





NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
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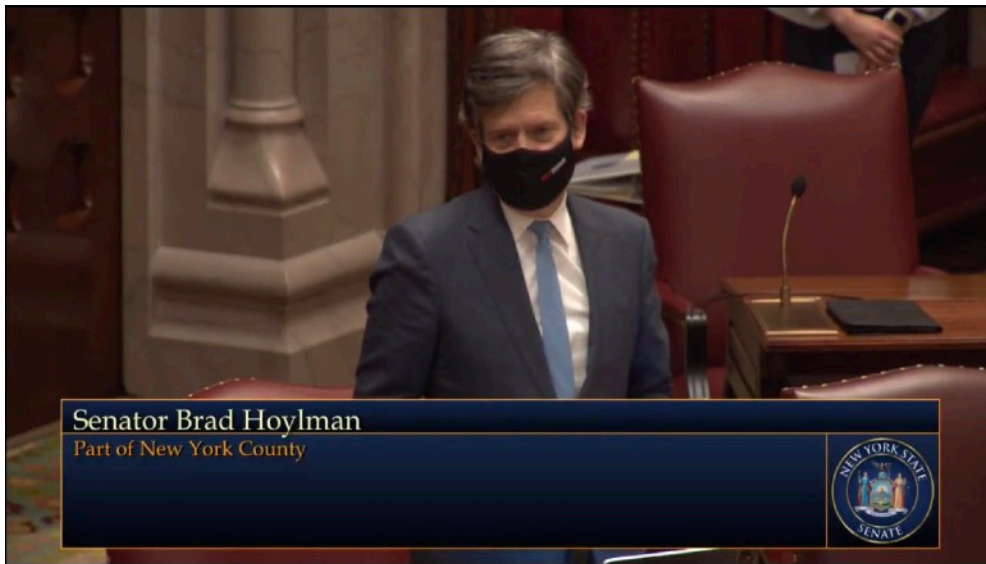
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JANUARY 2021 UPDATE TO COMMUNITY BOARD 6

Historic Civil Rights Reform Passes: Walking While Trans Ban Finally Repealed

On February 2nd, the Senate and Assembly passed my legislation with Assembly Member Amy Paulin ([S.1351/A.3355](#)) to repeal Penal Law Sec. 240.37, an outdated section of law sometimes referred to as the “Walking While Trans” Ban that essentially gives police the power to stop and arrest transgender women, women of color, immigrants and LGBTQ youth for simply walking down the street. For decades, this law has been used disproportionately against people of color, and transgender women of color in particular. The District Attorneys Association of the State of New York even noted last week that the law we’re repealing “leads to harassment and unjust arrests, undermines trust in our systems, and has no value in protecting members of our community. I’m proud that New York will be the first state to roll back this discriminatory statute via legislation. It’s been my honor to sponsor this bill and fight for it alongside a diverse groups of transgender advocates like TS Candii, Kiara St. James, Bianey Garcia, Norma Ureiro, Mariah Lopez, and many others who courageously shared their stories. I’m grateful to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for continuing to prioritize the needs of the LGBTQ community, to my Senate colleagues Julia Salazar and Jessica Ramos for their strong support, to Assembly Member Paulin for her leadership, and to Council Member Carlina Rivera for passing a City Council resolution in support of this bill.



Legislative Update

I am proud to have co-sponsored the COVID-19 Emergency Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act (CEEFFPA) that the State Legislature passed in December to protect COVID-impacted New Yorkers from residential evictions and foreclosure. Earlier this month, I received troubling reports from tenant advocates that some courts in upstate New York are continuing to process eviction proceedings, while some courts in New York City and on Long Island are moving forward with foreclosure cases, despite the immediate 60 day stay of such proceedings that CEEFFPA provided. Along with Senate Housing Chair Brian Kavanagh and 29 of my Senate colleagues, I sent a letter alerting the Chief Administrative Judge of New York’s court system to alert him to these reports and urged him to immediately ensure that courts are complying with the law we passed. You can read an article about our letter [here](#).

On January 19th, the Senate passed a package of legislation to support New York’s small businesses. I am proud to be a co-sponsor of bills we passed to: protect small businesses with COVID-19 related financial hardships from eviction and foreclosure; protect restaurants by capping third-party delivery service fees and prohibiting food delivery apps from listing restaurants without a written agreement; require the New York State Department of Labor to increase their efforts to provide information to employers about the shared work program; freeze employers’ Unemployment Insurance premiums; and establish a system of partial unemployment to incentivize part-time work.

