



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR  
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**COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

**July 2014**

Dear Neighbor:

The following is a summary of some of my activities since my last report to Community Board Four (CB4). Many of my attached letters, testimonies, and press releases may also be found on my website at [www.hoylman.nysenate.gov](http://www.hoylman.nysenate.gov).

If you have any ideas, questions, or concerns, please feel free to contact me or Robert Atterbury in my office at **212-633-8052** or via email at [robert@bradhoylman.com](mailto:robert@bradhoylman.com). Visit my website for updates on my activities and other information you may find of interest.

Best regards,

Brad Hoylman  
State Senator  
27<sup>th</sup> District

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**End of the 2014 Legislative Session**

The 2014 legislative session came to an end during the late night hours on Friday, June 20. Hundreds of bills were passed by the State Senate in the last two weeks of the session, including some very significant ones I was proud to support. These include legislation authorizing New York City to **lower the citywide speed limit** to 25 mph, legalizing and regulating **medicinal marijuana**, closing the **Port Authority loophole** exempting it from New York State's Freedom of Information Law, and my legislation with Assembly Member Richard Gottfried paving the way for **50 more years of affordability at Penn South**, the 2,820 unit middle-income complex in the heart of our Senate District.

Unfortunately, many important pieces of legislation died in the Senate this year. The Senate leadership failed to bring my bill to prohibit licensed mental health professionals

from engaging in so-called “**conversion therapy**” with minors to the Senate floor for a vote, even though it had enough bipartisan support to pass. Just yesterday, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to decline to hear a challenge to California’s ‘conversion therapy’ law, on which my bill is modeled. The court’s decision is a milestone in our fight to outlaw this harmful and widely-discredited practice by licensed mental health providers, and is a sad and embarrassing reminder how New York lags behind other states that are protecting LGBT kids. Other progressive priorities including **GENDA**, the **Women’s Equality Act**, the **DREAM Act**, municipal control of the **minimum wage**, a ban on **hydrofracking**, and comprehensive **campaign finance reform**, met similar fates.

I am optimistic about the change of leadership slated to take place in the Senate next year, which will finally allow these and other forward-thinking bills to come to a vote and become law. In the meantime, I look forward to spending the next six months working in the neighborhoods of our district before I head back up to Albany in January.

### **Illegal Intercity Bus Stops**

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) announced earlier this month that the agency was beginning a crackdown on illegal intercity buses at stops throughout the city. On July 17, I wrote to the NYPD and the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) to bring their attention to several bus companies operating in CB4 whose permits have lapsed. The companies, including Fuji, Three Aces, and Galaxy, have continued to load and unload passengers on 42nd Street between 8th and 9th Avenues, idling and blocking an MTA dedicated lane. While I appreciate the economic benefits that these buses bring to New York, in addition to the low-cost options they provide to New Yorkers looking to travel outside the city, I do not believe we should sacrifice the safety and order of our pedestrian and vehicular traffic in exchange for those benefits. Please see my letter attached.

### **Tenant Harassment on 21st Street**

I, along with Council Member Corey Johnson, Assembly Member Richard Gottfried, Tenants PAC, and Housing Conservation Coordinators, have been working with tenants of 222 and 224 West 21st Street to combat illegal harassment and dangerous construction. The landlord of these two buildings has removed fire stops, damaged walls, and served tenants with baseless eviction notices to remove rent regulated tenants from their homes. I want to thank CB4 member Pamela Wolfe for bringing this case to our attention. We have since had the building inspected several times, and the landlord was forced to stop work while repairs were made. We will continue fighting to ensure these tenants have safe and stable homes.

### **After-Hours Variances on West 25th Street**

During the last week of June my office was contacted by several residents of the 200 block of West 25th Street regarding incredibly loud construction taking place at 261

West 25th Street. This construction had After-Hours Variance permits (AHV) to operate Monday through Saturday, 7AM to 8PM. I quickly wrote to the New York City Department of Buildings to request these AHVs be curtailed. As a result, DOB has prohibited pile driving and pile grouting from the weekday AHV scope of work, as well as any weekend work. I will continue to fight to ensure this development is as minimally disruptive as possible.

