



November 13, 2023

Dear Neighbors,

This past week, I attended the Somos Conference in Puerto Rico. Organized by the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus of the Assembly, this annual event brings together over 2,000 New York legislators, leaders, unions, and advocates to discuss and develop legislation that benefits New York and beyond. The conference provides valuable opportunities to build relationships and to educate others on my policies, and I valued the time and opportunity to speak to others face to face.

I was honored to be able to meet with Wayne Spence, President of the Public Employees Federation (PEF) and other PEF leaders, including Leah Gonzalez and Randi Diantonio, to discuss public safety and how to support our parole officers and healthcare workers in the carceral system. One of the issues we discussed was my priority bill, [the Earned Time Act](#). The Earned Time Act allows incarcerated individuals to earn time off their sentences for both “good time” and “merit time.” It is win-win legislation as incentive programs have been shown to reduce misconduct in prisons, make prisons safer for both incarcerated people and corrections officers and other staff working in the facilities, and reduce recidivism after release. This [recent post by fwd.us](#) highlights how the bill will help keep New York safe.

During the conference I also connected with (pictured below) Julian Harris-Calvin, Director of Greater Justice New York for the Vera Institute, who works on criminal justice reform; Tierra Labrada, advocate for accessible housing from our district; and Serena Martin-Liguori, Executive Director, and

Caroline Hanson, Advocacy Coordinator, from New Hour who collaborate with me on bills related to pregnancy and birthing rights for incarcerated individuals.

I am returning to the district energized and ready to finalize legislation for the upcoming session!



Legislative Update

Clean Energy Summit

I am looking forward to presenting on November 16 at City & State's [Clean Energy in New York Summit](#), a day-long event to explore opportunities for New York as we pursue an ambitious energy strategy. My panel will focus on "Achieving Climate Smart Communities," and I will highlight some of my clean energy legislation, including the Just Energy Transition Act ([A.4866C](#)). By using alternative and efficient energy, New York can help make communities more green, livable, equitable, and resilient to the effects of climate change. I look forward to discussing ideas to build resilient cities and communities designed to anticipate and respond to climate emergencies and issues.



Bird Safe Building Act

Scientists estimate that between three million and a billion birds die in collisions with buildings each year, and [a New York Times article](#) from this year highlights the issue. New York City Audubon estimates that as many as 230,000 birds are killed by buildings in New York City alone every year, likely because migratory birds flying at night collide with skyscrapers' glass windows. Smaller structures pose a threat, too. The American Bird Conservancy estimates that residences and low-rise buildings account for

59% of all bird deaths in the United States. These deaths are often tied to light pollution that confuses and attracts birds as they fly. I'm proud to sponsor [A7808](#) that would enact the Bird Safe Building Act, directing state-owned or leased buildings to incorporate strategies to reduce bird fatality. We, too, can become "better hosts of these birds while they are in our own backyards" with simple changes at home. [Cornell's Lab of Ornithology offers 7 helpful steps](#), including adding decals to windows, keeping cats indoors, and planting native greenery.



Image by Freepik

New Bills to Track

Journalism Preservation Act

American journalism is in crisis. The number of working newspaper journalists has fallen by [more than half](#) since 2008. Newspaper revenue dropped by more than 50% from 2002 to 2020, and 60% of U.S. counties have no daily news coverage. A key reason local journalism is in crisis is the rise and consolidation of digital advertising markets. Historically, newspapers were funded through direct relationships with both advertisers and readers. Now news “aggregators” such as Google and Facebook have severed those relationships, inserting themselves between news outlets and readers. Tech platforms are profiting from the work of journalists and newspaper staff and not sharing the proceeds. [This recent article](#) highlights the issue and argues that Google owes U.S. publishers more than \$10 billion a year for the way it uses journalists’ content. I’m proud to have introduced Assembly bill [A7811](#), a journalism preservation act that requires tech platforms to pay news publishers adequate compensation for their use of work produced by journalists. I’m excited to share more about this bill in the coming months and to see it progress in the Assembly.



