

Assemblyman **TOM ABINANTI**

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With Senator David Carlucci and Alan Brody, whose wife Ellen died in the 2015 Valhalla railroad crossing accident.

RAILROAD SAFETY

The Legislature passed Assemblyman Abinanti's legislation (A.5235B) to direct the New York State Department of Transportation to conduct a statewide study of level grade rail crossings. The bill awaits the Governor's action.

Abinanti first introduced the bill following a February 2015 Metro-North crash – the deadliest in the railroad's history – when a commuter train collided with an SUV at a Valhalla highway-railroad grade crossing.

We need a review of railroad crossings from the driver's view – what do drivers see and not see. So many rail crossings are in high-population, high-traffic suburban areas that were low-traffic, rural areas when crossings were designed.

Following the Federal Railroad Administration's February 2016 formal request that states "visit crossings in their region and monitor and test crossing signals and adjacent traffic signals to ensure the signals are synched and operating properly," the Governor proposed such additional legislation which was also passed by the Legislature and awaits his action.

EPINEPHRINE

The Assembly and the Senate passed Assemblyman Abinanti's legislation (A.9357) to authorize certain public venues to stock and administer epinephrine auto-injectors (commonly known as epipens) in an emergency to individuals experiencing severe allergic reactions. The bill awaits the Governor's action.

Today, with limited exceptions, epinephrine may be administered only under a patient-specific prescription. A law passed by Abinanti in 2014 authorized schools to stock and administer epinephrine in an emergency without a prescription. A.9357 expands that authorization to other entities serving the public, including restaurants, youth organizations, sports leagues, theme parks, sports arenas and educational facilities. Any entity seeking to stock epinephrine would need to assign a person to take a training course and maintain control of the device. Abinanti's legislation would *not require* any entity to stock epinephrine.



In Albany with Senators and advocates.



LANGUAGE MATTERS

A new state law sponsored by Assemblyman modernizes the Surrogate's Court Procedure Act's language by replacing all references to "mentally retarded" and "mental retardation" with appropriate language referring to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As we strive to allow everyone to reach their fullest potential, we need to concentrate on abilities not disabilities and avoid broad, inaccurate and pejorative labels.

2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

We must preserve our community for our children and grandchildren.

ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENT BUDGET

The budget provides \$500 million for important environmental programs, including \$200 million for water infrastructure improvements, allowing the State to provide grants to municipalities to upgrade or repair their water treatment facilities; and \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) – a 69% increase over last year.

These include:

- \$1.5 million for water testing – including lead in schools;
- \$1 million for drug collection programs – to protect the environment and support the safe disposal of opioid based pharmaceuticals; and
- \$12 million to combat the spread of invasive species.



Discussing Tappan Zee Bridge barge accident with Westchester County Executive.

CLEAN VEHICLES

To decrease greenhouse gas emissions, the budget authorizes several programs to encourage the use of clean vehicles. The EPF will fund a clean vehicle initiative to give municipalities rebates up to \$250,000 for clean-vehicle infrastructure and rebates of \$750 – \$5,000 for each electric vehicle purchased, based on the vehicle's range. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will administer a program to provide rebates up to \$2,000 to consumers who purchase clean vehicles.



50th anniversary celebration of Federated Conservationists of Westchester County.

PUBLIC HEALTH

BUDGET

Community-based health care providers, hospitals, nursing homes, home care and other facilities will be eligible to receive \$200 million in new funds to support infrastructure improvements and to integrate and further develop health systems. Funding for family health initiatives in the budget includes:

- \$600,000 for Lyme disease research, education and prevention efforts;
- \$25.3 million for Cancer Services Programs;
- \$26.3 million for Nutritional Information for Women, Infants, and Children;
- \$9.7 million for chronic disease prevention (including diabetes, asthma, and hypertension);
- \$5.5 million for Rape Crisis Centers;
- \$2.3 million for the Prenatal Care Program;
- \$9.65 million – a \$1 million increase – for the Doctors Across New York Program;
- \$25 million in Excess Medical Malpractice Coverage to recruit and attract physicians to underserved communities; and
- \$1 million to support organ donation.

HEROIN

The final budget includes \$166 million to help address the challenging public health crisis caused by heroin and opioid abuse in communities throughout the State. This is an increase of \$25 million above the Governor's proposal, designed to strengthen abuse prevention, treatment, recovery, and education services.

