



News from the Neighborhood

New York State Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol



Students from PS 132 celebrated their 100th day of school by visiting me at my district office in Brooklyn. The students asked incredibly smart questions about what a legislator does and how to become more involved in the community. Thank you to Class 5-306 and Mr. Tramonte for visiting!

THE BUDGET THAT PUTS FAMILIES FIRST

I am happy to announce that the 2016-17 NYS budget has passed. The \$146.7 billion plan invests in education, helps lift families out of poverty, allows more young New Yorkers to get a college education, cuts taxes and helps grow the state economy.

The final state budget is a bold step forward for the working families of our state and paves the way for a brighter future for all New Yorkers. Landmark accomplishments like a robust increase in the minimum wage and paid family leave have long been priorities of the NYS Assembly Majority. New York families will greatly benefit from their enactment.

No New Yorker should have to choose between collecting a paycheck and taking care of a loved one. Paid family leave will ensure that workers can take time off to care for a newborn or sick relative without having to sacrifice their financial security. The state budget also recognizes that every New Yorker who puts in an honest day's work deserves a livable wage and increases the minimum wage to help lift working families out of poverty and give them a pathway to the middle class. The 2016-17 NYS budget recognizes the importance of supporting all New Yorkers. I am happy I was able to support its passage.

Increasing the Minimum Wage and Providing Paid Family Leave

Under the enacted budget, the hourly minimum wage would be increased for workers in New York City employed by large businesses having 11 employees or more, to \$11 at the end of

2016, then by \$2 each year thereafter, to reach \$15 by 2018. For those workers employed by small businesses having fewer than 10 workers within the City of New York, the minimum wage would rise to \$10.50 by the end of 2016, with additional annual increases of \$1.50 each year thereafter, to reach \$15 by 2019. For workers in Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester Counties, the enacted budget would raise the minimum wage to \$10 by the end of 2016, then by an additional \$1 each year until reaching \$15 an hour by 2021.

For low wage workers in the upstate and suburban regions of the state, the minimum wage would increase to \$9.70 at the end of 2016, then by additional annual increases of .70 each year until reaching \$12.50 on 12/31/2020, with incremental annual increases thereafter to reach \$15 on an indexed schedule to be set by the Director of the Division of Budget in consultation with the Department of Labor.

The Paid Family Leave proposal in the enacted budget would gradually provide up to 12 weeks of paid leave benefits for workers who have been employed for at least six-months, 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 employees average weekly wage, up to 67

(continued on page 2)



I stood with my colleagues in government and members of the community on the one year anniversary of the CitiStorage fire to advocate for the completion of the promised Bushwick Inlet Park. This parcel of land was designated to become parkland and I will not stop fighting for our community so that we no longer have to ask, where is our park?



I rallied with community members, tenants' rights advocates and other elected officials in support of the tenants of 94 Franklin Avenue who have been wrongfully and illegally displaced from their homes for the past nine months. Landlords must come to understand that intimidation tactics will not be tolerated and we as a community will stand together to protect the housing rights of all tenants.



As a member of the Public Protection Committee in the New York State Legislature, I joined my colleagues in the Assembly and Senate to conduct a hearing on all matters related to criminal justice, including: law enforcement, first responders, correctional services, homeland security operations, indigent legal services, and many more. This joint hearing is a crucial step towards strengthening our criminal justice laws and examining the current policies that keep New York safe from harm.



Reading can help children increase performance in school and expose them to new worlds, ideas, cultures, and more. I was proud to take part in PS 34's Annual Everyone Loves to Read Day to show that not only is reading important, but it can be fun too!

(continued from page 1)

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.

Finally, the bill will ensure that future scheduled increases to the minimum wage and paid family leave benefits would be carried out only after an evaluation to ensure that such increases would not negatively impact the state and local economies.

Cutting Taxes for the Middle Class

In order to provide additional assistance to working and middle-income families, the budget will cut personal income taxes by \$270 million in 2018 compared to 2017 tax rates. These tax savings will increase to approximately \$3 billion by 2025 when the middle-class tax rate reductions are fully phased in. The cuts would incrementally reduce the middle-class tax rates for single filers earning between \$13,000 and \$200,000, heads of households earning between \$19,500 and \$250,000, and married couples earning between \$26,000 and \$300,000. Tax rates for brackets in these ranges would decrease from the current 5.9 percent, 6.45 percent and 6.65 percent to 5.5 percent, 5.5 percent and 6.0 percent respectively, over eight years. These new tax cuts will benefit up to 6 million New Yorkers.

Aiming to Alleviate Parking in Popular New York Filming Areas

Earlier this year I introduced legislation to suspend alternate side parking rules within a six block radius on the days of permitted film shoots, with the goal of alleviating parking problems.

Permitted film shoots in New York City and throughout the state grant special parking privileges surrounding the filming location for essential vehicles such as equipment trucks, lifts, cranes, campers and honey wagons. Crew or personal cars are not covered by the permit.

Due to film shoot parking restrictions, residents are forced to compete with their neighbors on adjacent streets for the few precious parking spots available. This pressure is compounded because alternate side parking rules are fully enforced, regardless of permitted film shoots.

North Brooklyn is one of the hottest filming areas in all of New York City. While I wholeheartedly support filming and the great economic benefits it brings to our state, I must ensure that your quality of life is not adversely affected. This is a simple, temporary solution that will ease the tension that continues to build between residents and the filming industry.

The parking challenge is a substantial quality of life issue in popular filming neighborhoods. This legislation seeks to balance the requirements of an important industry with the needs of local residents by temporarily suspending alternate side parking rules when filming occurs.

