



A Message from Assemblywoman Sandy Galef

SENIOR FORUM 2013

SUMMER 2013

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Dear Constituent,

Summer is upon us, and so much is happening in Albany and in my Assembly District. In Albany the Assembly has continued advocating for a variety of issues, including government reform, property tax relief, and efforts to protect our environment. In my Assembly District there are many significant ongoing anniversaries and celebrations, including the Village of Ossining's 200th and the Town of Cortlandt's 225th Anniversary.

My Senior Forum will focus on topics that have been of major importance this past year. First, we will have John Wolham, from the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, speak about the STAR program and Enhanced STAR. As you may have heard, there were changes made to the STAR program, and John will give us an overview of the recent updates. **Enhanced STAR was not impacted by these changes.**

I continue to receive questions from constituents about the new federal health care law and how it will affect them. Chris Widelo from AARP will discuss some of these changes and update us on the new provisions set to take effect. William Fallon from AAA New York will share safe driving tips and information about senior mobility issues.

My forum will also feature Yolanda Robinson, from the New York State Comptroller's office to speak about the Unclaimed Funds Program run through the Comptroller's office, and how some of your money could be waiting for you.

We will also hear from Brandy Jones, a registered nurse at Hudson Valley Hospital Center. Brandy will speak about Alzheimer's disease. Our morning will begin with a special piano performance by one of my constituents, Jesse Beller of Croton.

I would like to thank Hudson Valley Hospital Center for once again sponsoring my senior forum and providing the breakfast that we will all enjoy. Please join me on July 24th at 9 a.m. for breakfast and a thoughtful discussion on many current topics. I look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Sandy Galef
Member of the Assembly

Sponsored by **Hudson Valley Hospital Center***

Wednesday, July 24th
9:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Cortlandt Town Hall
1 Heady Street, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567

Event is Free. You do not need to RSVP.

Find out about:

Changes to the STAR Property Tax Exemption that may affect you

Enhanced STAR

Unclaimed Funds—

Do you have money waiting for you?

Impact of the Federal Healthcare Law on you

Safe Driving Tips

Early Alzheimer's Detection

Featuring:

John Wolham

Regional Director, Southern Region
New York State Department of Taxation and Finance
Office of Real Property Tax Services

Yolanda Robinson

Westchester County Regional Director
Intergovernmental and Community Affairs
Office of New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli

Chris Widelo

Associate State Director, AARP New York

William Fallon

Traffic Safety Expert, AAA New York

Brandy Jones

Registered Nurse
Westchester Medical Practice, Hudson Valley Hospital Center

With Special Performance by:

Jesse Beller

Pianist, Croton-on-Hudson Resident

*Breakfast provided by Hudson Valley Hospital Center

Our Senior Forum 2013 Co-Sponsors:

- Buchanan Senior Citizens Club
- Cortlandt Seniors
- Crompond Seniors
- Croton Senior Citizens
- Nor-Cort Seniors
- Ossining Golden Age Club
- Ossining Senior Center
- Ossining Senior Citizens
- Peekskill Senior Citizens' Club
- Philipstown Seniors
- Putnam County Office of the Aging
- Verplanck Seniors
- Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services

Unclaimed Funds

I was recently joined by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli on an episode of one of my cable television shows, "Speak Out with Sandy Galef." One topic highlighted on the show is the unclaimed funds his office is responsible for managing. He stated that approximately \$19 million in unclaimed funds, such as health insurance checks, utility deposit refunds, and dividends on securities, are retained by New York State for individuals just in my district alone.

Staff from his office will be at my Senior Forum on July 24th to check for attendees if there is money that is owed to them. You can also check to see if you have any unclaimed funds by going on their website <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/ouf> or by calling their toll-free hotline at 1-800-221-9311. Watch this episode of

"Speak Out" starting Wednesday, June 26th for four weeks in a row, on local Cablevision stations at 8 p.m. or for three weeks in a row starting Wednesday, June 26th on Comcast channel 8 at 7:30 p.m.



