



Dear Friends,

*This past legislative session proved to be a success through the passage of an on-time 2015-2016 state budget. As we move forward to the next legislative session in Albany, I will continue to fight for our community to ensure we have the resources to thrive in 2015 and in the future.*

*This year's budget includes an increase in the state's education budget over last year, money dedicated to supporting struggling schools, as well as maintaining and expanding New York City's universal Pre-K program. In addition, the final budget invests in economic development throughout New York State and increases access to affordable child care. Further, the budget expands access to affordable housing and protects hard-working families in our community.*

*I am here working for you twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week to address any issues or concerns you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact my district office for more information regarding any of the items listed. I look forward to hearing from you all, and I wish you well.*

Sincerely,

Mike Miller  
Member of Assembly

83-91 Woodhaven Boulevard  
Woodhaven, NY 11421  
718-805-0950

Room 542, LOB  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4621

[millermg@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:millermg@assembly.state.ny.us)

# A GLANCE AT THE STATE BUDGET

## 2015-16 State Budget Puts New York's Families First

*A \$1.6 billion school aid increase, funding of the Higher Education Road to Success among the highlights*

The 2015-16 state budget puts families first by restoring much-needed funding for our schools, making it possible for more students to achieve a college education and helping New York's struggling families. The \$150.3 billion plan also funds numerous economic development projects to create more jobs and continues the state's fiscal discipline by holding spending growth to less than 2 percent for the fifth consecutive year.

"Enacting a good budget means making sure that the priorities important to New York's families are put first," Assemblyman Miller said. "The Assembly Majority stood up for the programs that make a difference in people's lives and secured needed investments that will make New York a stronger place to live, work and do business."

### Investing in our schools

"When it comes to our schools, students have to be our top priority. We must be doing everything we can to ensure they are getting the quality education they deserve," said Assemblyman Miller. "By securing critical increases in funding to ensure our schools have the resources they need, this budget puts students first."

**The budget secures a \$1.6 billion increase in education aid over last year, for a total of \$23 billion.** The funding is tailored to support the schools that need it most, with 68.5 percent going to high-need districts, 25.7 percent going to average-need districts, and 5.8 percent going to low-need districts.

### Building the Higher Education Road to Success

The 2015-16 state budget implements the Higher Education Road to Success by making access to college a priority. Earlier this year, the Assembly Majority unveiled this initiative aimed at increasing the number of students enrolling in, and completing degrees at, colleges and universities. The plan invests in New York's public higher education system and includes an increase in support for SUNY and CUNY community colleges.

The budget supports CUNY programs as follows: **\$500,000 more for CUNY LEADS**, a specially designed academic and career program for students with disabilities, for a total of \$1.5 million in funding.

"Every student in New York should have the opportunity to obtain a college education—it's that simple," Assemblyman Miller said. "The Assembly Majority's Higher Education Road to Success is a firm commitment to our children that we will work to ease barriers to college and help them reach their full potential."

### Investing in economic development

"The budget builds on the progress we've made to strengthen our economy as it recovers from the recession," said Assemblyman Miller. "By continuing to invest in our communities and our workforce, we'll help ensure sustainable economic growth."

The final budget includes \$365,000 in additional funding for the Minority- and Women-owned Business Development and Lending Program, for a total of \$1 million. In addition, funding has been provided to create seven full-time positions at the Department of Economic Development in an effort to increase participation by Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBES) in state contracting.

### Increasing access to affordable child care

"There's no reason anyone should ever have to choose between their child and their job, but increasingly, New Yorkers—especially women—are being forced to make this decision," said Assemblyman Miller. "This budget will help make quality child care more affordable and accessible to the families that need it most."

Based on the findings and recommendations from the Child Care Workgroup, the budget agreement includes nearly \$34 million to improve our child care system and ensure more families have access to the quality, affordable child care they deserve.

