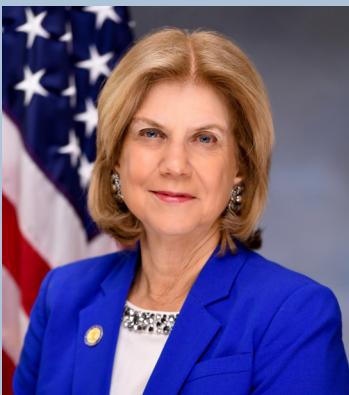


STATE SENATOR SHELLEY B. MAYER

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends:

What a year this has been! We have faced such challenges, and yet, I have tremendous faith in our communities, our resilience, and our commitment to our State and our Nation.

First, my deepest condolences to those who lost loved ones during this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Thousands of New Yorkers have died, and we do not forget them. We mourn them and honor their lives. Now, in addition to the health impacts of the pandemic, we face the economic challenges of the loss of businesses, jobs, homes, and our financial security. It's truly unimaginable to most of us. Third, our Nation is in the midst of a national reckoning about racism and the ongoing need to move our country ahead as it deals with its history. This is a challenge I adopt fully, and believe it must be done. On top of that, we in Westchester faced the fury of Tropical Storm Isaias, resulting in thousands of power outages for an unacceptably long period of time, coupled with an inadequate response by

our telecommunications providers. All in all, about as difficult as it can get.

As we wrestle with taming a global pandemic, there are very difficult decisions ahead regarding the reopening of schools. In mid-July, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a data-driven formula for determining whether school buildings would be permitted to reopen in the fall. For school buildings to reopen, the region must be in Phase Four with a daily infection rate below 5% using a 14-day average. School buildings are subject to close again if the regional infection rate is greater than 9% using a 7-day average beginning on August 1. Determining how to reopen school buildings in the midst of a global viral pandemic is an unprecedented and challenging task. There are many interests the State and school districts are working to balance, including the safety of instructors, staff, and students, and ensuring students are engaged and learning. As districts reopen, the State will closely monitor infection rates and offer updated guidance as needed.

My office has been distributing free hand sanitizer to religious institutions, senior buildings, public housing and community groups throughout the 37th Senate District to assist them in the reopening process. To date, we have distributed over 120 gallons of hand sanitizer and over 600 2 oz. spray bottles to over 40 locations.

I recognize how challenging the coronavirus pandemic has been on individuals, families, students, people with disabilities, and seniors. For many, the coronavirus pandemic and its effects have meant financial hardship, economic insecurity, and loneliness for months on end. Throughout all of this, bright moments of hope come from neighbors in our community who run to help where help is needed. Thank you to all who are volunteering to sew masks, delivering meals to those in need, and raising funds for local nonprofits working to meet heightened community needs.

Please feel free to contact my office at (914) 934-5250 or smayer@nysenate.gov if there is an issue with which we can offer assistance or if you have questions about reopening for yourself or your business.

Sincerely,

Shelley B. Mayer
State Senator

HOLDING UTILITY SYSTEM AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROVIDERS ACCOUNTABLE FOR INADEQUATE RESPONSE TO TROPICAL STORM ISAIAS

Tropical Storm Isaias hit Westchester County with a short but furious impact on Tuesday, August 4. Thousands of NYSEG and Con Ed customers lost power because of downed trees and power lines, some for almost a week (or longer!). I was incredibly frustrated by the lack of utility company preparedness, particularly by Con Ed. I spent hours every day with my staff fielding complaints of outages, including for some of our most vulnerable residents, and dealing with these companies. Ironically, after Hurricane Sandy, I fought, along with many colleagues, to reform the way our utility companies prepare for – and respond to – major storms. But it's clear that those reforms were inadequate, and drastic change is needed. In addition to the utilities, our telecommunications providers, Altice (Optimum) and Verizon, were slow to respond and resistant to working with our elected leaders. They took too long to coordinate their responses, share their outage information, and acknowledge that thousands of our residents depend on phone, internet and cable for essential services, particularly during the coronavirus pandemic. As a result of these serious failures, I fought to ensure that we have a prompt legislative hearing on this situation, and one is now scheduled for Thursday, August 20. I intend to press ahead with substantial reform to our utility system and telecommunications providers. I know you – and I – will not forget this incident.

FOOD DRIVE FOR FRIENDS FROM YONKERS TO PORT CHESTER



Thank you to Ms. Zafiro Acevedo, Club Morelenses, and all of the others for donations from Yonkers to Port Chester benefiting the Don Bosco Kitchen, Pantry & Closet. The coronavirus pandemic has put a great deal of strain on our local food pantries, and my Youth Advisory Council and staff member Perla Arellano have been working hard on Food Drives for Friends to collect donations for local food pantries during this time of need. Please email arellano@nysenate.gov to find out how to donate to your local food pantry.

