



Assemblywoman

Michele Titus

A Year End Review from

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MICHELE R. TITUS
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THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

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Legislative Women's Caucus
CHAIR
Social Services Committee
COMMITTEES
Children and Families
Codes
Education
Ethics and Guidance
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Criminal Procedures
Foster care

December 2013

Dear Friends,

As the new year approaches, I want to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. It is my top priority to be your voice in Albany. It is a job I take very seriously and am proud to be your state representative. Together, we have addressed ways that we can work together for a better community. I am committed to maintaining the highest level of service to you, our constituents, while tackling an ambitious agenda for change across our district.

The 2013 state legislative session proved again that New York State has turned the corner toward building a brighter future. Working together with Governor Cuomo we passed legislation that will boost our economy, create jobs, and cut taxes. We have fought for equal rights, successfully restored funding to protect our most vulnerable citizens, and raised the minimum wage.

This year marked the state's third consecutive on-time budget. The fiscal plan makes a commitment to putting more money in the pockets of working families by extending a middle-class personal income tax reduction for three more years, locking in the lowest rate in 60 years. We also reduced energy taxes that will save customers \$500 million by fiscal year 2017-18. In addition, working families will benefit from the creation of a \$350 tax credit per child for families with incomes between \$40,000 and \$300,000, which will provide much-needed relief as parents and guardians struggle to meet the ever-rising costs of raising children.

Our communities are only as strong as our schools—that is why I fought for the funding our schools need to provide a quality education. This year's budget invests in our children's future by giving our schools nearly a billion dollars in education funding. The budget also includes \$25 million for full-day and half-day pre-kindergarten grants to allow for more full-day pre-K programs across the state and additional half-day pre-K slots.

In the successful culmination of a long battle waged by the Assembly Majority, the 2013-14 state budget increases the state's minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour by 2016. The Assembly Majority led a strong fight to secure this increase in the minimum wage, voting last year to increase it to \$8.50 per hour and voting twice again this year to raise it to \$9.00 per hour. Raising the minimum wage was the right thing to do for workers and it will put more money into the pockets of those most likely to spend it locally—jump-starting consumer spending and helping to spur the economy. Additionally, in order to help struggling families in tough times, the weekly unemployment benefit will gradually increase from \$405 per week to 50 percent of the state's average weekly wage.

However, this year's legislative session was not just about improving the economy. The Assembly Majority proudly passed the governor's omnibus 10-point Women's Equality Act (A.8070) that I sponsored, to ensure equal rights for New Yorkers. The act contains 10 sweeping points to bring fairness to the women of New York, some of which include strengthening women's health and reproductive rights, equal pay, combating sexual harassment, stronger penalties for human trafficking and increased protections for victims of domestic violence.

For many years, the goals set forth within this act have been top priorities for the Assembly Majority; in fact, we have legislation mirroring aspects of the Women's Equality Act year in and out—despite opposition from misguided opponents. Equal rights for women remain one of my top priorities. It is sad that the governor's Women's Equality Act was not voted on in its entirety in the Senate. I stand with the women of New York State in urging the Senate to vote on the 10-point act.

These are just some of the accomplishments of the 2013 legislative session, but there are many other achievements that must be noted. We passed the most comprehensive gun safety law in the country in order to save lives, increased penalties for repeat child abusers, assisted communities as they rebuild from the devastating effects of Superstorm Sandy, and created a \$1 billion affordable housing program to preserve and create 14,300 affordable housing units, which will also create jobs and stabilize distressed areas.

As we prepare for the new year, our work for the people of New York continues on. I remain committed to getting things done for our hardworking families of the 31st Assembly District. As always, if there is any way that I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me. My office is here to serve you. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have at 718-327-1845 or via email at titusm@assembly.state.ny.us.

With Love and Hope,

Assemblywoman Michele Titus