SENIORS

The budget fully funds the State's Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program at \$131.5 million to help seniors with their prescription drug costs.

To help protect vulnerable senior citizens, the budget includes \$700,000 to support elder abuse prevention initiatives.

The budget also includes:

- \$28.9 million for Community Services for the Elderly Program;
- \$26.6 million for Alzheimer's programs;
- \$172,000 for the New York Foundation for Seniors Home Sharing and Respite; and
- \$63,000 for the Senior Action Council Hotline.

Everyone deserves a safe, healthful place in which to live.

PUBLIC SAFETY

TRUCKS ON PARKWAYS

The Legislature passed Assemblyman Abinanti's legislation (A.654A) to require the New York State Department of Transportation to install height-restrictor bars across the entrances most frequented by oversized trucks to deter them from illegally entering Westchester parkways. The bill awaits the Governor's action.

Oversized trucks wander onto Westchester passenger-vehicle only parkways over 900 times a year. A truck strikes a parkway bridge about once a week.

Boston uses similar height barriers to protect parkways and they are common in low-ceiling parking structures everywhere. Abinanti introduced the bill after DOT refused his repeated calls for the barriers – first, as a county legislator in 2001 to protect the Bronx River Parkway.



Boston's height-restrictors keep oversized trucks off parkways.

UNDETECTABLE GUNS

Assemblyman Abinanti has proposed legislation (A.381A) to ban the manufacture, possession and sale of firearms that are not detectable by traditional metal detectors. The bill was reported from committee but has not yet been voted on by the full Assembly.

NO FLY LIST

Following terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, Abinanti introduced legislation (A.8693) to prohibit persons named on the FBI's No-Fly List from obtaining or renewing a license to carry firearms in New York. Individuals who are known or suspected terrorists are placed on the list. If you're not safe to fly, you're not safe to have a gun – its common sense.



Hastings Anti-Gun Violence Walk.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

FAMILY BILL OF RIGHTS

The Assembly passed (140-0) Assemblyman Abinanti's legislation (A.424) to amend the Mental Hygiene Law to create a bill of rights for families and guardians of people with developmental disabilities who live in residences approved by the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. Proposed by families, the bill is intended to allow families to access information, participate in decisions and challenge decisions adversely affecting their loved ones. The bill awaits action in the Senate.

AUTISM STUDY

The Assembly passed (143-0) Assemblyman Abinanti's legislation (A.171) to direct the Commissioner of the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities to study the future long-term costs to the State for the care and treatment of the growing number of people with autism spectrum disorder (now 1 in 68 children). The bill is intended to facilitate state planning for the services necessary and fiscal impact to provide appropriate service levels and improve programs for this vulnerable population. The bill awaits action in the Senate.

MEDICAL INDEMNITY FUND REFORM

The Legislature passed Assemblyman Abinanti's legislation (A.9835B) to improve the NYS Medical Indemnity Fund. The Fund was established to cover lifelong health care costs for infants who suffered birth-related neurological injuries due to medical negligence. Intended to reduce medical malpractice premiums and ensure that needed health care services

are provided, the Fund substitutes for the medical portion of malpractice awards or settlements. Enrollment in the Fund is mandatory. The bill will remedy deficiencies in the Fund's administration that have limited access to the health care related services necessary to meet the needs of neurologically injured children. The bill awaits the Governor's action.

Around the Community



Elmsford Rotary Club.



Greenburgh Town Judges' swearing-in ceremony.



Ardsley Saw Mill Exit meeting with Department of Transportation.



Westchester Medical College in Valhalla groundbreaking ceremony.



Assemblyman
TOM
ABINANTI
Reports to the People

Summer 2016

Dear Neighbor,

I've been privileged to represent you in the Assembly for the last 6 years. I've been a strong advocate for our suburban needs and concerns. I've tried to use state government to make our community better.

This is my second report to you since our 2016 legislative session concluded. I highlight some environmental issues. I also discuss some public health and safety issues. We made some progress in these areas but still have so much more to do. I look forward to our next legislative session which begins in January.

In the meantime, I continue to work here in Westchester for our community. If I may be of any assistance to you, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

SAVE POSTAGE AND PAPER.

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