



Week of July 29, 2024

Dear Neighbors,

I have had many conversations over the last few months with community members about the tenant protections, referred to as Good Cause, included in this year's NY State budget. As many now know the law automatically went into effect for NYC but allows for a local opt in for communities outside of NYC. The law also allows for communities to adjust both the definition of a luxury apartment and the definition of a small landlord for the purposes of determining exemptions from the legislation. On July 10th of this month the City of Ithaca passed a local law choosing to opt in to the law and establish good cause eviction guardrails. My office continues to receive calls and emails with questions about the state law so I wanted to share here an article I wrote and published with City of Ithaca Mayor Robert Cantelmo that provides local and statewide context, details of the state law, and a comparison of the state law to good cause laws that exist in other states across the country. This last point I think is particularly illuminating because it both highlights that this is not a new statewide endeavor and it also puts the components of the law into a larger context of what has

been successfully implemented elsewhere. [Here is a link](#) to the article for anyone who wants the full analysis. Of course I welcome any continued questions folks may have and look forward to continued robust conversations on housing needs in our communities.

## Around the District



With Cortland Public Library Director Jessica Magelaner July 26th.

## **Meeting the new Cortland Library Director**

Libraries are a safe public place where people can go to find resources, job search and pursue educational goals, and the Cortland Free Library is no exception. I was happy to visit Cortland this past Friday to meet with constituents and have a conversation with the new director of the Cortland Free Library, Jessica Magelaner. We talked about the NYS budget and legislative process (each state is surprisingly unique in the structure, pace, and purview of the state government) and possible areas for partnership and collaboration, including educational docu-series and community book reads about poverty in the United States and the growing national homelessness crisis. As many of you are aware, the Cortland Library became the focus of contention in the community last winter, concerning the rise in unhoused people who, lacking alternative spaces in the community, gathered there during the day. The Cortland library is not alone in the pressures now facing libraries across the state and country. With continued stagnant wages, shrinking benefits, and continuously increasing cost of living, more and more people cannot find stable affordable housing. Housing instability in turn is associated with increased job instability, lower participation in education as well as an increased risk of physical and mental health issues, chronic hunger and malnutrition, and substance use disorder, often as a means of self-medication. Many

communities lack the resources and investments in programs to assist individuals and families that find themselves in this state of crisis and many lack sufficient supportive housing or a homeless shelter. Public libraries are finding ever more creative ways to help meet basic needs for the public, recognizing that libraries can be more than solely resources for learning but a place to access public resources in general. Recognizing this growing need the American Library Association has compiled Resources for Public Libraries Serving Persons Experiencing Homelessness and this publication on [Library Service to the Homeless](#).

I look forward to engaging in community conversations to open channels for honest dialogue and foster empathy between the populations of housed and unhoused people. For anyone curious to learn more about the topic, "[It's Not Like I'm Poor](#)" is a particularly eye-opening facts-based analysis of how families in poverty manage finances in the US that I used in my Public Health Nutrition course when I was a faculty member at Cornell as well as the documentary [A Place at the Table](#), which explains the impact of chronic hunger on all aspects of family life and individual achievements. Community conversations on these issues can help us come together, think outside the box, and create solutions that benefit us all.

Welcome aboard, Jessica and I look forward to learning and growing with you and supporting the Cortland Free Library in the future!



## Cortland ADA Celebration

This week I attended the annual celebration commemorating the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act ([ADA](#)) hosted by Access To Independence in Cortland Friday. This celebration highlighted the fact that while the ADA, a landmark civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities, has been law for 34 years, we still have a long way to go in terms of full equity for individuals with disabilities. This year, I was proud to vote for a number of bills to build on the foundation of the ADA and improve the lives of people with disabilities in our state. Here are a few highlights:

- [A1577](#), which will expand an existing Developmental Disability Ombudsman pilot program to a statewide program and make it permanent, ensuring that people with disabilities have access to a representative that can help them identify and obtain services and ensure they have an advocate in cases of abuse, neglect, and withholding of services.
- [A1200](#) which will create a state commission to examine the accessibility and performance of our existing programs and services and make recommendations for streamlining access to these services for people with disabilities.

