

New York State Assemblyman Félix W. Ortiz
Chair, Cities Committee
Chair, Puerto Rican and Hispanic Task Force



LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

April 2014

Dear Friends,

The 2014 Legislative session is a successful one, counting the passage of our fourth consecutive on-time budget. Topping the list of benefits to our community is a well-developed, long-term investment in our children. Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) is now a reality and with it a commitment to provide each child an education, beginning with new funding for child care, a bond act to improve technology in the classroom, and an increase in college tuition assistance programs. As demanded by parents and teachers, Common Core was limited in its implementation until it is fully ready to aid in student learning, protect students against unfair testing and help teachers in the classroom. As we move forward, I will continue to work toward meeting the needs of our schools, teachers and students.

I have fought for you on issues including education, good paying jobs with benefits and a raise in the minimum wage, affordable housing, senior care, immigration reform, veterans' needs, public safety, the environment and access to quality health care for everyone. I welcome your feedback through office visits, calls, letters and emails. Please continue to keep me informed of issues that matter to you. See you around the neighborhood!

Sincerely,

Félix W. Ortiz
Member of Assembly

Ortiz takes leadership role in bringing **UNIVERSAL PRE-K TO NEW YORK'S CHILDREN**

As Chair of the Assembly Puerto Rican and Hispanic Task Force and the Committee on Cities, there was no bigger issue this Session for Assemblyman Ortiz than working to pass the



state's first Universal Pre-K program and a budget that ensured access to a quality education for every child. The fight for pas-

sage of these measures included the efforts of newly elected Mayor Bill de Blasio whose leadership along with Assemblyman Ortiz helped to pass this innovative legislation. New York's children win! Assemblyman Ortiz extended a warm and hearty thank you to all who traveled to Albany to join the fight and whose voices rose in unison to make this effort a great success!



Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan visited Albany to voice his support for tuition tax credits for students attending non-public schools. Assemblyman Ortiz joined voices with Cardinal Dolan in calling for equal educational opportunities for all students.



**Award winning actress
Cynthia Nixon lobbies for
more education funding**

Assemblyman Ortiz discussed issues affecting New York's children with actress Cynthia Nixon who called a press conference in Albany to urge the Governor to increase education aid. This year's funding increased by 5.3%.



Assemblyman Ortiz aided parents and representatives from PS 24 in applying for the new Universal Pre-K program for their school in Sunset Park.

Questions, comments, suggestions and invitations to community events are always welcome!

CONTACT ASSEMBLYMAN ORTIZ AT:

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or call the District Office at (718) 492-6334 or the Albany office at (518) 455-3821

STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Opening More Affordable Child Care Slots for Working Families

In addition to investing in Universal Pre-K, the state budget increased funding to add more subsidized child care slots for families in need. The budget bill also overlooks the income of workers living in the household, under the age of 18, for purposes of applying for child care assistance.

Boosting College Tuition Assistance Programs

The maximum TAP award will be increased by \$165 for an award of \$5,165 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student. The budget also provides a 3% increase for the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), the Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) program and the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP).

Supporting Families by Improving the Criminal Justice System

New York is one of only two states prosecuting 16 and 17 year-olds as adults. To aid families with children in the system, the Legislature increased funding for legal services and community justice programs such as Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI), immigrant legal services, the New York State Defenders Association and the Office of Indigent Legal Services. Additionally, funding was added for Prisoners' Legal Services, and for domestic violence-related civil and criminal legal services providers.

Salary Increase for Caregivers of the Elderly and Disabled

The state budget includes a 2% COLA increase for direct care workers, including those caring for the disabled at nonprofits licensed by the state. The first increase will go into effect on January 1, 2015 and the second on April 1, 2015.

Tax Credits and Rent Relief to Make Housing More Affordable

Under this year's budget, homeowners, renters, condos and co-op owners will be eligible for a "circuit breaker" tax credit to offset rising housing costs. Also, the eligibility level for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) will be raised from \$29,000 to \$50,000, allowing more seniors to have their rents frozen.



