



Assemblymember Jim Brennan

REPORTS TO THE PEOPLE

Spring 2016

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Assemblymember Brennan, chair of the New York Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions, joined at a press conference by members of the Riders Alliance, urged Governor Cuomo to fully fund the MTA Capital Plan in the 2016-2017 State budget. A bipartisan letter signed by 35 members of the Assembly to the Governor urged a halt to delays in the program.

State Budget Update

The initial State budget contained a shocking surprise—more than \$700 million in cuts to the City of New York in a time of big surpluses at the State level!!! The two major actions by the State that would have forced these cuts were – 1). a \$485 million shift in the costs of the four year colleges at the City University from the State to the City. The State had taken over financial responsibility for the senior colleges during the fiscal crisis of the 70s and now decided to suddenly transfer part of it back with no prior warning! The second involved a \$250 million cost shift in the Medicaid program back from the State to the City—and one which would grow to over \$1 billion in cuts to the City by 2021. This cut involved excluding the City from a State program to absorb Medicaid cost increases for local governments that had started in 2012. This program had the effect of freezing the cost of Medicaid for local governments, and now the Cuomo administration wanted to have New York City as the only local government in the State to have to absorb their increased costs of Medicaid!! ***I am proud to say the Assembly blocked these two proposals!!***

School Aid

New York City schools will receive a \$525 million, or 5.7% increase in school aid, about the same increase as last year. The City school system will also receive \$35-\$40 million in additional aid for struggling schools. Over the past two years, State aid for the City schools has increased by over \$1 billion. The City also continues to receive 50% reimbursement for all school construction costs—part of an agreement enacted in 2006 related to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit—and the only part of that package designed to increase school funding related to CFE that is still intact. However, part of the overall school aid increase statewide included completion of ending certain cuts in base aid to schools that had remained from the recession. Now that the restoration of those cuts is complete, it frees future State aid to enhance funding for the neediest school districts—New York City especially!!

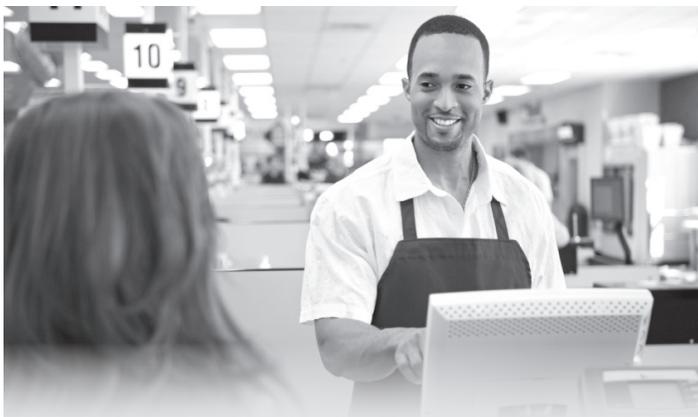
Mass Transit

Although the State and City agreed to jointly fund the MTA Capital Plan last fall, in January the Governor submitted a plan that contained no appropriation for the MTA Capital Plan. The Capital program costs are the investments in the upkeep of the system—replacement of track, signals, subway cars and buses, station renovations, and the expansion projects like the Second Avenue Subway and East Side Access. Instead, the Governor’s budget plan committed the State to provide the funds several years from now. It also left funding for the Second Avenue Subway incomplete, with no direct construction funding until after 2019. The final budget appropriated \$2.9 billion for the MTA including a new \$500 million for the Second Avenue Subway (for a plan total of \$1 billion for the project), and other projects. Continued political discussions are needed because Governor Cuomo’s funding schedule for the main plan, which I tried to change in the budget without success, pushed full funding several years past the 2015-19 cycle.

Higher Education

The Governor’s budget included an authorization for the City and State University to raise tuition. This was prohibited in the final budget. The cost shift, as I mentioned, was rejected as well. SUNY and CUNY were given \$18 million and \$12 million, respectively, in general aid increases, and the university systems were permitted to raise tuition for out-of-state students, which will raise another \$20 million. The Legislature provided additional capital funding, with \$60 million more for SUNY and \$40 million more for CUNY, for modernization and improvements to facilities. Unfortunately, the funds for the retroactive pay raise for CUNY was not in the final budget. Chancellor Milliken, in a statement, said negotiations with the State Division of the Budget were to continue to provide funds for the pay raise.

Budget Update continued on page 2



Minimum Wage

A historic minimum wage increase was enacted at the same time as the State budget. In New York City, workers in businesses with 11 or more employees will see the minimum wage rise \$2.00 per hour each year for three years, with \$15.00 an hour effective December 31, 2018. This December 31, 2016, the minimum wage will go to \$11.00 an hour. For businesses with 10 or fewer employees, \$15.00 an hour will be phased in over four years, with \$15.00 an hour effective by December 31, 2019.



