



Legislative Update

Summer 2016

Assemblyman Steve Englebright

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Dear Neighbor:

This has been a productive legislative session highlighted by a number of important accomplishments. Beginning with the sixth consecutive on-time budget, I am pleased to report that in the 2016-17 state fiscal year we were able to reaffirm our strong commitment to the education of our children through significant investments in school aid and a freeze on the rise of state college tuition.

The budget includes the creation of the strongest paid family leave program in the nation and the successful elimination of the onerous Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) that has been depleting our local school district budgets since the Great Recession.

Further, a number of noteworthy measures advanced through the legislature which includes tackling the zombie home problem by making the banks clean them up and expediting the sale of these neglected properties so they can once again become homes to families.

This year we also addressed the issues of climate change and ocean acidification which threaten our state. For the first time ever, a Climate Change Account of \$14 million within the Environmental Protection Fund will bolster the state's efforts to address the need for greenhouse gas reductions, flood mitigation and coastal projects, and electric car charging infrastructure.

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 englebrights@nyassembly.gov. For your convenience, my office also provides complimentary notary public services and senior citizen cards.

Sincerely,

Steve Englebright



Recognizing Tuskegee Airmen on their 75th Anniversary

The renowned Tuskegee Airmen, the all-black Air Force squadrons who served with distinction during World War II and helped lay the groundwork for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, were a highly decorated unit of 996 pilots and 15,000 ground personnel. These brave men defied racist stereotypes and earned 14 Bronze Stars, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 744 Air Medals.

It was an honor to celebrate the surviving Tuskegee Airmen in the Assembly Chamber on their 75th Anniversary. From left to right: Assemblyman Steve Englebright, Audley Coulthurst (age 91), William Johnson (age 90), Wilfred DeFour (age 97), and Herbert Thorp (age 93).

Need a Notary?

Assemblyman Englebright's Office Provides Free Notary Service

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

Special traveling Notary Service provided for homebound residents in 4th Assembly District. Call 751-3094 or email engles@nyassembly.gov to set up an appointment.

Highlights of the 2016 Legislative Session

The following Englebright measures passed the Legislature this year:

Addressing Ocean Acidification

*(Englebright A10264/LaValle S7908)
Awaiting the Governor's Signature*

Carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels are not only changing earth's climate, they are also making oceans more acidic. This increased acidity decreases the amount of carbonate, an important component in the building of shells and skeletons for many marine species, like shellfish, coral, and plankton. These changes in ocean chemistry may have far-reaching ramifications for the sustainability of the world's many fisheries.

Commercial fishing industries are an important part of New York's economy and that puts our state at high risk for economic harm due to ocean acidification.

Assemblyman Englebright's bill will create a task force on Ocean Acidification that will be charged with identifying the causes and factors contributing to acidification, facilitating research, public education and information-sharing, and evaluating ways of addressing the problem by applying the best available science on ocean acidification and its anticipated impacts on our state.

Keeping Local Law Enforcement Updated on the Location of Sex Offenders

*(Englebright A9239/S07252)
Awaiting the Governor's Signature*

Currently, there is no time frame for the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to report the change of address of a sex offender to local law enforcement. This bill will require reporting of a change of address within 48 hours of any move so that local authorities can adequately monitor the location of offenders on the sex offender registry. This bill also requires DCJS notification if a sex offender moves to another state by notifying the appropriate agency within the new state within 48 hours.

Climate Change and Community Protection Act

*(Englebright A10342/S8005)
Passed the Assembly*

Climate change is here. New Yorkers have witnessed firsthand the devastating loss of life, homes, and livelihoods caused by Superstorm Sandy and tropical storms Irene and Lee. These extreme weather events are related to climate change. These storms, the migration of LI Sound lobsters to cooler waters, new pests like the Southern Pine Beetle, and threats to public health all point to the undeniable fact that climate change is happening now, not in some distant future. The Climate Change and Community Protection Act will put New York on track to minimize the adverse effects of climate change through a combination of measures aimed at reducing statewide greenhouse gas emissions and improving the state's resiliency against future extreme weather events.