### Expanding access to affordable housing

"Housing is a basic necessity, something many of us take for granted. But unfortunately, too many families are struggling to find safe, affordable homes," said Assemblyman Miller. "This year's budget invests in our communities and expands affordable housing options."

The budget provides \$415.6 million for housing and community development programs, allotting \$225 million for repair and rehabilitation programs.

# ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER IN ALBANY AND IN THE COMMUNITY!

## Assemblyman Miller hosts local Vietnam Vets in Albany to honor the late Pat Toro



On March 18, Assemblyman Mike Miller hosted the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 32 in Albany. Assemblyman Miller introduced a resolution in honor of former President of Chapter 32, Pat Toro. Pat Toro was a decorated Vietnam War veteran and former President of the Vietnam Veterans Chapter 32 who worked tirelessly following his military service to provide other veterans with the benefits and the respect that he knew they deserved.

As members of the Vietnam Veterans of America, they honored the sacrifices made by their fellow veterans and work constantly to improve their community. Specifically, the Vietnam Veterans have a program in which they bury indigent and unclaimed veterans who either have no family or cannot afford a proper burial. Assemblyman Miller successfully fought to have the money for indigent burials increased in this year's budget.

## Assemblyman Miller presents awards to four Eagle Scouts



On Saturday March 14, Assemblyman Miller visited Nativity the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Ozone Park to recognize four Boy Scouts achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. The Eagle Scout honorees were: Antonio Cruz; Brian Jensen; Timothy Thomas; and Steven Zombek. Scout Master James Bleakney and Assistant Scout Master Carl Schmitti were also in attendance for the celebration.

## Assemblyman Miller welcomes former Mets legend Pedro Martinez to the Assembly Chamber!



On February 26, Assemblyman Miller welcomed Mets Hall-Of-Fame-bound pitcher Pedro Martinez to the Assembly chamber in Albany. Mr. Martinez made the visit up to Albany in honor of a Dominican Independence Day celebration. Mr. Martinez was a member of the Mets from 2005 until 2008 and is a member of the legendary 3,000 strike-out club. Mr. Martinez will be only the second Dominican-born player in the Hall Of Fame when he is inducted in July.

## Assemblyman Miller fights for the rights of all South-Asian Americans



On Tuesday, March 3, Assemblyman Miller once again hosted the Bengali American Advocacy Group in Albany. The Bengali American Advocacy Group (BAAG) is an umbrella organization which creates, supports, and sponsors initiatives and programs to help Bangladeshis living in the state of New York. Assemblyman Miller is also a co-sponsor of the religious garb bill, which would prohibit workplace discrimination against attire worn for a religious purpose.

## Earth Day Celebration at the Glendale Community Garden!

On April 18, Assemblyman Miller attended the Earth Day Event at the Glendale Community Garden in Glendale, Queens. Participants volunteered in activities such as planting and cleaning the community Garden. Pictured are Assemblyman Miller, police officers from the 104 Precinct, and all of the volunteers who came out to support the community garden.



## Assemblyman Miller embraces our local youth organizations and celebrates the Nepalese New Year in Ridgewood!



On Friday, April 10, Assemblyman Miller (D-Woodhaven) attended the Nepalese American Youth Association's (NAYA) New Year's Celebration at Gottscheer Hall in Ridgewood. The year celebrated was 2072 according to Nepal's calendar. NAYA was formed in late 2014 with the aim to mobilize the growing number of Nepalese American youths residing in the country. Also, NAYA focuses on efforts to contribute to various communities and schools back in Nepal.

## Assemblyman Miller honors the 'Women of Distinction' in our community

On Friday, March 27, Assemblyman Mike Miller hosted a Women of Distinction Awards event and acknowledged



women who have dedicated their time within the community. Assemblyman Miller presented a proclamation to each woman of distinction. The list of honorees are: 1. Laurie Adragna; 2. Lisette Rivera; 3. Nazima Ally; 4. Helen Day; 5. Jacquelin Merckling; 6. Kathy Ryan; 7. Sandra Singh; 8. Ms. Francesca Ferraro; 9. Maria Thomson; 10. Maureen Bermingham; and 11. Carolina Bolanos.

