



Assemblyman
**HERMAN D.
FARRELL, JR.**

*Reports to the People
of the 71st Assembly District*

*Happy Holidays
and a
Healthy New Year*

Winter 2013 - 2014

NEWS AND HAPPENINGS IN RIVERBANK STATE PARK



Working to Correct Problems

Photo above left: Assemblyman Farrell has been meeting with State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey (at left) and L. Ann Rucker of Friends of Riverbank (at right) to work on correcting problems with drainage, odor and mosquitoes that have occurred lately in Riverbank State Park. Several weeks later, an important higher education event was held at Riverbank.



Attending the Annual Historically Black Colleges Fair

Photo above right: Every November, the New York Urban League hosts a gathering of prospective students and historically African-American colleges and universities at Riverbank State Park. Every year, I make it a point to attend this event and offer my encouragement to these young people, as I have always believed that education is the key to unlocking the possibilities of life.

FARRELL SPONSORS TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Thursday, Jan. 16, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Moriah Senior Center
90 Bennett Avenue
(near W. 186th Street)

Friday, Jan. 17, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Esplanade Gardens
North Community Room
133 W. 147th St., Building #3

Saturday, Jan. 18, 2014

11:00 a.m.

Church of Intercession
550 W. 155th St.
(between Broadway and Amsterdam)

Thursday, Jan. 23, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Fortune Society
625 W. 147th St.

MILDRED WILLIAMS SUTHERLAND HONORED FOR WORK IN THE COMMUNITY



On November 23, Assemblyman Farrell, Congressman Rangel and other community leaders gathered at 152nd Street and Broadway to honor the late Mildred Williams Sutherland for her 70 years of work to improve the community. Our community will sorely miss her.

Her dedication to youth was shown in her nearly 40 years of service with the Department of Education, with many of those years spent at PS 132. Other good works included church service, leadership of the Tenants' Association of 534 West 152nd Street, and 15 years as Executive Vice President of the Friends of Music for Junior High School Pupils in Manhattan.

CLINKSCALES PARK SCHEDULED TO OPEN IN EARLY 2014

A project that began in the late 1990s to establish and build a park and community playground for children who live near 146th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues is on schedule to be completed early this year. Funding for the new park named for the late Robert Clinkscales was secured two years ago and as of now most of the work is complete. A few weeks ago, workers poured concrete for the spray shower area, and the job should wrap up soon.

Much of the credit must go to the Clinkscales family, who have worked hard for years to see their late relative's dream come to pass, and Councilman Robert Jackson, who was able to get the City to pay for much of the project. It has been a pleasure to support their efforts.

SUPPORTING QUALITY HEALTH CARE IN THE COMMUNITY



Assemblyman Farrell joined elected officials and members of the community for a December 5, 2013 event during which Councilmember Robert Jackson presented a ceremonial check for \$1 million to the Community League of the Heights in support of their efforts to provide quality, affordable health care in the community. The Community League Health Center recently opened at 511 West 157th Street.

Dear Neighbor,

I hope that you have been enjoying a happy and healthy holiday season. The 2014 Legislative Session will soon begin with the Governor's State of the State speech which will unveil his budget plans for State Fiscal Year 2014-2015 and his legislative priorities. The first day of the Session is January 8, 2014.

Cutting Taxes a Key Part of Gov. Cuomo's Agenda

We already know that one of the Governor's top priorities will be cutting taxes. As you know, we New Yorkers enjoy robust services compared to residents of other states, and these programs cost money to run. This quality of life is paid for in a variety of ways including income taxes, sales taxes, fees and property taxes. Here in New York City, property taxes are not a great concern for many but Upstate, property taxes are a concern.

Assembly Seeks Assistance for Low-Income Workers

For the last few years, a tax cap has been in place that stops the tax levy from rising more than 2 percent year-to-year, but this is not enough and many are asking for more tax relief. In the coming months, the Governor will be negotiating with the Assembly and Senate in order to achieve this goal. Our discussions will also include a so-called "circuit breaker" for property taxes, increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit (see story at right) and funding universal Pre-Kindergarten.

