



Assemblymember **BRIAN KAVANAGH**

*Representing: The Lower East Side • Union Square • Stuyvesant Town • Peter Cooper Village
Gramercy • East Midtown Plaza • Waterside Plaza • Kips Bay • Murray Hill • Tudor City*

*237 First Avenue, Suite 407, New York, NY 10003 • 212-979-9696 • Se Habla Español
kavanagh@assembly.state.ny.us*

Protecting Public Housing

Public housing, home to half a million New Yorkers, is a vital part of our city and our community. Unfortunately, due primarily to cuts in federal funding over many years—in spite of the efforts of our Congressional delegation—the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) faces enormous deficits, leading to a growing backlog of capital improvements and critical repairs.

This is not a new problem. In 2007, I was a prime sponsor of a bill that ended a practice that caused the public assistance system to shortchange NYCHA, increasing funding by \$50 million a year. In 2010, I backed a bill that enabled NYCHA to receive another \$65 million annually for apartments previously ineligible for federal funding. Without these actions, NYCHA's present deficits would be far worse.

However, there's still a funding crisis and NYCHA now proposes an aggressive plan to lease out land within eight public housing complexes for developers to build new buildings, with 80% of the apartments at market rents, and 20% at more affordable rates. Several of the buildings would be in our area, including sites at Campos Plaza and Baruch Houses. NYCHA says the plan might generate \$50 million a year and allow for better maintenance, security, and utility service for existing buildings.

In meetings and correspondence with NYCHA and City Hall—and during two Assembly hearings where I heard testimony and questioned NYCHA Chair John Rhea, advocates, and tenants—we've identified many concerns about the plan. It is unclear which, if any, of the sites are appropriate for the proposed development, what the impacts would be on residents and local services, or how we can be sure residents benefit as NYCHA promises. I've encouraged NYCHA to do a better job of reaching out and answering these questions, and also called for the plan to be subject to the rigorous Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, before any decisions whether to proceed.

As we consider NYCHA's bid to generate new revenue, we should also revisit the question of whether City Hall and NYCHA should continue their current policy of diverting funds, \$100 million in 2013, to the city budget to cover costs of police, sanitation, and other services normally funded through general taxes.

Learn About the East River Blueway Plan!



You're invited to join Assemblymember Kavanagh and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer for a presentation and discussion of the "East River Blueway Plan." The Blueway Plan is an exciting, comprehensive proposal to improve access to the East River from the Brooklyn Bridge to East 38th Street, while also creating new fortifications and infrastructure to protect our community against the next big storm. The plan was generated with extraordinary community input and numerous public meetings. Come see the results!

Thursday, May 2nd, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Cooper Union's Rose Auditorium

41 Cooper Square

(3rd Ave. between 6th & 7th St.)

Subway: 6 to Astor Pl. or N/R to 8th St.-NYU

Bus: M8 to St. Marks/2nd Ave. or

M101/103 to 3rd Ave./Astor Pl.

The Blueway Plan was developed in collaboration with the Lower East Side Ecology Center, Manhattan Community Boards 3 and 6, W X Y architecture + urban design, 40 community-based organizations, Congressmembers Carolyn B. Maloney and Nydia Velazquez, State Senators Brad Hoylman, Liz Krueger, and Daniel Squadron, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, and Councilmembers Margaret Chin, Daniel Garodnick, and Rosie Mendez. The plan was funded by a grant from the New York State Department of State.

For more information, call Anna Pycior in Assemblymember Kavanagh's district office at 212-979-9696 or visit www.eastriverblueway.org. To RSVP, email rsvp@manhattanbp.org. Space is limited, so RSVP is strongly recommended.

State Budget Passes On Time

At the end of March, we passed the state budget for the new fiscal year that began April 1st. This year marks the third budget in a row that we enacted on time, a departure from decades of late budgets that preceded 2011. The \$141 billion budget includes \$21 billion for post-Hurricane Sandy recovery (see page 3) and \$8.3 billion for NYC schools (an increase of \$360 million over last year). Other highlights of the budget are mentioned throughout this newsletter.

14th Street Post Office Relocation

The US Postal Service plans to relocate one of our local post offices, currently on 14th Street east of 1st Avenue, to a yet-to-be-determined location. If you ever visit the current location or your ZIP code is 10009, you may be affected. As this newsletter goes to press, we are co-sponsoring a public forum, at which the USPS will discuss the proposal and take questions and comments, on Monday, April 22 at 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Campos Plaza Community Center, 611 East 13th Street, between Avenues B and C.

