



Assemblymember

Anna Kelles

Assembly District 125



Dear Neighbors,

As we draw to the close of the legislative action phase of the State budget process, I have listened to constituent concerns and worked hard with advocates and other legislators to draft solutions to the oversights and omissions of the proposed budget and to push for the inclusion of my budget bills that will benefit the district and the State.

Please find below the priorities that were included in my budget letter to the Governor, divided into the key areas of community needs, wellness, environmental conservation, and revenue.

State Budget

Budget Bill Priorities

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Housing (A4454), (A4021)

Housing availability and stability is fundamental to the health, safety, and economic well being of a community. Too often, people face housing instability and homelessness due to predatory renting practices and a lack of access to affordable places to live. With the passage of the **Eviction Without Good Cause (A4454)** bill, tenants would be spared from exorbitant rent increases without good cause, such as major, *necessary* renovations. The **Housing Access Voucher (A4021)** bill would provide people experiencing homelessness or unstable housing conditions with more options to transition out of shelters or other unsustainable situations into secure housing, with additional eviction protections.

EMS (A1091)

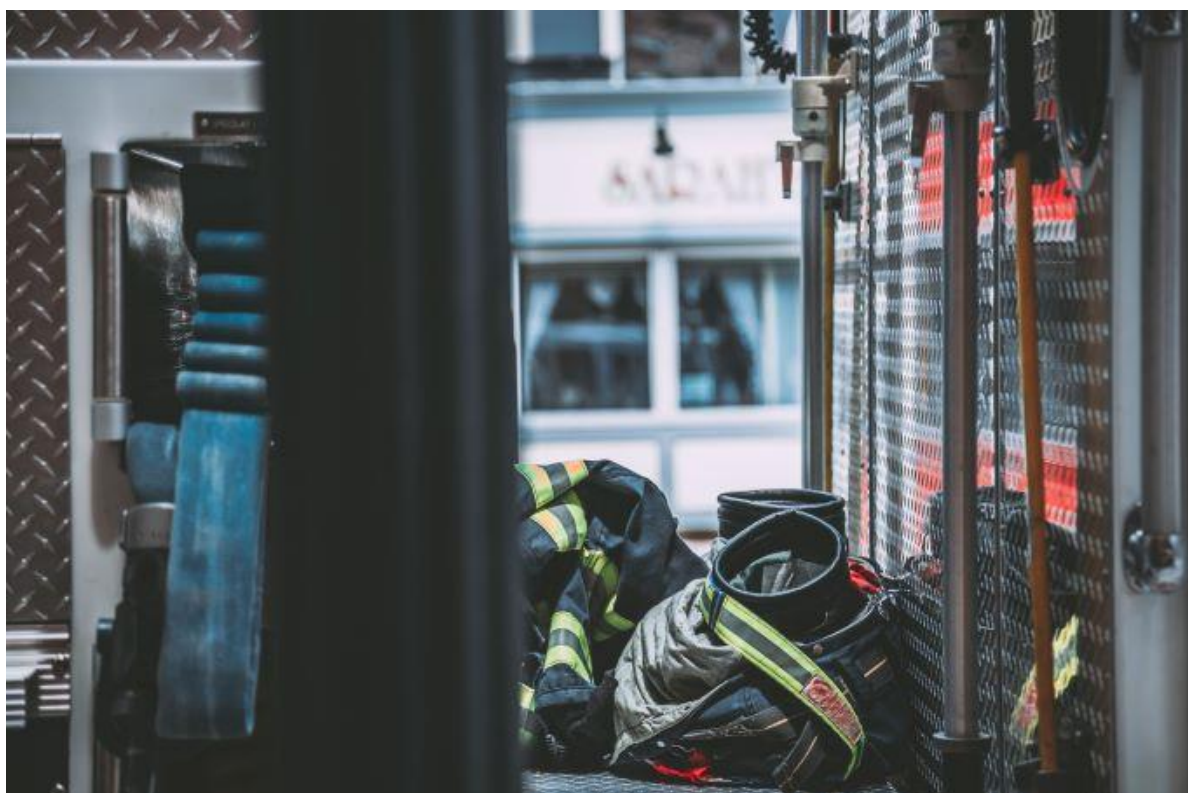
Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in New York need greater support and funding from the State. Existing volunteer-based and for-profit models are often strained beyond capacity and not meeting the needs of all New York residents, especially those in rural areas. My bill, **A1091**, would provide stable funding to increase the capacity and equity of access to vital EMS in New York State similar to the popular CHIPS program for highway maintenance.

Volunteer Fire Services

I have pushed for the creation of the **Volunteer Fire Services Capital Fund** to address the insufficient support that many volunteer fire departments struggle with to adequately maintain services as well as update firehouses to comply with federal health and safety codes.

Broadband Bonds (A1260)

Access to high-speed internet is no longer a luxury as our work, educational and social needs increasingly rely on our ability to be digitally connected. Unfortunately, access to high-speed internet varies widely between different types of communities, with rural areas often left stranded in broadband “deserts.” This disparity of access is something my **broadband bonds bill (A1260)** would address. This legislation authorizes municipalities to leverage bonds, stable, low-interest investments, for broadband and related telecommunication expenses creating greater equity of access to the internet for New York residents.



