



The Honorable Margaret Chin  
Chatham Green 165 Park Row, suite #11  
New York, NY 10038  
RE: Senior Education

Dear Councilwoman Chin,

We are a group of students at the NYC iSchool in Manhattan and we are taking a course that encourages advocacy for the issues of senior citizens. We are writing because we believe there is a lack of access to education for seniors.

Education is something that people of all ages should have the ability to enjoy, but it is not truly accessible to all ages. If we do not act now elders might not know how much technology has advanced since they were young and how it might help them in their everyday life. For the elderly traveling to schools for education can be a challenge. Technology can prove rather unwieldy when used by inexperienced hands. Our group, partners with the DOROT organization met a lovely elderly woman named Erica, she explained to us that she wished for easily accessible education, but sadly, she is usually left alone with her technology, leading to accidents happening such as deleting the email application on her iPad. She then has to wait a week for a DOROT volunteer to come by and assist her. The issue seems to be the lack of technological knowledge, leading to a lack of other types of knowledge. If this problem continues, elders will continue to be segregated from society and politics, and as a result, they could face isolation.. If they are not able to gain the education needed to harness tools like iPads/iPhones, they will be held back in the past, rather than be regularly updated like other citizens.

Elders are seeking more opportunities with education and trying to stay on top of what is going on in the world around them. One of the main solutions we found for their mobility issues are online classes. However, accessibility to technology for elders can be a problem. Instead, giving reduced tuition and free transportation for the elderly to get to college may be a solution. If there is transportation given to the elderly for going to college, than they will be less isolated. They really do need education just like everyone else. We feel that you have power when it comes to putting actions into place to solve elder issues, as head of the City Council Committee on Aging, and this is why we feel you should be the one to try to take care of the issue of elder education.

Thank you for considering our issue.

Sincerely,

Bridgette Smolar

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The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
780 Third Avenue Suite 2601  
New York, New York 10017  
Re: Elder Abuse

Dear Senator Gillibrand,

We are students from the NYC iSchool in Manhattan and we are taking a course that encourages advocacy for the issues of senior citizens. We are writing because we are alarmed about the problem of elder abuse in New York.

Elder abuse is any intentional emotional, psychological, physical, financial abuse or neglect toward an elderly citizen. The people that are most likely to abuse the elderly are those who are taking care of them. Elder abuse has been going on for many years and there has not been much done about the issue. 76 out of 1,000 elders are victims of abuse in New York City. The New York State Office of Children & Family Services reported in 2013 that for “ every case of abuse or neglect reported to PSA [Protective Services for Adults] or other authorities, there are 24 other cases that go unreported.” This tells us that there are many senior citizens who desperately need help. There are multiple reasons victims of elder abuse suffer. Firstly there are very few programs that provide services to victims, but the services that are provided are difficult for elders to access. Secondly, there are not many people trained to identify elder abuse, so they are not able to report it. Most of all, people are not aware of elder abuse. Our group has been working to come up with solutions to the issues surrounding elder abuse.

We appreciate the work that you have done to help the elders. We propose that you continue this work by requiring doormen and bankers to be certified to detect the signs of elder abuse. Doormen as well as bankers deal with elderly people on a daily basis. Taking classes and training would allow them to become experts, allow them to offer help, and be better aware of what is happening with the senior. Finally, June 15th is “Elder Abuse Awareness Day”, and we propose that more awareness is given to this day since not many people know about it. Letting people know this day exists should lessen the problem and bring needed support to our elders.

Thank you for considering our issue.

Sincerely,

Ke'Sean Taylor-Jack

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The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
New York City Office  
780 Third Avenue  
Suite 2601  
New York, New York 10017  
RE: Senior Scamming

Dear Senator Gillibrand,

We are students in the NYC iSchool in Manhattan and we are taking a course that encourages advocacy for the issues of senior citizens. We are writing because we are concerned about the increase of financial fraud against the elderly.

Scamming is when someone creates a scenario to get a person to give up financial and personal information. Statistics show that people over 65 years old are 34% more likely to have lost money on a financial scam than people in their 40's. In addition, only 1 in 44 financial fraud victims report being scammed. Seniors are not well informed about scamming, and if it happens to them, they are too embarrassed to report it. We had the wonderful opportunity to meet a senior citizen named Sandra Ceslowitz at DOROT, an organization involving younger generations and older generations, working together and supporting each other as a community. Sandra discussed the different ways seniors can be taken advantage of. She specifically said, "To prevent scams we need to spread awareness and educate senior citizens about how they are being targeted." She told us about a scam she had heard of where a scammer calls pretending to be a grandchild who has been incarcerated, and needs bail money. This is just one of many scams that exploit seniors financially.

