



Assemblywoman

# Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes

Summer 2018



## Community News

Assemblywoman Peoples-Stokes just concluded a very successful legislative session in Albany and is eager to continue her work back home in the district.

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Summer is in full swing, I hope everyone is staying safe, having fun and enjoying this fantastic weather. It's also time for my post session report to you on the progress I've been making as your State representative in the Assembly.

I'm proud to say that the state budget included much-needed resources for Buffalo. Specifically, it included increases for healthcare, education, economic and workforce development funding. This letter details some of those increases as well as the bills I was the prime sponsor of that passed the Assembly and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

I look forward to continuing to engage my constituents and community stakeholders to increase the quality of life for all of our residents.

Sincerely,

Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes

## Legislative Lane

### Bills That Passed Both Houses, Now Awaiting Governor's Signature

**A1789** - Directs the director of the division of minority and women's business development to provide for the minority and women-owned business certification of business entities owned by Indian nations or tribes

**A2279A** - Authorizes cities having a population of between 250,000 and 300,000 to establish a senior citizen longtime resident real property tax exemption

**A2788B** - Provides for taxpayer gifts for lupus education and prevention, and establishes the lupus education and prevention fund and outreach program

**A7966C** - Relates to the amount of the supplemental basic tuition for charter schools

**A8156** - Enacts various provisions relating to procurement procedures

**A10074** - Relates to Buffalo sewer authority bonds

**A10275** - Relates to the reimbursement of shelter costs and crime scene cleanup for certain, non-injured victims

**A10744A** - Relates to the certification classifications for businesses owned by minority group members or women

### Bills that have been Chaptered (Signed into Law)

**Chapter 47: A2131** - Provides that each state agency that maintains a website shall ensure its website provides for online submission of requests for records subject to FOIL

**Chapter 157: A10298A** - Extends provisions of law relating to authorizing a pilot residential parking permit system in the city of Buffalo

**Chapter 167: A10618A** - Authorizes the city of Buffalo to add unpaid housing code violations to the city's annual tax levy

### Bills That Passed the Assembly Only

**A1862** - Identifies the criteria the commissioner of environmental conservation should consider in publishing a list of high local environmental impact zones

**A2142** - Relates to sealing records for certain proceedings

**A2317C** - Relates to prescription drug formulary changes during a contract year

**A2924** - Relates to HIV post-exposure prophylaxis and other health care services for sexual assault victims

**A4303B** - Requires dialysis center disaster preparedness plans

**A10810** - Relates to establishing in the city of Buffalo a demonstration program implementing speed violation monitoring systems in school speed zones by means of photo devices

**A11012** - Relates to the timeframe for the implementation of recommendations included within final reports for corrective action

# Development Drive

## State Announces Local Affordable Housing Projects

On Thursday, May 10th Governor Cuomo and the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (HCR) announced \$22 million towards 7 affordable housing projects in Western New York. Four of these seven projects are located in the 141st Assembly District, specifically the East side of Buffalo, and equate to roughly \$11 million of state investment.

The funds were made available through New York State Homes & Community Renewal's 2017 Unified Funding Application, a streamlined process to apply for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and low-interest loans for affordable, multifamily developments. Projects are funded in every region of the state. The awarded projects in the 141st District are listed below:

- 1. \$858,000 for Trinity One Apartments:** Mt. Olive Community Development Corporation will convert a vacant property on East Delavan Avenue near the Northland Corridor into 8 workforce apartments and demolish another dilapidated structure to create surface parking for residents.
- 2. \$1.7 Million for Cigar Factory Apartments:** Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services is building and adaptively reusing a historic former cigar factory site and historic garage on Fillmore Avenue into 4 workforce apartments and the new construction of a 7-unit residential and commercial building. Cigar Factory Apartments will be located within the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood. This project is one of many catalysts that will soon be underway to reinvigorate this community.
- 3. \$3.9 Million for ELIM Townhouse:** ELIM Community Development Corporation will construct 5 townhouse buildings for a total of 30 homes next to the Highland Park Development Project at the former Central Park Plaza site.
- 4. \$4.5 Million for Westminster Commons:** Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers (BFNC) will create 84 apartments for seniors 55+ next to a treatment center for the residents and community in the existing historic Westminster Settlement House on Monroe Avenue. The treatment center will include a medical clinic, pharmacy, rehab services and a senior social adult day program.