Plan to Legalize Mixed Martial Arts in New York Taking Shape

Another major issue during our 2014 Session will likely be Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) bouts, which have been illegal in New York State since the 1990s. This popular form of sports entertainment has been profitable for the states where these bouts are legal, but New York has maintained its ban despite pressure from lobbyists and fans who support legalizing MMA.

One of the problems is that MMA fighters, like other contact sport athletes, can develop traumatic brain injuries. As you may know, research has shown that athletes who suffer repeated blows to the head can have problems with thinking and learning. In many cases professional football players, boxers and other contact sport athletes have been known to suffer brain injuries that are tied to their participation in sports. The effects of some brain injuries do not show up for many years, in some cases not until long after the athlete has retired.

Protecting Athletes Against Future Injuries

In the coming year, I will support legalizing Mixed Martial Arts in New York State as long as a very important condition is met. Fight promoters must agree to set aside a percentage of their profits from each fight and use those funds to treat future brain problems that MMA fighters may develop. This program would be similar to the workers' compensation program. All fight promoters would be required to pay into this pool, insuring fighters who would be considered employees.

Assembly Majority Fighting for Students, Tenants, Women's Rights

The Assembly's Majority Conference will have other priorities that we wish to see signed into law. These may include funding for education, finishing a 10-part package of women's equality legislation that passed the Assembly but stalled in the Senate in June of 2013, strengthening housing laws, reducing the penalty for minor marijuana possession, protecting workers' rights, tougher ethics laws, raising the minimum wage and passing the DREAM Act which would allow students with at least one immigrant parent to file for State financial aid to pursue their higher education goals.

As we move forward toward these important goals and passing an on-time budget for State Fiscal Year 2014-2015, I suggest that you keep track of the events in Albany and here at by visiting my Assembly Web site, www.assembly.state.ny.us.

Don't Forget the Earned Income Tax Credit

There has been discussion in Albany of Governor Cuomo's plan to cut taxes during 2014. One part of that discussion has been the possibility of increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is a joint State and Federal tax program that has kept many low-income workers off of public assistance. The State already provides 30 percent above the Federal EITC benefit and it may come to pass that the State will pay a larger percentage, which could help low-income families.

All Who Receive Federal EITC Eligible for State Tax Credit

Everyone who qualifies for the Federal program can receive the State credit. Generally, to claim the EITC, workers must have a valid Social Security number, must have earned income from working or running a business, and cannot file their taxes as married filing separately. These workers also cannot be claimed as the dependent of another worker, cannot have foreign income that year, and must meet certain income criteria. A married couple with three children who earn below \$51,567 can claim the EITC. Special rules apply for the military and the clergy.

This program can be very helpful to workers with children. In 2013, the maximum Federal credit for a family with three or more children was \$6,044; \$5,372 with two children; \$3,250 with one child and \$487 with no children. A family with three children can receive a maximum combined State and Federal tax credit of around \$8,000.

Program Can Provide Real Help to Low-Income Workers

To qualify, a child must live in your home for at least half the year, be no older than age 19 or be a full-time student up to age 24, or be permanently disabled. Middle-income filers generally receive a larger credit, up to a point, after which the benefits of the EITC are less. Households reporting an income between \$12,000 and \$16,000 generally receive the greatest benefit of this program, an average State credit of \$1,625 for a family with three or more children, plus the much larger Federal EITC credit.

Tax Help From IRS Volunteers Available

The IRS offers free help for low-income workers who need help filing their tax returns. AARP also offers assistance. You will need to bring photo ID and Social Security cards, your W-2 and other tax forms, a statement from your child's day care showing payments, and a copy of your tax forms from last year. If you are filing electronically, both spouses will need to sign the forms, and filers who want direct deposit should provide their account and routing numbers.

For more information, please visit www.irs.gov or call the local IRS office, located at 2283 Third Ave. near 125th Street, at (718) 536-3699.

Again, I wish you and yours . . .

*Happy Holidays and a
Healthy New Year,*

Herman D. Farrell, Jr.

ASSEMBLYMAN FARRELL'S COMMUNITY OFFICE INFORMATION

I maintain full-time bilingual offices to serve you. If you need my help, you may contact me at any of my offices.

2541-55 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd. • 212-234-1430 • Monday — Friday: 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

751 W. 183rd St. • 212-568-2828 • Monday — Friday: 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

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