

# ALBANY CAPITOL UPDATE FROM ASSEMBLYWOMAN MICHELLE SCHIMEL

## Legislative Missions Accomplished

- Enacted Fourth Consecutive On-Time Budget
- Legalized Medical Marijuana
- Reformed Common Core
- Eliminated InBloom
- Hydrofracking Moratorium



Dear Neighbor,

**I'm back!**

Legislative Session 2014 was a wild ride. Frankly, I've never worked harder as a legislator, but the results were worth it. It was my best year yet.

This session, the New York State Legislature delivered its fourth on-time budget and legalized medical marijuana to help seriously ill patients get safe alternatives to alleviate their pain. We terminated InBloom (remember InBloom? I do!), and even reformed Common Core. I personally brokered an agreement with the New York State Department of Health to allow eligible veterans to continue receiving all the rights and privileges they are entitled to when applying for admission to veterans' homes across the state.

I was able to unveil an emergency response traffic pre-emption system on eight intersections on Northern Boulevard; the first of its kind on the North Shore of Nassau County. This will allow Manhasset-Lakeville fire trucks and ambulances to enter busy intersections in a more orderly fashion. It is my goal to expand this system to all fire houses in my Assembly District.

The most exciting news of all: two bills of mine that no one ever thought would pass the Assembly now await the Governor's signature! The first is another extension on the lever voting machine for schools, villages, and special districts. The second is my truss bill, which has been in the making for six years, and will help prevent many injuries and deaths of firefighters.

I hope you take a moment to read my newsletter and find out why I still love this job.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Schimel". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Michelle Schimel**

## Protecting Patients from Hidden Out-of-Pocket Medical Costs

Incorporated into the budget is a comprehensive effort to deal with surprise health care bills and out-of-network medical fees. The plan would ensure that adequate out-of-network coverage is available in the group market, obligate health insurers and health care service providers to disclose more information relating to costs expected from the patient, and ensure that patients are not held liable for billing in surprise or emergency situations.

## New York State Legalizes Medical Marijuana

The New York State Assembly passed legislation (A.6357-E), agreed to by the Senate and the Governor, which permits seriously ill patients to use medical marijuana to treat life-threatening illnesses. The new law allows licensed physicians to determine if a patient suffering from a terminal or debilitating illness is likely to benefit from the use of medical marijuana. The measure limits the forms of the drug that could be prescribed to oil-based extracts, pills, edibles and vaporized forms.

A sponsor of the medical marijuana bill, Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel, said "I participated in public hearings both in Nassau County and Albany on the Compassionate Care Act. I listened to the testimony of parents who described the pain experienced by their young children who are severely ill. This agreement is an essential step toward providing seriously ill patients with safe alternatives to alleviate their pain and improve their quality of life."

## Schimel Helps Secure Common Core Reforms

The 2014-2015 final state budget agreement included legislation passed by the Assembly that helps fix the flawed implementation of Common Core and protects students from unfair consequences based on test results. These reforms:

- Ban standardized tests for students in grades K-2
- Delay the use of test results from becoming part of the permanent record for students in grades 3-8
- Limit the amount of classroom time used for test preparation and assessments
- Ensure that students with disabilities and English Language Learners are assessed based on their instructional level rather than their chronological age
- Direct SED to provide tools, resources, and materials to assist teachers in professional development related to the new standards

## Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel

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## Schimel Strikes Legislative Deal on Voting Machine Mandate

Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel and Senator Jack Martins were able to strike a deal on legislation (A.9321A/S.7371A) that allows villages, school districts, and special districts, to continue using lever voting machines for an additional year. Without this bill, local governments and school districts would be forced to purchase or rent electronic voting machines at an exorbitant cost or use paper ballots in conducting their local, non-partisan elections. These costs would ultimately have been borne by taxpayers. The legislation also helps pave the way for a permanent solution to this problem by requiring the New York State Board of Elections (State BOE) to conduct a report that must include recommendations and guidance to localities on how to successfully transition to electronic voting systems. The report must also include an analysis of the cost and fiscal impact of these solutions on local governments and school districts.

*Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel assembled a strategy meeting in Albany with the New York Conference of Mayors, the New York School Boards Association, and the New York School Superintendents Association, for a final push to bring the lever voting machine bill to the Assembly floor for a vote.*

## INBLOOM IS DEAD State Legislature Protects Student Privacy

This legislative session, the New York State Legislature eliminated the State Education Department's (SED) contract with InBloom. As a result of this action, InBloom has gone

out of business. Assemblywoman Schimel also helped institute additional safeguards to protect students' private information from third-party vendors.

## Schimel's Bill Protecting Firefighters from Residential Truss Fires Passes Legislature

The New York State Legislature passed Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel's legislation (A.1869D/S.6675C) that would establish a truss construction notification system for residential properties in the State of New York.

While truss construction is very safe and durable, when exposed to and weakened by a fire, major components of it can collapse suddenly without warning. When responding to a fire, first responders are unable to differentiate between a building constructed of truss or

*"This legislation will help save first responders lives, protect the public and ensure their own safety when responding to a fire emergency involving a residential structure where truss construction was utilized."*



*Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel holds a press conference at the Albertson Fire Company to speak about her Truss Notification Bill. Joined by Senator Jack Martins, (Senate bill sponsor), North Hills Mayor Marvin Natiss, Burt Roslyn (architect), North Hempstead Councilman Peter Zuckerman, Nassau County Deputy Fire Marshall Mike Utarro, Ex-Chiefs Tom McDonough, Roger Goodwin, Chief Scott Strauss, Jeff Clark, (Albertson), and firefighters from across Nassau County.*

another type of construction. As a result, the collapse of residential truss structures has been the cause of many preventable injuries and deaths among first responders, especially firefighters.

