



Assemblywoman
**Margaret
MARKEY**

Reports to the
People

SEPTEMBER 2012

A message from
**Assemblywoman
Margaret Markey...**

Dear Neighbor:

I am pleased to present this report about the Legislature's 2012 progress in Albany.

We adopted an on-time budget for the second consecutive year, closing a \$3.5 billion deficit with no new taxes. Not only did this new budget provide increases for important health, education, and job programs, we also provided additional funding for transit projects and rehabilitation and replacement of our aging infrastructure of roads and bridges.

I am also delighted to report that funding for local non-profit community organizations will be made available this year to help them conduct programs that do vital work for our seniors, youth, and families and provide support for commercial districts in Maspeth, Woodside, and Astoria.

See my report inside about the work of the Assembly Standing Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development where we acted in several ways this year to preserve and enhance our state parks and help boost the important tourism sector of the state's economy.

I also want to announce that I will partner with the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation to present Fall Festival events in Windmuller Park in Woodside on Sunday, October 14, and in Juniper Valley Park in Middle Village on Sunday, October 21, both from noon to 4pm. Bring the whole family for fun fall activities, including pumpkin carving, face painting, and other craft activities. There will also be a "Haunted House" for Kids at A.R.R.O.W. Community Center in Astoria on October 27.

Sincerely,

Margaret Markey

Important Progress in Albany Session This Year

We Passed New Laws to Make Our Families Safer

The Legislature passed a new law that creates the most expansive **DNA database** in the nation that will not only help put criminals behind bars, but will also help exonerate the innocent.

A new law will help in making a safe and secure learning environment for all students. It requires prompt reporting of incidents of **bullying or cyberbullying** to ensure that they are addressed as quickly as possible. It also requires every school to create an official policy for handling harassment or bullying and mandates anti-bullying education for school staff.

Both houses of the State Legislature passed extensive anti-domestic violence legislation this year. With more than 400,000 incidents of this abuse reported every year, the new law toughens punishments of abusers, creates a felony-level offense for repeat offenders, and requires judges to consider additional risk factors in considering bail for alleged abusers.

Our I-STOP legislation will help **stop prescription drug abuse**, cracking down on illegal trafficking of painkillers, and preventing untimely deaths, especially among teenagers. It establishes a real-time, controlled-substance database and requires doctors to review a patient's history before prescribing certain medications.

We Acted to Improve the Economy of Our State

New York is now ranked in the top 10 states for economic growth, productivity, and livability as a result of new state programs to strengthen our business climate.

These include creation of a low-cost power program for businesses and non-profit organizations and tax credits through the Excelsior Jobs programs. We allocated \$1.6 billion for infrastructure projects this year and our NY Youth Works program provides job training, placements, and tax credits for youths, including \$25 million for NYC's Summer Youth Employment Program.

Our Regional Economic Development Councils are crafting better job-creating and business assistance programs that best fit the needs of each region of the state.

Revision of the MTA payroll tax provided a welcome relief to over 700,000 small businesses and self-employed New Yorkers and completely eliminated or reduced the tax for small businesses with annual payrolls of less than \$1.75 million.

As armed forces members return to civilian life after service in the Middle East, many are struggling to find a job when they come home. We enacted a law to connect veterans with jobs that utilize their skills and help them transition to new careers by requiring the State Division of Veterans' Affairs to create a special portal on its website and provide printed information to assist them in their search.



MASPETH STUDENT HONORED IN ALBANY – I was pleased to meet Kevin Mazeski, a fourth-year graphic design student at the Fashion Institute of Technology, and see his outstanding work that was part of a spring Albany "SUNY Discovery Expo," showing off the work of students at campuses of the State University of New York. His poster behind us advertises a flash animation video he created to promote FIT's Graphic Design Program for future students. His expertise earned him an internship at Conde Nast's Details magazine this past summer.

Boost Tourism, Protect Parks as Assembly Committee Chair

My new responsibilities as Chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development have been challenging as well as informative.

Before the 2012 legislative session began, the Committee held a public hearing to hear from public agency and private industry experts about how to preserve and enhance the state's natural resources and parkland and how best to support the tourism industry in every part of the state. With the goal of boosting the economy of New York State and providing new jobs for our citizens, we put the intelligence we gained to work as the Committee went about its work this year.