### **Renovation of the Port Authority Bus Terminal**

Today, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Board of Commissioners voted to approve \$90 million to renovate the Port Authority Bus Terminal. I applaud the Port Authority and its Executive Director Patrick Foye for this commitment, and look forward to working with the Authority as it continues to press forward with the Bus Terminal Master Plan, which would modernize and expand the capacity of the depot to help keep idling buses off our city's streets.

### **8th Avenue Split Phase Signals**

Today, I was joined by Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Assembly Member Richard Gottfried, and Council Member Corey Johnson in writing to DOT in support of CB4's longstanding request for left-turn signals on Eighth Avenue at the southwest corners of West 25th and West 29th Streets, including separate (north/south) pedestrian crossing times. CB4 originally requested these split-phase signals in conjunction with the installation of protected bike lanes along Eighth Avenue. While this stretch of Eighth Avenue along Penn South has protected bike lanes, which significantly reduce pedestrian and cyclist injuries and fatalities along the route, pedestrians crossing north/south at high-traffic intersections remain at substantial risk of being hit by turning vehicles. Please see our letter attached.

### **Continuing the Fight Against Hydrofracking**

I was pleased to see this month's decision by the New York State Court of Appeals that local governments have the power to ban hydraulic fracturing within their jurisdictions through the zoning process. Dozens of communities throughout New York State have passed local laws banning hydrofracking, and it's time for New York State to do the same. I will continue to fight against this environmentally-damaging process, and I am proud to co-sponsor legislation which would prohibit the practice of hydrofracking statewide.

### **Calling on the FCC to Scrutinize Comcast-Time Warner Merger**

On June 16, I was joined by seven of my colleagues, including Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal and Council Member Helen Rosenthal, in sending a letter to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) asking it to carefully scrutinize a proposed merger of Comcast and Time Warner Cable. This merger would combine the two internet service providers lowest ranked on the American Customer Satisfaction Index, and give Comcast control of over 30 million subscribers, a roughly 30% share of the television and internet services market. Such a monopoly would likely increase prices, cause declines in service, give the company undue control over the content consumers may

access, and diminish overall industry standards, affecting not only Comcast's and Time Warner's customers but cable subscribers throughout the country. Please see our letter attached.

### **Governor's Plan to End AIDS in New York**

On June 29, I joined leading AIDS advocates at a press conference lauding Governor Andrew Cuomo for announcing a plan to end AIDS in New York State that puts New York at the forefront of the fight against the epidemic. As I said in *The Wall Street Journal*, although there is still no cure, scientific advances and widespread health care coverage through NY State of Health have put an end to the epidemic within our reach. I applaud Governor Cuomo for recognizing the potential to end AIDS in New York State by 2020 and for committing the human and financial resources necessary to develop and execute a plan to do so. I wish to particularly thank Housing Works, Treatment Action Group, ACRIA, GMHC, VOCAL-NY, ACT-UP, Harlem United, and the more than two dozen other HIV/AIDS and LGBT organizations that came together to make a strong and sustained case for this critical initiative. Please find attached a letter to Governor Cuomo supporting such a plan, which I spearheaded earlier this year and which was also signed by 19 of my Senate colleagues.

### **Bike-Friendly Amtrak Cars Coming to New York**

Last year, I reported on my efforts with U.S. Senator Charles Schumer and my colleague, New York State Senator Little (R-Queensbury), to compel Amtrak to add baggage cars capable of carrying bicycles on their Adirondack and Ethan Allen trains, which run from Penn Station to Albany and Saratoga, and other points north. Amtrak heeded our call and last July began accommodating bicycles on board in a demonstration program. I'm happy to report that the program has been a huge success, and on June 17 Amtrak announced that it will be using the new bicycle-friendly baggage cars on all 15 of its long-distance routes by the end of 2014. This includes the Lake Shore Limited Line, which runs between New York City and many upstate destinations, such as Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica and Albany, and points further west including Cleveland and Chicago. This new service will be a boon to the State and City: the new baggage cars are being built in New York State by Elmira-based CAF USA, and their use will encourage increased bicycle tourism. Please go to <http://bit.ly/1qFbo3f> for more information.