We Are Protecting Tenants

Affordable housing is a scarce and precious resource in many parts of New York, and market forces reward bad behavior by uncaring owners. Unscrupulous and greedy landlords have gone to great lengths to force tenants to vacate their rent regulated homes. Their misdeeds have escaped the scope of current penal law that protects tenants of rent regulated accommodations.

I introduced legislation that will hold landlords accountable when they purposefully sabotage rental units in an effort to make the accommodations uninhabitable. The purpose of this bill is to expand tenant protections by establishing the crime of harassment of a rent regulated tenant in the second degree, a Class A misdemeanor, with a maximum sentence of one year in jail. (A.1497)

Assembly Approves Sunshine Legislation to Provide Public With Greater Access and Disclosure to Government Records

I supported the Assembly's passage of legislation expanding the state's sunshine laws, continuing the Assembly's long-standing commitment to increasing the availability and accessibility of government records to New Yorkers.

Among the other legislative measures that were approved and have been part of the Assembly's sunshine bill package over the years are bills that would:

- clarify that the automatic and blanket denial to requests for records that are filed under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) is prohibited (A.4468).
- increase access to government records that are required to be disclosed under FOIL by waiving government copyrights as a reason for not disclosing a document. Under the bill, the waiver would not apply in cases where the records reflect artistic creation or scientific or academic research, or if the body intends to sell the record to the public unless the agency elects to waive such copyright (A.3489); and
- require the identity of political committees who pay for political communications to be fully disclosed. The bill also imposes penalties on violators who would face a maximum fine of \$1,000 or up to the cost of the communication that was not disclosed, whichever is greater (A.4286-B).

In response to the reality that the internet is the public's tool of choice for accessing information that is important to them, the Assembly would require agencies that maintain websites to permit the online submission of requests for records that are subject to FOIL. This bill would help establish an online FOIL request process that is convenient and cost effective (A.5768).

Legislation That Went Into Effect

We pass important laws in the NYS Assembly. Below are some highlights of legislation signed into law by the Governor at the end of last year:

A.6075 – Expands existing law to prohibit employers from paying women less than men for similar work, even if they work in different locations within the same geographic region. The law also clarifies “bona fide factor other than sex” must be consistent with business necessity like education, training, or experience. Finally, this law makes it easier for women to find out whether they are being fairly treated, and protects them against retaliation for sharing wage information with other employees.

A.5360 – Protects all employees, even those at very small companies that were previously exempt, against sexual harassment. The prior law prevented those persons working for employers with fewer than four employees from filing a complaint with the State. This new law allows complaints regardless of the size of the company.

A.7189 – Allows victims of employment or credit discrimination based on sex to recover attorney's fees.

A.7317 – Prohibits employment discrimination based on an employee's familial status.

A.6354-B – Protects individuals from being discriminated against or evicted from their homes based on their status as victims of domestic violence.

A.506 – Bolsters the state's existing human trafficking measures, increasing penalties for perpetrators, providing training for law enforcement and empowering victims to sue for damages.

A.4272 – Requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations for pregnant employees who may need adjustments in their work schedules or job duties due to pregnancy.

If you would like to read more about any of these new laws, go to www.assembly.state.ny.us. Click on the bill search icon and input the bill number.

UPDATES

L Train Closure

As you may have heard, the L train tube under the East River was severely damaged during Hurricane Sandy and much-needed repair work is slated to begin in 2019. The repair work may require partial or full shutdowns by the MTA and I have been working with my colleagues in government to ensure that the closures have the least amount of impact on businesses and riders. Through our advocacy, the MTA has committed to hosting town hall events throughout Brooklyn and Manhattan to allow for feedback on the potential closures.

At the town halls the MTA will outline their proposals and initial recommendations on ways to mitigate the service disruptions. The MTA will also ask for recommendations from

the community on how to mitigate the disruptions. The first town halls will take place at the beginning of May in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

New Yorkers are resilient and many times the best solutions come from my constituents. I have faith that the process will be fluid and that together we can all solve this seemingly insurmountable service disruption. For up-to-date information on when and where the town halls will take place, please sign up for my e-newsletter at <http://bit.ly/JoeLentolNewsletter> or like my Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/joelentol>. If you do not have access to the internet, please call my office at 718-383-7474 for details.

Swinging 60s Senior Center and Small World Day Care Center

At the end of April, there was a meeting at City Hall with the current owners of the center, elected officials and city representatives. A settlement offer for the center was negotiated. The current owners would be paid \$8.8 million and Conselyea Street Block Association would own the property. The current owners requested time to deliberate on the offer, and a few days later filed for bankruptcy. By filing for bankruptcy, the current owners are stalling the sale of the center.

The solution to securing the Swinging 60s Senior Center and Small World Day Care Center is by using eminent domain. Last legislative session, the necessary legislation to take this

property through eminent domain was passed by the Senate and Assembly majorities. Unfortunately, at that time, the Governor did not feel comfortable signing the bill. Now, the situation has changed. This is not a partisan issue. This is about securing the future of seniors and children. The landlord had a chance to do it the right way, but has refused. We need to pass the legislation again and the Governor needs to sign it into law. I am hopeful that the Governor will see the importance of this senior center and day care center to the community and sign the bill into law during this session.



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- The Budget that Puts Families First
 - We Are Protecting Tenants
- Assembly Approves Sunshine Legislation to Provide Public With Greater Access and Disclosure to Government Records
- **UPDATES: L Train Closure and Swinging 60s Senior Center and Small World Day Care Center**