



Albany Capitol Update from...

Assemblywoman
Michelle Schimel

16th Assembly District • Spring 2016

What We Have Accomplished Together: Nine Years of Progress

- **SAFE Act – Strongest Gun Control Law in the Nation**
- **Banned Hydrofracking in New York State**
- **Passed Marriage Equality Law**
- **Demanded Increased State Funding for K-12, CUNY & SUNY Every Year**
- **Residential Truss Construction Notification Law Saves Firefighters Lives**
- **Stopped the Great Neck Sewage Plant Consolidation with Nassau Sewer System**
- **Passed Women's Equality Agenda**
- **Job Search Boot Camp connecting people with Real Jobs in Real Time**
- **Medical Marijuana Law in New York State**
- **Implemented Statewide Electronic Waste Recycling**
- **Banned Microbeads Nationwide**
- **Implemented the Lowest Tax Rate for Middle-Income Families in 60 Years**
- **Helped Countless Constituents**
- **Finally...The First LI Groundwater Study to Protect Drinking Water in Decades**



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Dear Friend:

As you may have heard or read in the news, I have made the very difficult decision not to seek re-election in November. This was the hardest decision I have ever made.

I love this job and may never see the likes of doing something as rewarding as this again in my life. After five elections to the Assembly I have decided a change may be in order.

Please remember that the signature causes that I am most passionate about: gun control, the environment, and renewable energy were causes I fought for long before I sought elected office.

I do not have to be an Assemblywoman to continue with that passion.

And then I reminded myself that we passed the SAFE Act after the Sandy Hook horror, the toughest gun law in the land. Together WE banned hydrofracking in New York State. We enacted Marriage Equality in New York, statewide electronic waste recycling, and through all of our efforts we banned Microbeads nationwide!

My wonderful dedicated staff, Nicole, Sandy, Liz and Albany Deb, and my dedicated volunteers (special shout out to Elaine and my two Joans) have helped so many constituents – into the thousands – with a myriad of issues during the last nine years.

I have climbed higher with you than I ever could have imagined. I will never forget that, ever.

Thank you,



Michelle Schimel
Member of Assembly



“I couldn’t do this job without my great staff.” – Michelle

Sandy Portnoy, Director of Constituent Services

If you call the District Office of Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel you will very likely get me to answer the phone. In addition to organizing Michelle’s very busy schedule, I help constituents interact with administrative and governmental agencies by acting as a facilitator, ombudsman, and advocate. I also help the Assemblywoman honor constituents who have worked to better our community. Numerous outreach events that I coordinate throughout the year include Valentines for Vets, Yom Hashoah Commemoration for Nassau County high schools, Summer Reading Program, Emergency Preparedness, Skintelligence, and Food Drives. I am also very proud of our student intern program. We have extraordinary young people who help us in the office while learning about government. We are an amazing community and I am very proud to work with and for the residents of the 16th Assembly District.

Nicole Duckham, Chief of Staff

I have had the pleasure of working with Assemblywoman Schimel and the constituents of District 16, and I’ve come to the conclusion that this job is like no other. It requires patience, critical thinking, problem solving, compassion and the desire to help people. I have grown as a person, not only professionally but also personally. This office has touched the lives of many by being a resource for those in need. It has been an honor to work here and be a helping hand to the constituents of Assembly District 16.

Elizabeth Ridge-Cole, Legislative Analyst

As Assemblywoman Schimel’s Legislative Analyst, I wear many hats. Along with evaluating and researching legislation, regulations, and policy proposals, I also draft correspondence and serve as a facilitator to the thousands



From Left to Right, Sandy Portnoy, Nicole Duckham, and Elizabeth Ridge-Cole

of constituents that reach out to our office each month regarding legislation, budget allocations, social and economic policy, and equality. In this capacity I have been on the front lines witnessing grassroots movements take shape and impact real change. I have learned that there are no small ideas and I have seen ordinary people achieve extraordinary things just by participating in the democratic process and advocating for change. This has been the most inspiring and rewarding part of my work with Assemblywoman Schimel.

Debby Girgenti, Albany Office Director

I have worked with Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel from the beginning. I like to think that I am the heart



Debby Girgenti

of the Albany office. When you call or stop by our Albany office you get me. I handle the daily functions of the office such as making appointments, handling Michelle’s Albany schedule, and making sure she is best prepared for her meetings and legislative session. This has been the best office I ever worked in. It’s been a great experience meeting the constituents of Assembly District 16.

FINALLY! New York State to Fund LI Groundwater Study

Assemblywoman Schimel has been fighting for a comprehensive study of Long Island's groundwater for years. Her fight was not hers alone. On Thursday, February 18th 2016, the Governor announced that he would be including \$6 million in the state budget to fund a comprehensive groundwater study for Long Island.

The study will be conducted in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), and Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The study will examine saltwater intrusion, surface water impacts, contaminant transport and sustainable yield. The result will be a groundwater flow model, the international standard for understanding and managing groundwater impacts.

Assemblywoman Schimel is grateful for all of the environmental advocates who make up the Western Long Island Aquifer Committee for their fierce determination, and dedication to this critical and existential issue, most especially Sarah Meyland and Mindy Germain.

Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel and Senator Jack Martins issued this statement after Governor Cuomo's announcement of the funding for the Long Island groundwater study, conducted by USGS:



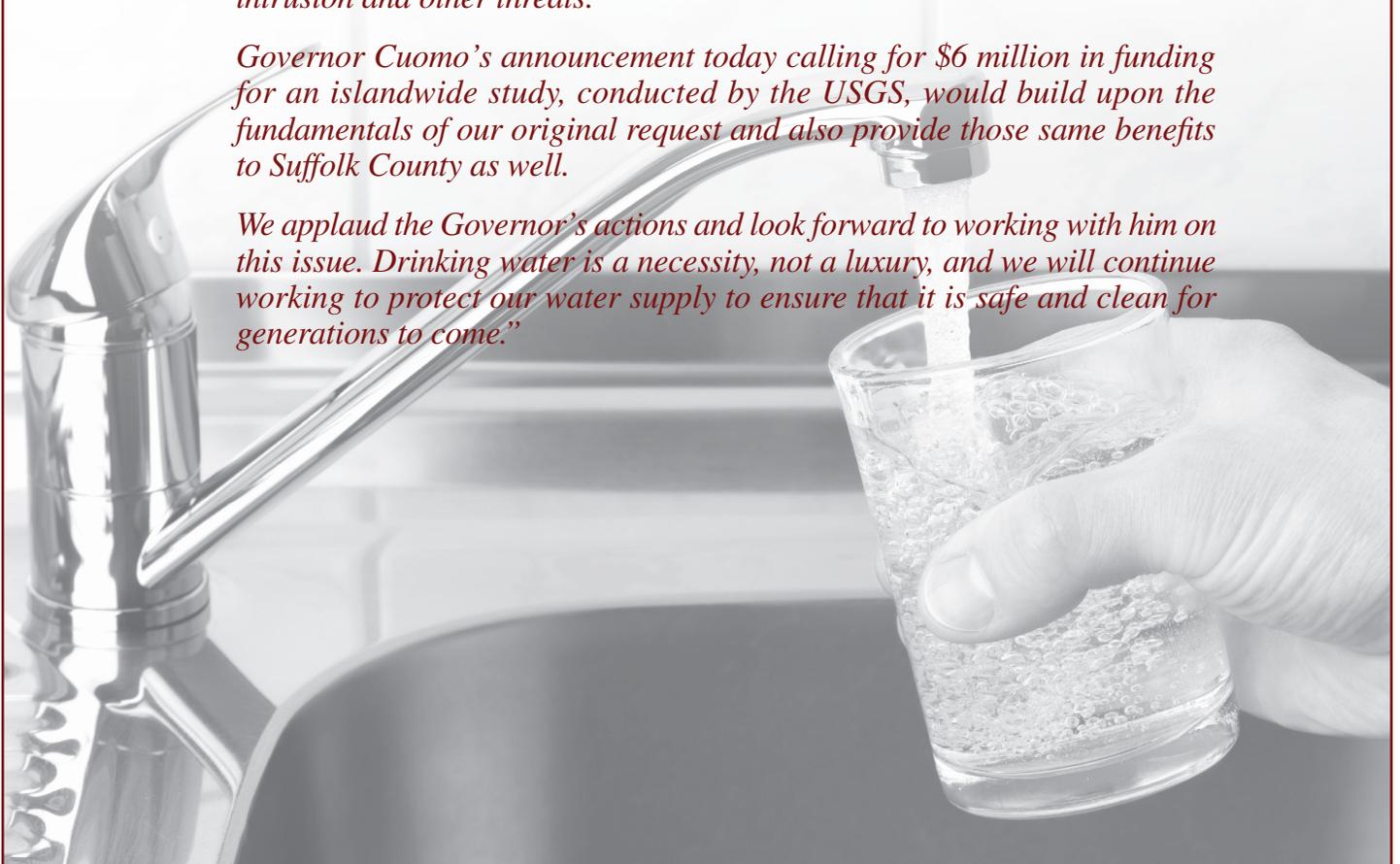
We are grateful that Governor Cuomo has recognized our work to include funding in the state budget for a comprehensive groundwater study on Long Island conducted by USGS.

Long Islanders don't get to choose where they get their drinking water; we are an area wholly dependent on sole-source aquifers. That is why protecting our groundwater supply has been, and continues to be, of paramount importance to us.

We, together with local stakeholders, have called for the inclusion of \$3 million in the state budget. The study would provide localities with current scientific data so that they can protect our water supply from saltwater intrusion and other threats.

Governor Cuomo's announcement today calling for \$6 million in funding for an islandwide study, conducted by the USGS, would build upon the fundamentals of our original request and also provide those same benefits to Suffolk County as well.

We applaud the Governor's actions and look forward to working with him on this issue. Drinking water is a necessity, not a luxury, and we will continue working to protect our water supply to ensure that it is safe and clean for generations to come."



The 2016-2017 Assembly Budget Spending Plan

The Assembly has submitted their one-house budget. The 2016-2017 Assembly one-house budget restores and increases important funding for the 16th Assembly District in comparison with the Governor's Budget (Executive Proposal).

Some Highlights:

- **\$25.4B in School Aid, an increase of \$2.13B or 9.2% over the 2015-2016 budget and an increase of \$1.2B over Executive Proposal.**
- **Final installation of \$434M to fully restore the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA).**
- **Increase in Library Aid and Capital Support for Public Libraries.**
- **\$1.7B Multi-year investment in Higher Education which includes a two-year tuition freeze for CUNY & SUNY and raises Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award to \$5,265 per student.**
- **Enriches budget funding for Senior Citizen programs like NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities).**
- **Expanding Heroin and Opiate Abuse Treatment and Support Centers with an unprecedented \$30M.**
- **\$83.7M for new child care subsidies, after school centers.**
- **\$500M over five years to construct 6,000 new supportive housing units.**
- **\$100M over five years for capital costs of housing for the developmentally disabled.**



Capitol Update

Assemblywoman

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Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel

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