### **The SCRIE Household Income Cap is now \$50,000 - Call me for Help Applying**

As a result of action taken at the state and local level, effective July 1, the household income cap for New York City's Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption program (SCRIE) will increase from \$29,000 to \$50,000. To be eligible for SCRIE, you must be a rent-regulated tenant-of-record, 62-years of age or older, have a household income of \$50,000 or less, and a rent amount that exceeds one-third of your household income to be eligible. If you have questions or need help applying, please contact me at 212-633-8052 or [hoylman@nysenate.gov](mailto:hoylman@nysenate.gov).

### **Supporting the Call for Policies to Promote Electric Vehicles**

On July 2, I joined Environment New York, as well as Assembly Members Linda Rosenthal and David Buchwald, as the organization unveiled its new report, "Driving Cleaner: More Electric Vehicles Mean Less Pollution." In 2006, documentarian Chris Paine asked "Who Killed the Electric Car?" Today, companies like Tesla right here in CB4 have brought the electric car back to life. The report finds that more than 220,000 electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles are on America's roads today and in just the last two years, annual sales of electric vehicles have increased by 500 percent. Still the report underscores the need for our state and federal governments to do even more to encourage car companies to produce zero emission vehicles, and make it easier for consumers to drive them. I look forward to working with Environment New York and my colleagues in government to get more clean-energy electric vehicles on our roads and deliver real benefits for our health and environment.

### **Spreading the Word about NYC's Paid Sick Leave Law**

On July 16, I joined Mayor de Blasio, other elected officials, agency heads and more than 1,000 volunteers in a Paid Sick Leave Day of Action to distribute information about New York City's new law requiring employers with five or more employees to provide those who work at least 80 hours a year up to 40 hours of sick leave to care for themselves or a loved one. Paid sick leave allows employees to stay home and get better instead of coming into work sick, and means workers no longer have to choose between providing for their families financially and taking care of a sick child or parent. The law, signed by Mayor de Blasio, took effect in April, and employees will be able to start using the time they have accrued on July 30. If you have any questions about the new paid sick leave law please visit [nyc.gov/PaidSickLeave](http://nyc.gov/PaidSickLeave) or call me at 212-633-8052.

### **Tenants Still Facing Rent Guidelines Board Increases**

On June 16, I submitted testimony to the New York City Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) on its proposed rent increases of 0% to 3% for one-year lease renewals, and 0.5% to 4.5% for two-year lease renewals in rent-stabilized apartments. I noted that while many tenants are still reeling from the recession, and more than a third of renter households in the City paid 50% or more of their household income for rent in 2011, RGB data show landlords of rent stabilized properties have seen eight consecutive years of increased Net Operating Income. I urged the RGB to allow tenants to make up economic ground and to impose a freeze on rents for all rent-regulated apartments as well as for lofts, hotels, rooming houses, single room occupancy buildings (SROs), and lodging houses. The RGB heeded that request for hotels, rooming houses, SROs and lodging houses but set rent increases for rent-stabilized and loft lease renewals at 1% and 2.75% for one- and two-year leases respectively. While these increases are lower than those we have seen historically, they are still too high for tenants struggling to make up economic ground after falling so far behind. The RGB's order underscores our need to continue working to strengthen our rent laws to protect our tenants and our precious affordable housing stock.

### **Students: Join My Summer Reading Program**

My colleagues in the New York State Senate and I, in conjunction with the New York State Library, are offering a summer reading program to help students to keep their skills honed and minds sharp. Participating students will use an online journal to keep track of their reading progress throughout the summer, and children who submit a completed journal will receive a Summer Reading Certificate. You can access the online journal by visiting my website at <http://hoylman.nysenate.gov> and clicking the Summer Reading Program button on the left hand column. Please join me this summer in promoting literacy and indulging in the wonderful world of books.

**Free Summer Meals for Kids 18 and Under**

The City's free breakfast and lunch program for children 18 and under continues on weekdays during the summer at hundreds of public schools, community pool centers, New York City Housing Authority complexes, and other locations around the city. For more information please go to <http://bit.ly/UuevOA>.