Legislative Budget Hearing on Housing

Last week, I joined with my colleagues in the legislature for another Joint Legislative Public Hearing on the 2021 Executive Budget proposal on Housing. At the top of the hearing, HCR commissioner RuthAnne Visnuskas offered testimony and responded to questions from legislators. The commissioner shared that HCR received 15,000 new applications to the state’s rent relief program and will also be reassessing

applications that were received under the last application window. We are looking forward to seeing many more New Yorkers receive the rental assistance that they need to survive our state of emergency.

I also took some time to ask the Commissioner about the proposed MCI reasonable cost schedule that HCR is preparing, in compliance with the 2019 Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act (HSTPA). Despite a public hearing on the cost schedule there are still a number of unresolved issues. I asked the Commissioner to finally make public the report on which the cost schedule is based, to bring transparency and give us all certainty that the reasonable cost schedule is indeed fair and reasonable. The commissioner will report back to my office to let us know if the report can be made public. I will continue to follow up to ensure that tenants are protected and the spirit of the HSTPA is preserved.

The Subways Must Return to 24/7 Service + MTA Hearing

On January 26th, I joined my Senate and Assembly colleagues for a Joint Legislative Public Hearing on the 2021 Executive Budget proposal, with a focus on transportation. Among the panelists were MTA Chairman Patrick Foye, MTA Chief Development Officer Janno Lieber, and MTA Chief Financial Officer Bob Foran. Despite the financial crisis triggered by the pandemic, the MTA informed us that they were able to avoid draconian service cuts thanks to the most recent round of federal stimulus funds. While this much needed assistance provided immediate relief, there are still long term budget woes we must address. Now that President Biden has taken office, the MTA confirmed that they will be moving expeditiously to ensure that congestion pricing is enacted as soon as possible – a move the previous administration blocked. Once enacted, congestion pricing can help close our budget gaps. I also took time to highlight how important 24/7 service is for New York’s recovery and urged the MTA to prioritize restoring this much needed service as quickly as possible. You can watch an exchange I had with Chairman Foye [here](#).

Meeting the Needs of LGBTQ Seniors

On January 28th, I stood virtually with SAGE and AARP at an event heralding the release of their groundbreaking report on the many disparities faced by aging LGBTQ New Yorkers. New York is home to one of the biggest populations of LGBTQ people in the United States, both in raw numbers and as a percentage of the total population, and as they grow older we must ensure that we’re taking care of their unique needs. LGBTQ seniors run an increased risk of isolation, disconnection from vital services, and facing discrimination compared to their non-LGBTQ peers. These risks are compounded in particular for people of color, people living with HIV and our transgender brothers and sisters. I’m proud to carry several pieces of legislation that would enact the recommendations that SAGE and AARP lay out in their report -- including establishing an LGBTQ Long-Term Care Facility Residents’ Bill of Rights -- and I am committed to working with my colleagues in the Senate and Assembly to try to advance these important reforms this year.

Getting Our Schools the Money They Deserve

On January 27th, I joined the Alliance for Quality Education, the Invest in Our New York Coalition and parents and grandparents of color to demand investment in our public schools. New York City’s schools were already chronically underfunded before the pandemic. Now we may have to contend with 20% budget cuts that would lead to teacher layoffs. This funding crisis is happening while New York City is still owed Foundation Aid money as a result of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit in 2006, and in my Senate district alone schools are still owed close to \$25 million; across Manhattan that number is \$128 million. I believe we should be fully funding our public schools – not trying to cut our way out of this crisis. That’s why I fully support raising taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers, repealing the Trump corporate tax cut at the state level, and asking the billionaires who have made money this pandemic to give a little more. We need to invest in our schools – we owe it to the next generation.

Supporting Asian-American New Yorkers with the Chinese-American Planning Council

Last month, I rallied with the Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC) in support of the critical work they have done with the hardest hit New Yorkers during this state of emergency. CPC is a social services organization that provides help to New Yorkers who need it, with a particular focus on Asian American, immigrant and low-income communities. Low-income New Yorkers and communities of color have been hardest hit by this pandemic, and CPC has been there to help. But they can’t do it alone. Too many New Yorkers still cannot afford necessities like food, rent, and utility bills, which is why I stood with CPC to call for additional revenue to invest in our community and to ensure an equitable recovery.

