



ULSTERCOUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATOR CRAIG LOPEZ PROPOSES TAX INCENTIVES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES THAT PROVIDE GREATER ADA ACCESS.

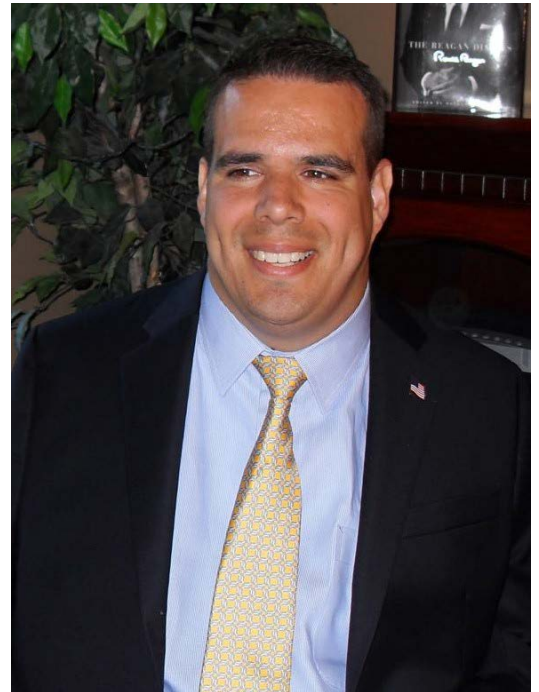
Kingston, NY – Legislator Craig Lopez, Chairman of the Ulster County Public Health and Social Services Committee, has introduced a proposed local law that would extend a tax credit for small businesses and non-residential establishments that provide greater ADA access for people with disabilities.

“This local law is a win-win for our community that would provide an incentive for small businesses to make the necessary improvements that would offer greater access to individuals with disabilities by removing architectural barriers,” said Lopez.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and guarantees equal opportunity in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications and has no doubt improved the lives for millions living with disabilities since its inception in 1990.

Lopez noted that Ulster County offers everything from public transportation to voting machines that comply with ADA requirements. But Ulster County has many private business and nonresidential facilities that pre-date the ADA and remain essentially un-accessible to hundreds of individuals with disabilities due to physical architectural barriers like steps and narrow doorways. Often these buildings are historic, built close to the road or sidewalks or have other unique physical constraints that make a traditional ramp impractical.

Lopez points to other tax incentives available at the Federal and State level and hopes that Ulster County leads the way for similar property tax exemptions by Ulster County municipalities and school districts.



“Ulster County is a place where folks are always looking to remove barriers of any kind, “ said Lopez, “I hope local towns and villages, the City of Kingston and even our school districts will follow suit and offer this tax exemption to their small businesses as well.”

Lopez notes that the Ulster County Resource Center for Assessable Living (RCAL) provides free Architectural Barrier Consulting services.



“I think most business owners are eager to accommodate the disabled and may not see the 3 inch step, a 26 inch door or a 4’ wide aisle next to their handicapped parking space as a barrier,” said Lopez. “But to the consumer in a wheelchair, it might as well be a wall.”

“Gilles Malkine, the RCAL Consultant, is an excellent resource to anyone considering ADA modification,” said Lopez. “He can provide timely concrete technical assistance, survey existing facilities to create the most cost effective modifications and ensure businesses are aware of all available funding resources and tax incentives.”

Proposed Local Law No. 3 of 2017 would provide a tax credit incentive for offices, restaurants, retail businesses and other nonresidential establishments that add ramps, widen doorways, improve bathroom facilities or make other structural changes that can meet ADA standards. A public hearing on the proposal is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, May 9 at 6:35 PM in the Legislative Chambers at 244 Fair Street in Kingston.

“This is good for small businesses,a benefit for the disabled and the right thing to do for Ulster County,” said Lopez.