## Better Buffalo Fund 3rd Round Awards 6 Projects in 141st District

On June 22nd, The Better Buffalo Fund gave \$7.7 million worth of financial support to 11 projects aimed at revitalizing neighborhoods within the City of Buffalo. Six of these projects are located within the 141st Assembly District. The fund, part of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Buffalo Billion program, supports housing, retail and business projects near public transportation. Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul announced the third round of award recipients, "This is a recognition that resources need to be put on the table, not just for the big, showy projects, but the ones that change a neighborhood block by block," Hochul said.

- 1. \$2 million for Cedarland Development Corp., 950 Broadway:** This building sits at the intersection of Broadway and Fillmore near the Broadway Market. The \$5.79 million project will rehabilitate and convert the former Eckhardt Building into a mixed-use, multifamily housing project.
- 2. \$1.9 million for People Inc., 1140 Jefferson Avenue:** People Inc.'s Jefferson Avenue Apartments will develop into a \$31 million mixed-use project consisting of two, three-story buildings with 89 units of affordable and middle-income rental housing. There will also be commercial and retail space.
- 3. \$949,000 for R. Kyndall Development Corp., 647 E. Delavan Avenue:** The Kyndall Building will be located at 647 East Delavan Ave., at the corner of Dutton Ave. across from MST High School. The project seeks to capitalize on the activity and momentum being created in the Northland Corridor. The \$5.9 million project will develop vacant lots into a three-story mixed-use building.
- 4. \$500,000 for North Buffalo Org., 1585 Hertel Avenue:** A \$500,000 grant was awarded for North Buffalo in-fill development. The North Buffalo Organization will apply the funds toward a \$7 million mixed-use development of 1585 Hertel Ave., located at the intersection of Hertel and Parkside Avenues.
- 5. \$359,000 for Preservation Buffalo Niagara, 72 Sycamore Avenue:** Signature Development is working with Preservation Buffalo Niagara to redevelop the historic property as an arts hub destination in the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor. The project is valued at \$1.75 million.
- 6. \$170,156 for Arch Type, 65 Northland Avenue:** A \$170,156 grant was provided for Transit Oriented Development at 65 Northland Ave. The \$850,000 project will create a new, four-unit apartment building on a vacant lot, using geothermal heating and cooling.



*The Assemblywoman and staff support Gay & Lesbian Youth Services by marching with them in the 2018 Pride Parade. Congratulations to Sophia McDaniel-Francis on becoming the new Executive Director after the retirement of Marvin Henchbarger. Good luck to both!*



*The unveiling of a portrait of Mary B. Talbert by Julia Bottoms. The Albright Knox Art Gallery sponsored the exhibit We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women 1960 - 1985. The exhibit ran from February through May 2018. A committee chaired by Alice Jacobs, Eunice Lewin and Michele Brown hosted two free community evenings.*



*On June 23rd the Assemblywoman spoke to 30 fellows from the Cornell High Road Initiative who are actively volunteering with numerous WNY non-profits. Her speech focused on diversity and inclusion, the sealing of records for low-level marijuana convictions, and the eventual decriminalization and legalization.*

## Office-Funded Capital Projects

### State and Municipalities (SAM) Program

- 1. City of Buffalo – 509 Michigan Ave. - \$1,000,000.00:** This project provides stabilization and expansion of a vacant, city-owned 1,500sq. ft. structure located at 509 Michigan Avenue, next door to the Historic Michigan St. Baptist Church. Potential reuses include upstairs office and meeting space for the Michigan Street African American Historic Corridor Commission, with first floor retail as a small café and/or visitor's center and public meeting and art exhibition space.
- 1. City of Buffalo – City Hall & Dillon Courthouse Security Upgrades - \$700,000.00:** The project includes the installation of x-ray machines, wands, metal detectors, bollards, and a security surveillance system to monitor and control access and egress points of Buffalo's City Hall and the new Dillon Courthouse Public Safety Headquarters.
- 2. City of Buffalo – African American Veterans Monument - \$600,000.00:** Funding will be applied to the construction and design of a Veterans monument at the Buffalo & Erie County Military & Naval Park.
- 3. City of Buffalo – Broadway Market - \$500,000.00:** This restoration project will return the façade close to the original 1956 design. Weatherproofing, masonry restoration, new exterior signage and lighting, sidewalk improvements, window and door replacement and enhancements are expected.
- 4. City of Buffalo – Northland Sidewalk Infrastructure - \$500,000.00:** The project will replace sidewalk infrastructure in residential neighborhoods surrounding the Northland Avenue Industrial Corridor.
- 5. City of Buffalo – Michigan St. Archway - \$275,000.00 :** This project entails the design, construction and implementation of an archway to signify entrance into the Michigan St. African American Heritage Corridor including way-finding, lighting, signage and streetscape enhancements.
- 6. Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System – East Delavan Branch Library - \$250,000.00:** Improvements to this library branch include a new entrance, installing an elevator to make the location wheelchair and ADA-compliant, and renovating the interior.
- 7. City of Buffalo – Apollo Media Center - \$125,000.00:** The project will upgrade the Apollo Media Center's security and surveillance systems, add an additional camera in the main studio, and renovate the production studio and upgrade its technology.

