



Assemblywoman **MARGARET MARKEY** *Reports to the People*

JUNE 2014

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

Dear Neighbor:

As a senior member of the Assembly leadership, I am pleased to present this interim report of my work in Albany and in the 30th District.

My work as a member of the Ways and Means Committee and as Chair of the Assembly Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development Committee has helped bring about a new era in Albany where New Yorkers can count on on-time budgets and improved attention to our education, human services, seniors and economic development needs.

Community issues are important to all of us, and I have continued to address the need for more neighborhood parkland, pedestrian safety on our streets, and solutions for environmental issues caused by flooding and airplane, railroad and traffic noise.

I am proud to continue to be of assistance to the many non-profit community and civic organizations in our neighborhoods. These organizations provide vital services to children, families, seniors, veterans and people in need and are the life-blood of our communities.

Celebration of our heritage is also important. I was pleased to partner with Borough President Melinda Katz to organize the borough-wide commemoration of the 50th and 75th anniversaries of our New York World's Fairs, with activities continuing throughout Queens into October. My funding helped support a May festival at the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park site of the fairs and marketing of activities taking place around the borough. See the Queens Tourism Council's website, www.itsinqueneens.com for details.

As we move into the last few days of the 2014 legislative session, I want to thank you for the opportunity to represent you in Albany and look forward to hearing directly from you about important State and local issues.

Sincerely,

Margaret M. Markey

Our Work Invests in New York's Future

Historic Action in Albany Cuts Taxes, Boosts Education, Jobs, Human Services and Provides Universal Pre-K

An on-time budget for the fourth consecutive year, historic high support for schools, universal pre-K education and the lowest taxes in 60 years for New Yorkers – those results are reflected in the new state budget we adopted in Albany this spring.

The 2014-15 budget reflects our commitment to the working families of New York, providing essential funding to educate our children, easing the tax burden on New Yorkers, and creating a better economic environment that will continue to grow jobs. The following are some of the highlights of our work to date:

Education for NYC – Overall, the new budget increases school aid by \$1.1 billion, or 5.4 percent. For New York City, the budget allocates more than \$8.6 billion to our city schools, an increase of over \$435 million over last year. The city will also get \$600 million over two years for Universal Pre-Kindergarten. Every child deserves to have a first-class education and this budget makes a significant investment in education to ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed. Families with children will also receive a one-time \$350 tax rebate check this fall.

Reforming Common Core – We also acted to formalize Assembly proposals to fix the flawed implementation of Common Core requirements for our kids. Our action protects students from unfair consequences based on test results and ensures the security of sensitive student data. All of us want higher standards for our children but we will continue to work to reduce anxiety over testing and protect student privacy.

More affordable college education – Increased funding for the State University of NY includes an additional \$4.3 billion for City University. Students and parents will also benefit from an increase in funding for the Tuition Assistance Program for the first time in 14 years, including an increase in the maximum award. Funding for SUNY and CUNY community colleges was also increased for the third consecutive year.

Property tax relief – Residents of New York City will benefit from \$85 million in tax credits for homeowners, condominium and co-op owners and renters with the implementation of a “circuit breaker” plan. The “circuit breaker” will run for 2 years and will factor in household income for the property tax break.

Reducing utility costs – Utility costs for consumers includes a surcharge on energy bills for families that will be phased out over the coming years. We acted this year to reduce the remaining surcharge rates by \$200 million annually for both residential and commercial customers, a total of \$600 over the next three years.

Expanding youth job program – The NY Youth Works Program encourages businesses to hire unemployed, disadvantaged youth, ages 16 to 24, by connecting it to community colleges. This year we have tied the occupational training component of the NY Youth Works Program to the Job Linkage Program to help encourage more employers to hire inner-city youth.

Strengthening the child care system – Funding to increase access to quality, affordable child care is included in this year's budget, providing \$34 million for more than 4,500 additional subsidized child care slots and making other adjustments to help working families secure safe, nurturing care.

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Hearings held by the Assembly Ways and Means Committee helped guide formulation of the new state budget. Here, we questioned Mayor Bill de Blasio about New York City issues earlier this year.