Preventing Power Outages

On January 26th, I testified before the Public Service Commission (PSC) at their hearing regarding the two power outages in Manhattan and Brooklyn in July 2019. These outages impacted our hospitals, restaurants, theaters, local businesses and thousands of New Yorkers. During a pandemic, a reliable and affordable electric grid is more important than ever: a grid failure today would mean avoidable death at our overtaxed hospitals, spoiled vaccines because of failed refrigeration, and too many struggling businesses thrown another hurdle.

This pandemic has made it abundantly clear: we need utilities that are responsive to the needs of our community. My colleague, Sen. Michael Gianaris has introduced a package of reforms that I co-sponsor, including legislation to create a blue ribbon panel to recommend nominees to the New York State Public Service Commission, a bill to eliminate the current liability shield utility companies enjoy during service

interruption if utility negligence is proven, and a bill to expand the scope of management audits the PSC can perform on utility providers. This package is an important step to ensure that all utilities, including ConEd, operate with the public's best interest in mind.



Standing up for Hotel Workers in Time Square

The Marriott Marquis terminated 850 of its employees over a month ago and still has not kept their promise of a fair market severance. I rallied with the impacted workers in Time Square and called on Marriott to make good on their promise. These workers built Marriott into one of the largest hotel brands in the world through their decades of service, and they deserve their full compensation. Marriott's bait and switch on a fair severance will endanger hundreds of working families during a pandemic. That is unacceptable and I will continue to fight alongside the workers until Marriott does the right thing.

Requesting a Pause of Privatization at East Midtown Plaza

Last month, Assemblymember Harvey Epstein and I sent HPD a letter requesting that they place a pause on the privatization of the Mitchell-Lama Development, East Midtown Plaza (EMP). The financial projections on which the privatization of EMP is based on, were calculated before the pandemic and are no longer accurate given how much of our financial outlook has changed in the last year. The outdated analysis could give residents inaccurate information about the financial impacts of privatization. But importantly, during this financial crisis triggered by an unprecedented public health emergency, we should be preserving affordable housing rather than proceeding to dismantle it. The Mitchell-Lama program is a bastion of affordability for New Yorkers. The privatization of East Midtown Plaza should be at least temporarily paused during this state of emergency.

'Ban the Scan' Campaign: Stop Law Enforcement from Using Biased Facial Recognition

I was proud to stand with local and global activists to launch the Ban the Scan campaign to put a stop to law enforcement use of facial recognition. Facial recognition is a biased and ineffective technology that puts New Yorkers at risk of harassment from police and prosecutors. That's why I've introduced legislation (S.79) with Assemblymember Deborah Glick to immediately halt the use of facial recognition and other biometric surveillance technology by law enforcement. I'm thankful for Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, my constituent Derrick Ingram, S.T.O.P. Amnesty International, Legal Aid Society, National Action Network, Immigrant Defense Project, Electronic Frontier Foundation and NYCLU for supporting our legislation and for your work fighting back against this dangerous threat to our privacy and civil liberties.

Parole Justice in New York

On January 14th, I was proud to stand with Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP), grassroots advocates from across New York, and my fellow legislators for the launch of the People's Campaign for Parole Justice. To achieve true parole justice, our correctional system must offer incarcerated people a meaningful opportunity for rehabilitation and reentry into their communities. It's with that principle in mind that I sponsor elder parole legislation to provide incarcerated seniors serving long sentences the opportunity for parole. With Democratic supermajorities in both houses of the State Legislature, there's never been a better opportunity to achieve Parole Justice in New York, particularly at a time when our state's prisons and jails are at the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fighting for the Merchant's House Museum

On January 12th, I joined my colleague Assembly Member Glick to oppose the Landmarks Preservation Commission application to build a hotel that would be built next to the Merchant's House Museum. Conclusive engineering studies showed that constructing even the smaller building would pose an existential threat to Merchant House's structural integrity and its landmarked interior. A larger structure could be even worse. Any damage caused by the applicant could result in temporary or permanent closure, stifled revenue, displaced staff and personnel, massive storage costs for the Museum's collections, and potentially destroy the Museum altogether. A vote on the application has not been calendared.