Assemblyman Steve Englebright joined DEC Regional Director Carrie Meek Gallagher and Forester John Wernet at an Arbor Day tree planting of over 200 native trees and shrubs at DEC's Lustgarten Preserve in Ridge, NY.

New Laws from the 2016 Legislative Session

New Measures to Break the Cycle of Substance Abuse and Addiction

Chapter 71 of 2016

As heroin and opiate addiction devastates our suburban communities, we've heard from families about the barriers that have prevented needed treatment for loved ones. A new law is now helping those suffering from addiction get the treatment they need by eliminating burdensome insurance barriers and increasing access to needed programs. This new law:

- increases the maximum time for detoxification in a treatment facility from 48 to 72 hours;
- requires insurance companies to cover a minimum of 14 days of inpatient treatment;
- ends prior insurance authorization to allow for immediate access to inpatient treatment; and
- requires insurance companies use objective state-approved criteria to determine the level of care for individuals suffering from addiction.

Testing School Building Water for Lead Contamination

(A10740/ S08158) Awaiting the Governor's Signature

Lead poisoning in young children can cause brain damage that lasts a lifetime. That's why when the lead contamination crises in Flint, MI raised awareness of the dangers of lead in drinking water, we began to investigate our school water supplies. Schools in New York are not required to test drinking water for lead or notify parents or government officials of results. Legislation awaiting the Governor's signature will make New York the first state in the nation to require periodic testing of drinking water in schools and reporting to parents and local and state entities.

New Law will Clean up and Expedite Sales of Zombie Properties

Chapter 73 of 2016

Zombie houses are those rundown properties where the owner has abandoned the property but banks still have not yet taken legal ownership. These properties are costly to local governments which are left with the responsibility of

Budget Update

GEA Eliminated in State School Aid Budget

The 2016-17 budget included the permanent elimination of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). This state-aid take-back was instituted in 2010 state school aid formulas after the Great Recession resulted in a \$10 billion budget deficit. The budget also fully restored the Gap Elimination Adjustment by providing \$434 million in funding.

Middle Class Income Tax Cut

Middle class New Yorkers will be eligible for a new tax cut that brings middle class income taxes down to the lowest rate since 1948. The tax cut will phase in reduced tax rates over a period of eight years. When the tax cut is fully phased in, it will provide an average savings of \$700 per taxpayer per year.

Protecting New York State's Environment

The year's budget provides \$500 million for important environmental programs, including \$200 million in additional funds for water infrastructure improvements and \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). The EPF will pay for initiatives including

those that prevent and identify water contamination, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and eradicate invasive species.

The Budget also provides \$14 million to establish, for the first time ever, a Climate Change Account within the EPF. This new account will bolster the state's efforts to more effectively address the need for greenhouse gas reductions, flood mitigation, and coastal projects.

Keeping a College Education Affordable and Accessible

As a member the Higher Education Committee, Assemblyman Englebright worked to protect access to a college education by supporting a budget plan that included:

- No tuition increase for SUNY and CUNY in 2016-17;
- Increasing the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) by \$43 million to over \$1 billion.
- An increase of \$20 million for community colleges including Suffolk. They will receive a total of \$752 million with aid per full-time student at \$2,967.

Fighting for our Fair Share of School Aid

Assemblyman Englebright's work during the budget process assisted schools and helped hold down property taxes within the 4th Assembly District. There were significant aid increases over the year 2015. The following breakdown shows this year's percentage increases for school districts in the 4th AD.

School district	Executive Proposal % change	Final % change
Comsewogue	+2.56	+6.86
Longwood	+6.48	+7.41
Middle Country	+3.94	+6.17
Mount Sinai	+0.00	+4.71
Port Jefferson	+2.58	+5.67
Three Village	+11.15	+13.32

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

maintaining and securing them at tax-payer expense. The Town of Brookhaven has been hard hit by the zombie property epidemic with an estimated 800 derelict houses despoiling our neighborhoods and driving down property values.