Over the past year, we have seen the tourism sector continue to improve and make an important contribution to the economy of New York State as we recover from the downturn in our economy. We have also had to face up to the need to rehabilitate and renew state parks which were hard hit by major storms over the past year.

One of our most important accomplishments this year was the legislation, adopted by both the Assembly and Senate, to establish a Tourism Economic Development Fund to be funded with revenue from the licensing of the popular "I Love NY" brand. Money from this fund will be devoted to the promotion, attraction, stimulation, development, and expansion of tourist travel, resort, vacation, cultural, and convention activities in every region of the state.

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Another important success this year was the extension of the consumer protections embodied in laws we enacted regarding the resale of tickets to sporting, entertainment and cultural events. Thanks to this Committee, New York pioneered how best to work with the industry to regulate these transactions while adapting to new technology that made reselling a popular option for consumers.

We made significant changes to existing laws in 2010 that were due to expire this year. It was extended to May 14, 2013 in order to provide additional experience to better evaluate the effectiveness of the updated regulations. As the market evolves, ensuring the protection of consumers and their rights becomes increasingly important and this extension allows for additional time to fully understand the effects these regulatory changes and new technologies will have on industry and consumers alike.



COMMITTEE WORK – *It was my first full year as Chair of the Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development Committee. Here is one of our committee sessions where my colleagues and I worked closely to move legislation to help promote tourism and preserve and expand our public lands and historic sites, with a strong emphasis on laws that would boost economic development opportunities and provide new jobs.*

Another important bill we succeeded in making law was legislation that authorizes the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to lease properties and facilities at the Knox Farm State Park for a period of 40 years.

Existing regulations limit the lease period for such property and discourage the private investment that might be available to renovate and restore these properties. The Parks agency has achieved success with similar extended leases at some 50 other similar sites around the state.

I have been discussing the future of the historic Steinway Mansion in Astoria with community groups and exploring the potential for ensuring its future by making it a State property so I was particularly supportive of this legislation because I see it as a possible solution to preserving the Mansion.



PARKS, CULTURAL SPACES – *Since I became Chair of the Assembly Tourism Committee, I have had the opportunity to visit many park facilities and historic sites, as well as cultural attractions throughout the state. One visit, right here close to home, was an introduction to the Chocolate Factory in Long Island City. Executive Director Sheila Lewandowski and Artistic Director Brian Rogers have created a vibrant performance space in this 5,000 square foot former factory and they have received enthusiastic critical praise for their presentations. They recently shared their exciting plans with me for enhancement of their facility to provide rehearsal space and new opportunities for programming.*



PARKS DAY – *May 5th was "I Love My Park Day" in the State of New York. To help promote the day and boost participation of volunteers across the state, I was joined on the Assembly floor by leaders of Parks & Trails New York, the leading statewide advocate for parks and public spaces, which works with hundreds of community organizations and municipalities throughout the state. With me are Robin Dropkin, Executive Director, and Louise DiBetta, Program and Government Relations Director.*

My Child Victims Act Will Protect Our Children



I held a series of informational events in Albany earlier this year to bring the attention of Governor Cuomo and my colleagues in the Legislature to the wide-ranging problem of child sexual abuse in society.

We looked at the recent revelations in the world of sports and learned about abuse in schools and institutions. We heard one of the state's leading prosecutors speak about how current statutes of limitations in New York State need to be changed in order to bring justice to victims.

A panel of legal experts spoke about the change that is taking place across the nation where other states are facing up to the challenge of providing justice and punishing perpetrators and those who hide them. My Child Victims Act of New York seeks to update our laws regarding this crime.

Our New York State statutes of limitations are so lax that many perpetrators evade exposure by waiting out the short statute of limitations. I want to change that because pedophiles who are not exposed will continue to abuse yet more children in the future. You can help by signing the online petition at www.nychildvictimsact.org.