WELLNESS

SUNY Mental Health

Mental health crises within the higher education system have been on the rise, and our State Universities of New York (SUNY) urgently need more resources to deal with this growing problem. I have asked for vital funding for expanded mental healthcare resources such as hiring more counselors, enhancing support for students with disabilities, more tele-health access and increasing peer-to-peer counseling programs.

Roots of Success

Young people in New York's juvenile corrections facilities need opportunities to gain skills and prepare them for life after incarceration, so that they may have a better chance of successfully reintegrating into society upon their release. **The Roots of Success (RoS) Environmental Literacy and Job Training Pre-Apprenticeship Program** is a 60-hour course that would give participants an industry recognized "Environmental Specialist" credential in a variety of different career tracks. The more options people exiting the carceral system have, the more likely they are to break the recidivistic cycles of crime and successfully reunite with their families.

REACH

As we contend with the ongoing opioid epidemic in our State and across the nation, we need to turn to evidence-based solutions provided by such organizations as the **REACH Project, Inc.**. This non-profit provides medication to individuals who suffer from Opioid Use Disorder. The REACH Project needs sustainable State funding in order to continue providing life-saving aid to thousands of individuals across the State.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

HABs

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) are an overgrowth of various types of algae in both salt and freshwater that can produce toxins that have harmful effects on people, pets, and wildlife. This out-of-control growth can be caused by environmental imbalances and have devastating effects on local ecosystems, community health, and economies. More funding is needed for research and mitigation that will improve our ability to predict and prevent the occurrence of HABs.

Community Solar Panels (A1013)

As our communities begin to invest more into sustainable energy, we need to continue to incentivize this transition by extending tax credits to people who utilize **community solar array** programs.

Agrivoltaics (A4911)

Agrivoltaics, also known as agrisolar or dual-use solar, is an agricultural technique of using land for both farming and generating solar energy. This efficient use of space can help to sustain and protect natural areas, increase the yield of certain] crops, and aid in the overall reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture. The creation of an agrivoltaics research program will allow further development of innovative, science-based solutions for our energy and food-supply needs while promoting biodiversity and a healthier environment.

Carbon Sequestration (A4224)

Carbon Sequestration is the process of capturing carbon, which would otherwise be released into the air as a greenhouse gas, and storing it underground. There are different methods of capturing and storing carbon, and investing in further research will allow for the development of best practices - especially pertaining to agriculture, as carbon removed from the air has the potential to become a useful soil additive. This research would help to improve soil quality, leading to better food production, and could prove to be a vital tool in combating climate change.



REVENUE

A crucial part of budget considerations is where the means of funding these critically important services and programs will come from. I propose to pay for these services by creating equity in our tax structure. The current system is not fair or balanced, and regardless of a person's income level, everyone should pay their fair share of taxes. The **Mark-to-Market Billionaires' Tax (A03252)** and **Corporate Tax (A03690)** bills address these issues, creating more revenue for the state and a more just tax system for the people of New York.

SUPPORTED CAMPAIGNS

There are other campaigns that I champion that aren't a part of my prime sponsored legislation. I give my continued support to these issues and will work to help them get the funding they need.

- **8.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Direct Support Professionals (DSP)**
 - includes home care workers
- **Nourish New York Initiative** and the **Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program**
- **Universal School Meals**

Community Resources

Advisory Committee for Rep. Molinaro

Congressman Molinaro is seeking New York state residents to serve on his advisory committees and has asked that we share this opportunity with our constituents. These committees will meet quarterly to discuss legislative actions relating to their subject area and inform the congressman of their findings. Please email the attached application form to Advisory.Committees@mail.house.gov by March 13th.

WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

Today on World Wildlife Day, we celebrate the extraordinary diversity of fauna and flora in New York State! NY is home to over 50 endangered species and almost 600 vulnerable to extinction.

In addition to giving us physical and mental refuge, boosting our economies, and protecting watersheds, state parks such as those in Tompkins County play a vital role in conserving species and their habitats. We must support environmentally conscious legislation that protects and preserves our wildlife.

You can learn more about New York's endangered and vulnerable wildlife on the [Department of Environmental Conservation website](#). Please consider supporting local organizations such as [Finger Lakes Land Trust](#) in their mission to protect our natural areas and wildlife!



A few of NY's endangered species from left to right: Karner Blue Butterfly, Eastern Tiger Salamander, Cougar, Bog Turtle, Short Eared Owl

Have a safe and restful weekend!

In good health,

Handwritten signature of Anna R. Kelles

Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

ALBANY OFFICE
LOB 833
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-5444

CORTLAND OFFICE
83 Main St
PO Box 5026
Cortland, NY 13045
607-208-2024

ITHACA OFFICE
106 East Court Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-277-8030

Assembly District 125 | kellesa@nyassembly.gov