Assemblymember Brennan met with members of the **Flatbush Tenants Council** in Albany where they discussed effective strategies for advocating for the strengthening of the rent laws.



Police Officer Danny McGrath of the **72nd Police Precinct** visited our Park Slope office to introduce Assemblymember Brennan to the new recruits who have been training in the Command.



Assemblymember Jim Brennan is assisted by his staff in Albany crafting the **New York State budget**.

Ethics

The State Assembly passed legislation to restrict the amount of outside income legislators can earn, tighten the rules regarding that type of compensation, and close the LLC loophole. The “LLC loophole” was created by the State Board of Elections in the 1990s after limited liability corporations were allowed in law. The law at that time prohibited a corporation from making a campaign contribution of more than \$5,000. However, the board interpreted contributions from an LLC to be subject to the aggregate limit on individual contributions of \$150,000., since LLC income is passed through to individuals. As the number of LLCs grew, wealthy individuals and corporations began creating dozens of LLCs in which each one could contribute the aggregate individual maximum, enabling millions to be contributed. The Assembly bill ends that practice and returns the limit to \$5,000. The Senate has not acted on this reform or any limit on outside compensation.

Paid Family Leave

We also enacted a historic paid family leave program. New York is now the fifth state in the country to enact a program that helps individuals strike the work-life balance by mandating and guaranteeing paid family leave.

The Paid Family Leave proposal in the enacted budget would gradually provide up to 12 weeks of paid leave benefits for workers, men and women, who have been employed for at least twenty-six or more consecutive weeks. The leave can be used to care for an infant, a family member with a serious health condition, or to ease the burden placed on families when earners are called into active military service.

Benefits will begin in 2018 with 8 weeks of leave payable at 50 percent of an employee’s average weekly wage, up to 50 percent of the statewide average weekly wage, and by 2021, provide up to 12 weeks of leave payable at 67 percent of the employee’s average weekly wage, up to 67 percent of the statewide average weekly wage. This program is self-sustaining and will be funded entirely through a small payroll deduction from each employee.

To learn more about Paid Family Leave, please contact my Albany Legislative Office: (518) 455-5377.



Assemblymember Brennan joins Mohammad (Mo) Razvi, Executive Director of Council of Peoples Organization (COPO), Hafida Torres, Boardmember, NYC Department for the Aging Commissioner Donna M. Corrado, Nawaz Khan, Boardmember Ibrahim Olevic, President, Ejaz Ahmed, Treasurer and Councilmember Jumaane Williams at the **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony** for their new community service center located at 1077 Coney Island Avenue. Since its inception in 2002, COPO has advocated for and assisted low-income immigrant families. The new center includes one-on-one counseling areas, classrooms, a computer lab, and a backyard for after-school recreation/youth programs and community events.



Assemblymember Jim Brennan

GET IN THE KNOW

Community Resource Fair

Community Partners:

Maria Nunziata, Principal PS 130 and Michael Perlberg, Principal MS 839

At the new "Parkside Educational Complex"

713 Caton Avenue (East 7th and East 8th Streets)

Thursday, May 12, 2016
5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.



Participating government agencies and community based organizations will address: **senior and youth services, cultural institutions, quality of life issues, housing (tenant/landlord), utilities, health and fitness**

Brooklyn Borough President's Office ■ Boro Park Jewish Community Council ■ BRIC (Celebrate Brooklyn) ■ Brooklyn Public Library (Mobile Book Van and apply for a library card) ■ Brooklyn Museum ■ Brooklyn Legal Services ■ CAMBA (Legal Services and Food Pantry) ■ CERT ■ Community Board 14 ■ Con Ed ■ Council of Peoples Organization (COPO) ■ Dorchester Senior Center ■ Flatbush Development Corp. ■ Flatbush Tenants Coalition (**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**) ■ Grow NYC (Greenmarkets and Recycling) ■ Heights and Hills ■ Housing and Family Services of Greater New York (**SCRIE and DRIE applications**) ■ IDNYC ■ JASA ■ Lefferts Historic House (**CRAFT PROJECTS FOR CHILDREN**) ■ Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty ■ National Grid ■ Ocean Parkway Community Dev. Corp. ■ Neighborhood Housing Services (**HELP FOR HOME BUYERS AND HOMEOWNERS**) ■ **NYC Comptroller's Office** ■ **New York City Departments:** Aging, Buildings, Environmental Protection, Education, Finance, Fire, Housing Preservation and Development, Human Resources Administration (**SNAP**), Landmarks, MTA, Police (66 and 72 Precincts), Sanitation and Transportation ■ **NYC Public Advocate's Office** ■ **NYS Comptroller's Office (SEARCH FOR UNCLAIMED FUNDS)** ■ NYS Housing and Community Renewal ■ Park Slope Center for Successful Aging ■ Park Slope Civic Council ■ PAL ■ Prospect Park Alliance ■ Senior League of Flatbush ■ T.E.A.L. (Tell Every Amazing Lady) ■ Wildlife Conservation Society (Aquarium and Prospect Park Zoo).