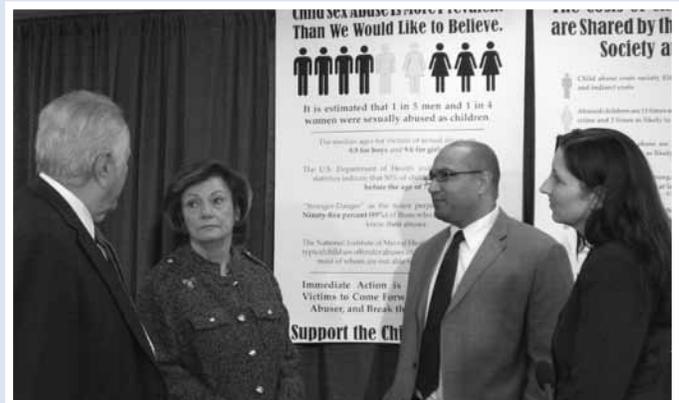
LEGAL ROUNDTABLE

At a roundtable in May co-sponsored by Albany Law School and Benjamin Cardozo Law School, Albany legislators and others had the opportunity to hear about movements across the county that are seeking to change outmoded statutes of limitations for child sexual abuse. The panel was moderated by Albany Law Professor Melissa Breger and one of the speakers was attorney Carmen L. Durso, who is spearheading changes in Massachusetts law (both standing with me). Shannon Sarfoh, Albany County Assistant District Attorney and Special Victims Unit Bureau Chief; (seated left) spoke about the difficulties faced by her office when victims come forward with charges against abusers. Professor Marci Hamilton from Yeshiva University's Cardozo Law School, spoke about the recent enactment of the Child Victims Act in Hawaii and the outcome of successful enactment of legislation similar to my bill in California and Delaware. We also heard about ongoing efforts in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to make laws more favorable to victims of abuse.



ABUSE IN SPORTS

Bobby Davis (speaking) and his cousin Mike Lang are among the most recent to bring charges of child sexual abuse against figures in collegiate sports. They and their attorney, Gloria Allred (far left), were among the speakers at an Albany press conference and told about their case against a Syracuse University coach. Attorney Kevin Mulhearn (left) spoke about their long-running effort to get legal justice in a case involving a coach at Poly Prep Day School in New York City. Another speaker was filmmaker Christopher Gavagan, who is producing a documentary, "Coached Into Silence," about abuse he and others suffered as children at the hands of amateur and scholastic sports coaches.



DA SUPPORT FOR CVA

Albany County District Attorney David Soares (R) endorsed the Child Victims Act of NY legislation at a press conference in Albany, joining a list of 14 other present and past District Attorneys in New York who support the legislation. Also joining us to speak up for the bill was Henry Miller, past president of the New York State Bar Association (L) and Shannon Sarfoh, Chief of the Albany DA's Special Victims Bureau. DA Soares said: "Depriving us of the ability to hold accountable those who have perpetrated these crimes is depriving us of the ability to rid society of dangerous people. I want to applaud Assemblywoman Markey for coming forward with a bill that I think is fair and addresses a lot of concerns that everyone has. For those of us in the public safety realm it is a bill that we can use to bring more people to justice and make our communities that much safer."



FOCUS ON SCHOOLS, RELIGION

Advocates for the NY Child Victims Act held a Lobby Day in Albany where they visited individual legislators to urge them to support the bill. Among the speakers at the kick-off program for the day were, from left: television producer Steve Jiminez, Cardozo Law Professor Marci Hamilton, Mark Meyer Appel of Voice of Justice, and Rabbi Nuchem Rosenberg. Professor Hamilton said: "The cover up of child abuse in the Syracuse basketball and Penn State football systems, when added to all we have learned about the cover up in churches and synagogues—cements what I have been saying for a decade: our laws favor pedophiles and hurt child sex abuse victims. I urge all members of the New York legislature to set aside politics this time for the sake of New York's children."

We Adopted a Responsible On-Time Budget With No New Taxes

For the second year in a row, the Assembly and Senate worked together with the Governor to adopt an on-time, bipartisan, and fiscally responsible state budget.

The budget we adopted invests in key job-creating programs and increases aid to our schools and health care system, while holding spending under 2 percent growth.

It closed the state's \$3.5 billion budget deficit for the current year without any new taxes, fees, or gimmicks, while increasing funding to our schools and vital health care and jobs programs.

