

A \$15 MINIMUM WAGE AND AN ENDURING COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

For years, the Assembly's Majority Conference has fought for a living wage that puts hardworking families on the path to success and independence, rather than send them down a slow road to poverty. This year's budget agreement marks an important victory in that struggle. In New York City, the minimum wage will increase to \$11 by the end of 2016 and then by \$2 each year thereafter, reaching \$15 by 2018. Those who work for companies with less than 10 employees will see their wages rise more slowly to avoid harming small businesses, reaching a \$15 wage by 2019.

Critics of a higher minimum wage claim, as they always do, that ensuring workers better pay will lead to job losses and will harm the economy. My reply is that if this were the truth, our society would have made no progress beyond living in caves and wearing animal skins to protect us from the cold. The automaker Henry Ford, who was not a person known for his generosity, paid his workers a fair wage so they were able to afford the cars they made. That speaks volumes.

As one of my Assembly colleagues pointed out during our floor debate on the bill that raised the wage, we are not hurting New York State small businesses. We are giving them new customers.

2016-2017 Budget Includes New Funding and Programs to Ease Homelessness

As the cost of living in Manhattan and New York City as a whole has continued to skyrocket, we have seen a disturbing increase in homelessness. It is tragic enough when any person becomes homeless, such as in the many cases when a member of the armed services returns to an uncertain future in civilian life with little support, or a person suffering mental illness lives on the street without adequate treatment. In many cases we are seeing entire families lose their housing and end up either on the streets, in shelters, or in other insecure housing situations. I think we can all agree that something must be done about this problem, and it must be done now.

Prevention May Be Key to Reducing the Problem of Homelessness

It is my belief that the key to reducing homelessness in New York City is stopping evictions from happening before individuals and families lose their homes. Along with my Assembly colleague Keith Wright, who chairs our Housing Committee, the Assembly Majority Conference fought to get new money and programs into the budget for State Fiscal Year 2016-2017 to address these needs.

Budget Creates and Funds Programs to Reduce Homelessness

Along with Governor Cuomo and our colleagues in the Assembly Majority Conference, we got funding into the budget for programs like *Solutions to End Homelessness*, which offers special resources to those who are at risk of losing housing. Funding was also appropriated to strengthen supportive housing programs which get individuals and families off the streets and out of shelters at a lower cost than most shelter placements.

Gov. Cuomo Pledges 6,000 New Units of Affordable Housing

Governor Cuomo has also proposed the construction of at least 6,000 units of affordable housing over the coming five years, and the Assembly's Majority Conference strongly supports new affordable housing. In Albany, I have fought to ensure that our communities receive their fair share of that important new commitment.

Because of the complexity of the ongoing problem of homelessness, and the constantly shifting needs of those who are on the front lines and are addressing this problem day-to-day, details of these programs and how they will be implemented are being worked out between the Governor's office and the Legislature.

Many of the problems at hand are problems we have dealt with before, so strategies to deal with these problems exist, but we are taking a careful and measured approach to addressing the problem of homelessness to be sure we are spending public funds wisely and responsibly in a way that will have a positive impact on the problem.

Dear Neighbor,

I hope that you and yours are having a wonderful summer. Since the Legislative Session ended in late June my staff and I have been hard at work here at home in the District, supporting important projects and programs, and explaining to constituents how this year's legislative accomplishments (which include a \$15 minimum wage, paid family leave and a major commitment to affordable housing) can improve the quality of life.

As we prepare to send our young learners back to school, I should also note that the Assembly Majority was again successful in extending Mayor de Blasio's legal right to run our City's public schools, but unfortunately we were not able to get everything we wanted. Because mayoral control of public schools is a matter of State law, the Senate was able to make it harder for the Mayor to do his job, no matter how hard we in the Assembly fought to protect our schools and our students.

My Assembly colleagues and I fought for a bill that would have extended mayoral control for three years, a period of time that was supported by Governor Cuomo. However, the Senate not only called for an extension of only one year but also imposed new conditions upon the Mayor which may make his job of educating our young people harder. Because the mayoral control law was set to expire on June 30 we had no choice but to accept this bad deal for fear of throwing our entire public school system into chaos.



Mayor de Blasio testified in Albany about the need to continue mayoral control of City schools.

On a more positive note, the \$154.9 billion budget we passed this Spring made an unprecedented commitment to education, increasing aid to schools by \$1.47 billion or 6.3 percent. We were also able to increase Foundation Aid to schools by \$627 million to help insure that all schools are fairly funded and set aside \$2 billion to increase the use of technology in the classroom plus many other important programs.

To close, on a personal note, I was delighted to once again be able to offer scholarships to young people in our community. As you may know, the Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators raises money at the Caucus Weekend it holds every February in Albany. Funds raised during those events are distributed to members, including myself, to pass along to young people in our communities in support of their higher education goals. I always enjoy when these scholarship winners come to visit us at the District Office years later to introduce their young families and tell us about their lives and goals for the future.

Yours truly,

Denny

MEET THE 2016 HERMAN D. FARRELL, JR. SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

Every February, the Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators raises money during its annual Caucus Weekend event in Albany and passes along those funds to members to award as scholarships to hardworking students who are seeking to further their higher education.

Tamara Jones, who graduated from Frederick Douglass Academy where she mastered many advanced courses, wrote and submitted an inspiring essay about overcoming adversity and finding strength in community. She plans to attend Albright College and major in social work before returning to our community to work with children in difficult situations.

Alexis Davis, a member of Democracy Prep's Class of 2016, also shared an inspiring story of overcoming difficult circumstances and tells me she is the first woman in her family to aspire to higher education. She is enrolled in the University at Albany this Fall and plans to study criminal psychology.

Marcella Erving, who attended Harlem Village Academies, intends to pursue a career in graphic design and hopes to attend the Fashion Institute of Technology. Her artwork has been shown in venues as varied as City College and a 'pop-up' art gallery downtown.

I hope that you will join me in congratulating these outstanding young people, and wishing them great success in the future.



GRAND OPENING FOR NEW HCCI FACILITY HELD JUNE 22

I am pleased to announce that a new Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement building on 153rd Street which will contain a day care, affordable housing and social service offices is complete. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Wednesday, June 22. I attended the 2014 groundbreaking for this important project, which was described in an earlier newsletter.

This important new facility, which I was very pleased to support, will contain a 10,000-square-foot day care that we were able to fund in the State budget and affordable apartments, some of which will be set aside for families who had been homeless.

RESIDENCES AT PS 186 TO OPEN DURING 2016

I am also pleased to announce that the renovation of the former PS 186 is scheduled to be complete this year. The project's managers stated that the apartments in this beautiful building would be filled by lottery. While the application period to be among the first tenants has closed, it is good to know that residents of Northern Manhattan will have access to these high-quality, affordable apartments as we move forward. Please see my Web site at nyassembly.gov for all the latest news on this important issue.



Assemblyman
**HERMAN D.
FARRELL, JR.**
*Reports to the
People of the
71st Assembly District*

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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 either of my offices.

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