- [A5815](#) which will require state agencies and contractors to report data on the employment of people with disabilities and their level of participation. The State's high unemployment rate of individuals with disabilities highlights the need for more employment opportunities. This data will help clarify where opportunities exist within the state purview.

All three bills passed both houses of the state legislature and now await the Governor's action. Once again we passed a bill that I sponsor [A6541](#) through the Assembly to waive the state's immunity to violations of the ADA, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, assuring that all employees in our state, including those employed by the state, have the same protections. I will continue to advocate and educate colleagues, including those in the Senate, to ensure its passage in the future so that the state holds itself to the same standards to which we hold all other businesses, organizations and institutions accountable throughout the state.



With Dr. Francois Elvinger, Director of the Cornell Animal Health Diagnostic Center, Richard Ball, NY State Commissioner of Agriculture & Markets, Assemblymember Donna Lupardo, Senator Lea Webb, Mike Kotlikoff, Acting Cornell President, Harris Weiss, Southern Tier Regional Representative for Gov. Hochul, and Dr. Lorin Warnick, Dean of the Cornell School of Veterinary Medicine at the Cornell Veterinary Diagnostic Lab on July 29th.

## Announcing Cornell Veterinary Diagnostic Lab funding

Yesterday I had the great pleasure of participating in the announcement of a \$19.5 million award for an expansion to the New York State Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, in the [Cornell Animal Health Diagnostic Center](#). I helped secure this in this year's state budget in collaboration with fellow colleagues Senator Lea Webb, Assemblymember



and Assembly Agriculture committee Chair Donna Lupardo, Senator and Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Michelle Hinchey and an amazing team of champions from Cornell including Dr. Lorin Warnick, Dean of the Cornell School of Veterinary Medicine, and Dr. François Elvinger, Director of the Animal Health Diagnostic Center.

The money will fund an expansion adding 26,000 square feet of additional laboratories, offices and workstations. The lab plays a key role in protecting public health by conducting robust pathogenic testing on both animal, and during times of great need, human populations to monitor outbreaks of infectious diseases such as COVID-19 and the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus. For nearly 100 years the Cornell Veterinary Medicine Program has protected our communities across New York and around the Country through virology research and testing at the Animal Health Diagnostic Lab. Given the growing prevalence of viral outbreaks in wildlife due to climate change and the occurrence of viral mutations leading to the transfer of diseases across animal species and to human populations this expansion of a world class viral research laboratory could not be more timely. Not only does the laboratory provide direct research and testing but the hundreds of veterinary students enrolled each year in Cornell's Veterinary school programs do rotations through the laboratory ensuring cutting edge

education of practitioners throughout the world. I look forward to celebrating the great work of the laboratory for many decades to come. To watch a video of my speech at the event click [here](#).



With Rev. Christina Culver, Loaves and Fishes Executive Director, and her team in Ithaca on July 26th.

## **Loaves & Fishes of Tompkins County anniversary celebration**

It was a pleasure and honor to join Loaves & Fishes of Tompkins County, housed at St. John's Episcopal Church, to celebrate its 40th Anniversary and to present

the dedicated leadership and team with a citation from the New York State Assembly recognizing their important contributions to our community. The event highlighted the many ways Loaves has helped to alleviate community hunger, one meal at a time. Since 1983, Loaves & Fishes has served more than 1.5 million meals and continued to serve a hot lunch or dinner every weekday to over 275 people daily. The Loaves & Fishes program began as an idea born over a bowl of soup shared at the church between then Rev. Kathy Eickwort, a community volunteer, and a local person who was homeless at the time. At the end of the meal, Rev. Kathy Eickwort said: "Let's do this tomorrow and invite others to join us." 40 years later, the invitation still stands, and all are truly welcome. From the bottom of my heart, I thank Loaves & Fishes deeply, for the welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment it offers, the loving service it provides, the nutritious quality meals it prepares, and the hard work of its many, caring volunteers. To watch my speech at the event click [here](#). The meal schedule includes Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11:30am to 1:00pm and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00pm to 6:30pm.