Do-Not-Call Compliance

Many people have told me about harassing robocalls they have received from companies asking about their energy bill. I have spoken with the New York State Attorney General's Office as well as New York State's Department of State, the office responsible for enforcing the federal Do-Not-Call legislation. Both have advised the following:

1. Sign up to get your number on the Do-Not-Call Registry online at www.donotcall.gov or by calling 1-888-382-1222.
2. Ask the callers to remove you from their lists.
3. If you continue to receive harassing calls, register a complaint with the Do-Not-Call Registry (same number and website as above.) The more people who complain about the same robocalls, the more likely the registry is to call on the state to investigate.

Senior Discounts

A lot of people would be surprised to find out how many products and services are discounted for seniors. Senior citizens can receive discounts when they visit restaurants, go shopping at retail stores and even on some travel services. Some companies require membership cards or that you call ahead in order to receive the discount, while others just require you to show up and request it. Next time you go shopping make sure you ask what is available because it can only benefit you.



Here, I am pictured with attendees of the Ossining Senior Prom, hosted by Ossining High School students in April 2013.



I attended the Westchester Senior Hall of Fame luncheon late last year, where Croton residents Carol Shanesy (left) and Laura Seitz (right) were honored. Also honored from my district were, Reverend Jeanette Phillips of Peekskill, Joseph Lalak of Briarcliff Manor, and Marie Turner of Cortlandt Manor.

STAR Program

Included in the recently passed 2013-14 New York State budget are changes to the STAR program. These changes require current Basic STAR recipients to re-register with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance in order to continue receiving their exemptions, which as a reminder are only applicable to primary residences. Due to abuses in the system, the new rules have been put in place in order to correct the problems and continue to assure that the program has the necessary financial resources to help taxpayers. The changes are all aimed at discouraging fraudulent exemptions. It is important to note that the changes do not impact the Enhanced STAR program for seniors 65 and older. You can learn more about these new changes at my senior forum on July 24th, when John Wolham of the Department of Taxation and Finance will be joining us to share information about the STAR Program.

2013 Assembly Legislative Priorities for Seniors

(All legislative statuses are as of June 14, 2013)

A.363 Senior Drug Guide

(Passed Assembly)

This bill would require the New York State Office for the Aging (SOFA) to publish a guide explaining the purpose, function, and potential drug interactions of drugs commonly used by people over age 62. The creation of this guide for seniors would make seniors aware of the specific effects of the drugs most commonly used by their age group. Often, seniors are prescribed multiple medications and/or self-medicate with over-the-counter medicines. Seniors need to be made aware of how certain prescribed drugs and over-the-counter medications might negatively interact.

A.433 NY Connects Contact Information

(Passed Assembly/Senate)

This bill would require the New York Department of Health and SOFA to create a list of contact information for the NY Connects: Choices for Long-Term Care program, local area agencies on aging, local departments of social services, and local departments of health, and organize the information by county. The list would be provided to licensed health care providers who would give county-specific information to patients who they recommend receive long-term care services.

A.449 Home Visitation for Elderly Victims of Violent Crimes

(Passed Assembly)

The purpose of this bill is to require that SOFA be consulted regarding the establishment of a volunteer program of home visitation to elderly and invalid victims of violent crime. SOFA has resources relating to many programs that provide services for the elderly. It is important that the needs of the elderly who have been victims of violent crimes are considered carefully.

A.1601 Veteran Speakers in Classrooms Program

(Passed Assembly/Senate)

This bill calls for the development of a statewide program relating to veteran educational speakers; the bill also entails the distribution of an informational pamphlet to schools describing the speakers program and containing names of area veterans willing to speak to students regarding their military service experience. Having veterans speaking about their experiences

would provide students with vital supplemental information when learning about American history.

A.1857-A Hiring and Retraining Older Workers

(Passed Assembly)

This bill would direct SOFA, in conjunction with the Department of Labor, to develop and annually update a guide for businesses to hire, retain and retrain mature workers to be made available on the websites of SOFA, the Department of Labor, and the Department of State, as well as to businesses that obtain licensure or certification from such agencies.

A.1860 Local Programs to Assist Seniors

(Passed Assembly)

This bill would require SOFA to create model programs that could be used by local area agencies on aging and community-based organizations as a template to establish a telephone reassurance program or visiting program to assist seniors in their local communities.

A.7231 Information regarding elder abuse in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and Neighborhood NORCs

(Passed Assembly)

This bill would include education on the signs of elder abuse and exploitation, as well as information on resources for seniors suspected of being victims of elder abuse or exploitation as an eligible service available to residents of NORCs.