Pausing Non-essential Construction in Occupied Residential Buildings

On January 14th, I joined residents of 308 West 30th Street to call for the pause of non-essential construction in occupied residential buildings and greater enforcement of COVID-19 safety protocols. Even as we've been asked to stay in our homes to stop the spread of the virus, residents were subjected to massive renovations and unmasked workers in common areas. With COVID-19 cases significantly higher than when

the original pause on non-essential construction was in effect, it's only reasonable to reinstate the pause for the safety of residents. I also joined my colleagues, Assembly Member Gottfried and City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, in a letter requesting a pause in non-essential construction in occupied residential buildings. Because of the rising number of COVID-19 cases, even surpassing the previous positivity rate when a statewide stop work order was in place, it is only reasonable to reinstate a pause on non-essential residential construction.

COVID-19 Vaccine Updates:

New York State expanded vaccine eligibility to New Yorkers age 65+. This puts us in line with CDC guidance. The full list of those eligible can be [found here](#).

New York City and New York State each have their own vaccination sites and ways to schedule your vaccine.

I am as frustrated as you are about how confusing this all is, and I'm committed to helping improve the vaccination sign-up process however I can, but for now I hope this information offers some clarity.

Scheduling a Vaccine through New York City

[Head here](#) to find NYC vaccination locations. Plug in your zip code and you can find locations near you. If you are currently eligible, you can schedule appointments directly with vaccine providers, either by email or phone.

To schedule an appointment by phone please call 877-VAX-4NYC or 877-829-4692.

If you need technical assistance or are receiving an error when using the COVID-19 Vaccine Hubs portal, please call 800-831-8196.

The New York City "[Vaccine Command Center](#)" can answer other questions and provide you with additional information like vaccination rates.

Scheduling a Vaccine through New York State

Here is state guidance on how to sign up for a vaccine.

- **Health care workers** who are part of Phase 1a will continue to be vaccinated at hospitals and other clinical settings.
- **People age 65 and over or immunocompromised** will primarily be vaccinated at pharmacies and other sites that are part of the "retail network." If you are eligible please [fill this out](#) and then you will be able to schedule a vaccination using the same site. If you have any questions on how to use the form and website, please use this [resource page](#). Additionally, the COVID-19 Vaccination Hotline is open 7AM - 10PM, 7 days a week, for scheduling vaccination appointments for eligible New Yorkers: 1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829).
- **Public employees** (for example, police departments, public school teachers and MTA employees) will primarily be vaccinated through their employers' relevant health programs or as organized by their unions.

If you are interested in scheduling a vaccine at the **Javits Center** can do so through [heading here](#) or calling 888-364-3065. *Disclaimer: this page has crashed with an influx of interest and may crash again.*

COVID-19 Testing

COVID-19 positivity rates are increasing across the city. Please get tested and help keep the rate of spread down. I'd suggest going to NYC Health & Hospitals sites. They typically have shorter lines, results come in 48-72 hours, and it's FREE whether or not you have insurance. You can find NYC's sites here: <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/covid-19-testing-sites/>. I also strongly recommend getting the COVID-19 Alert NY app to receive exposure alerts: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-alert-ny>.

What to Expect When You Get Vaccinated

- The first New Yorkers to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine got their second doses earlier this month. As more and more New Yorkers receive a second dose, I thought I'd share my experience as a participant in the Pfizer / BioNTech Phase 2-3 drug trial earlier this summer to help allay any concerns.
- When you get your 2nd dose you may feel side effects by the early evening like I did. On the day of my 2nd dose, I went out for a drink with a friend that evening, but by about 8 pm I felt a little off. By about 9 pm the evening I got my shot, I had developed some chills and body aches. It felt like a quick onset of the flu or a bad cold. By about 10 pm, I had a fever. The highest I measured it was around 101. I piled the blankets on and went to bed. I think I shivered through a large part of the night. By morning, the fever, chills and aches were gone. I didn't have a headache, nausea or any other side effects. I basically felt okay, but might have taken a day off from work if I could have.
- The comparisons to a hangover are pretty accurate. The week following, I experienced some fatigue. I wasn't up for going to the gym or taking a run. I recall using the railing walking upstairs because I felt tired. Within about 1.5 weeks, I felt like my old self again. I reported my symptoms on a daily basis to the NYU Langone Vaccine Center for some period of time (they informed me that they were not atypical for someone my age).