QUEENS WOMEN HONOR GOVERNOR - I was joined by Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan in presenting Governor Andrew Cuomo with a proclamation from the Queens Delegation of the NY State Assembly honoring him as special guest at the annual Queens County Ladies' Luncheon recently. From left are: Congressman Joseph Crowley, Assemblywoman Michelle Titus; Assemblywoman Barbara Clark; Assemblywoman Nolan; Assemblywoman Vivian Cook, Co-Chair of the event along with Hon. Mary Ann Dorsa; Governor Cuomo; and Assemblywoman Markey.

NEWS BRIEF

Increasing benefits for seniors

Increasing the income limit for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption program (SCRIE) was an important action we took this year. Raising eligibility from \$29,000 to \$50,000 for the next two years will help more seniors continue to live in affordable housing. An expansion of eligibility for the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program will allow more seniors to get help with the costs of medicine they need. Call my office for more information.

Sewer Work Underway to Reduce Flooding

Preliminary work is underway on a \$25 million project to upgrade the sewer system in Maspeth, Woodside and Elmhurst. New, larger sewer lines under 69th Street, and Calamus Avenue will increase sewer capacity and reduce flooding from storms. This is great news for the long-suffering residents who have endured years of damage from repeated flooding after ordinary rainstorms. We all look forward to the completion of this long-awaited improvement that will alleviate the hardships that have been caused by the current inadequate sewer system. The City's Department of Environmental Protection promises work will be completed by the fall of 2016.

We Allocate More Money to Re-Fit Antiquated Locomotives

The new state budget allocates an additional \$3 million in funding to continue a program aimed at overhauling antiquated, polluting, state-owned freight locomotives that are used on the rail line that passes through our communities and we can expect to begin realizing environmental benefits this year as the first retrofitted locomotive is planned to be on-line by December. Again this year, as a member of the Joint Legislative Transportation Budget Conference Committee, I fought hard to make sure this funding was in the final budget we adopted in March. As public officials working together with civic and environmental groups, we will continue to do what it takes to eventually replace all of the antiquated railroad engines that pollute our communities.

Get Rid of Old Papers, Protect Your Identity at JUNE 28TH Shredding Event

Protect your personal identity, but get rid of old financial and personal papers you no longer need at my Free Community Shredding event on Saturday, June 28th. I'm teaming up with Congressman Joseph Crowley, Senator Michael Gianaris and Councilmember Costa Constantinides to sponsor this program. The shredding of your papers will take place right in front of you, while you watch. It takes place at Boulevard Gardens, in the driveway near the Bernie Gilroy Playground. For more information call 718-274-4500.

Salute Winners at Maspeth High

Boys and girls from Maspeth High School had their first basketball season this year and what a season it was: both teams went undefeated for the season. We knew these Maspeth students were high performers, but who could have predicted they would have a perfect inaugural season. I was proud to honor the students and their coaches with citations from the New York State Assembly at a pizza party at the school. I presented citations to each of the team members and their coaches. The Girls Varsity Team, coached by Fabian Suarez, who is also the Athletic Director for the school shown here, won eight games; the Boys Varsity Team, coached by Anastasia Bitis, won all eight of its season games.



Sunnyside Gardens Wants Park

The vacant land at the site of a former playground at 39th Avenue and 50th Street is part of the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District, a designation by the City of New York's Landmark Preservation Commission. All of us in Queens are proud of the unique status and history of this portion of this neighborhood and we fought hard to earn that designation.

Last year I was proud to join Sunnyside Gardens' residents and many others to speak out about an inappropriate development of this site. We turned out at a Landmarks Commission hearing in large numbers to object to a proposal to build on the privately-owned space and we were all relieved to hear that the Commission rejected it.

Now it is time to look to the future. I joined residents recently to look at the site at 30th Avenue and 50th Street, a one-time recreational space called Cauley Gardens. The owner is expected to put forward another development plan, but the community seeks an alternative that would return this one-time playground to public use as a community garden. I stand with them in urging the New York City Parks Department to consider the acquisition of this site as a public park.



Residents including Herb Reynolds and Regina Shanley, talk about their hope to turn the former playground back into a public park with me, Congressman Joseph Crowley and Councilmember Jimmy Van Bramer and Adrian Bordonni of Woodside on the Move.

