



Legislative Update

Assemblyman Steve Englebright

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Dear Neighbor:

As our State and local economy recovers from the deepest recession since the Great Depression, things are looking brighter in New York State. This has been a productive legislative session highlighted by a number of important accomplishments. Beginning with the fourth consecutive on-time budget, I am pleased to report that in the 2014-15 state fiscal year we were able to reaffirm our strong commitment to the education of our children through significant investments in school aid and much-needed increases to college tuition assistance.

The budget includes measures that will further spur our economy, including cutting manufacturer's taxes to zero and lowering the business tax rate to the lowest since 1968. We also were successful in eliminating surprise medical bills and reforming the title insurance industry to significantly lower closing and refinancing costs.

Further, I sponsored and advanced through the Legislature several important initiatives that include requiring the installation of carbon monoxide detectors in restaurants and commercial buildings following the tragedy earlier this year at a Huntington Station restaurant where undetected carbon monoxide sickened 20 people and caused the death of an employee.

I am also pleased to report that the Greenway Trail is complete and offers unique recreational and commuting opportunities along its 3.5 mile length from Port Jefferson Station to East Setauket.

As always, I hope you find this newsletter informative and useful. My staff and I are available to assist you in my District Office located at 149 Main Street, Setauket, or by phone at (631) 751-3094, or email at engles@assembly.state.ny.us. For your convenience, my office also provides complimentary notary public services and senior citizen cards.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy season.

Steve Englebright

Steve Englebright
Member of Assembly



Greenway Trail is Complete!

The Setauket-Port Jeff Station Greenway officially opened in May. Opening ceremonies were held at each end of the 3.5 mile greenway that follows the NYSDOT right-of-way once slated to become the Route 25A Bypass. Construction of this highway would have split our community apart and harmed the quality of life of the adjacent neighborhoods. Instead, the new Greenway

is bringing neighbors and communities together.

The finished Greenway is a wonderful culmination of more than 20 years of work. Thanks to all who made this project possible with special mention to Congressman Tim Bishop who secured \$5 million to enable the completion of Phase II. If you would like a map of the Greenway Trail, contact Assemblyman Englebright's office.

Need a Notary?

Assemblyman Englebright's Office Provides Free Notary Service

Weekdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
149 Main Street, Setauket, NY 11733
631-751-3094

Special traveling Notary Service provided for homebound residents in 4th Assembly District call 751-3094 or email engles@assembly.state.ny.us

Highlights of the 2014 Legislative Session

Englebright Bills Awaiting the Governor's Signature

Carbon Monoxide Detectors to Be Required in Restaurants and Commercial Buildings

A.8963A/S.6657C (Englebright)

Currently in New York State, only residential homes and apartments are required to be equipped with carbon monoxide detectors. So when tragedy struck a restaurant in Huntington Station where undetected CO sickened 20 people and caused the death of the manager, Assemblyman Englebright's top priority became passage of legislation requiring installation of CO detectors in restaurants and other commercial buildings. This measure, which awaits the Governor's signature for passage into law, establishes standards for the installation and maintenance of CO detectors in restaurants and other commercial buildings that contain carbon monoxide producing building systems and appliances. When signed into law, this common sense measure will ensure that restaurant and business employees, as well as first responders and the general public are protected from needless exposure to harmful CO.

Licensure for Geologists

A.4753D/S.3810D (Englebright)

Thirty one states license the profession of geologist because they recognize the critical need that geologists serve in areas of underground water resources, brownfield remediation, and civil engineering projects such as designing bridges and tunnels, mining and drilling including hydraulic fracturing to drill for natural gas. As geologists are not currently licensed in New York, they have been historically excluded from direct participation with public works projects. In some cases, such as with Federal brownfields remediation projects in New York, licensed geologists from other states get the jobs that should go to New Yorkers.

Given the demands placed upon Long Island's sole source aquifer, the push to allow hydraulic-fracturing for natural gas in New York's Marcellus shale deposits, and the recent devastation caused by hurricanes and flooding, there has never been a more compelling time for a strong licensing statute in our state for professional geologists. Assemblyman Englebright's geologist licensure bill creates legal criteria to regulate the profession and assure the public that decisions regarding geologic issues in our State will be made by qualified professionals.

Removing Barriers to Residential Alternative Energy Use

A.9903/S.7293A (Englebright)

This measure prohibits the imposition of a LIPA exit fee should a residential customer chose to leave the grid to switch to an alternative power source such as solar, wind or fuel cell. While the current Board of Directors of LIPA have pledged to not impose any fee on any customer leaving the power grid, this legislation is necessary to continue this protection for customers beyond the tenure of the current board.

Protecting Crime Victims Dependent on Medical Equipment

A.4645B/S.2754A (Englebright)

In the commission of a crime, medical equipment may be damaged or stolen. Because insurance may not always cover replacement of such equipment, Assemblyman Englebright successfully advanced this measure which would allow the Office of Crime Victims Services to cover the cost of replacing important medical equipment when replacement is not covered under Medicaid or private insurance. This measure would allow an award of up to \$10,000 to cover the cost of replacing medical equipment necessary for the crime victim's continued survival.