The USPS is also accepting public comments by mail, which may be submitted until May 7th to:

Joseph J. Mulvey
US Postal Service
2 Congress Street, Room 8
Milford, MA 01757-9998

For more info, or to let us know of your concerns, please contact Marcela Medina at 212-979-9696 or kavanagh@assembly.state.ny.us. If you send comments directly to the USPS, please consider sending us a copy as well.

Fighting For Tenants

It's always been a top priority of my work in the Assembly to preserve the rent regulation law that protects tenants from excessive rent increases and arbitrary eviction and to support affordable housing programs. When we last renewed rent regulation, we managed to strengthen the law for the first time in decades and fend off repeated attempts by landlords and their allies to add new loopholes. A big part of this effort was defending the landmark Roberts v. Tishman Speyer decision, which ensures that residents of Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village, and many other New Yorkers, continue to be protected by the law. Now settled, the case has secured \$173 million in reduced rents, and residents of our community can be assured of benefiting from these protections for years to come.

In another victory for tenants, we included in this year's State budget a \$6 million allocation for the Tenant Protection Unit, an initiative of the Cuomo administration that we funded over the objections of the real estate lobby, that will help ensure the laws are enforced, with special attention to the worst landlords.

Standing Together Against Gun Violence

As a co-founder of State Legislators Against Illegal Guns (SLAIG) and a longtime advocate for gun safety legislation, I was proud to help enact the NY SAFE Act in January, making our gun laws the strongest in the nation.

I have worked for years with colleagues and local leaders to ensure we're doing everything we can to reduce gun violence and keep illegal guns out of our communities. When the horrific violence at Sandy Hook school in Newtown focused the nation's attention on the need for action, I joined with my SLAIG co-chairs, Assemblymember Michelle Schimel and Senator



Kavanagh joins Borough President Scott Stringer (left) and Arlene Delgado, the mother of Raphael Sadonte Ward—the 16-year-old Baruch Houses resident who was shot and killed on January 4th—in an emotional rally against gun violence.

Eric Adams, to rally over 100 New York legislators to call for a comprehensive package of gun legislation. With the leadership of the Governor and Assembly Speaker, most of these provisions were included in the NY SAFE Act.

The new law bans assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines, requires background checks for gun and ammunition sales, stipulates that certain mental health professionals must report when patients are likely to cause harm to themselves or others so firearms licenses can be suspended or revoked, and mandates that those with an order of protection against them surrender their guns. In March, we also allocated \$27 million in the state budget to create a statewide gun permit database to improve enforcement.

Here in our community, my office has been working with District Attorney Cy Vance, the Police Athletic League, Henry Street Settlement, and many other government officials and community leaders to respond to gun and gang violence. In addition to working with law enforcement and seeking added security, we co-sponsored programs emphasizing intensive athletics, counseling, and resistance to gangs on the grounds



Kavanagh joins Governor Cuomo and (from left) Senators Diane Savino and Jeffrey Klein, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Majority Leader Joseph Morelle, Assemblymember Joseph Lentol, Senator Michael Gianaris, Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Assemblymembers Jeffrion Aubry and Michelle Schimel for the signing of the NY SAFE Act.

of Campos Plaza and Riis Houses. We've also participated in numerous community events to highlight the role of families and local leaders—especially youth leaders—in ending the violence. We're continuing to work with community partners to continue these programs and identify additional steps we can take.

Assembly Votes to Enact Two-Year Moratorium on Fracking



Kavanagh addresses advocates against fracking at rally in Albany.

I was proud to join my Assembly colleagues to pass legislation that would impose a two-year moratorium on the controversial, industrial-scale gas drilling process known as hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”). The moratorium would ensure that New York does not allow fracking before a thorough, independent health impact assessment and other critical environmental reviews are completed.

New Yorkers have repeatedly raised serious concerns about the potential impact of fracking. These concerns include the inevitable negative effects on air and water quality and sensitive ecosystems; the adequacy of the State’s resources to oversee drilling operations; proper handling of large volumes of toxic chemicals and waste fluids; costs to taxpayers of damage to drinking water aqueducts, roads, and other public property; adverse effects on agriculture, tourism, and other economic activities; and questions about how much “cleaner” gas is compared to other fossil fuels.

I will continue to work to ensure that we aren’t sacrificing the health and safety of New Yorkers in our quest for reliable energy and that we implement policies that support rapid development of alternative energy sources that are less harmful than extracting, transporting, and burning fossil fuels.