Image by Freepik

Around the District

Local Leader Attends the United Nations Climate Change Conference

I'm excited to highlight that Kim Cameron, Co-President of The League of Women Voters of Cortland County, will be attending COP28, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Dubai on November 27. In 2015, many countries agreed to limit global warming to approximately 3 degrees Fahrenheit compared to pre-industrial levels by 2050 through the Paris Agreement. In order to reach this goal, scientists calculated that greenhouse gas emissions would have to be cut in half by 2030 - less than 6 ½ years from now. The conference will bring together diplomats and dignitaries from nations all over the world to discuss the future and progress of the Paris Agreement. The League of Women Voters of the United States has been involved with the United Nations since its inception in 1945. In 1997 the League was granted Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which provides the opportunity to make formal oral or written statements to the UN and be consulted by the UN in areas in which the League has expertise. As such, the League is also allowed to send observers to UN conferences, such as COP28.

Kim Cameron states, "I am extremely honored and proud to have been selected to attend this event and I look forward to learning and sharing my knowledge with as many people as possible. Our earth is becoming wrapped in a blanket of pollution... It is raising temperatures on earth, melting our glaciers, and creating dramatic changes in our oceans and on our land. This is a human-made catastrophe - humans made it, humans can stop it. And to stop it we must for our children and their children." This is a wonderful opportunity, and I wish Kim all the best. I look forward to hearing what she learns and sharing it with all of you in the district.

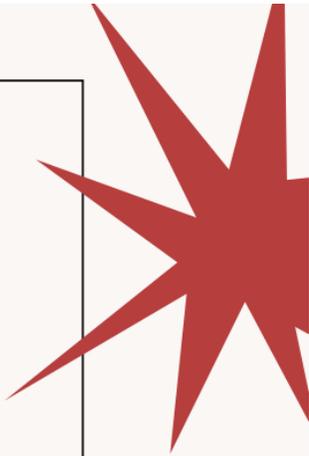


Wrapping ReUse this Holiday Season

This holiday season, let's reuse the gift-wrapping supplies that are in our community instead of purchasing new or sending items to the landfill! I'm collecting donations of wrapping paper, ribbon, gift bags, gift tags, tissue paper and shirt boxes. If you have extras that you'd like to donate, items can be dropped off at the Ithaca District Office (130 E. State Street), Monday - Friday from 1 - 4 p.m.

From December 1 - 20, all constituents are welcome to come to the Ithaca District Office, Monday - Friday from 1 - 4 p.m., with your holiday gifts and wrap them for free with our collected supplies!

Join me on **December 20 from 4 - 7 pm** for a Holiday Open House! All are welcome to join for some holiday cheer - and my staff and I will wrap your presents for you!



SAVE THE DATE



DECEMBER 20TH
4PM-7PM
130 E STATE ST

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION!

Come to my Ithaca District
Office for holiday cheer - and
my staff and I will wrap your
presents for you!

Community Resources

Cornell Hosting Noted Journalists at Open Panel

Cornell's College of Arts and Sciences is hosting a panel titled "Free Press in a Free Society: U.S. Newsrooms on the Front Lines" on Nov. 14 at 5:30 pm in the Kiplinger Theater in the Schwartz Center for Performing Arts (430 College Ave, Ithaca). Hosted by David Folkenflik, who serves as NPR's media correspondent and was named one of the 50 most influential people in American media by Business Insider, the panel will discuss how the news media is navigating an era of political polarization amid shrinking newsrooms. Panelists include Marc Lacey '87, managing editor of the New York Times; Shawna Thomas, four-time Emmy winner and executive producer of CBS News' CBS Mornings; and Suzanne Mettler, the John L. Senior Professor of American Institutions in the Cornell Department of Government. The event is free and open to the public, but [registration is required](#).

In good health,



Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

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