



Assemblymember

# SHELLEY MAYER

Spring 2014

## Community Newsletter

### Your Perspective Matters

Dear Neighbor:

Throughout the New York State budget process, which recently concluded, I have advocated for the needs of Yonkers residents. On issues ranging from education and aid to municipalities to challenges facing independent pharmacies, I benefited from your input and feedback. I hosted two community forums in Yonkers – one with New York State Senate Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow and one with Senator George Latimer. In addition, I heard and read your concerns in phone calls, emails, and letters. This feedback was indispensable in helping me better advocate for you and the needs of the entire district. Keep it coming!

Thank You!

Shelley Mayer

### New York State Budget



During the Assembly debate over the New York State budget.

#### Supporting the Yonkers Public Schools

The recently enacted state budget contains substantial fiscal relief to the City of Yonkers to address the school-driven shortfall we face. First, the budget provides the City with the authority to bond \$45 million to address the fiscal gap, and includes provisions required by the State Division of Budget which provide for review by the Comptroller and State Education Department Commissioner. In addition, the budget bill provides \$28 million of direct funding, contingent on an inter-municipal agreement between the Yonkers School District and the City of Yonkers, which also must be approved by the State Division of Budget. The bill requires that all educational issues must continue to be determined by the Board of Education and the Superintendent. Importantly, our delegation was able to get substantial additional funding for the Yonkers Public Schools resulting in \$17 million more in state aid than last year, an increase of 7.7%, the highest of the big five districts. This amount exceeds the Governor's original school funding proposal by \$6 million. Given the issues with the Yonkers Public Schools former financial management, we are pleased that we were able to get such a large increase in education aid. In addition, under the budget we passed, the Yonkers Public Schools will be eligible for \$24 million in capital under the Smart Schools bonding ini-

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With Senator Charles Schumer, New York State Senate Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Councilman Christopher Johnson, Wilson Kimball, Commissioner of Planning and Development for the City of Yonkers, and Bill Dennison of the Yonkers Bike Club, as Senator Schumer announces completion of the Hudson River Greenway Project Study.

If you would like to receive my e-newsletter or information about events I am organizing, please send your name and email address to: [mayers@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:mayers@assembly.state.ny.us).

## ASSEMBLYMEMBER SHELLEY MAYER

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## Women in Leadership Forum

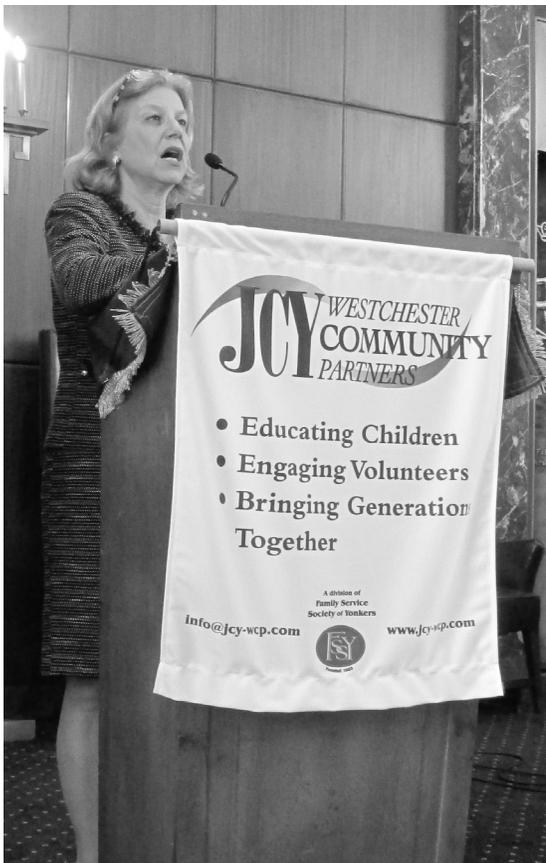
In April I teamed up with the Workforce Development Institute to host an interactive forum on women in leadership at the Hudson River Museum. With over seventy women in attendance, Senate Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and I provided opening remarks, and attendees learned from some outstanding women in leadership about what it takes to lead and be successful. Executive Consultant, Ginny Corsi, provided information to attendees on the potential to learn from challenges and importance of building personal connections. This important forum provided concrete suggestions as well as an opportunity to share our successes and failures together. As a diverse and strong group of women, we will continue to work together to ensure our voices are heard in every sector of our community.



*Speaking with panelists (from left to right): Nereida Quiles, Director of Admission for Adult Education, Concordia College; Taryn Duffy, Director of Public Affairs, Empire City Casino; Maria Kercado, Vice President, 1199SEIU UHWE; Shawyn Patterson Howard, President & Chief Executive Officer, Yonkers Family YMCA; Florence McCue, At-Large NYSUT Director.*



*With Assembly colleagues and advocates calling for passage of A9036, which would provide municipalities and counties the authority to raise the minimum wage above the New York State minimum wage.*



*Speaking at the 2014 Holocaust Remembrance Program at Lincoln Park Jewish Center. This is a tremendous program organized by JCY Westchester Community Partners providing over two thousand Yonkers Public School students and their teachers an opportunity to hear directly from a person who witnessed the horrors of the Holocaust and learn the importance of taking action in the face of injustice.*



