

# KATE BROWNING NEWS

**KATE BROWNING**  
County Legislator, 3rd District  
Health and Human Services, Chair

**COUNTY OF SUFFOLK**

1120 Montauk Hwy., Suite G  
Mastic, NY 11950  
(631) 852-1300  
Fax: (631) 852-1303



**COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

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**Contact: Joshua Slaughter**  
631-852-1300  
631-456-1718

## **BROWNING FIGHTS ILLEGAL RENTALS ONE HOME AT A TIME** *SOUTHAMPTON SECTION 8 HOME SHUT DOWN IN MASTIC*



(Legislator Kate Browning in front of 197A Patchogue Avenue in Mastic after Section 8 cut off the tenants benefits. The home is currently being brought into compliance with Brookhaven Town Housing codes)

**Mastic, NY** – A rental at 197A Patchogue Avenue in Mastic was shut down last week after local residents complained of drug dealing, domestic violence, public drunkenness, and a lack of maintenance at the property. Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley) was notified of the problem in December and responded quickly by urging Suffolk County Police Department Detectives to investigate, while contacting Brookhaven Town Supervisor Mark Lesko and notifying Southampton Town Section 8 officials.

The home, where rent was being paid by Southampton Town’s Section 8 Program, is owned by Jean and Richard Albano of 42 Seward Drive in Dix Hills. These absentee landlords rent several homes in the tri-hamlet area and more than one of these properties have been the focus of quality of life problems. In late December, Section 8 payments were terminated at 197A Patchogue Ave. due to violations of the program stemming from the investigation initiated by Legislator Browning. Brookhaven Town Housing Inspector Bill Powell was integral in issuing several housing violations including renting the property without a Rental Occupancy Permit. The tenants have been removed from the home and no longer are receiving housing assistance through Section 8. The homeowners are currently taking actions to acquire the proper permits and to come into compliance with Brookhaven Town housing codes.

“This is a great example of the county and town acting quickly to rid the community of illegal rentals and improve our quality of life,” stated Browning. “If I have to address this problem one house at a time then that is what I will do. I want to thank Supervisor Lesko for addressing the code violations and Suffolk County’s Seventh Precinct for aiding in the cut-off of funding for the home. Special acknowledgement needs to be directed to Inspector Powell for his tremendous

efforts in this instance and in regard to the many other homes he has successfully worked with me to shut down. We will be now be targeting several other homes that these same absentee landlords are renting out in the area.”

Legislator Browning is deeply concerned about the ability of adjacent townships to transfer Section 8 tenants outside of their home towns and into Brookhaven. She has contacted Supervisor Anna Throne-Holst of Southampton to relay her concerns and to encourage Southampton to effectively monitor homes in neighboring towns when they are funded through its Section 8 program.

“Brookhaven operates its own Section 8 Program and does a tremendous job of addressing any violations that may exist,” continued Browning. “I am worried that other towns may not be as vigilant, especially if the home is located outside of their township. We need to make sure other towns are making every effort to use the vouchers within their own town before allowing them to be used elsewhere. Brookhaven has its fair share of Section 8 housing, and this is a perfect example of what can happen when we are forced to take on additional burdens. These housing aid recipients should be located in Southampton Town where town officials can monitor their own program.”

Legislator Browning has repeatedly vowed to take the fight to landlords who rent in her district but live elsewhere. This home is one of many she has successfully shut down, and there is much more to do. In 2009 alone, Legislator Browning was successful in working with Sheriff Vincent DeMarco to force evictions in more than 15 homes where quality of life issues were disrupting the surrounding neighborhoods. The legislator contacts landlords directly and threatens action from the police and town inspectors if tenants aren’t abiding by the law.

“Even though landlords may not be the ones committing crimes at these homes, they are responsible for what takes place on their property,” stated Browning. “I have been effective in having landlords cooperate in removing bad tenants because they don’t want to have these problems affecting their wallets. Don’t get me wrong--we are prosecuting the criminals if they are committing crimes. But landlords can control who they allow into our communities and if their tenants are negatively affecting our neighborhoods we will do anything we can to shut those homes down.”

Residents living with quality of life problems that are the result of a problem home in the area should contact the legislator’s office to initiate an investigation.

“The residents are my eyes and ears,” concluded Browning. “We need to work together as a community and I can only address these problems if they are presented to me. The worst offenders will be prosecuted, but unless the community informs my office I don’t know where they exist.”

Concerned residents can contact Legislator Browning’s office at 631-852-1300 if they have information on homes in their neighborhood.