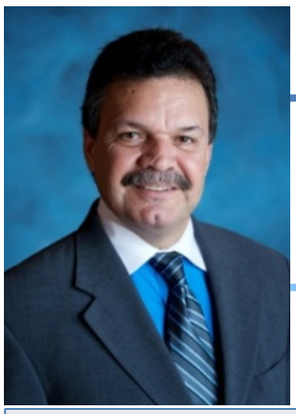


New York State Assembly Weekly Report

From Assistant Speaker

FELIX W. ORTIZ

FEBRUARY 29TH, 2016

NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S SODIUM WARNING RULE MAKING NYC THE FIRST U.S. MUNICIPALITY TO REQUIRE CHAIN RESTAURANTS TO POST SODIUM WARNINGS

On February 24, a State Supreme Court judge upheld New York City's new sodium warning rule, allowing the city to enforce a rule requiring chain restaurants to post salt icons next to items with 2,300 milligrams or more of sodium – the total recommended daily limit. The sodium warning rule was unanimously passed in 2015 by the New York City Board of Health and calls for chains with 15 or more locations nationwide to comply with the new requirement before March 1, without receiving a fine.

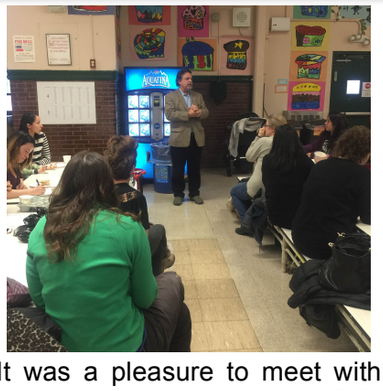
Now that the courts have spoken and New York City has set the standard for high sodium labeling on restaurant menus, I will make sure to do my part to see that this new rule is applied statewide with my legislation in the Assembly (A8266). We cannot wait for the federal government to create new sodium guidelines. New Yorkers deserve to know what is in the food they order to make better choices.

The State Assembly's Annual State Economic and Revenue Report was recently posted on the NYS Assembly webpage. This report, containing data and analysis, is critical to the Assembly's work with the Governor and the Senate in the adoption of a state budget that is fiscally prudent and passed on-time. You can read a copy of it at http://assembly.state.ny.us/Press/20160224a/

Members of the Food Bank of NYC met with me in my Albany Office to discuss budget issues and an increase in funding. The demand of services has increased at the Food Bank of NYC requiring a discussion on how to maintain their necessary expenses for utilities, utensils and minimum wage.

The New York City Fire Department and "Get Alarmed NYC" hosted a fire safety education and fire alarm giveaway at my District Office in Brooklyn on February 26th. The event helped inform residents about fire safety and securing their homes.

I had the pleasure to meet with veterans from the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization. We discussed my legislation (A.6114) that establishes a certified peer counselors program for veterans who suffer from mental illness, alcohol abuse, and/or chemical dependence.



It was a pleasure to meet with parents and teachers at P.S. 295's PTA meeting. Their meetings let me follow the pulse of the community and stay in touch on community issues.

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Please learn about two important health issues at these websites:

Find a facility that can help people batteling eating disorders at: http://columbiapsychiatry.org/eatingdisorders/directions

Register and become an organ donor at: http://donatelife.net/?s=new+york

If you have a comment or suggestion regarding the upcoming year and 2016 session, please send an email, "like" the Facebook page and follow on Twitter.

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Senior NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) officials provided me with a briefing on the Gowanus Expressway upgrade project. The state has worked with me to complete several improvements residents have requested, including cleaning up trash and improving lighting under the highway. I am pleased that my efforts to enhance 3rd Avenue's appearance will result in the planting of dozens of trees along 3rd Avenue between 19th and 61st Streets. The state has also worked with city officials to rebuild the seating area on 64th Street. Please continue to let me know of your concerns at the Gowanus construction site by calling my District Office and letting the staff know of problems or suggestions.