GPS Devices & Stalking: Closing a Dangerous Loophole Chapter 184 of 2014

In an increasing number of cases, stalkers are using GPS technology to track their victims. This new law expands the crime of stalking to include the unauthorized use of a GPS or other electronic device to track another individual. Known as "Jackie's Law," this new law is named in memory of Jackie Wisniewski of West Seneca, NY who was killed after being stalked by a former boyfriend utilizing a GPS tracking device on her car.

Stronger Penalties for Theft of Pets Chapter 185 of 2014

More than 590 pets were stolen in NY State in 2013, a 31% increase over the number of thefts in 2012.

This new law increases the maximum fine from \$200 to \$1,000 for those who attempt to steal, harm, or transport a dog, cat, or other pet that is not their own. The new maximum penalty will be applied against those who remove a collar or identification; entice, seize, or harass a pet while it is being held, led, or while properly muzzled; or transporting an animal for the purpose of killing or selling it. The fine has not been increased since 1970 when the penalties were raised to the current maximum of \$200 and/or 6 months imprisonment.

Keeping our Kids Safe at College: Requiring Local Authorities Be Notified of Felony Violence or Missing Persons on College Campuses

A.2089B/ S.2753-B (Awaiting the Governor's Signature)

We send our children off to college to begin one of the most important experiences of their young adult lives. We expect that they will be protected during this time of gaining independence and intellectual growth. Unfortunately, that is not the case for all students. Research by the U.S. Department of Justice and the White House Council on Women and Girls indicates that one in five females have been the victim of a sexual assault and only 12% of student victims report these violations to local authorities.

Assemblyman Englebright was the prime co-sponsor of a measure that would require all colleges and universities to notify local enforcement officials within 24 hours of the report of any violent felony or missing persons. The importance of timely reporting of these crimes cannot be overstated. When signed into law, this measure will ensure that the critical investigative time period following a crime or disappearance is not lost.

Included in this year's State Budget are two important reforms:

Putting an End to Surprise Medical Bills Chapter 60 of 2014

Surprise medical bills are the No. 1 health insurance complaint. These bills are usually from non-primary doctors such as a radiologist, pathologist, or anesthesiologist involved in a procedure such as surgery or colonoscopy. Language in this year's State budget takes the consumer out of the middle of billing disputes between out-of-network medical physicians and health insurers, and holds the consumer harmless from out-of-network costs in the case of emergencies and surprise bills.

Patients will now be responsible only for whatever their co-pay would be if the doctor were in-network leaving the out-of-network doctor and the insurance company to hash out the bill in arbitration. The budget also holds insurers accountable to build and maintain robust provider networks so that consumers will have sufficient in-network health care options. It also incorporates new disclosure requirements aimed at helping consumers identify whether providers are in their network, which will reduce incidents of surprise bills.

New Reforms Reduce Closing Costs Chapter 57 of 2014

If you've ever purchased or refinanced a home, you know that one of the significant expenses is title insurance. Title insurance protects the buyer should a problem arise with the title that was not found during the title search. The typical one-time cost of a title insurance policy is approximately \$1,000. With New York being one of only three states that did not require title insurance agents to be licensed, reform was long overdue. This year, the Budget included measures to provide stronger oversight for the title insurance industry to better protect consumers and lower costs for New York homeowners. The reforms are expected to result in a 20 percent reduction in title insurance premiums and closing costs for new home purchases, and a more than 60 percent reduction in the costs of refinancing transactions.

The NYS Department of Financial Services (DFS) will now have the authority to issue licenses to title insurance agents for the first time, just as it licenses all other insurance agents and brokers. DFS will also have the authority to monitor abuse by agents and to revoke licenses accordingly, as well as help root out conflicts of interest that drive up costs for homeowners. Together with other measures designed to foster greater transparency, these reforms will give consumers the ability to personally control title insurance costs.

Fighting for our Fair Share of School Aid

Assemblyman Englebright's work during the budget process helped school districts within the 4th Assembly District see an increase of over \$12 million in school aid over the year 2013. The following breakdown shows this year's increases for the school districts in the 4th Assembly District:

School Name	School Aid 2014-15	Increase over 2013-14 Budget
Three Village	\$37,951,615	+\$1,776,898
Comsewogue	\$26,788,586	+\$1,349,013
Port Jefferson	\$3,315,027	+\$221,376
Mount Sinai	\$15,502,240	+\$700,545
Middle Country	\$80,831,468	+\$3,984,834
Longwood	\$80,921,044	+\$4,305,367

Note: School Aid increased proportionally. Variations in aid increases reflect the fact that each school district budget is different.

