



Assemblymember

Shelley Mayer

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2016

2016-17 NEW YORK STATE BUDGET

Education Highlights



As a strong advocate for the Yonkers Public Schools, it was terrific to join with Yonkers Public Schools Superintendent Edwin Quezada and Senate Minority Leader Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins to meet with students from Gorton High School's Smart Scholars program, which allows students to take college-level classes for credit for free.

The 2016-17 state budget provides a record level of education funding for schools by ending the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), increasing Foundation Aid targeted for high-needs districts like Yonkers, and providing additional funding for the schools that serve our most vulnerable children with special needs. The Yonkers Public Schools will receive over \$277 million in total state school aid, an increase of more than \$20 million—or almost eight percent—from last year. Included in this funding is over \$4 million that is dedicated to converting struggling and persistently struggling schools into community schools. A separate allocation of \$75 million is also provided statewide for community schools such as our struggling schools. There is more work to do to get the Yonkers Public Schools on secure fiscal footing, but I am pleased I have been able to deliver 8% increases in funding over the past two years.

In addition, the budget includes a \$2.3 million increase for Schools for the Blind and Deaf (§4201 schools), which serve students who are blind, deaf, and severely disabled throughout New York. As Chair of the Assembly Education Subcommittee on Students with Special Needs, this addition is a result of the collective effort by the Assembly Majority to ensure that these students get the resources necessary for their educational needs. Lastly, the budget rejects a tuition increase for SUNY and CUNY colleges and universities, and adds funds to invest in these important institutions.

Once the budget was complete, I introduced the Rebuild Yonkers Schools bill (A.9932/S.7459) which provides Yonkers the financing it needs to construct up to three new school buildings and repair many others. Along with Senators Andrea Stewart-Cousins and George Latimer, and Assemblyman Gary Pretlow, we are working with Mayor Spano to ensure our children and teachers have the infrastructure they deserve. We are working hard to secure passage of this important legislation.



Cardinal Timothy Dolan came to the Capitol with other Catholic Church leaders to meet with Governor Cuomo and legislators. I was honored to spend some time with Cardinal Dolan.

Minimum Wage

The final budget provides New Yorkers with a minimum wage increase that will help lift countless families out of poverty. The minimum wage will be gradually increased over several years and has a more rapid implementation in downstate suburban counties where the cost of living is higher. For workers in Westchester County, the enacted budget will raise the minimum wage to \$10 by the end of 2016, then by an additional \$1 each year until reaching \$15 an hour at the end of 2021. The NYS Department of Labor projects 281,104 workers in the Hudson Valley will experience higher pay as a result of the \$15 minimum wage, reinvesting an estimated \$1.8 billion in the region's economy.



I was joined by Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assemblyman Steve Otis, and a diverse coalition of business, labor, health, senior, cycling, and community groups from throughout Westchester to call for improved funding for public transit, pedestrian, and bicycling infrastructure in the final NYS Budget.

Infrastructure and Transportation

Since I was elected in 2012, I have been a strong advocate for investing in our infrastructure and public transit. These investments have a tremendous effect on our economy, generating good paying jobs and ensuring consumers and employees have reliable transportation. Shortly after I was elected to the New York State Assembly, I conducted a survey of residents' needs for and experiences with transit. I found that many were frustrated with the limited and unreliable service.

I have remained an advocate for increased investment in transportation services and infrastructure, and I am pleased that this year's budget has a robust plan to repair New York's aging roads and bridges, as well as a thorough commitment for public transit, especially in our downstate urban and suburban communities. The enacted budget also includes over \$55 million—an increase of over \$3 million from last year—in operating aid for Westchester County transit services, such as the Bee-Line bus, which provide essential transportation that sustain our local economy and meet the growing needs of those without access to cars or who use public transportation.

Paid Family Leave

The 2016-17 budget takes an important step forward in ensuring New Yorkers do not have to choose between caring for a loved one and earning a paycheck. The inclusion of a comprehensive paid family leave program in New York State will ensure that no worker is forced to risk his or her job to care for a loved one. When fully phased in, the family leave provision will afford employees 12 weeks of paid leave per year to care for a new child or family member in need. The measure will be funded through a small weekly employee contribution and offer up to two-thirds of an employee's salary during their absence, not to exceed two-thirds of the

statewide average weekly wage. The State Department of Labor projects 649,990 private sector workers in the Hudson Valley will become eligible for 12 weeks of paid family leave.

Additionally, the budget includes increased funding for various childcare and after school programs. The budget provides \$22.3 million for Advantage After School, which offers enrichment activities for students in a positive environment, and provides \$3 million for Kinship Care, which affects over 1,000 families in Westchester County, many of whom reside in Yonkers.

HEROIN PREVENTION, TREATMENT, AND RECOVERY

In April, in partnership with the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), St. John's Riverside Hospital, and Franky's Field of Dreams Foundation, I sponsored a community opioid overdose prevention training on how to administer Naloxone or Narcan. More than fifty residents from throughout Westchester gathered at St. John's Riverside Hospital to receive training in preventing Heroin and opioid overdoses. In the event of an overdose, the lifesaving drug, Naloxone or Narcan, can temporarily block the effects of Heroin or other opioids, allowing the individual to regain consciousness and resume normal breathing. This training, and others like it, ensures more people are trained and equipped with kits to give an overdose victim an opportunity to recover and get the help they need to address their addiction.

I am pleased this year's NYS budget includes funding to help tackle this epidemic. New



York State has taken steps to combat the Heroin/opiate crisis in recent years. This year's budget builds on our state's commitment by investing \$166 million in opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery services—an increase of \$25 million since last year.



ALS Champion Pat Quinn

Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and I met with Yonkers resident and co-founder of the Ice Bucket Challenge, Pat Quinn; his father, Patrick Liam Quinn; and other advocates to press for increased funding for research about Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). ALS is a disease that progressively causes increased muscle weakness, paralysis, and ultimately, respiratory failure. Working with advocates and my colleagues, we were able to allocate \$250,000 to the ALS Association Greater New York Chapter to provide supportive services for patients and families, as well as research on this terrible disease.



Congratulations to Yonkers Police Department Deputy Chief John Mueller! It was wonderful to attend his official promotion ceremony.



Proud to stand with the Sarah Lawrence College workers of IUOE Local 30 and support their fight for a fair contract.



Join Me for a Discussion of Recently Enacted Minimum Wage Increase and Paid Family Leave

Passage of these two measures mark a tremendous victory for working families. Join me, along with Janel Quarless of the non-profit Working Families Organization and Sherry Leiwant, Co-President and Co-founder of A Better Balance, for a discussion of implementation and next steps in strengthening these policies.

Please call 914-779-8805 or email mayers@assembly.state.ny.us if you would like the details once they are confirmed.



Dominican Heritage celebration honoring the Livery Car Industry and posthumously recognizing Don Claudio.

Join me for an
End of Session Town Hall Meeting
Thursday, June 23rd
6:30–8:30 p.m.

at
Grinton I. Will Library
Senator Flynn Room (lower level)
1500 Central Park Avenue
Yonkers, NY 10710

It is not necessary to RSVP, but if you have questions, please call 914-779-8805 or email mayers@assembly.state.ny.us



Assemblymember
**SHELLEY
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Community Newsletter

Spring 2016

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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.