

News from the Neighborhood

New York State Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol

Winter 2015

HEAP Can Help Reduce High Home-Heating Costs This Winter

We've been fortunate to experience quite a few warm days this fall, but New York's cold winter weather is coming, and that means turning up our thermostats and shouldering the high costs of heating our homes. For those who fall within certain income guidelines, the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is here to help pay those expensive energy bills.

HEAP is a federally funded program providing relief to those who struggle to afford the cost of heat. Whether you own or rent your home, you can apply for direct benefits to help cover the costs of electricity, propane, natural gas, wood, oil, kerosene, coal, or other heating fuels. Repair, replacement, and emergency benefits are also available if your home heating equipment is in danger of failing.

Eligibility for HEAP relies on numerous factors, including income, household size, primary heating source, and whether a member of the household is under the age of 6, over the age of 60, or permanently disabled. However, this season, a household of four

could earn up to \$51,792 per year and still qualify for a one-time benefit of up to \$625 to help heat their home.

Last year, more than 1.4 million households received HEAP benefits. Enrollment for this winter is now open, so if you anticipate difficulty paying your heating bills, I encourage you to contact the New York City Human Resources Administration at 1-800-692-0557, or mybenefits.ny.gov to apply for assistance. To learn more, you can also visit: <http://nyc.gov/html/hra/html/services/energy.shtml>.

As the cost of heating our homes makes it difficult for North Brooklyn households to make ends meet, it's essential that we ensure that working families and elderly New Yorkers have the resources they need to stave off the harsh winter weather. If you have any questions or concerns about this or any other community issue, please don't hesitate to contact my office at lentolj@assembly.state.ny.us, or by calling 718-383-7474.



Greening Greenpoint, a Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund project, celebrated its first tree planting and I was proud to be there! The project will plant new trees and provide care to our community's existing trees. Thank you to the Greening Greenpoint team and the Girl Scouts from St. Stan's for such a memorable kick-off!

EMS Workers Are Now Further Protected from Assault

I sponsored legislation this year that was signed into law earlier this month that increases the penalties for those that assault EMTs and paramedics. The Assembly and Senate worked together to pass this legislation because it is well-deserved by our City's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel. Perhaps we do not say it often enough, but they are indispensable New Yorkers. We were told stories of innocent workers brutally harmed in the course of trying to deliver emergency medical care to individuals.

However incomprehensible it may seem, EMS workers meet each day knowing that they may be intentionally punched, kicked,

or thrown down during emergency calls. It's a problem that must be stopped and one way of accomplishing that is to indict and prosecute those who decide to be violent with stiffer penalties. The word will get out that there is no first responder that you can assault without facing prison time for your actions. When we need emergency medical treatment, we are so happy to see our City's EMS workers speed to our aid. I am happy to say that we have stepped up to protect our EMS workers.



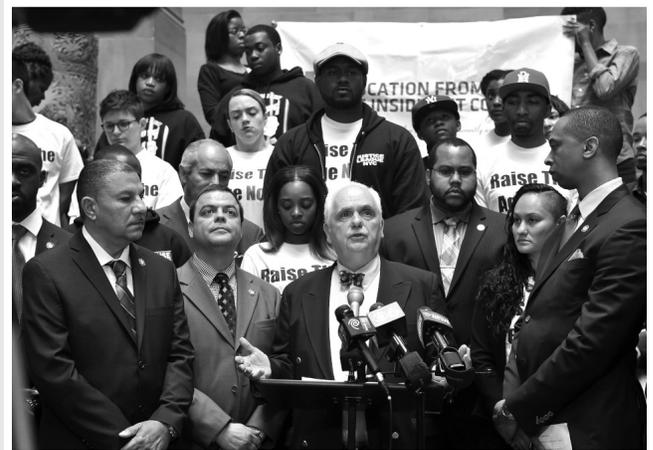
Earlier in September I had the pleasure of attending the Grand Opening of the Pilsudski Institute in Greenpoint. The Institute has dedicated itself to guard the truth about Poland's history in order to protect Poland's image in the world, and to acquaint Americans with Poland's cultural heritage and its contribution to our common American heritage.



Participating in the Pulaski Day Parade was truly an honor. I am very thankful to the Polish Community for allowing me to be a part of this special day.



I was proud to attend the launch of Prosper, the first NYC veteran incubator—in Brooklyn! With appropriate training and development, our veterans will make us proud again as emerging business leaders in New York.



I am pictured here with my Assembly colleagues during the 2015 session fighting to pass legislation I authored that Raises the Age of when a child is considered an adult for the purpose of criminal prosecution. New York is the only state other than North Carolina that prosecutes children as adults once they reach the age of 16. Although the Governor and the Senate did not pass my legislation, on December 21st Governor Andrew Cuomo took a significant step on the issue by granting conditional pardons for about 10,000 16- and 17-year-olds. The Governor's pardon will give these offenders with misdemeanor and non-violent felony convictions at age 16 or 17 pardons after a decade with no subsequent crimes.

Legislation to Remove the Burden of Sidewalk Repair from Homeowners

Earlier this month, I signed on to sponsor a bill that will require municipalities to pay for repairs when a sidewalk is damaged by trees, which will remove the burden of payment from homeowners. This bill will be introduced in January when session convenes. I am hopeful that we will be able to bring this bill to the floor for a vote, and ultimately get the bill signed into law by Governor Cuomo.



I joined the students of P.S. 34 for their Annual Wall of Character Event. They learned about good character and a positive learning environment, which are both crucial for our children to do well in school.



National Night Out Against Crime has been a long-standing tradition where the police and community come together to take a stand against crime. It was a pleasure and an honor to celebrate this year's National Night Out with the 90th and 94th Precincts and the community. Together, we will take a stand against crime in our neighborhood.



Our community deserves the completion of Bushwick Inlet Park! I was proud to stand with my neighbors in calling on the city to complete the park that we were promised. I will continue to rally and stand by the community until this happens.



I was happy to work with the Lennon Bus, a state-of-the-art mobile audio and HD video recording and production facility, to meet with the students of P.S. 84 Jose de Diego Magnet School for the Visual Arts and Sciences. The Lennon Bus' generous donation of musical equipment to the school's newly formed band program is something that is sorely needed when funding for music in our schools has been severely cut.

Legislation We Passed this Year

- We voted to protect our children by expanding the 2011 law banning the chemical TRIS from children's products to include Chlorinated TRIS (TDCPP). (A.4741)
- We increased the penalty when a person subjects another person to sexual contact while they are a passenger aboard a public or private transportation system. (A.4969-B)
- We alleviated the financial burden on victims of sex trafficking that are charged with prostitution crimes. (A.2469-A)
- We helped protect victims of sexual assault by extending orders of protection to conform with probationary periods given to abusers convicted of felony or misdemeanor sexual assault. (A.1797-A)
- We increased the crime victim award from \$5,000 or more to \$10,000 or more without having to prove financial difficulty. These awards help crime victims with expenses like medical bills, counseling and replacing personal property. (A.6943)



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