NEW YORK STATE SENATE CITIZENSHIP AWARD AND MY YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

On Sunday, June 14, with Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, I had the pleasure of hosting a Virtual Award Ceremony & Celebration with over 50 5th, 8th, 11th, and 12th grade recipients of the NYS Senate Citizenship Award. Students were chosen for having made a significant impact on their school, community, or another area of civic life.

Young people throughout our Nation are organizing for change, and I was heartened and inspired by their ideas and insights about how to improve our communities, policing, and education. I believe it is important to listen to the ideas of young people and engage them in conversation. Thank you to all of the students for their contributions to the community. I look forward to working alongside them to repair our world.

When I was elected to serve in the State Senate in 2018, I launched my Youth Advisory Council (YAC) to offer young people a forum for their ideas and policy questions. The Council meets monthly with my staff, goes on an annual trip to Albany to watch the Legislature in session, and develops plans for ways to give back to the community. New members are always encouraged to join. High school or college-aged students interested in joining the YAC are encouraged to email arellano@nysenate.gov.



Virtual Award Ceremony and Celebration, hosted on Zoom on Sunday, June 14, with recipients of the NYS Senate Citizenship Award.

CHABAD OF BEDFORD GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY



On Sunday, June 14, I was pleased to attend a beautiful groundbreaking for the Chabad of Bedford with Bedford Town Supervisor Chris Burdick, Assemblymember David Buchwald and others. It was a very special ceremony, and it was especially touching to see Rabbi Arik Wolf write a letter in the Torah.

CPW GROUP HOMES: HEROES WORK HERE



I deeply appreciate the direct care workers taking care of some of our most vulnerable community members. As a small token of that appreciation, during this pandemic I have delivered lunch from local pizza places to direct care workers at group homes throughout the district, including a Cerebral Palsy of Westchester (CPW) group home pictured above.



Westchester officials gathered during Juneteenth weekend for a Black Lives Matter protest and march led by faith leaders of White Plains.

JOINING TOGETHER FOR A MORE JUST AMERICA

The terrible killing of George Floyd brought forth a moment of national reckoning, a moment that makes me optimistic and determined at the same time. I am optimistic that Americans of all colors, faiths and ages are forcing us to look reality in the eye and acknowledge our system must change to confront and end racism in all of its forms. I am encouraged by the young people demanding that we act. To that end, my office received over 3,500 emails and calls supporting change. And we now have acted to make change.

In June, my legislative colleagues and I adopted a package of bills that took a bold and important step toward reform — a step we had to take to begin to rebuild trust between law enforcement and Black and Brown New Yorkers. Included in these reforms was the repeal of section 50-a, which effectively prohibited the release of an officer's disciplinary record, even when relevant to a misconduct claim; a Statewide ban on the use of chokeholds by law enforcement; and the creation of an Office of Special Investigation, under the Attorney General, to investigate and prosecute any incident of death in a police-civilian interaction. As I noted in my speech on the Senate floor, I have worked closely with my local police departments as well as police and other law enforcement unions Statewide throughout my career, and I am fully aware that taking these steps involved decisions that not everyone agrees with. Nevertheless, I am convinced that they were the right decisions.

Policing Reforms Legislative Package:

- S.8496 (Bailey): Repeals section 50-a of the Civil Rights Law which provided protection to the personnel records of police officers, firefighters, and correction officers from disclosure. This protection has been interpreted to include disciplinary records of law enforcement officers, and there have been too many instances in which this law shielded such records, even when relevant to a case of misconduct. This repeal would subject these files to FOIL, just as all other records kept by public agencies. However, in order to ensure continued protection of personal contact and health records of these officers, the bill enhances protections under FOIL for this sensitive information.
- S.2574C (Bailey): Creates an Office of Special Investigation within the Department of Law, under the Attorney General, which will investigate, and, if warranted, prosecute any incident of a person whose death was caused by an act or omission by a police officer or peace officer.
- S.3253A (Parker): Clarifies that a person not under arrest or in custody has the right to record police activity and to maintain custody and control of that recording, and of any property or instruments used to record police activities.
- S.6670B (Benjamin): The "Eric Garner Anti-Chokehold Act" prohibits the use of chokeholds by law enforcement and establishes the crime of aggravated strangulation as a Class-C felony.
- S.8493 (Parker): The New York State Police Body-Worn Cameras Program directs the Division of State Police to provide all State Police officers with body-worn cameras that are to be used any time an officer conducts a patrol. It further prescribes mandated situations when the camera is to be turned on and recording, as well as limited situations in which the cameras may be turned off.

Please email me at smayer@nysenate.gov for a full list of the legislative package.

SHOWING APPRECIATION FOR HEALTHCARE HEROES AND ADVOCATING FOR HAZARD PAY



Pleased to stand with 1199 and NYSNA healthcare heroes at Lawrence Hospital in Bronxville and Westchester Medical Center to show appreciation for the endless sacrifices healthcare heroes have made during the coronavirus pandemic. Healthcare workers have made immense sacrifices and put themselves and their families at risk during the pandemic, and they deserve hazard pay for their contributions and sacrifices.