Speaking on the floor of the Assembly Chamber, Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel said, "This legislation will help save first responders lives. The notification system will enable firefighters to take appropriate measures to protect the public and to ensure their own safety when responding to a fire emergency involving a residential structure where truss construction was utilized."

The legislation, which is sponsored in the State Senate by Senator Jack Martins, would require a municipality's building department

to notify the local fire chief when it receives a permit application for the construction or modification of a residence utilizing truss construction. The bill also requires coordination between local code enforcement officials, emergency dispatchers, and 911 so that dispatchers can alert responding fire units prior to their arrival at the scene that the residence has structural truss components.

Schimel's bill closely mirrors the state's commercial truss notification law, which has been in place for over a decade. Under the measure, property owners are required to affix a small, non-invasive decal to the electric box on the exterior of their house to warn first responders that truss construction was used at the residence. The bill currently awaits action by the governor.

## Schimel Funds New Emergency Traffic System on Northern Blvd

Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel and members of the Manhasset-Lakeville Fire Department (M-LFD) unveiled an emergency response traffic pre-emption system. The system, funded by a \$125,000 grant secured by Assemblywoman Schimel, has been used to outfit all of M-LFD's fire engine trucks and ambulances as well as eight intersections along Northern Boulevard, stretching from Shelter Rock Road to Middle Neck Road.

Utilizing advanced GPS vehicle and intersection equipment, the traffic pre-emption system will allow fire engine trucks and ambulances an orderly transition through busy intersections, eliminating confusion and reducing intersection crash rates. The equipment will also reduce overall response times to emergencies and will enable the Department's fleet of ambulances to get patients to hospitals quicker and safer.



*Manhasset Lakeville Fire Department and Assemblywoman Schimel held a demonstration of the traffic pre-emption system; the first of its kind on the North Shore of Nassau County.*



## Schimel Earns Perfect Score for Environmental Record

Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel has once again been recognized for her outstanding leadership on the environment. A member of the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee, Schimel received a score of 100 percent from Environmental Advocates for her support of key environmental legislation. Assemblywoman Schimel was also selected to represent New York State at the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NCEL) conference in Chicago.

## Schimel Leads Three-Way Negotiation to Protect Veterans' Access to Long-Term Care

In an effort to ensure that veterans and their eligible family members, who qualify for Medicaid, continue to have access to long-term care services at state veterans' homes, Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel introduced the Veterans Long-Term Care Access Act (A.8917) this session.

Since the intent of the legislation could be met by agency administrative action, Assemblywoman Schimel participated in a three-way negotiation between the state veterans' homes and the New York State Department of Health. Schimel helped broker an agreement that allows eligible veterans to continue to receive all of the rights and privileges they are entitled to when applying for admission to state veterans homes across New York State.



## Assembly Passes Hydrofracking Moratorium

Legislation (A.5424-B) that would prohibit hydrofracking in New York until 2017, sponsored by Assemblywoman Schimel, passed in the Assembly. Hydrofracking is a method used to extract natural gas from underground rock formations by injecting large volumes of water, sand, and chemicals at high pressure into the ground. This process has been shown to cause negative impacts on the environment and public health, including contamination of drinking water, destruction of surrounding land and habitat, and increased air pollution. The moratorium

would provide the time needed to study the long-term effects of hydrofracking on public health and the environment. The New York State Court of Appeals recently issued a 5-2 decision with significant implications regarding hydrofracking's future in the state. The Court's ruling allows local governments to use their local zoning laws to ban hydraulic fracturing within their borders.

"How do you spell relief? This ruling confirms my strong belief system about local government control. I applaud this decision," said Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel.

## Schimel Features Hallie Liman's Distracted Driving PSA at State Capitol

Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel showcased an important video on distracted driving outside her Albany Office, which was written, produced, and directed by Hallie Liman, a sophomore at Great Neck South High School. Hallie's video, which is titled "Distracted Driving Kills: Drive Focus Live," is a 30-second public service announcement that focuses on the tragic consequences that can occur as a result of driving while distracted. To watch Hallie's video please visit <http://goo.gl/YS5yQG>.



*Great Neck South High School Student Hallie Liman premieres her PSA on distracted driving in the Albany Legislative Building.*



## State Legislature Passes On-Time State Budget

For the fourth consecutive year, the New York State Legislature passed an on-time, balanced budget that holds spending growth to less than two percent and ensures a better economic outlook for the state. The 2014-2015 fiscal plan makes a commitment to invest in our children's education, institutes needed reforms to the Common Core, increases aid to public libraries, and expands access to quality, affordable child care. Other highlights include an increase in funding to the Environmental Protection Fund and expanded eligibility for the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program.

*Many late nights in Albany help deliver an on-time budget.*



## Capitol Update

**Assemblywoman**

## Michelle Schimel

**16<sup>th</sup> Assembly District • SUMMER 2014**



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### Addressing Port Washington Residents Concerns Over LIRR Pedestrian Bridge

When the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) closed the pedestrian bridge at the Port Washington LIRR Train Station, there was a huge outcry from the community. As a result, Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel asked the new LIRR President, Patrick Nowakowski, to meet with her, North Hempstead Town Supervisor Judi Bosworth, Councilwoman Dina De Georgio, and Senator Jack Martins to discuss the matter. During the meeting, the LIRR agreed to build a temporary extension to an existing pedestrian bridge on the Haven Avenue side of the Port Washington station. The overpass will be installed this summer and is expected to open to the public in September.



*Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel at roundtable in Town Hall about the Pedestrian Bridge in Port Washington.*