

# Executive Profile: Kyle Strober

By: [LIBN Staff](#) January 30, 2017

*After serving more than five years as Long Island regional director for Sen. Charles Schumer, Kyle Strober brings a wealth of experience to his new post as executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island.*

*As a key Schumer aide, Strober worked on a wide range of issues including expansion of the Long Island Rail Road, major redevelopment projects, helicopter noise, fishing regulations, improvements to MacArthur Airport, the prescription drug epidemic and post office closures. The Long Beach resident has also worked with Long Island's higher education and research institutions to promote developing technologies that can create startup companies to boost the Long Island economy.*

## **What do you see as the biggest obstacles for getting new real estate developments moving on Long Island?**

Regrettably the answer isn't new and it remains pervasive: NIMBYism. Too many Long Islanders are averse to change, yet they are also frustrated with the ever increasing property taxes and the problem is that the public has yet to fully understand the link between responsible development and the reduction of their tax burden.

## **Do you see a shift towards more acceptance for new developments here?**

I would say no. Major infrastructure projects like the third track, which is vital for our region, still faces strong NIMBYism along the right of way. The irony of course is that even without the third track, the rail traffic will increase along that stretch of the Main Line, but without any of the improvements to the corridor that are being proposed as part of the project that will make a difference. And here's another development example: The EPA calls Glen Cove's Garvies Point a poster child for brownfield remediation and redevelopment. Its construction will generate \$900 million over 40 years, \$600 million that would be a direct benefit to local municipalities, yet even with all that, it still faces strong NIMBYism.

## **Long Island remains way behind other suburbs in available rental housing. How can ABLI help in this regard?**

Education. Viable rental apartments and mixed-use developments in our downtowns are crucial to our long-term economic viability. It's been well-documented that Long Island is seeing an exodus of our youth, yet most town governments where the zoning powers reside seem either indifferent or unaware. If we don't respond to this demographic drain by providing affordable rental housing for millennials it will be almost impossible to attract new companies to Long Island who are looking for a young, professional workforce. You can read that as an economic death spiral.

## **How important are the efforts to revitalize Long Island downtowns?**

We cannot reverse the mass exodus of young people on Long Island without creating communities that will attract them. As a millennial, when I first moved back to Long Island from living in the city 10 years ago, there were only really three communities that I considered. They were Rockville Centre, Huntington and Long Beach. I chose Long Beach. There should be 20 to 30 communities that are attractive to millennials. That being said, since I moved back here we have made progress. If I was moving back to Long Island today, that decision would be between nine or 10 communities that I would consider.



For millennials and attracting young people back to Long Island, a lot of them aren't looking for single-family residences. They're looking for mixed-use downtowns where they can live, work, socialize and have some sort of culture and sense of community, where they don't have to get in their car and drive somewhere. They can leave their apartment and walk to a restaurant and go out to dinner, or see a movie or go to a concert. That's why downtowns are vital to attract young people and are important to Long Island.

**How do you think your experience working for Sen. Schumer will help you as executive director of ABLI?**

As Long Island regional director I covered every nook and cranny of our great region. I worked with every federal, state, county, town and village official and agencies, large and small business leaders, labor leaders, environmentalists, colleges and universities and civic associations. I dealt with issues concerning various industries and communities stretching from the Queens border to the Montauk lighthouse. It was an incredible experience that gave me a unique view of Long Island. No other position really presents a day where you start out by working with commercial fisherman to push for a new benchmark assessment for fluke, then meet with the Babylon IDA to help secure funds to convert a blighted property into a beer incubator, then lobby the FAA to establish a helicopter route to alleviate noise for the entire North Shore of Long Island and then finish the day speaking with Nassau County about the Bay Park sewage treatment plant and a possible aqueduct that would bring effluent to the Cedar Creek ocean outflow pipe.

**What are the most important qualifications you're bringing to the ABLI leadership?**

I would say it's the ability to listen and then take that information and convert it into action. We live in an era on Long Island when inaction is no longer an option.

**When it comes to development policies, does local politics matter as much as it does on a national level?**

Much of the policies that directly affect development on Long Island come from the state and local municipalities. On the national level, there's a mutual understanding that the nation should invest in infrastructure. A robust infrastructure bill is something we could see very soon with the new Trump administration and it's something that Sen. Schumer has repeatedly spoken in favor of, but the real answer is answered with a question. Can the enormous political schism that has existed in Washington be healed so that issues such as infrastructure funding can move forward?

**Will having two leaders from this area on the national political stage (President Donald Trump and Sen. Schumer) help support Long Island initiatives?**

Absolutely. Having two New Yorkers as president and as minority leader can only help Long Island. I have no doubt that Sen. Schumer will continue to be an enormous advocate for the region. For example, when Congress is constructing an infrastructure bill, Sen. Schumer will be thinking about the need for sewers in Suffolk, funding for transformative projects like the Ronkonkoma Hub, etc.

**What are your most pressing agenda items for your first year?**

We are formed to protect, improve and strengthen the Long Island economy by advocating on behalf of affordable growth, sensible energy, a reduced tax burden, investment in infrastructure and related issues that enhance the quality of life for all of Long Island, thereby protecting the region's future. These issues need to be converted from agenda items to action items, so I will be working in issues that include the Long Island Rail Road third track project, Suffolk County sewer expansion, the chilling over-taxation of property owners by school districts and the re-assessment of LIPA power plants. Equally important are land-use reforms, professional certification, Article 78s and initiatives like the Melville Employment Center plan. It's a full plate but it's all about creating a pathway to a viable Long Island future that invites my generation to live and prosper in a region where we grew up.