Ms. Vilma Heramia, Executive Director of the Carroll Garden Association and representatives from the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) met with Assemblyman Ortiz to discuss their work in the community and to ask for continued funding. They were well received and funding was included in the budget for NPP for its help revitalizing and strengthening neighborhoods. Also receiving funding was the NYC Housing Authority Tenant Watch Program.



Assemblyman Ortiz celebrates the Chinese New Year with dignitaries from the Brooklyn Chinese community along with other elected state and city officials.



Local 1199 SEIU workers rallied in Albany to bring attention to the need to support the care of nursing home residents. In order to ensure that people will have a long-term care health plan, these workers are helping to enroll more people in Medicaid when they enter the nursing home.

Restoring Public Trust in Government

The budget includes provisions to increase transparency in government and strengthens laws to penalize government officials who misuse their power and office. A new series of crimes is created for violating the public trust by defrauding or stealing from the state or local governments. It bans those convicted of public corruption felonies from holding any further elected office, serving as a lobbyist or doing business with the state. It also creates a new enforcement unit at the state Board of Elections to investigate the use of campaign funds and election activities.



The Ongoing Struggle for Campaign Finance Reform and Fair Elections

"During my first term in office, I introduced a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill that continues to be strongly supported by fair election advocates across the country. While the Assembly has passed portions of my bill, the Senate remains an obstacle to change. If we are to enact true campaign finance reforms, we must speak in unison and push for more accountability and transparency in our government and our election process," stated Assemblyman Ortiz.

Assemblyman Ortiz stands firm in safeguarding the environment

Assemblyman Ortiz believes that future generations are owed an environmentally healthy planet and that we must work together to protect our natural resources. He supports clean energy and increasing the use of solar power as an energy alternative. He stands strongly against the use of hydrofracking. The new budget continues a commitment to protecting New York's environment by increasing funding to the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) by \$9 million – for a total of \$162 million. Ortiz also supports the state's newly planned weather station and college to better prepare New Yorkers for future weather-related disasters.

NO HYDROFRACKING

This year, Assemblyman Ortiz's focus has been on cleaning up the brownfields in Brooklyn to make room for more affordable housing units, and on clearing up all issues within our community from the impact of Hurricane Sandy. Ortiz is working directly with President Obama's administration along with Senators Gillibrand and Schumer and Mayor de Blasio in a federal, state and local collaboration. Assemblyman Ortiz is working to make sure that recovery funds are streamlined and that the federal, state and city agencies are monitoring the quality of New York's air and water resources.

Assemblyman Félix Ortiz keeps **DREAM ACT ALIVE AT SOMOS CONFERENCE**

Assemblyman Ortiz led the 27th Annual Spring Somos Conference in Albany in March, keeping the Dream Act at the center of discussion. After the Senate failed to pass the bill, Assemblyman Ortiz rallied Hispanic legislators to meet with Governor Cuomo to gain his support. The meeting resulted in Governor Cuomo committing to work with Chairman Ortiz and his Hispanic Task Force Members to put pressure on the State Senate to reconsider the bill and make the Dream Act a reality for students.



Military veterans win as new Ortiz law gives returning **VETERANS START UP BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

Assemblyman Félix Ortiz declared victory for New York Veterans this session when both houses of the Legislature passed into law his Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act. The law sets a 6% participation goal for state contracts to be awarded to service-disabled veteran-owned businesses. Assistance is available to help veterans apply for contracts or to learn more about this and other employment opportunities. For more information call Ortiz's office at (718) 492-6334.



RULES REPORT--SPECIAL ORDER ON SECOND & THIRD READING
 RULES REPORT 25 S6865 A9135
 BALL ORTIZ (MS)
 Exec. L. - Enacts the "Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act"
 Tuesday March 25, 2014 ASSEMBLY CAL. 41A PAGE 03

"Veterans and their families need to know that we appreciate their service and their sacrifices and they are not alone once they return home. Giving them an opportunity at financial stability and success is a moral obligation that New York has embraced with open arms."

— Assemblyman Félix W. Ortiz
 Veteran



TWU Local 100 members and Union President John Samuelsen traveled to Albany to build support for Assembly Bill 6974 which would allow veterans in public service jobs to obtain pension credit for military service. Assemblyman Ortiz pledged his strong support.

