

FARRELL FIGHTING FOR SENIORS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE COMMUNITY



When the Assembly and Senate passed the budget for State Fiscal Year 2014-2015, we were able to include funding for a major expansion of the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program, which can be of great help to seniors who are living on a fixed income and struggling with the rising cost of living.

SCRIE Expanded in 2014-2015 State Budget

During the bad years, when our community was struggling, these seniors were the people fighting to keep the community alive. Now that our community is turning itself around, I believe these seniors who have lived here for years and helped keep our community going deserve our help to stay in their homes as rents go sky-high. Beginning on July 1, 2014 income-qualified seniors aged

62 or older became eligible for a major expansion of SCRIE, the largest increase in many years. The household income to qualify for SCRIE is now \$50,000 which is a much more realistic figure than the previous \$29,000 per year household income cap. The new \$50,000 cap will be in place for the next two years.

Do You or Your Relatives Qualify for SCRIE?

SCRIE applicants must live in a rent-stabilized or rent-controlled apartment and pay more than one-third of their total income for rent. If your total annual income is \$30,000 your average monthly income is \$2,500 which means your monthly rent must be more

than \$833.33 to qualify. If you receive SCRIE, your rent is frozen, so you do not have to pay most rent increases. If you previously applied for SCRIE and were denied, you must re-apply after July 1 when you renew your lease.

More Affordable Housing Coming to Northern Manhattan

Sugar Hill Development at West 155th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue

I am also proud to announce that new affordable-housing projects are underway or nearing completion in Northern Manhattan. As you may have read, the 124-unit Sugar Hill Development at West 155th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue is nearly complete. I recently attended an event alongside Mayor de Blasio and a

number of local elected officials to announce that this important and much-needed project will soon be opening. According to the Mayor, this project represents renewal, rejuvenation, community involvement and community leadership.

Bethany Place at West 153rd Street and Frederick Douglass Boulevard

On July 1, I visited Bethany Place, which is located at West 153rd Street and Frederick Douglas Boulevard. Residents of Bethany Place must be income-qualified and will pay as little as \$1,322 per month for a two-bedroom apartment. This building, which has been in the planning stages for more than 10 years and has gone through many changes and challenges including the loss of City

funding, proves that longevity and stick-to-it-ive-ness are the most important parts of getting things done for the community. I must thank the workers and the people of Bethany Baptist Church for their continual battle to get this building finished and make these apartments available. It has been wonderful to work with them.

Farrell Legislation Would Expand Tenants' Rights

Tenants who live in existing apartments also need help. During our 2014 Session, my colleague Senator Bill Perkins and I carried a new tenants'-rights bill that requires landlords to disclose four years' worth of records of rent increases and improvements at the time a tenant signs their first lease. Bad landlords falsify records in order to raise the rents and trick new tenants into paying more rent than they should, and this must stop. My bill is based on a problem that brought a Northern Manhattan resident into court to fight her landlord and the Division of Housing and Community Renewal. The landlord made small changes to the apartment after a previous tenant moved out and used that small investment to more than triple the rent. The case, which was decided by a 3-2 vote of the Appellate

Division in late 2013, found that the landlord had proven that the improvements to the apartment were substantial enough to justify the significantly higher rent, which is now over \$2,000 per month. But this level of proof is very low and unfairly benefits the landlord. This must be changed. Bad landlords often skirt the rules, fudging the numbers or outright lying on the forms they submit to DHCR seeking higher rent. My bill ends the statute of limitations in cases of housing fraud, giving tenants more time to bring court actions against bad landlords. It codifies two recent court decisions in fraud cases that went beyond the current four-year statute of limitations. It would also allow tenants to quickly and easily see if their landlord has falsified any claims made to the State.

Where to Go, Who to Call for Information on SCRIE Expansion:



Farrell meets with Mitchell-Llama Residents' Coalition.

For more information on SCRIE and related programs, contact the New York City Department of Finance at 311 or read the SCRIE/DRIE Guide at nyc.gov/scrie. TTY callers may reach the Department of Finance at (212) 504-4115. Written correspondence should be addressed to the Department of Finance's Correspondence Unit at One Centre Street, 22nd Floor, New York NY 10007.



Assemblyman
**HERMAN D.
 FARRELL, JR.**

*Reports to the People
 of the
 71st Assembly District*

Summer 2014

**DIVERSE GROUP OF ELECTED OFFICIALS AGREE
 NEW YORK CITY SHOULD
 BAN TOURIST HELICOPTERS**



A diverse group of nearly 20 elected officials from across New York City met with Mayor de Blasio's staff at City Hall on June 6 to lay out their and their constituents' belief that tourist helicopters should be banned by the City.

Present at the meeting, in addition to myself and the Mayor's staff, were Congresswoman Nydia M. Velazquez, who represents Brooklyn, Lower Manhattan and Queens; Congressman Jerrold Nadler, who represents parts of Manhattan and Brooklyn; State Senator Daniel L. Squadron, who represents Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn; Assembly Member Felix Ortiz of Brooklyn; Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal of Manhattan; Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer; and City Council Member Mark Levine of Northern Manhattan, plus staff members representing other elected officials who could not attend the meeting.

These officials agree that the City should no longer allow tourist helicopter flights that disrupt the quality of life in their neighborhoods, and met with the Mayor's staff to plead their case. In recent years, since the practice began, many residents of Northern Manhattan have voiced their opposition to the noise created by hovering helicopters over their homes.

Over Northern Manhattan, helicopter flights use the Hudson River as a highway, then cut across Washington Heights to view Yankee Stadium from the air. One helicopter in particular tends to hover in place for extended periods of time, apparently acting as a traffic cop for other flights.

At the close of the meeting, Mayor de Blasio's staff promised a follow-up meeting after the complaints passed along by the group of officials were checked and verified.

**WORKING TO END THE MOSQUITO PROBLEM
 IN RIVERBANK TREATMENT PLANT**

As you may remember from last fall, we have been having problems in Riverbank State Park with malfunctioning drainage systems creating pools of standing water that are a breeding ground for mosquitoes. While the insects themselves are a nuisance, they are known to carry West Nile Virus and other diseases, which can be serious, but we have no reason to believe there is any danger at this time. Since these problems arose, I have worked with L. Ann Rocker of Friends of Riverbank, New York State Parks

Commissioner Rose Harvey, and City officials to figure out what is wrong and fix it. As you may know, the State and City share responsibility for this problem because Riverbank is a State park and the sewage treatment plant below it is maintained by the City. I recently wrote both agencies to inquire about their progress, and to be sure that the pools of stagnant water are being treated with insecticide to be sure mosquitoes are not breeding in them. I will share their responses when I receive them.

FARRELL SPONSORS HOUSING TOWN HALL MEETING

Saturday, July 26 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Church of the Intercession • 550 West 155th Street
between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue

Featured will be:

Commissioner Darryl C. Towns — New York State Division of Homes and Community Renewal
Assemblymember Keith Wright — Chairman, New York State Assembly Housing Committee

Commissioner Towns is coming to the District at my invitation to talk about how to fix the problems of affordable housing, deregulation of formerly rent-stabilized apartments and other housing-related issues in the community, as well as legislation I have introduced in Albany to fix these problems and others. Your attendance and participation in the discussion is strongly encouraged. Tenants will be able to talk to and ask questions of the Commissioner and the Chairman.