### UCP Program

- 1. Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers (BFNC) - \$500,000.00:** Construction and renovation of the Westminster House on Monroe St. Project will provide senior housing, health and nutrition, care coordination and case management on site.
- 2. Buffalo Promise Neighborhood - \$500,000.00:** Capital and security improvements to the Westminster Charter School.
- 3. Colored Musicians Club - \$350,000.00:** Funding will be used to support the construction of an addition that will house an elevator and new staircase for improved accessibility for the disabled along with the installation of a fire suppression system.
- 4. Buffalo Museum of Science - \$250,000.00 (2):** Project funding will be applied towards the design, demolition, and reconstruction of the Museum's main entrance and staircase, which have been closed to the general public since the 1980s.
- 5. Gerard Place - \$250,000.00 (2):** Installation of an elevator and renovation of kitchen, classroom training and ancillary space for women's programming.
- 6. Central Terminal Restoration Corporation - \$250,000.00:** Installation of a commercial-grade electrical transformer and improved electrical lines that will allow for the restoration of elevator service, the installation of rooftop solar panels, a commercial grade kitchen and banquet space, a security system, and the relighting of the terminal's tower.
- 7. Medaille College - \$200,000.00:** Project calls for the renovation of science lab space plus the purchase and installation of equipment for students, STEM learning and extra-curricular programming.
- 8. Torn Space Theatre - \$175,000.00:** Project details include the exterior restoration of the Adam Mickiewicz Library on Fillmore Ave., plus the development of two vacant lots to construct a state-of-the-art facility to host their theatrical performances.
- 9. African Cultural Center - \$125,000.00:** Reconstruction of the roof and exterior walls of the storage building that houses stage props.
- 10. Jericho Road Ministries - \$125,000.00:** Funding supported the installation of a new roof and boiler system for the VIVE La Case site on Wyoming Ave. that services refugees upon their relocation to Buffalo, NY.
- 11. WNED WNY Public Broadcasting - \$125,000.00:** Replacement of the facility's roof.

## Academic Avenue



May 18th the Buffalo School District broke ground on the Emerson 2.0 School located at 75 West Huron Street, which is directly behind the current facility on Chippewa Avenue. It is expected to be open for students beginning September 2019.

### Teacher Diversity Pipeline

Two-thirds of students in the Buffalo Public Schools are minorities while 87% of teachers are white. The Education Trust of NY, and other education advocates, maintain that minority teachers better understand the cultural and racial backgrounds of students, which can lead to improved academic performance, as well as a decrease in suspensions and dropout rates. Minority teachers also serve as role models for young people of color, while exposing white students to more minorities in positions of authority.

My office is working with Buffalo State College, Empire State College, and others, to create a "pipeline" to increase the diversity of

teachers in Buffalo Public Schools. Teacher Aides and Teacher Assistants are ideal candidates to become classroom teachers. They have familiarity with the students in the district and many of them are from ethnic backgrounds that are underrepresented in our teachers. The State budget allocated \$500,000 for a teacher diversity pipeline demonstration project. As the State Education Department finalizes its process to distribute this money, additional funds will also be sought to realize a robust teacher diversity pipeline program for Buffalo Public Schools.

### Peoples-Stokes and Jacobs Pass Charter School Reimbursement Bill

Earlier this year, Assemblywoman Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes and Senator Chris Jacobs passed the Charter School Tuition Reimbursement Bill (A.7966C/S.6551C).