Increasing Environmental Funding

In this year’s budget, we increased funding for the Environmental Protection Fund by \$19 million for a total of \$153 million. We also increased the allocation for environmental cleanup projects by \$40 million.

Minimum Wage Rises, Slowly

I voted earlier this year to raise the state minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$9 an hour, which would help offset some of the erosion in its value that has occurred over many years. Unfortunately, we were unable to get the unusual coalition that controls the Senate to go along immediately with this long-overdue increase, notwithstanding the support of all our local Senators and a large majority of New Yorkers. Instead, we reached an agreement to increase the wage to \$8 in 2014, \$8.75 in 2015, and \$9 in 2016. I am dedicated to continuing to push for a true living wage for hard-working New Yorkers.

Wasting Less, Recycling More

In spite of some progress in recent years, we still produce far too much garbage that is collected and sent to our overburdened landfills, at great cost to taxpayers and the environment.

I’m working with the Mayor’s office and my colleagues in Albany on several recycling improvements, including legislation that would:

- Expand the plastic bag recycling program to increase the number of stores that collect bags, and add dry cleaning and newspaper bags to the program.
- Build on the success of a rechargeable battery recycling law Senator Liz Krueger and I passed several years ago, by ensuring retailers are complying.
- Ban the use of polystyrene foam, commonly known as styrofoam, for food service in school cafeterias, public hospitals, and all other government agencies throughout the state. Styrofoam is toxic and virtually impossible to recycle.
- Make producers of certain products that take up a lot of landfill space, such as carpeting, responsible for taking back the product after its use, and discourage curbside disposal of such products.



Kavanagh joins Baruch College leadership and local officials at the opening of the pedestrian plaza at East 25th Street.

Responding and Recovering from Hurricane Sandy

When Hurricane Sandy hit in October, my staff and I worked closely with our colleagues in government, community organizations, and hundreds of volunteers to ensure that people were safe and had access to emergency supplies and services. Since the storm subsided, we’ve worked to secure funding and other support to allow residents, businesses, and community facilities—especially our hard-hit hospitals—to recover as quickly as possible. We’re also advocating for the lessons learned from Sandy to be incorporated into plans for weathering future storms and other emergencies (including in our own “Blueway Plan” on page one.) This year’s state budget allocates \$21 billion to support Sandy recovery efforts, including funding for infrastructure, the environment, and public health.

In some cases tenants may be entitled to rent reductions from their landlord as compensation for losses. I’ve worked to support rent reduction applications submitted by tenants at Stuyvesant Town-Peter Cooper Village. In particular, I’ve questioned a policy of the state housing agency that seems to favor landlords and could lead to tenants being short-changed.

Making Government More Effective and Accountable

I'm happy to announce my appointment as Chair of the Legislative Commission on Government Administration. The Commission is charged with exploring ways to increase government efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. I'm looking forward to working in this new role with my colleagues and the public to ensure that our government is effective at meeting our needs.

You can help this effort by sending ideas for strengthening government performance, transparency, and accountability to: improveNYgov@gmail.com.

Combating Corruption with Campaign Finance Reform

Recently we had a State Senator, two Assemblymembers, a City Councilmember and party officials all charged with crimes related to their duties. Reading the grim news of public officials apparently violating the trust of their constituents inevitably evokes feelings of anger and dismay, especially when the accused are colleagues with whom I have served personally, who could have done much good for their communities.

However, we cannot allow the latest scandals to drive us to despair, cynicism, or inaction. We should seize this moment by passing real reforms that would reduce the corrupting influence of money and help rebuild public faith in government.

The Fair Elections legislation that many of us have been working to enact would give voters a powerful reason to believe that we are serious about putting their interests first. Elections based on public financing, lower contribution limits, and stronger disclosure rules would dramatically reduce the role of lobbyists and wealthy special interests.

Sad spectacles like the ones we've seen recently should inspire us to redouble our efforts to get these reforms enacted.

237 First Avenue, Suite 407, New York, NY 10003



Se Habla Español

Si desea una copia de este boletín de noticias en español, por favor llame a mi oficina al 212-979-9696 o visite mi página web: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Brian-Kavanagh>

Assemblymember **Brian Kavanagh**

You're Invited!

Assemblymember Kavanagh and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer invite you to a presentation on the

“East River Blueway Plan”

Thursday, May 2nd

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at

Cooper Union's Auditorium

41 Cooper Square

(3rd Avenue between 6th & 7th Street)

See page 1 for details!