COMMEMORATING PRIDE 2020: A Conversation about LGBTQ Rights and Equality



On Thursday, June 25, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and I proudly co-hosted Commemorating Pride 2020: A Conversation about LGBTQ Rights and Equality. The event featured special guests: The Hon. Selwyn Walters, President of the Board, The LOFT: LGBT Community Services Center; The Hon. Michael Sabatino, Member, LGBT Advisory Board, Westchester County; Shary Sanchez, Esq., Attorney-in-Charge Peekskill Office, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley; and Robert Voorheis, Liaison to the LGBT Community, City of Yonkers.

Thank you to all of the participants for a dynamic conversation that began with a celebration of New York State's history as a Rainbow State committed to the rights of all LGBTQ+ individuals. The panel also discussed the most recent legal victories for the LGBTQ+ community, including the Supreme Court ruling that strengthened workplace anti-discrimination protections. We also focused on improvements we can make to family law in relation to surrogacy and legal parenthood, and how we can take care of trans women of color and other populations who are most at risk from hate crimes. If you were not able to watch the event live, it is still available to stream on my Facebook page: [facebook.com/ShelleyMayerSD37](https://www.facebook.com/ShelleyMayerSD37).

REOPENING SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN NYS

As we plan for the fall, I know that many of you are contemplating what plans to reopen school buildings will look like if buildings are to reopen. Like many of you, my first priority is the safety of students, teachers, administrators and staff. There are many thoughtful and creative solutions districts are proposing within their school building reopening plans that foster learning while keeping everyone safe.

Determining how to reopen school buildings in the midst of a global viral pandemic is an unprecedented and challenging task. The State Education Department (SED) has released guidance that incorporates NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) guidance to assist school districts in formulating their reopening plans that create protocols for screening, transportation, classroom space, food service, tracing and more. SED guidance also incorporates curriculum and instruction requirements for both remote and in-person learning. No doubt these plans will require adjustments as districts reopen and protocols calibrate to real-world conditions.

If you have a particular worry ahead of school reopening, I urge you to contact your local school district and make your voice heard. There are many interests the State and school districts are working to balance, including the safety of instructors, staff, students, the families to whom they return home, and ensuring students are engaged and learning. As districts reopen, the State will closely monitor infection rates and offer updated guidance as needed.

IN THE 37TH SENATE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITIES

Villages:

Bronxville
Larchmont
Harrison
Mamaroneck
Port Chester
Rye Brook
Tuckahoe

Towns:

Bedford
Eastchester
Harrison
North Castle
Mamaroneck
Rye

Cities:

Yonkers
White Plains
New Rochelle
Rye

Unincorporated Hamlets:

Katonah
Bedford Hills
Armonk

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Bedford Central School District
Blind Brook-Rye Union Free School District
Bronxville Union Free School District
Byram Hills Central School District
Eastchester Union Free School District
Harrison Central School District
Katonah-Lewisboro School District
Mamaroneck Union Free School District
New Rochelle City School District
Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District
Rye City School District
Rye Neck School District
Tuckahoe Union Free School District
White Plains Public Schools
Yonkers Public Schools



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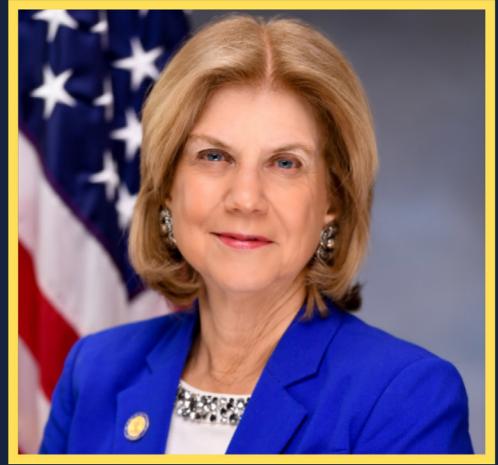


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E-NEWSLETTERS



10,000 subscribers already receive regular information about New York State and Westchester County's response to the coronavirus pandemic, community events, updates on legislation and the State budget, efforts to address challenges in the community, and so much more. Email me at smayer@nysenate.gov to be added to my email list to receive regular community updates.



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Senator

Shelley B. Mayer | 2020 Community Newsletter

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During difficult times, we must remember that there is always beauty around us if we look for it. I am sponsoring a Garden Contest to showcase the beauty in our communities and the hard work of local gardeners. Residents of the 37th Senate District who tend to their own home gardens or work on a community garden plot can email me pictures of their gardens at smayer@nysenate.gov by August 31, 2020.

WINNERS:
1st & 2nd Place HOME GARDEN
1st & 2nd Place COMMUNITY GARDEN PLOT
Submission deadline: August 31, 2020.

Home gardens and community garden plots must be located in the 37th Senate District. We also ask for submissions of gardens that do not use a professional landscaper. The winners will be featured in my print newsletter, on my website and social media, and have an opportunity to have outdoor lunch with me at a restaurant in the community. Please email me 3-5 pictures of your home garden or community garden plot by August 31, 2020 at smayer@nysenate.gov.