School districts are constantly faced with financial hurdles to balance budgets. One such factor is charter school tuition payments for students. Charter school funding is annually advanced by the Buffalo Public School District at the beginning of the school year. Currently, these advanced funds are not reimbursed by New York State until the following school year. This essentially means that Buffalo Public School students end up being shortchanged throughout the course of the school year. This is a critical issue as the Buffalo Public School District needs all of its resources readily available to continue investing in and achieving student academic improvement.

This legislation would eliminate the one year lag in reimbursement, thereby enabling school districts outside of New York City to immediately direct additional resources to classrooms. This change in

the timing of payments would have no fiscal impact on the State, as payments would still be made within the same State fiscal year. The bill will be sent to Governor Cuomo's desk later this year, where it will hopefully be signed into law.

## The Change the Date Coalition Supports Change in Date of School Board Elections from May to November's General Election

The Change the Date Coalition, a group of concerned clergy, parents, the business community and others, joined Assembly Member Crystal Peoples-Stokes to voice support for her legislation (A2113A/S8857 Jacobs) to move the Buffalo Public School District board elections from May to the general election held in November. According to the group, the change would ensure greater participation, lower costs, more convenience and a greater democratic process.

The Change the Date Coalition includes Great Lakes Baptist Association, Concerned Clergy Coalition of WNY, Baptist Minister's Conference of Buffalo and Vicinity, Greater Buffalo United Ministries, VOICE Buffalo and Back to Basics Outreach Ministries and The Catholic Diocese of Buffalo; The Buffalo Niagara Partnership; The District Parent Coordinating Council representing Buffalo Public School District parents and families; the business

community and individual private sector companies, and the nonprofit community.

A press conference was held at the Mt. Olive Baptist Church on June 1st, featuring speakers representing concerned clergy and the District Parent Coordinating Council (DPCC) as well as Assembly Member Crystal Peoples-Stokes, who introduced legislation in the Assembly. State Senator Christopher Jacobs also introduced similar legislation in the State Senate. The group cited increased voter turnout in November compared to May, greater convenience for voters, and an estimated cost savings of \$100,000 as primary benefits of changing the voting date.

The group's urgency in passing legislation before the end of the session on June 20th stemmed from the fact that all nine board members will be up for re-election in 2019. Because of a staggered election cycle, this only happens once every fifteen years. With voter participation in the May election averaging eight to ten percent and sometimes as low as three percent, control of the School Board, its \$1 billion budget, and decisions impacting thousands of school children and their families would be concentrated in the hands of very few voters.

While many New York State communities continue to hold school elections in the spring, both Rochester and Syracuse have changed elections to coincide with the general election and have realized increases in voter participation. The legislation has unanimously passed the Buffalo Common Council and now must pass in both the New York State Assembly and Senate before being sent for Governor Cuomo's signature.



The Assemblywoman and Senator Kennedy helped announce \$10 million in state funding designated for Say Yes Buffalo college students for non-tuition expenses like books and other fees.

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Assemblywoman  
**Crystal D.  
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**Community News**

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## Legislative Women's Caucus Corner

### Assembly Passes Legislation Establishing Discrimination Prevention and Training Policies

On Monday, June 4th Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Legislative Women's Caucus Chair Crystal Peoples-Stokes, and Assemblymember Tremaine Wright announced passage of legislation to eliminate discrimination in the workplace by establishing prevention and training policies. The legislation (A.10461, Wright) would expand the existing state sexual harassment law, passed in the 2018 budget, to all discrimination.

This bill would establish a model policy and model training program to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, creed, sexual orientation, age, disability, military status, familial status, marital status, predisposing genetic characteristics or domestic violence victim status. Previously, the law only established model policies and training programs for sexual harassment.

The bill would also require businesses submitting bids to any state or public department for services performed or the sale of goods to have a written policy implemented addressing discrimination prevention in the workplace. It would also prohibit mandatory arbitration clauses related to discrimination in the workplace. If a state agency or public entity pays an award in a discrimination claim, the legislation would require the employee to personally reimburse the state agencies or public entities within 90 days of the payment. Finally, the bill would expand the Human Rights Law to all employers in the state and authorize the Attorney General to bring action or prosecute cases of discrimination.