For additional information regarding this **FREE** event, please contact Assemblymember Brennan's office at **718 788-7221**.

Something for Every Age – Services at the Community Resource Fair Include:

- ✓ **Brooklyn Public Library Book Mobile** will be in front of the school providing library services on site. Individuals can apply for **library cards** at the Resource Fair. Please visit www.bklynlibrary.org to determine library card requirements.
- ✓ **Flatbush Tenants Council** will be conducting a workshop for tenants on "Know Your Rights."
- ✓ If you are a senior citizen living in an apartment building with a household income of **\$50,000 or less**, you may be eligible for a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE). Additionally, if you are a named tenant, at least 18 years old, residing in an apartment building with an annual household income of **\$50,000 or less** and receive SSI, SSDI, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs disability pension or compensation, or Disability-related Medicaid, you may be eligible for the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE). **Housing and Family Services of Greater New York** will assist you in completing an application.
- ✓ **Lefferts Historic House** will be engaging **children** with **arts and crafts projects**.
- ✓ **Neighborhood Housing Services** will be conducting a workshop on "**Help for Homebuyers and Homeowners.**"
- ✓ **NYC Department of Environmental Conservation** will be registering individuals for the **FREE Rain Barrel Giveaway Program**. Assemblymember Brennan is partnering with **DEP** and the **Flatbush Development Corp.** on Sunday, June 5th for the distribution of the rain barrels. Please see additional information on **page 4**.
- ✓ **NYC Fire Department** will conduct a **FREE smoke alarm** distribution.
- ✓ **NYC Human Resources Administration** will prescreen for the **SNAP Program** formerly the Food Stamp Program. To determine which documents are needed, visit their website at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/snap-benefits-food-program.page>
- ✓ The **NYC MTA Metro Mobile Card Sales** will be able to assist eligible seniors and people with disabilities in obtaining their half-fare MetroCards.
- ✓ The **NYC Parks Foundation** will provide information on **FREE** arts, sports, educational and community-building programs within NYC parks.
- ✓ The office of the **NYS Comptroller** will assist in searching for **UNCLAIMED FUNDS**.
- ✓ **Ocean Parkway Community Development Corp.** will provide assistance with DRIE and SCRIE applications, pre and post purchase homebuyer counseling and foreclosure prevention counseling.

Looking for a volunteer opportunity? Please visit my website at assembly.state.ny.us/mem/James-F-Brennan and review my online Brooklyn Volunteer Guide. There is an opportunity for every age.



Assemblymember Brennan, joined by Lenore Friedman, Director of the Senior League of Flatbush, presented a NYS Assembly citation to long time Midwood resident **Samuel "Sandy" Saunders** in commemoration of his **100th birthday**. Sandy owned a beauty salon on Newkirk Avenue for 25 years.



Assemblymember Brennan joins Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon on **Dyslexia Day** promoting Assembly Bill **A.4330-A**, legislation that they are cosponsoring, that requires school districts to help students with dyslexia by acknowledging the diagnosis on their Individual Education Plans and providing teachers trained to instruct them. Also in the photo, Ptahra Jeppe, Barbara Lynch, Debra Rafferty (of Decoding Dyslexia) and Dr. Marilyn Bartlett (heads the Ph.D. program in Educational Leadership at Texas A&M).

FREE Rain Barrel Giveaway Program

by Assemblymember Jim Brennan

in partnership with the
New York City Department of Environmental Conservation
and the Flatbush Development Corp.

Sunday, June 5th, 2015

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

1020 Cortelyou Road

(Between Stratford Road and Coney Island Avenue)

The 60-gallon rain barrel is easy to install and connects directly to a property owner's downspout to capture and store the storm water that falls on the rooftop. The water collected in the rain barrel can then be used to water lawns and gardens, or for other outdoor chores. Rain barrels should only be used for non-potable purposes, such as gardening, and must be disconnected from the downspout during the winter months to avoid freezing.

You must register for your FREE rain barrel by telephoning Assemblymember Brennan's office at 718 788-2221 or the Flatbush Development Corp. at 718 859-3800.



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SPRING 2016

SAVE THE DATE! • GET IN THE KNOW

Assemblymember Jim Brennan's

Community Resource Fair

Thursday, May 12th, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

P.S. 130 / M.S. 839

713 Caton Avenue (between East 7th and East 8th Streets)