It means a lot to us that you are enforcing the "Senior Investors Protections Enhancement Act", which will target those who commit security violations against seniors, and target the scamming problem in New York. However, for the prevention of fraud, there needs to be more awareness. Our proposal would be to educate seniors and families about scamming during "Scam Awareness Month" in July. Scamming month is already observed in the UK and Canada, and it aims to prevent people from being rushed into irrational decisions by scammers. We think that "Scam Awareness Month" should be observed in America. This could also be the time you can pursue the passage of the Senior Investors Protections Enhancement Act. This way awareness could be spread from both the act and the cases of senior scamming. Borough presidents and senators of New York should work together to make sure organizations are providing workshops for seniors and families on scamming. We hope that awareness will be spread nationally.

Thank you, in advance, for acting upon this serious matter.

Sincerely,

Angel Pizarro

Kaira Batiz

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Tom Klein

Tsedale Forbes

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The Honorable Gale A. Brewer  
1 Centre Street, 19th Floor  
New York, NY 10007  
RE: Transportation for the Elderly

Dear Borough President Brewer,

We are four students at the NYC iSchool and we are enrolled in a class called iAdvocate. In this class, we are learning to advocate for the needs of senior citizens in our city. Our focus is senior transportation and our goal is to have safe forms of transportation for seniors throughout the boroughs.

Living in New York City is no easy feat for anyone, especially the elderly, who face many complications while traveling. We visited an organization called DOROT that aids seniors on the Upper West Side, and we spoke to a senior named Marilyn Braveman. She is fortunate enough to live close by to the 1, 2, and 3 train line. But she explained how there are still a number of issues she faces when traveling via train, bus, and taxi due to her age. She has difficulty boarding transportation because people tend to crowd the front of trains and buses. Mrs. Braveman also suffers from arthritis which requires her to be seated on any kind of public transportation to prevent accidental injury. In our research, we have found that the number of seniors with poor access to transit between the ages of 65 and 79 in 2015 is approximately 562,464. Seniors who have poor access to transportation tend to be isolated, which can lead to depression. Unfortunately, this can be a common situation for seniors. We believe that the most important thing for everyone's well being is the feeling of appreciation, and feeling safe. That being said, we MUST improve modes of transportation for the elderly so that they have a reliable and safe way of getting around the city. Current modes of transportation have proven to be very efficient, but also very dangerous: 141 people were struck by trains in 2012, and 55 people were killed.

Car services do exist that are specifically designed for the elderly. For example, there is a service called C.A.R.T, or Community Arranged Resident Transportation. Essentially, C.A.R.T is a free transportation service for the elderly that operates between 110th street and Battery Park. Various vehicles take elders to appointments, doctors offices, hospitals, and other necessary errands. They also have a private service within the program which is for seniors in cases of emergency. The C.A.R.T. program is funded by the NYC Department of Aging. There are some flaws in this program though. One is that the program doesn't go past 96th street on the east side, nor 110th on the west side. Also, they do not go to outer boroughs. In other words, there is a significant population of elders in New York City who do not have access to this service. Additionally, they only operate during business days, which could be a problem for some. A program like this could be extremely beneficial if it had more substantial funding.

We intend to spread awareness about the lack of support that seniors have while traveling throughout the city. While spreading awareness can be beneficial, it will not fix the isolation that seniors feel, nor will it entirely fix that lack of transportation that they experience. This connects back to you, Borough President Brewer. You have been a constant advocate for the senior population in Manhattan, and we believe you can talk to other Borough Presidents and come to some consensus and agree to help seniors have access to affordable transportation throughout New York City. We propose that the C.A.R.T. program extend their route to ensure that seniors all over New York City can have access to free transportation. We would also like to have the C.A.R.T. hours extended to weekends as well. You have stated that you would be funding programs like C.A.R.T. by paying for gas and drivers. You had also stated that by ensuring a more stable route, the city would be saving money. Most seniors aren't able to work and have limited resources. They should not have to worry about having to pay such an extravagant amount of money to move through the city. Even with half-priced fares, it is expensive to get around using public transportation. Borough President Brewer, you have been advocating for seniors have access to affordable transportation.

Thank you for your time. We deeply appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Nathan Neale

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