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91st Assembly District
Larchmont - Mamaroneck - New Rochelle - Port Chester - Rye Brook and Rye

December 30, 2020

Dear Friends,

On Monday, the Assembly held a special session to pass legislation that will help to prevent evictions and to protect small landlords during Covid-19. As we enter the winter months, we need to make sure more families do not become homeless as a result of the pandemic.

Individuals not paying full rent will now have to certify that they have encountered significant financial or health related hardship to justify their inability to make payments. Also property owners will now have a hardship declaration process available to protect them from foreclosure proceedings and adverse credit reports.

The legislation also provides added protection for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities by providing for automatic renewal of their Senior Citizen Homeowner Exemption (SCHE) and the Disabled Homeowner Exemption (DHE) for 2021 property taxes.

The legislation, which I supported, passed both houses of the legislature on Monday and was immediately signed into law by the Governor. The measure improves and builds upon existing Covid-19 eviction protections already included in state and federal law instituted earlier this year. The new legislation requires that claims of hardship be legally attested to and that such hardship be significant. For more information on the legislation, click [HERE](#).

The legislation does not discharge the responsibility to pay rent, taxes or mortgages owed. The new federal relief legislation just enacted includes funding for Covid-19 housing relief. My hope is that we will use those funds towards rent relief for tenants and property owners hurt by the pandemic.

I am continuing my efforts to help with Covid-19 issues throughout Westchester and advocating for modification of rules that apply only to Port Chester, where we are seeking relief. We are entering a very dangerous phase of the virus. Please continue to exercise caution and take advantage of the numerous testing locations available in Westchester.

I am also closely following the rollout of the vaccine distribution in New York and have advocated for senior citizens and individuals with medical conditions who live on their own to have early access to the vaccine.

Finally, unemployment benefits will be extended until March with a \$300 federal enhancement. Our office has helped many workers who have lost their jobs and this extension will provide much needed financial support to families until businesses can safely reopen and our economy gets back on track.

We all share in the hope that 2021 will be a year without the health challenges and tremendous loss we have suffered this year. Every individual has shared in the harm the pandemic has inflicted on our way of life, our economy and our health. We all grieve for the lives lost this year. The new year requires continued vigilance and care. The challenges continue, but if we pull together, 2021 can be a year of promise, recovery and health. Let us all hope for a different and better 2021.

Warm regards,

Westchester Resources

To find a testing site near you and to make an appointment, please visit the [NY State Health Department](#) or call the New York State Covid-19 Hotline at 1-888-364-3065.

Testing is free for all New Yorkers at NYS run test sites.

[Find a Test Site Near You](#)

For help with quarantine and isolation: 866-588-0195
County Health Department Covid-19 Information: [HERE](#)

Free flu shots at the County Center - Register [HERE](#)

Westchester Covid-19 Stats by Municipality [HERE](#)

Beware of Covid-19 Vaccine Scams

The Westchester County Department of Consumer Protection is warning all Westchester residents to be vigilant for Covid-19 vaccine scams as we enter the next phase of the pandemic. Any solicitation, via call, text or in-person, with offers to receive the vaccine should be ignored.

Tips for Westchester residents to avoid scams:

- Covid-19 vaccine is expected to be free.
- There are no sign-up lists for vaccine.
- You can't pay to get your vaccine earlier.
- Medicare or Social Security won't be calling you about getting your vaccine (scammers often act like they are calling from government agencies).
- You don't need to give out SSN, credit card or bank info before you are able to get vaccine.
- Turn to trusted sources - such as your local health department or your doctor for questions and guidance.

If you are contacted by someone looking to sell you early access to the vaccine, contact Westchester Consumer Protection at [914-995-2155](tel:914-995-2155) or at ConPro@westchestergov.com.

NY State of Health Deadline Extended

New Yorkers have until December 31 to enroll in a health plan that begins on January 1. As the pandemic continues, it is especially important for New Yorkers to have access to high-quality, affordable health insurance. Please visit [their website](#) or call [1-855-355-5777](tel:1-855-355-5777) to enroll.

COVID Rent Relief Extension

The COVID Rent Relief Program has reopened for application with expanded eligibility criteria in an effort to serve New Yorkers who may have not had the opportunity to initially apply, and to serve those who may have been previously ineligible. I was a co-sponsor of the legislation that established this program.

The application period will remain open through February 1, 2021. [Previous applicants do not need to reapply to be considered](#), HCR will re-evaluate all applications that were denied according to the new criteria and issue revised determination letters to applicants.

Applications for the program and additional information is available here: www.hcr.ny.gov/RRP

To qualify for this one-time subsidy, low-income renters impacted by the pandemic must meet all of the following criteria:

- Must be a renter and have a primary residence in New York State;
- Applicants must have lost income during the period of April 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020;
- Before March 7, 2020, household income must have been at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income, adjusted for household size; and
- Households must be "rent burdened" during the months they are applying for assistance between April 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020.

Throughout the application period, residents who need help or have questions about their application can contact HCR's COVID Rent Relief Program Call Center for assistance at [1-833-499-0318](tel:1-833-499-0318) or covidrentrelief@hcr.ny.gov. Call Center representatives are available Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

School and College COVID-19 Dashboard Available Online

Governor Cuomo has required that all schools, including private schools and colleges, report COVID-19 cases to the NYS Department of Health on a daily basis.

[School and University Covid-19 Statewide Tracker](#)

