce their right to safe and habitable housing have had to fear permanent consequences merely from being named in an eviction proceeding, even if their landlord is unsuccessful in the court action itself.

The use of housing court data to promulgate blacklists is just another way massive real estate concerns have twisted the system to pressure tenants and benefit themselves. When the fear of being ‘blacklisted’ causes many tenants to avoid the court and relinquish their legal rights, access to justice and the protection of the law itself are both fundamentally undermined. I applaud Judge Prudenti’s action to protect both New York’s tenants and the integrity of our court system.