# Community Resources

## Voting Resources

The next US General Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024. If you're not registered to vote yet, you can do so online [here](#). Starting Oct. 26, registered voters can vote early. For early mail ballot requests click [here](#). For absentee ballot requests click [here](#). For accessible ballot requests click [here](#).

**In Cortland.** For more early voting information for Cortland County click [here](#). For a list of polling sites in Cortland County click [here](#). Eligible registered voters living in the City of Cortland have been sent information about changes to poll sites. Call the Cortland County Board of Elections at 607-753-5032 with questions.

**In Tompkins.** For early voting information for Tompkins County click [here](#). For a list of polling sites in Tompkins County click [here](#). For questions about registering to vote

in Tompkins County click [here](#). For more questions for the Tompkins County Board of Elections call 607-274-5521.



## **On the Lookout for the Spotted Lanternfly**

The [New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets](#) announced recently that the Spotted Lanternfly ([SLF](#)) was found in Romulus, following reports it received from the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program at

Cornell University. The Department is urging residents and grape growers to report any sightings [here](#). If spotted, you should also take a photo, collect a sample and place it in a freezer or jar with rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer.

## **Tompkins County grants**

The Tompkins County Tourism Program is announcing three grant opportunities for fall 2024, aimed at enhancing local tourism and community development. One is a [Community Celebrations Grant](#) which offers up to \$2,500 for community events celebrating the county's culture, history and diversity. Another is the [Tourism Advancement Grant](#), which offers up to \$20,000 for projects promoting Tompkins County as a tourist destination. A third is the [Tourism Capital Grant](#), offering up to \$100,000 for investments in visitor-generating projects driving economic growth and quality of life. Applications are due by Aug. 26, 2024.

Visit <https://tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/grants> for more details. If you have a draft application to discuss with staff from the Tompkins County Tourism Program, bring the ideas to the CAP ArtSpace (inside the Tompkins Center for History and Culture) at 110 N. Tioga St. Ithaca, from 1-3 p.m. Tuesday Aug. 1. No reservations necessary.

## **State grants**

Click here to view Speaker Heastie's July [Grants Action News](#) which contains a list of upcoming funding opportunities available. To receive this publication via email, send a request to [grants@nyassembly.gov](mailto:grants@nyassembly.gov).

## **Planned Parenthood seeking youth leaders**

Planned Parenthood is seeking young people for its Youth Health Promoter (YHP) program which supports young people in becoming leaders in communities, training them to connect with and educate peers on topics like relationships, sexual and reproductive health and consent. The group meets once a week and also participates in community events throughout the year. The youth are also given a stipend and must be entering 9th - 11th grades. For more information about the opportunity and application process, please visit their Web site.

## **Blood donations needed**

The American Red Cross is in need of blood donations. To schedule an appointment call 1-800-733-2767 or visit their Web site and enter the zip code of the area you would like to donate into the search box. The following is

a list of locations where blood drives are being held in  
Tompkins County:

8/1 First Baptist Church, 1 PM – 6 PM.

8/2 Newfield Fire Department, 9 AM – 1 PM.

8/6 St. Catherine of Sienna, 1 PM – 6 PM.

8/7 First Baptist Church of Trumansburg, 9 AM – 1 PM.

8/9 Lansing Town Hall, 1 PM – 6 PM.

8/10 Church of the Latter-day Saints.

8/13 Enfield Fire Department, 9 AM – 2 PM.

8/15 Foundation of Light, 10 AM – 3 PM.

8/16 Cayuga Medical Center, 10 AM – 3 PM.

8/23 Vineyard Church of Ithaca, 10 AM – 3 PM.

8/26 Pallas Fitness, 1 PM – 6 PM.

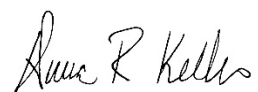
8/28 Tompkins County Library, 10 AM – 4 PM.

8/29 First Congregational Church UCC, 9 AM – 2 PM.

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In good health,



Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

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