A number people on the drug trial have independently had their antibodies measured. The good news: For those who didn't receive the placebo, their antibodies are at the highest levels measurable. A 'titer' is the

relative strength of the immune response to the COVID-19 virus. If you've recovered from COVID-19, you're required to have a titer of 320 to qualify to donate convalescent plasma. I've seen results from the vaccine trial showing titer levels of 2,880!

In all, I'm extremely lucky not to have contracted COVID-19, especially since I lost a family member to it and my husband also had it, but also honored to have done a small part to help advance a vaccine for a virus that has caused so much suffering to so many. I have new appreciation for the importance of drug trials, too, and the scientists who make them happen. I'll be keeping an eye out for future trials. If you're able and willing, you should, too. [Sign up here](#) for a clinical trial.

Community Board Applications

Want to get more involved in the direction of your community? Join your Community Board! Manhattan's 12 community boards are local organizations each composed of 50 volunteer members serving staggered two-year terms. Community boards are tasked with being the independent and representative voices of their communities – the most grass-roots form of local government. The boards are pivotal in shaping their communities and work to enhance and preserve the character of the city's many unique neighborhoods. The online application can be found here: manhattanbp.nyc.gov/cbapplication. Community board applications will be open until 5pm on Monday, February 1st, 2021.

Mental Health Resources & Hotlines

Between the isolation and loneliness of social distancing and the stress and anxiety of worrying about our health, mental health care is more important than ever. I want to share some free resources you can use to get help if you need it:

- New York State Office of Mental Health (NYS OMH): In response to increased need for mental health care, NYS OMH has created a hotline with free mental health counseling. Call 1-844-863-9314 to speak to someone.
- NYC Well: This city-operated hotline offers free, confidential mental health counseling 24/7. You can call 1-888-NYC-WELL, text "WELL" to 65173 or visit their website to chat with a professional.
- Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH): This free helpline provides crisis counseling and support for anyone experiencing distress or behavioral health concerns related to public health emergencies and other natural disasters. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746
- Crisis Text Line: This service provides free trained crisis counselors who can listen and respond through text messages. They operate 24/7. Text "MHA" to 741741 to get in touch.
- The Trevor Project: This nonprofit organization, based in our district, operates a national 24-hour toll free confidential suicide hotline for LGBTQ youth. To reach the hotline, call 1-866-488-7386 or text "START" to 678678.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: Practicing social isolation can be extraordinarily difficult for those living with abusive intimate partners. Call 1-800-799-7233, log onto www.thehotline.org or text "LOVEIS" to 22522 to speak with someone.
- Caregiver Help Desk: Caring for a loved one can present new challenges given the current restrictions on outdoor activity and high risks for senior citizens. Between 8:00 AM and 7:00 PM, you can call this hotline where caregiving experts can provide the information you need to navigate complex caregiving challenges. Call 855-227-3640 to speak with a caregiving expert.



Senator Hoylman's COVID-19 Resource Guide

My office is continuing to update our COVID-19 resource guide with the latest news and information. You'll be able to read up on health tips you should know, new resources from State and Local government, and places to get help if you need it. [Click here to read our COVID-19 Constituent Resource Guide.](#)

Volunteer to Help Your Neighbors

Throughout this scary and uncertain time, New Yorkers have risen to the occasion. It's been heartening to see so many neighbors calling me to ask how they can help those less fortunate in the community. My office has created a web form to help connect constituents with local non-profits who are looking for volunteers to help senior citizens, immunocompromised individuals, and anyone for whom COVID-19 poses the highest health risk. If you're interested in volunteering from home, [please click here and fill out the form.](#) And if

you are able to volunteer out in the community, please fill out this form. We already have 400 volunteers helping during this time!

If you have any ideas, questions, or concerns, you can always contact me or Sam Vasquez at **212-633-8052** or via e-mail at **svasquez@nysenate.gov**

You can email me at **hoylman@nysenate.gov** or visit my website at **hoylman.nysenate.gov** to find copies of my letters, testimonies, and press releases.