These crucial measures will strengthen our state's economic recovery, provide our children with a quality education, and keep money in the pockets of working families.

In addition, the budget continues new income tax brackets first established last December, creating the lowest middle-class tax rate in 58 years, which cut taxes for 99 percent of New Yorkers.

With this budget comes a new spirit of bipartisan cooperation in Albany, allowing us to get things done quickly and efficiently for the people we represent. When we all work together, our families see results.

TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION – As a member of the Joint Conference Sub-Committee on Transportation, I worked with the administration and my colleagues to develop a budget that has several important benefits for transit riders and drivers.

These include important **assistance to transit riders** by providing \$4 billion to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) – a 5 percent increase from last year – plus \$770 million to assist in financing the final three years of the MTA 2010-14 Capital Plan which is continuing such major projects as the LIRR's East Side Access and extension of the #7 Line.

The new budget also provides \$232 million in state funds added to \$917 million in federal funds – a total of \$1.2 billion – for **repair, replacement and improvement of deficient roads and bridges** in addition to the \$1.6 billion allocated in the previous year for this purpose.

EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES – Our new budget increased school aid for New York City schools by \$292 million and increased funding for our City University **community colleges** by \$9 million. Statewide, school funding is up \$805 million.

The budget also restores \$10.5 million to **teacher resources and training centers**, increases **adult literacy education** by \$1 million, and provides an extra \$1 million for public libraries.

Of particular interest to families with children in **private and parochial schools** is an increase in funding for the Comprehensive Assistant Program, which adds \$7 million to increase that program. For the new fiscal year, the regular mandated services program for these schools will grow from \$77 million to \$90.4 million.

OTHER MAJOR BUDGET ITEMS– Some of the other budget benefits for New York State taxpayers include:

- New York will once again exempt the state's 4 percent sales tax on clothing, footwear and related items sold for less than \$110;
- Restoration of co-payment assistance for those seniors who are enrolled in the EPIC drug assistance program for seniors;
- Creation of a Foreclosure Prevention Program over a three-year period with a first-year investment of \$25 million.

FALL SHOPPERS SAVE ON SALES TAX – Families shopping for fall and back-to-school clothing will appreciate the extra savings they will receive this year from the removal of the four percent state sales tax on clothing, footwear and related items sold for less than \$110 each.

The savings, which will save New York taxpayers \$210 million this year, is good news for hardworking families and local businesses and comes at a great time as the economy is slowly regaining its strength.

STILL NEED TO ACT ON UNFINISHED BUSINESS

HYDROFRACKING – We do not fully understand the potential environmental impact of hydraulic fracturing. Statewide use of this gas extraction method must not go forward without further study. My Assembly colleagues and I approved an Assembly bill, which has gone to the Senate, that would require a comprehensive health impact assessment of the effects of this gas extraction method in New York State.

MINIMUM WAGE – Even though the Assembly voted to raise the statutory minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$8.50, the bill failed to move forward in the State Senate. We need this change so workers do not have to choose between paying rent, putting food on the table and providing for their children.

YOU CAN HELP MAKE CVA A NY LAW

People from around New York State who are concerned about children are supporting my Child Victims Act of New York and I hope you will join them by signing the online petition at:

WWW.NYCHILDVICTIMSACT.ORG

We have some of the most antiquated laws in the nation for prosecuting child sexual abusers. Statute of limitations codes severely limit the rights of victims to get justice for the crimes done against them and hold those who hide abusers responsible for their failure to report them.

My bill (A.5488) will extend the criminal and civil statute of limitations for child sexual abuse in New York State. Please sign the online petition to urge NY Governor Andrew Cuomo and legislative leaders to bring the NY Child Victims Act to a vote in the NY State Senate.

Sign the petition at: www.nychildvictimsact.org

For more information about how you can help enact this law, see my Assembly website or contact: NY Coalition to Protect Children at **NYProtectChildren@gmail.com**.



ASSEMBLYWOMAN MARGARET MARKEY

DISTRICT OFFICE: 55-19 69th Street • Maspeth, New York 11378 • 718-651-3185

ALBANY OFFICE: Room 712 Legislative Office Building • Albany, New York 12248 • 518-455-4755

Email: markeym@assembly.state.ny.us