*With Yonkers Public School student, Alexandra Offner, and Yonkers Public Schools (Schools 17 & 21) art teacher, Avi Stein, at the New York State Art Teachers Association (NYSATA) Legislative Exhibit in Albany, where students' art from throughout New York State was exhibited.*

## Transportation and Infrastructure

I am pleased that the recently enacted state budget provides important investments in the highway and transportation infrastructure. Recognizing the tremendous road damage resulting from the severe winter weather, the budget provides a \$40 million dollar increase in the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS). This increase will provide Yonkers \$175,598 for pothole repair, reducing both costs to consumers and the City of Yonkers. In addition, transit systems throughout the state will receive \$4.8 billion in total aid. Importantly, we rejected the Governor's proposal to transfer \$40 million from the MTA operating account and reduced that amount. I continue to press for investment in our public transportation – trains and buses.

## Kinship Caregiver Services

I am pleased that the final state budget recognizes and supports the important work our family caregivers provide. In allocating \$500,000 in TANF funding for caretaker relative services, the New York State budget supports relatives caring for their family's children outside the formal foster care system. I am also pleased that we have committed resources to identifying the statewide need for appropriate housing for grandparents raising grandchildren. I thank the Yonkers Grandpower Advocates raising their grandchildren for identifying this as a problem.



*With the wonderful grandparents of Yonkers raising their grandchildren.*

## Flood Mitigation – NY Rising

Since I came into office, I have been working with residents to find solutions to persistent flooding, and in January's State of the State, Governor Cuomo announced an allocation of three million dollars in federal recovery funds to Yonkers' resiliency projects. Last year, Governor Cuomo established the NY Rising Community Reconstruction program to provide assistance to communities damaged by Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. This program provides communities with federal funds allocated by Congress to plan and better prepare for increasingly frequent extreme weather.

I appreciate that the Governor recognized that Yonkers has serious flood and storm issues which must be addressed. I look forward to working with the City of Yonkers, Mayor Spano and the City Council members so that we comprehensively respond to persistent flooding to make the city stronger and more prepared.



*Speaking at the Northeast Jewish Center Men's Club Breakfast.*

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tiative if it is authorized. While much work remains to be done, in view of the circumstances we faced, this budget provides us a framework we need to move ahead to achieve fiscal stability for our schools and our city.

### In addition, the New York State budget...

#### Reduces the property tax burden

This year's budget provides significant property tax relief for homeowners across the state by offering a two-year property tax credit in the form of a direct check for additional local property taxes, provided that the local government and school district stay within the 2 percent property tax cap. To benefit the second year, schools and localities must propose detailed cost-cutting plans. This measure provides homeowners relief while offering incentives for efficiencies, saving state taxpayers over \$1.5 billion over the next 3 years. As such, in addition to the \$350 rebate many Yonkers families with children will receive, homeowners in Yonkers can anticipate receiving an additional rebate check if Yonkers stays within the property tax cap.

#### Invests in higher education

- provides \$10.4 billion for SUNY and \$4.3 billion for CUNY.
- increases funding (\$25.7 million) for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for the first time in fourteen years, increasing the maximum TAP award by \$165 from \$5,000 to \$5,165 per full-time student (FTE).
- establishes a new Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) scholarship program, which provides the top ten percent of all high school graduates full-tuition scholarships at any SUNY or CUNY institution if they pursue a STEM career and work in New York for five years.
- provides funding to enhance community college base aid, providing \$20.2 million in increased support for community colleges, thus reducing the financial burden for both students and municipalities.

#### Reforms Common Core/ high stakes testing

The 2014-15 state budget incorporates recent reforms to address the flawed implementation of the Common Core curriculum standards in our schools. The reforms protect students from unwarranted consequences based on test results and ensure the security of sensitive student data.

## Cracking Down on Public Corruption

I am proud to support my fellow Westchester Assemblyman, David Buchwald, whose bill (A7173) proposes a constitutional amendment that would allow a law to be adopted authorizing termination of public officials' benefits if they are convicted of a felony involving a breach of public trust. Under current law, even when public employees are convicted of serious crimes related to their office, such as bribery, they continue to receive their state pensions. This bill begins to address this problem and is essential for restoring the public trust.



*Honoring local artists, including Choreographer, Senior Dance Program, Judith Ayres at the Arts Alive Breakfast and Award Ceremony with ArtsWestchester Board Member, Tom Lalla; Senate Conference Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins; and Hannah Shmerler, ArtsWestchester Board Member.*



*With parents, providers, and my Senate and Assembly colleagues continuing to work to ensure children receive early intervention services they need.*



*Hosting Office Hours at Shop Rite on Tuckahoe Road.*



Assemblymember  
**SHELLEY  
MAYER**

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*Please Join Us!*

State Senator George Latimer and I  
will be holding a coffee hour for constituents on

**June 14th from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
at Mont Olympus Diner**

located at 1 Fort Hill Road, Yonkers, NY 10710

Light refreshments will be provided and no appointment is necessary.

For more information call 914-779-8805 or email [mayers@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:mayers@assembly.state.ny.us)