

Assembly Member Paula Elaine Kay

October 18, 2025

Livingston Manor

Borscht Belt historical marker ceremony - opening remarks

Good afternoon, everyone.

It's a joy to be here in Livingston Manor to celebrate this new historic marker and the history it honors. I've participated in half a dozen of these celebrations as an attendee, and I feel strongly that these historical markers are important for us all. So I'm especially honored to be here speaking to you today.

The story of the Borscht Belt is, at its heart, a story about belonging. Nearly a century ago, Jewish families came to Sullivan County seeking what so many of us still want: a place to be welcomed. At a time when they were turned away from other hotels and country clubs, they built their own places of joy and community here—resorts that filled the hills with laughter, music, and life.

This area became a refuge built on openness, creativity, and hard work. The people who came here created a world they wanted to live in. They built an economy, a culture, and a spirit that continues to define our towns today.

As we unveil this marker, we're preserving the story of our past. At the same time, we're renewing a promise. Sullivan County should always be a place where people of every background can come together, find opportunity, and make a home.

I want to thank the historians, community partners, and residents who made this project possible. Your dedication ensures that these stories will continue to inspire future generations. Livingston Manor has always been a crossroads of creativity and kindness. Thanks to all of you, it will continue to be a place where everyone feels welcome.

Congratulations to everyone involved and thank you for inviting me to be part of this celebration.