Assemblyman Ortiz and Senator Gillibrand join forces to **FIGHT VIOLENCE AND SEX CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN**

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand joined Assemblyman Ortiz at the 2014 Annual Spring Somos Conference where she spoke about her fight in Washington to protect women against sexual harassment in the military. The issue of crimes and violence against women is a worldwide epidemic. Assemblyman Ortiz and Senator Gillibrand are working together to raise awareness of the magnitude of crimes against women, including domestic violence, teenage dating violence, rape, assault, sex trafficking, and sexual harassment. Ortiz and Gillibrand are pushing to strengthen and add new federal, state and local laws, increasing penalties and making it easier to arrest perpetrators and those who threaten the safety of women and their children. They urge women to seek immediate help and protection when threatened with any violence.



ATTENTION COLD WAR VETERANS

New York Veterans who served our country during the cold war are now eligible for an official State Cold War Certificate. You are eligible to for a certificate if you served in the military and were honorably discharged between September 2, 1945 and December 26, 1991.

To request a certificate go to: <http://dmna.ny.gov/awards> or call 518-591-5296 or visit my District Office at 404 5th Avenue, Brooklyn.



Assemblyman
Félix W. Ortiz
 Working for
 our community
 in Albany and Brooklyn

Assemblyman Félix Ortiz rallies to raise awareness of TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Assemblyman Ortiz joined hundreds of New Yorkers walking across the Brooklyn Bridge to heighten awareness of teen dating violence. The march raised awareness of the seriousness of teen dating violence and called on teen victims to warn friends to watch for the signs of potential offenders and to speak out if it happens to them.



Assemblyman Ortiz attended a recent Community Board 7 meeting to inform the community about the work he is doing in Albany on their behalf. This month he informed attendees he had secured passage of a bill through the Assembly called Brianna's Law. The bill was named after a young girl from our community, Brianna Ojeda, whose life may have been saved if a police officer had been properly trained in CPR. The legislation, sponsored by Assemblyman Ortiz, would make it mandatory for all members of the NYPD to receive CPR training every two years. The bill must pass the Senate to become law.

Success achieved to SAVE BROOKLYN'S HOSPITALS

Assemblyman Ortiz, Governor Cuomo, Mayor de Blasio, and other Brooklyn legislators called on the federal government to grant a waiver which would allow New York to reinvest \$10 billion in Medicaid to help keep afloat two Brooklyn-based hospitals, Interfaith Medical Center and Long Island College Hospital. As a result of pressure brought by the Brooklyn elected officials, the waiver of \$8 billion was granted and the hospitals remain open, saving community health services and jobs.



Assemblyman Ortiz held a press conference on opening day of the Legislative Session to bring awareness of obesity among teenagers. Speaking at the conference were the "winners" from the Biggest Loser television show where contestants who lost the most weight were awarded prizes and regained their lives. The winners were helping Ortiz spread the message that healthy eating choices must start early to prevent diseases brought about by obesity.



Lutheran Family Health Center advocates visited Albany to thank Assemblyman Ortiz for his strong support of their health and education programs. The group discussed how the Center's comprehensive primary care program has improved their lives and asked for additional funding in this year's state budget.

Red Hook fire calls into question safety of electrical system

Assemblyman Félix Ortiz was at the scene of a recent fire in the Red Hook West apartments and questioned the safety and stability of the electrical wiring in the wake of damage caused by Hurricane Sandy. Ortiz has been the leading voice engaging help from the federal, state and city government agencies to rebuild after the storm. He met with Shola Olatoye, Chair & Chief Executive Officer of New York City Housing Authority, and Lillie Marshall, President of the Red Hook West Tenant Association, where the fire remains under investigation.



Assemblyman Ortiz rallied with a coalition of NYC labor unions to call for the responsible development of structures, decent paying jobs, worker safety, and quality job training. Rallies are planned around the city to



bring awareness to the need for well-planned, safe community growth, by "Build Up NYC" and a coalition of concerned working men and women including members from unions SEIU 32BJ, the Hotel Workers, Iron Workers, and Communications Workers.