This new law requires that banks maintain vacant property during the foreclosure process. Additionally, it authorizes municipalities to enforce the property maintenance provisions of the law and creates penalties against banks of up to \$500 per property per day for failure to maintain properties. A state registry has been created for abandoned property under the supervision of the Department of Financial Services as well as a toll-free hotline for residents to report the presence of such properties. (Zombie House Toll-free Hotline is 800-342-3736.) The new law will also expedite foreclosure proceedings of zombie houses so that they can be made available for sale and create new opportunities for home ownership.

Prevention is the Cure: Improving Access to Breast Cancer Screening

Chapter 74 of the Laws of 2016

New York State is taking the most aggressive action in the nation to improve access to breast cancer screening. Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer deaths among women in our state. Cancer screening, which includes mammography,

can increase the detection of the disease at an early stage when treatment is most effective. However, in 2014 nearly 22% of women in New York aged 50-74 reported not having mammograms at least every other year. This new law contains measures to help more women gain access to the health care and services they need. Legislation will extend hours for screening at mammography facilities across the state and eliminate insurance hurdles for mammograms and other diagnostic procedures.

Pension Forfeiture for Public Officials Convicted of Felony

(A10739-A/S8163) Passed Legislature

Public officials who violate the public trust and use their office for personal gain should face severe penalties including the forfeiture of state pensions. This session the Legislature passed a state constitutional amendment to provide for the stripping of pensions for public officials convicted of a felony related to their official duties. For this amendment to become law, it must pass in both chambers again next legislative session. At that point, it will be placed on the ballot as a public referendum for voters to amend the New York State Constitution.

Whooping Cough Incidence Decreases by 50% after 2012 State Law

A 2012 law sponsored by Assemblyman Steve Englebright and the Neonatal Infant Pertussis Act [NPPA], appears to be working according to data presented by Dr. Shetal Shah at a recent Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting. The data shows that passage of the Neonatal Infant Pertussis Act [NPPA] was associated with a significant reduced incidence of disease in children in each age group studied.

But, in 2012, there was a sharp increase in the number of whooping cough or pertussis cases—a killer disease many of us thought was history. Dr. Shah, then of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at University Hospital at Stony Brook, aware of the increase in pertussis cases, came to Assemblyman Englebright with an idea for a law that could prevent this disease in newborns. Babies are especially at risk if infected. The only problem was that most parents did not know this and those previously inoculated require a booster after 10 years. Dr. Shah asked the Assemblyman to introduce legislation which would require hospitals with nurseries to both inform the parents and offer them and other caregivers a vaccine against pertussis.

Englebright, with assistance from Dr. Shah, wrote the NPPA, which requires that a vaccine against pertussis be offered to new parents and other caregivers during birth hospitalization. Five months later, the



Assemblyman Englebright and Dr. Shetal Shah after the Neonatal Infant Pertussis Act was signed into law.

legislation was signed into law, codifying Dr. Shah's commonsense idea.

Through Dr. Shah's efforts to broaden awareness about this highly communicable infection, and Assemblyman Englebright's action, we were able to provide a simple solution that we now know was a success in helping to prevent pertussis.



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Celebrating Our Harbor Heritage

Thanks to the Setauket Harbor Task Force for working hard to ensure a great 2nd Annual Setauket Harbor Day. A beautiful sunny day was overhead and on the harbor was kayaking, sailing, and paddleboarding. At the dock there were marine science and art activities for kids, informative water-related displays and live music. The Coast Guard Axillary, the Old Field Power Squadron, Three Village Sailing Club, and the Stony Brook U Crew team had information tables. In the photo from left to right: Charlie Lefkowitz, Task Force Trustee; Laurie Vetere, Task Force President; George Hoffman, Task Force Trustee; Legislator Kara Hahn; Assemblyman Steve Englebright; Mike Kaufman, Task Force Trustee; and Councilwoman Valerie Cartright.