Fighting to Ensure Safer Streets for Pedestrians

We Have Some Successes on Grand Avenue and Northern Boulevard

Pedestrian safety is finally receiving well-deserved priority in Queens as attention has been focused by several recent deaths at the hands of reckless, careless and illegal drivers. Some 4000 New Yorkers are injured every year and 250 killed in traffic crashes and most of us welcome the new focus that Mayor de Blasio has brought to the subject with his Vision Zero initiative.

Many of the community's elected officials called upon the Mayor to address the danger to pedestrians on Northern Boulevard in Woodside and Jackson Heights, and I am delighted that the City's Department of Transportation has responded by reducing the speed limit on the street by designating it as an Arterial Slow Zone.

Another initiative that will make our streets safer for residents and shoppers is expansion of the speed camera demonstration project we adopted last year to crack down on drivers who violate speed restrictions in school zones. This year's legislation will authorize the City to install 120 speed cameras in the vicinity of schools to clamp down on drivers who violate speed restrictions. The bill, which I sponsored, has now passed both the Assembly and Senate and we expect Governor Cuomo to sign into law shortly.

After the death of a woman on Grand Avenue earlier this year, I met with the NYPD and the City Department of Transportation (DOT) to discuss new measures to improve safety on that street. I am pleased that Borough Commissioner Dalila Hall acted quickly to limit the danger at the intersection of Grand Avenue and 69th Place.

We made great progress for safety on Grand Avenue two years ago when the City finally acted to get big trucks off lower Grand and Flushing Avenues. But since then street safety still is not adequate. Last fall a careless driver plowed into a group of school students walking on

the sidewalk; in January Angela Hurtado was killed by an unlicensed driver making an illegal turn while crossing in the crosswalk. We will continue to look to DOT for other possible safety solutions at other dangerous locations over the coming months, including Grand Avenue and 69th Street, and 53rd Avenue and 65th Place.

We also succeeded on Northern Boulevard where the city has designated a portion of this busy street a Slow Zone in the wake of the tragic death of Noshat Nahian. The eight-year old third-grader at PS 152 lost his life when he was hit by a tractor-trailer truck while crossing at 61st Street.

When cars and pedestrians come into contact, it is always the walkers who lose. I, and all our other elected officials will continue to press the DOT and NYPD to do everything possible to make our streets safer.



OUR CALL IS ANSWERED ON NORTHERN BOULEVARD

– Northern Boulevard is one of the most dangerous roadways in the city for pedestrians. In February, here, we asked for it to get high priority in the Mayor's Vision Zero campaign. We are all grateful that the City DOT has now designated the street as an Arterial Slow Zone to make it safer and help save lives.



STOPPING ILLEGAL DRIVERS – With a warning sign clearly visible at this intersection in Maspeth, an unlicensed driver made an illegal left turn and killed Angela Hurtado in January. This was the second death caused by an unlicensed driver in Western Queens in two weeks, so Senator Mike Gianaris and I came to this intersection to announce introduction of legislation in the Senate and Assembly to crack down on unlicensed drivers who cause accidents. We say that bad drivers should be kept off the road and those who persist in driving when they have had their license revoked should be severely punished. Standing with us are: Councilwoman Liz Crowley, who is working with me to pressure the NYC Department of Transportation to make Grand Avenue safer for pedestrians, Paul Steely-White of Transportation Alternatives, and members of Make Queens Safer and COMET, led by its president, Roe Dario.

Denounce relocation of P.S. 11 students to Astoria

Even after vigorous protests from parents and the community's elected officials, the NYC Department of Education seems to be proceeding with its plan to transport 230 of the youngest students from P.S. 11 to a school in Astoria during construction of expanded facilities at the Woodside School.

P.S. 171 is a half-hour bus ride away from P.S. 11 and is over seven blocks from the nearest subway station, a major inconvenience for parents who need to travel to the school in case of an emergency. The community has long urged construction of permanent classroom space at P.S. 11 and it is cruel to see that the very children to be served by the space are victimized by this plan.