Hitting the Pause Button on Common Core

The 2014-15 Budget pauses the implementation of Common Core to give more time to address concerns raised by students, parents, and educators. It bans standardized testing on young children, includes a four and a half year delay on the documentation of Common Core high stakes test scores on the permanent records and transcripts of students in grades 3-8, and prohibits the use of assessment scores from being the sole or primary factor in promotion and placement decisions.

The Budget also addresses Common Core professional development for teachers by requiring that the State Education Department (SED) provide tools, resources and materials to help teachers be more effective in the classroom. Further, it requires school districts to provide an annual testing transparency report as well as outreach material for parents and the public regarding Common Core. The Budget agreement establishes the position of chief privacy officer, who will serve a 3 year term, and be responsible for setting data sharing guidelines and procedures in the event of data breaches.

The agreement also establishes the Parents' Bill of Rights related to student privacy protections. It eliminates further data sharing with inBloom and requires SED to request that all student information already provided to inBloom be deleted. (Note: following NY State's adoption of these student privacy protection measures, the inBloom data-sharing corporation closed its doors.)

Keeping a College Education Affordable and Accessible

- The 2014-15 State Budget includes the first increase in TAP awards in 14 years. The \$25.7 million allocation will increase the maximum TAP award by \$165 from \$5000 to \$5165 per full-time student.
- By raising community college base aid, the state reduces a financial burden for both students and municipalities, providing \$20.2 million in increased support for community colleges. This translates into a \$75/student increase in state support.
- The budget includes \$8 million in funding for a new STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) scholarship program. Full tuition scholarships to any SUNY or CUNY institutions will be offered to the top ten percent of high school graduates if they pursue a STEM career and work in New York for five years.

Making New York Work Again

Measures passed in this year's budget negotiations lower the cost of doing business for manufacturers, making New York a more attractive place for firms to locate and create jobs.

- **Cut Manufacturer's Taxes to Zero.** The tax rate on income for all manufacturers is cut from the current 5.9 percent to zero in 2014. The budget also establishes a 20% real property tax credit for manufacturers who own or lease property.
- **Reduced the Business Tax Rate to its lowest level since 1968.** The business tax rate is reduced from 7.1 percent to 6.5 percent.
- **Eliminate the Corporate Capital Base Calculation.** The budget phases out this asset tax over six years beginning in 2016, removing the disincentive for corporations to grow their businesses here.



The Middle Country Educational Foundation (MCEF) presented Assemblyman Englebright with a certificate of appreciation for providing a special grant that helped make possible the Middle Country School District's model K-12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Program. From left to right: Dr. James Macomber, Chair, MCEF, Dr. Karen Lessler, President, MCCSD Board of Education, and Assemblyman Englebright.

Protecting New York State's Environment

Our environment provides natural services that are essential to our health, quality of life and survival. We often neglect to factor into the economic equation the tremendous benefits nature provides. To continue those benefits, we have to invest to ensure the systems we depend upon are sustainable. This year's investments include:

- **\$9 million increase for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF).** EPF funds projects like water quality improvement, municipal recycling, and open space acquisition.
- **Preserving New York's hallmark 1996 pesticide reporting law.** In 1996, I sponsored a law that required a robust reporting system to track the use of pesticides across the State in order to quantify usage and study the possible link between pesticides and breast and other cancers. This year, the Legislature rejected the Governor's proposal to greatly diminish pesticide use reporting.
- **Protecting the Health Research Science Board.** Eight years ago, I sponsored a law that expanded the role of breast cancer survivors on the Health Research Science Board, which approves research and education grants focusing on the causes, prevention, screening, treatment, and cure of breast cancer. The regional distribution of breast cancer survivors brought to the Board an important voice gained by personal experience. Again, the Legislature rejected the Governor's proposal to eliminate the regional breast cancer survivor representatives, retaining this important element of the Board.
- **\$650,000 to reduce drug disposal into New York's waters.** This funding will expand the state's program to provide free pick up and safe disposal of drugs from health care facilities. In the past, these facilities have flushed pharmaceuticals down the drain causing pollution of our ground and surface waters.
- **\$3 million for Suffolk County water quality protection.** These funds will be matched by Suffolk County for a total of \$6 million to protect ground and surface waters by advancing the use of decentralized septic systems.
- **\$200,000 for Long Island pesticide prevention.** The purpose of this funding is to advance implementation of programs to reduce pesticide use by consumers, businesses, and farmers on Long Island.



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At the Groundbreaking for the New Wincoram Project

Residents of Coram have been seeking the redevelopment of the United/Artists Theater site for years. Earlier in the spring this derelict site began its transformational journey to becoming a vibrant community center. This first step of demolition and construction will create jobs and build optimism in the form of new homes and commercial space. Hats are off to the Coram Civic, CDCLI, and all the community leaders who made this turning point possible. At the ground breaking with Martin Bailey, Civic Board Member; Erma Gluck, Coram Civic President; and Assemblyman Englebright.