



Assemblymember

Anna Kelles

Assembly District 125



May 21, 2024

Dear Neighbors,

These final weeks of the legislative session are fast-paced as the Assembly will prioritize the legislation to pass in a shortened period due to the delay in passing the budget. I am connecting with Committee Chairs and Assembly leadership to advocate for a number of critical bills for our district to make it on committee agendas and move through to a full vote. I joined many press conferences and rallies to advocate for some of those priorities. Read on for highlights from the week!

As I sometimes do, I wanted to share a powerful *New York Times* interview I listened to this weekend that was achingly beautiful: [An Antidote to Our Climate Delusion](#) with Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson. There is an article and an audio interview with the brilliant Noble scientist, and while I recommend both, the audio is extra captivating. It focuses on climate change, but about seeing things as they are, recognizing all our complicated feelings about it, and finding hope.

Anna in the News

Cap and Invest Legislation

As New York strives to lower our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the state, in depth conversations continue on the best way to achieve this climate goal. This past week, I hosted a legislative briefing and press conference on my bill [A8469](#) that would establish an economy-wide cap and invest program to support our GHG reductions. This bill provides a counterweight to the pre-proposal released this January by NYSERDA based on a cap and trade model (with draft regulations that are expected to be released soon). The bill I have introduced with Senator Parker offers a crucial counterpoint to the pre-proposal's focus on emissions trading and profits that has insufficient targeted protections for disadvantaged communities most impacted by climate change and our current fossil fuel-heavy energy infrastructure. The bill prioritizes a clear roadmap for proceeds of the sale of emissions allowances to go towards reinvestment of revenues through a community-directed Climate Solutions Grants program for community-based organizations, projects and initiatives not assisted by other assistance programs, with 75% going to disadvantaged communities throughout the state.

Our charge is clear: create a pathway to net zero greenhouse gas emissions, create clean energy jobs, and safeguard the health and well-being of all New Yorkers. To ensure the success of this transition, we cannot allow major polluters to continue to pollute our air and water in perpetuity for free. This legislation, with clear guardrails, protects disadvantaged communities, protects industry participants from artificially induced consolidation of the market, provides a clear transmission roadmap for NY companies that compete in a tight global market, and provides clear administrative guidance to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. If implemented effectively and equitably, this cap and invest program will not only mitigate the impacts of climate change but also foster a more sustainable and resilient future for generations to come. To learn more, [watch my interview on Spectrum's Capital Tonight](#).



Legislative Update

#RescueEMS

The statewide EMS system is complex with some service agencies being for-profit, some being community not-for-profit, some being municipal EMS departments and some being EMS services provided as part of a municipal Fire Department. Because the complex mechanism of funding is different for each system, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to guarantee sustainable effective statewide EMS. We have a legislative package to #RescueEMS and its varied needs, and I was proud to join my fellow legislators at a press conference this week to call for its passage this session. My sponsored bill in the package ([A9102](#)) would provide for Medicaid reimbursement for

ambulance services when they provide treatment in place (TIP) and would enable EMS to provide transportation to an alternative healthcare destination (TAD), like an urgent-care facility when the primary hospital ER is overburdened. Currently EMS is only reimbursed if they transport an individual to a hospital. With this bill, patients would still receive the treatment they need, EMS providers would receive reimbursement for their services, we could save millions from unnecessary hospital visits, and we would significantly increase efficiencies in the existing system enabling EMS providers to be more readily available for incoming 911 calls. You can [watch a video of my comments](#) or learn more about the entire legislative package on the [New York State Association of Counties \(NYSAC\) Fact Sheet](#).



Sentencing Reform Rally

Our carceral system by intent is supposed to be one of correction, rehabilitation, and transformation, with the goal of a healthy reentry into society for the individual, their family, and the community. All too often, though, incarcerated individuals are simply reduced to a number. I joined my

legislative colleagues, advocates, and families at a rally calling for our judicial system to view the individual merits of each case in both sentencing and parole decisions. This package of legislation allows judges and parole boards to operate without the rigid constraints of mandatory minimums that do not account for a person's mental health status or experienced trauma. This will be a step forward in putting an end to our system of mass incarceration.

The Eliminate Mandatory Minimums Act ([A2036](#)), Second Look Act ([A0531](#)), and Earned Time Act ([A1128](#)) are reinvestments in communities that have too often been neglected. We all want healthier and safer communities, and the [Communities Not Cages](#) package is a tested and true roadmap to get there. I'm proud to sponsor the Earned Time Act that provides increased good time and merit time allowance credits to incarcerated individuals and incentivizes participation in educational, vocational, treatment-related, and other beneficial programming. When incarcerated individuals engage in rehabilitative programming, violence between those incarcerated as well as against corrections staff and volunteers is reduced. This legislation, that has significant support in swing states, has also been shown to significantly reduce recidivism rates thus improving public safety for all. We can reduce the violence, and set people up for success upon reentry into their communities.



Transportation Equity Rally

New York set ambitious climate goals in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2050. Reducing our dependence on gas-powered vehicles will help us reach those targets and provide opportunities for better ways of getting around in rural, suburban and urban communities. Yet, New York is spending billions of dollars in federal and state resources to both widen highways and to address the negative impacts of wide highways. The #GetAroundNY Act ([A4120](#) McMahon) sets a target for the NY State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to reduce statewide per capita vehicle miles traveled by 20% by 2050. Other states that have passed similar legislation have been successful in reducing emissions by redirecting transportation funds away from roadway expansions to mass transit projects and to the expansion of biking and walking paths. I joined advocates at a rally in Albany for transportation equity, and I look forward to bill A4120 moving in the Assembly!



Around the District

Women Swimmin' for Hospicare

I have participated in the Women Swimmin' for Hospicare event for years, and I'm excited that registration is now open for the 21st Annual event on August 10, 2024! Community members are invited to participate in the fundraiser any way that works best for them: swim Cayuga Lake, be a boater, volunteer, or set up an activity or service project from now to Aug 10 to support Hospicare. Hospicare's mission is to support patients and their loved ones at any stage of a life-limiting illness or following a death. Here are some images from past events, and I hope you can join me at this year's event!

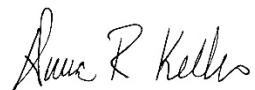


Community Resources

Tompkins County No Cost Rabies Vaccination Clinic

Tompkins County Whole Health's Environmental Health Division is hosting a no-cost rabies vaccination clinic for cats, dogs and ferrets on Thursday, May 23 from 7 - 9 pm at the Enfield Highway Garage (475 Enfield Main Rd, Ithaca). Please bring proof of your pet's most recent vaccination, or information about the location and date of your pet's previous vaccination, if applicable. Dogs must be on leashes, and cats and ferrets must be in carriers. For more information and to register for an appointment, visit [Tompkins County website](#) or call 607-274-6688 for assistance.

In good health,



Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

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