



November 6, 2023

Dear Neighbors,

The legislative session for 2024 begins in January, so during November and December, my focus shifts to making sure that my legislation is updated and ready to go for the upcoming session. It is a time to not only introduce new bills or amend existing bills, but also to share information and educate others on what the bills do and to gather support. Below is information on two priority bills of mine for the upcoming session.

# Legislative Update

## **Earned Time Act Legislative Briefing**

I held a virtual legislative briefing for my Assembly colleagues to learn more about my Earned Time Act Bill ([A1128](#)) and hear from experts in the field and those with lived experience. This is a common sense piece of legislation that can make a strong cultural shift in our carceral system by allowing incarcerated individuals to earn time off their sentences for both “good time” and “merit time.” “Good time” is time without infractions (good behavior), and

“merit time” is time participating in job training, vocational programs or education. Currently only a fraction of those incarcerated are eligible for earned time, but this bill would expand eligibility, except for those with sentences of life without parole. Incentive programs in prisons are win-win proposals that have been shown to reduce misconduct in prisons, make prisons safer for both incarcerated people, the officers and other staff working in the facilities, and reduce recidivism after release. It costs nearly \$70,000 per year to incarcerate a person in state prison, and New York spends over \$3 billion every year on the prison system. When an incarcerated person participates in education or training programs - and can reduce their sentence - we can save money, reduce violence and provide opportunities necessary to facilitate smooth reentry and reduce recidivism. I look forward to the bill advancing in the Assembly in the upcoming session!

## **EMS Stakeholders Roundtable**

I held a virtual roundtable discussion with local EMS providers and elected officials to discuss the challenges Emergency Medical Services face and my bill [A1091](#). Our current EMS funding system is not working, and an EMS system based on volunteerism is not viable. Municipal service areas are no longer confined to a given municipality, but rather, can span several counties for hundreds of square miles in rural areas. We need a new funding model to ensure that residents have timely access to life-saving medical assistance. My bill would establish a new consolidated financial assistance program for EMS, similar to the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) for roads. It would relieve financial strain in localities where EMS is a high percentage of a municipal budget and where providers must travel longer distances, creating a stable funding stream particularly for rural EMS. I look forward to engaging more stakeholders and discussing the critical issues of municipal and nonprofit EMS ahead of the upcoming legislative session.



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# New Laws

We pass many important laws in the state Assembly. Please find highlights of legislation signed into law by the Governor, taking effect in November 2023, [here](#).

# Around the District

## **Enfield “Trash Talks”**

I was able to participate in a community conversation in Enfield centered around addressing our pressing trash problem, the development of a reuse hub, and workforce development in the circular economy. Each year, approximately 600 million tons of waste from building demolition and construction debris are sent to landfills. However, 80-90% of that material can be reused if buildings were deconstructed, rather than demolished. Creating sufficient reuse infrastructure is key, though, to ensure the materials are stored properly and that those seeking reused materials can be matched to available materials. Thank you to Stephanie Redmond, Enfield Supervisor, for organizing the event and to Diane Cohen from Finger Lakes ReUse and Susan Holland from Historic Ithaca for sharing your expertise. I look forward to continued conversations as we build the circular economy in New York.





## **District Office Legislative Interns**

My district offices in Ithaca and Cortland [are now accepting applications](#) for internship positions to begin in January. Interns play a vital role in the administration of the office, gain an understanding of the issues that impact our district and all of New York State, and can learn valuable skills - verbal and written communication, legislative research, organization and interpersonal skills. District office internships for the NYS Assembly are experiences that are unpaid by the NYS Assembly. If you are eligible to receive funding from an alternate source or are seeking college credit, we are happy to work with you through those processes should you be offered an internship opportunity.

# From the Governor

## **\$25 Million for Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes Grants**

Governor Hochul announced an additional \$25 million for the Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes (SCAHC) grants. Given ongoing hate and extremism at home and abroad, the Governor also directed the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to develop new innovations and strategies to incorporate within the SCAHC program in the future – such as increases to the maximum award amount, a streamlined, rolling application process, and evaluations of the deployed protective equipment and technology. These potential changes will help respond to the current needs and challenges faced by organizations that are at-risk of hate crimes.

In July, the Governor [announced](#) the most recent SCAHC funding awards to 497 organizations statewide for 1,081 projects totaling \$51,680,910, with \$8,899,091 going toward 187 cybersecurity projects. Administered by DCJS, the SCAHC program provides funding to strengthen security measures and prevent hate crimes against nonprofit community and civic centers, cultural museums, day care centers, and other nonprofit organizations that may be vulnerable because of their ideology, beliefs, or mission.

# Community Resources

## **Catholic Charities' Annual Share the Warmth Event**

Colder weather is upon us! If you are in need of extra warm clothing, blankets, coats, socks, or gloves, Catholic Charities is ready to help. Catholic Charities of Tompkins and Tioga Counties will host the annual Share the Warmth event Monday through Friday the weeks of Nov. 6 - 10 and Nov. 13 - 17 from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. each day at 324 W. Buffalo St., Ithaca.

If you are interested in donating warm items to support the event, red "Share the Warmth" collection bins are placed in various sites or can be donated directly to the Catholic Charities main office. If you are interested in volunteering for a 2-hour shift, please contact them at 607-272-5062, extension 27.

## **Thanksgiving - Not Only an Annual Celebration**

November is National Native Americans Heritage Month! The Early Care and Learning Council is hosting an informational virtual session titled, "Thanksgiving - Not Only an Annual Celebration." The session will focus on the connection between Native Americans and the Thanksgiving holiday and

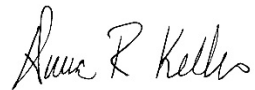
address some of the stereotypes and misinformation that are often connected to Thanksgiving, including traditional Haudenosaunee and additional Indigenous teachings. Hosted by Pete Hill, the Special Initiatives Director at Native American Community Services of Erie and Niagara Counties, the event will be held Thursday, Nov. 9 from 12 - 1 p.m. via Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81279032179>).





Tomorrow is Election Day! There are [two Statewide Ballot Proposals on the November 2023 ballot](#) that you should be aware of as you go to the polls. **Remember to turn your ballot over** to see the proposals and to vote. If you missed it, you can read more about the proposals in my [October 23 newsletter](#). Make sure your voice is heard - vote!

In good health,



Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

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