In February, State Senator David Carlucci and I helped students from Roosevelt School in Ossining, including my grandson, hand out Valentine's Day cards to veterans at the Montrose VA.

Veterans Home Performance Project

The Building Performance Contractors Association (BPCA) has announced a new program, entitled the Veterans Home Performance Project. The BPCA and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) are teaming up to provide veterans with free energy audits, which aim to help veterans save money on their home energy bills.

If you are a veteran, or know somebody who might benefit from this service, please contact Vito Pinto, director of Westchester County's Veterans Service Agency, at 914-995-2145 or 914-995-2146. You can also email Donovan Beckford at DPB2@westchestergov.com or call Energize NY at 914-302-7300. If you are not a veteran, but still are interested in saving money by saving energy, please visit www.energizeny.org. While the program is based in Westchester, residents of Putnam County are still encouraged to call Energize NY to learn more about their options.

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef's Important Phone Numbers

Listed below are agencies in your area that may provide services you need.

Social Services

Putnam County NY Connects	845-225-7040
Westchester County NY Connects	914-813-6300
<i>NY Connects is a collaborative effort by the New York State Office for the Aging and New York State Department of Social Services to provide access to information and assistance about long term care.</i>	
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)	1-800-342-3009
Putnam County Office of Social Services	845-808-1500

Social Security

For these benefits: Retirement, Survivors, Disability, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Medicare

General Phone Number	1-800-772-1213
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Health Services

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services	1-800-633-4227
Westchester DSPS' Medicare Information Line	914-813-6100
<i>Helps seniors with Medicare issues. Those issues include Medicare parts A, B, C and D, Medigap insurance, cost-sharing, preventive benefits and appeals. It can also answer questions about New York State's EPIC to help eligible seniors pay prescription drug costs.</i>	
Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC)	1-800-332-3742

County Programs for Seniors

Putnam County Office for the Aging	845-808-1700
Putnam County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)	845-808-1734

Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services:	914-813-6400
Westchester County Office for the Disabled	914-995-2957

Veterans Services

VA Nurses Helpline	1-800-877-6976
<i>For veterans who need medical advice or need assistance with their medication.</i>	
Westchester County Veterans Service Agency	914-995-2145
Putnam County Veterans Services	845-808-1620
Veterans Affairs Hospital	914-737-4400
Women Veterans Program - Montrose	Ext. 2757
Women Veterans Program - Castlepoint	Ext. 5658
Veterans Affairs Hospital	
Caregiver Support	845-831-2000 Ext. 5487



I recently attended an event at the American Legion in Ossining in which it was announced that money in the state budget was allocated for the Peer-to-Peer Veterans Counseling program to pair veterans transitioning back into civilian life with fellow veterans.

Safety Services

American Red Cross	
Westchester County Chapter	914-946-6500
Putnam County Chapter	845-878-7265
Westchester County Adult and Protective Services	914-995-2259
Westchester County Elder Abuse Helpline	914-813-6436



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The United Way

The United Way of Westchester and Putnam 211 2-1-1 provides callers with information about, and referrals to, health and human services for everyday needs, and in times of crisis. 2-1-1 offers access to a range of services, including: **Basic Human Needs:** food, clothing, shelter, rent assistance, utility assistance, financial assistance; **Physical and Mental Health Challenges:** health insurance programs, Medicaid and Medicare, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation; **Challenges Facing Older Adults and People with Disabilities:** adult day care, congregate meals, Meals on Wheels, respite care, home health care, transportation, homemaker services; **Desire to Help:** volunteer opportunities and ways to donate.

Aging in Place Services

Center for Aging in Place	914-357-8511
<i>Refers senior citizens to different aging in place services; this center is especially useful if there is not an aging in place service in your direct vicinity.</i>	
Croton Caring Committee	914-271-4979
Community Helping Hands	
Greater Ossining Area	914-346-7773
Being at Age 80 & Beyond - Briarcliff	
Contact Claire J. Dutt	914-941-1582
Aging in Place White Plains	914-319-1609
At Home in Somers	914-519-7914

PLEASE CLIP OUT AND SAVE