"The women from our community who have been nominated as Women of Distinction are incredible sources of strength to our community. Time and again these women have shown the utmost dedication both in and outside of what is expected of them, reaching into the fabric of our community itself to help foster the sense of pride that so defines the area we call home. These are truly women of distinction, whose abilities and tireless efforts have made their achievements undeniable to anyone even passingly familiar with who they are. It is with strong gratitude that I acknowledge the work these women have done for our community and say thank you," said Assemblyman Miller.

## Assemblyman Miller recognizes our Students of the Month throughout the Community!

On Friday January 9, Assemblyman Mike Miller visited the St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy located in Woodhaven, to recognize the school's students of the month. Assemblyman Mike Miller values our education system and recognizes those students who excel in the classroom every month. Pictured are Assemblyman Miller and Principal Carpenter, Principal of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Academy. The students of the month are (from left to right): Alexander Alvarracin-Battad, Amber Alvarracin-Battad, and Sarah Ramirez.



# Pending legislation affecting our Community:

## Assemblymember Miller introduces legislation to help fund our local veterans organizations

As of September 2014, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates there are over 892,000 veterans in New York. Many of these veterans actively participate and depend on their local American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) posts. Veterans organizations serve active service members and veterans with numerous types of community outreach. Many organizations focus on the transition to civilian life through job training, counseling and support, health-care, and providing information on veteran benefits. In addition, veterans organizations also assist families of veterans during and after military tours.

Since the elimination of member initiative grants, veterans groups such as American Legion and VFW posts have had significant difficulty raising funds to provide needed maintenance to their facilities. These organizations receive support primarily through lo-

cal fundraising efforts. This lack of financial support makes it very difficult to provide much-needed outreach services to aging members and to those returning from tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. It continues to be a challenge to balance operating costs while attempting to raise the necessary funds for capital improvement on their facilities.

The state and municipal facilities program provides much-needed capital funding to state and municipally owned properties including but not limited to school districts, public libraries and New York's public and independent colleges and universities. With capital improvements, these posts can continue providing valuable services to our brave men and women and their families who have served or are currently serving overseas.



Assemblyman  
**Michael  
Miller**

*Reports to the  
People*

**SPRING 2015**

## Equal Pay for Equal Work is Long Overdue

Pay equality for women and men is not a bold or novel idea. It's common sense. Two people doing the same work with the same skill should be compensated equally, regardless of their gender. And yet that's still not the reality in New York State or across the nation.

The reality is that women earn, on average, 78 cents for every dollar earned by men nationwide. Women in New York State make 86 percent of what their male counterparts make. This disparity costs the average American woman and her family an estimated \$700,000 to \$2 million during her lifetime. That's why on Tuesday, April 14, I joined women and men from all walks of life across the country in observance of Equal Pay Day. This occasion is a chance for us to recommit ourselves to the hard work of ending the gender wage gap wherever it persists. April 14th is not an arbitrary date; it represents just how far into the year women must work to earn the same amount of money their male coworkers

made during the previous year—a stark example of just how unfair this disparity is. Declaring this day as Equal Pay Day helps start a conversation about the enormous effects the gender wage gap has on women, their families and our economy as a whole.

As your representative in the state Assembly, I've also made it my priority to fight for laws that bring us closer to ending the gender pay gap once and for all. This year, I'm sponsoring several pieces of legislation that would make pay equity law in New York State, help end wage inequality in public employment, allow for corrective action and provide funding to eliminate wage disparities.

There's no reason that in 2015 we should still be fighting for equal pay for women. It's the right thing to do, plain and simple, and it should not be the subject of controversy. But as long as this fight continues, I remain committed to doing everything in my power to bring our state closer to true pay equality.