I believe this decision is a heartless one. It seems impossible to me that after we called the issue to their attention that the DOE deliberately continues to choose to send these youngest P.S. 11 children on a three mile bus ride at rush hour in their first year at school. It is too late to correct this unfortunate situation, but I will continue to work with parents and my colleagues to ensure that the Chancellor and Department of Education avoid such ill-advised decisions in the future.



I joined parents and Congressman Joseph Crowley, Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, State Senator Michael Gianaris and Councilmember Jimmy Van Bramer outside the school at one of several protests about the DOE action.

Arts District in Astoria

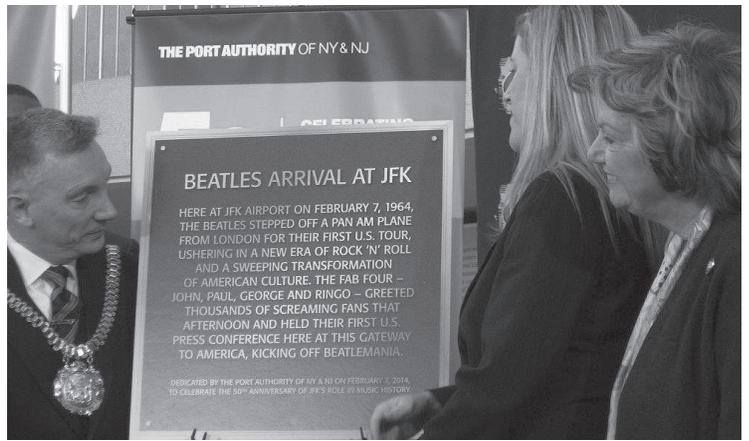
It was terrific to join my colleagues in government and arts and creative leaders to salute the designation of the Kaufman Arts District at a ceremony at Kaufman Astoria Studios. The area surrounding the famed studio is being established in partnership with Kaufman Astoria Studios, the Museum of the Moving Image, and the Queens Council on the Arts.

This designation is recognition of the strong concentration of important cultural and creative resources that have emerged here over recent years and Hal Rosenbluth of Kaufman Astoria Studios, Museum Director Carl Goodman and the Arts Council's Barbara Pryor each spoke about the future growth they see for this vibrant cultural destination and home for creative industries.

As Chair of the Assembly Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development Committee, I am excited about the growth we can expect to see from the expansion of the creative industry here. The Kaufman Arts District promises to become a magnet that will bring more media and creative jobs to Astoria, plus an increased level of artistic activity and larger audiences. It all adds up to a tremendous resource for Queens and New York City.



From left are: Frank Sinatra High School Principal Donna Finn, Assemblywoman Markey, Kaufman Astoria Studio President Hal Rosenbluth, City Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer and Senator Michael Gianaris. Also there was Museum of Moving Image Director Carl Goodman.



CELEBRATE BEATLES ARRIVAL IN QUEENS – As Chair of the Assembly Tourism, Parks, Arts, Sports Development Committee, I was excited to join Liverpool Lord Mayor Gary Millar and Port Authority's Deb Graniccioni in unveiling a historical marker at JFK Airport to mark the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Beatles in America.



LOVE FOR GANTRY PLAZA PARK – May 3rd was "I Love my Park Day" at parks and historic sites all across the state and volunteers turned out to celebrate and spruce up Gantry Plaza State Park on the East River. Gantry was among some 80 other state parks, beaches and historic sites participating in the day organized by Parks & Trails New York advocacy group. I was happy to present an Assembly proclamation to mark the day to, from left: David Bronston, Parks & Trails board member; Mark Christie, Hunters Point Park Conservancy; Bill Bylewski, Hunters Point Parks Conservancy; and David Aglialoro.



Assemblywoman

**Margaret
MARKEY**

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JUNE 2014

**ASSEMBLYWOMAN MARGARET MARKEY
and Woodside on the Move are pleased to present
MOVIES IN THE PARK**

**Windmuller Park Bandshell
52nd Street and 39th Drive, Woodside**

Wednesday, July 16, 8:00 p.m. (sundown)

"Despicable Me 2"

Please be sure to bring your own lawn chairs

**Coming next: "Despicable Me 2" to Juniper Valley Park,
Juniper Blvd. South & 77th Street – Baseball Field**

Wednesday, August 13th, 8:00 p.m. (sundown)

For information call my district office at 718-651-3185