



# E-News February 2015

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## CABIN FEVER?

The Arts Council of Rockland and Nyack News & Views have launched the Rockland Arts Calendar to promote Rockland County cultural events in the Lower Hudson Valley and North Jersey. Visit: [Artscouncilofrockland.org](http://Artscouncilofrockland.org) and enjoy any of the exciting events happening in the area.

African American History Month:

*I, Too, Sing America!*  
Contributions & Challenges of African Americans in the US Military  
February 25, 2015  
7 pm  
Cultural Arts Theater  
Rockland Community College  
145 College Road  
Suffern, NY  
Free / Open-to-the-Public

Dear Neighbors,

February is Black History Month. I've been thinking about Shirley Chisholm who served in the NYS Assembly before becoming the first African American woman elected to Congress and the first African American to run for president of the United States. A vocal advocate for early childhood education, financial aid for college students, increasing the minimum wage, and women's equal rights, she once said, *"You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas."*

Stay warm,  
Ellen C. Jaffee

## Eyes of the People



I am grateful to Speaker Heastie for giving me the opportunity to lead the Standing Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigation.

It is truly a privilege to serve as the "eyes and ears" of the people of New York State. The Committee's mission includes strengthening state accountability and efficiency, while protecting the disadvantaged and underserved; ensuring that state agencies and programs function effectively; and reviewing whether state laws are being followed.

## Safe, Reliable Child Care for Working Families

I am pleased to announce my appointment to the Assembly Child Care Workgroup reconvened by Speaker Heastie to address the child care crisis facing New York's working families, particularly working mothers. It is up to us to fix this problem for the children who are our future by ensuring that affordable childcare is available to every family in New York State, regardless of their income. Jane Brown,



Executive Director of Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc. (r) Lisa Kreisel and Donna Perreca met in Albany with me, and Assemblymembers Zebrowski, Skoufis and Brabenec (not pictured).

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**Rockland Seniors Take Action**

I met with Diana Adele Pomeroy, President of the NY StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc.'s Rockland County Chapter, Anna Stellwag, Treasurer and Acting Vice-President, and member Marsha Gordon to discuss their priorities for the 2015-16 State Budget, which will benefit older adults. If you have questions about your rights as a health care consumer in a hospital, nursing home or through home care you can call StateWide's Helpline: 800-333-4374.



**New York Student Aid Alliance Advocacy Day**



On February 10 in Albany I heard firsthand from Nyack College students about how crucial state aid is in helping them earn a college degree. The annual event brings together New York State students, faculty, financial aid and opportunity program administrators, legislators, and higher education policymakers to talk and show our support for student aid funding, which helps more than 370,000 New Yorkers pay for college expenses.

**Giving Our Veterans a Break**

In a recent letter to Governor Cuomo, Assemblymember Tom Abinanti (D-Greenburgh/Mt. Pleasant) and I asked the Governor to include appropriate funding in his 2015 budget amendments so that the state will cover the cost of implementing the Veteran's Tax Exemption. Assemblymember Abinanti's bill (A00966/ S01699), which I co-sponsored, ensures that real property tax exemptions authorized by school districts to eligible veterans won't shift the tax burden to other school district taxpayers or reduce our school districts much-needed revenue.



**High Praise for Rockland**



At the Rockland County Task Force on Water Resource Management meeting on February 12<sup>th</sup> NYS Public Service Commission Chair, Audrey Zibelman, spoke about the need to provide both affordable and reliable water service for Rockland County. She praised the diverse group of people on the task force and in the community, noting that in working

together to meet Rockland's long-term water supply needs with sustainable water management and conservation policies, Rockland could become a model for all of New York State.

