

# Assemblyman **TOM ABINANTI**

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## **PROPERTY TAX RELIEF**

Places like Lyndhurst, Sunnyside, Philipsburg Manor, and the Village of Sleepy Hollow at Halloween time have brought thousands of tourists—many looking for a place to stay—supplementing the steady flow of business travelers to our hotels.

To benefit from the surge of visitors and to ease the burden on local property taxpayers, Assemblyman Abinanti passed legislation (A.209A-2016) to authorize eight local governments (Town of Greenburgh and Villages of Tarrytown, Elmsford, Ardsley, Irvington, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-On-Hudson, and Sleepy Hollow) to collect a hotel occupancy tax of up to three percent.

The new law gives these municipalities an additional non-property tax source of revenue to fund basic and necessary services. The measure was passed as part of an extraordinary effort by the Westchester Assembly Delegation and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie to help these and several other Hudson Valley localities that have been hit with rising costs and tax cap restraints.

Abinanti introduced similar legislation for the Town of Mount Pleasant, but there has been no companion bill in the Senate.



## **EPINEPHRINE**

As medicine advances, new discoveries should be readily available to people who need them. A law sponsored by Assemblyman Abinanti (A.9357-2016) will make epinephrine, which is used to counter severe allergic reactions, more readily available.

The new law eliminates the requirement for a person-specific prescription and authorizes organizations and venues—including restaurants, youth organizations, sports leagues, theme parks, sports arenas, and educational facilities—to stock and administer epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPens) in an emergency.

This bill builds on a 2014 law passed by Abinanti which authorized schools to stock and administer epinephrine without a person-specific prescription.



## **NEWBORN MALPRACTICE**

On New Year's Eve 2016, the Governor signed Assemblyman Abinanti's legislation (A.9835B) to reform the New York State Medical Indemnity Fund.

The fund was established to cover life-long healthcare costs for infants who suffered birth-related neurological injuries due to medical negligence. Participation in the fund is mandatory in exchange for the injured infants' forfeiting a portion of their malpractice awards.

The new law remedies deficiencies in the fund's administration that have restricted access to needed healthcare-related services by neurologically injured children.

Children who have sustained birth-related neurological injuries due to malpractice deserve to have their future healthcare costs and services paid for by the Fund in which they are required to participate.



# 2017-18 STA

*The Legislature passed the 2017-18 state budget. Like last year, the results were mixed—some good, some bad and some in-between.*

### EDUCATION AID

This year’s budget provided \$26 billion for education—a 4.1% increase over last year. The \$26 billion increased the formula-driven “Foundation Aid” by \$700 million to \$17.2 billion.

The increase gives a boost to educational programs and significantly helps financially stressed schools. However, the increase is far less than the \$2.4 billion increase requested by the Department of Education and needed by our schools.

### HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

“Direct care workers” who provide the hands-on care for so many seniors and others with disabilities have not had a raise in state-funded programs for several years. The budget included \$55 million to give direct care workers a 6.5% pay raise over the next two years.

Hopefully, the raise will encourage experienced caregivers to remain in their jobs and encourage others to join the field which has seen a decrease in its workforce.



Meeting in Albany with Pace students.



### HIGHER ED

This year’s budget created the Excelsior Scholarship program, which will ultimately provide free tuition to SUNY/CUNY schools for families earning less than \$125,000 a year. The program will be phased in over three years, starting this year for students with annual family incomes of less than \$100,000. Eligible students must take a minimum of 30 credits a year and reside and work in New York State after graduation for a number of years equal to the duration of the award.

The program will help alleviate the financial burden of higher education for many of New York State’s students. However, the scholarship covers only tuition—leaving students to pay for other costly college expenses such as housing, textbooks, transportation, and meal plans.

The Enhanced Tuition Awards program provides similar funding to ease costs for students who choose to attend private universities and colleges in New York. Under this program, eligible students will receive up to \$6,000 in combination with other student financial aid programs and a match from their private college. Private universities and colleges may opt in to this program.



Education Commissioner Mary Ellen Elia (center) with Assemblymembers during the budget debate.

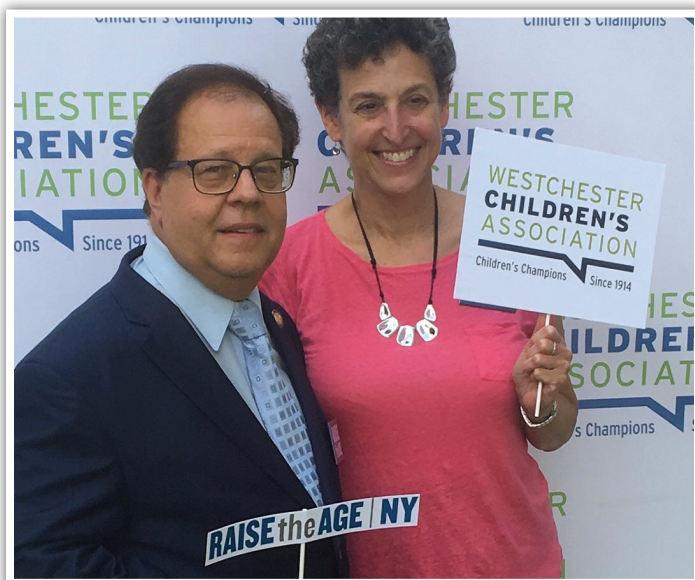




# STATE BUDGET

## RAISE THE AGE

As part of the budget agreement, the Assembly majority accomplished its longstanding goal to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 18 for most non-violent young offenders. Under this landmark change, the majority of offenses committed by 16- and 17-year-olds will be handled by family court, where they will have access to additional intervention services and programming. These youth will be given a chance to learn from their past mistakes without forfeiting their futures. New York had been one of only two states that continued to treat 16-year-old defendants as adults.



Westchester Children's Association Executive Director Cora Greenberg.

## ENVIRONMENT

Several high profile incidents have highlighted the need to better protect our drinking water statewide. Through Assembly efforts, the 2017 budget included \$2.5 billion to aid municipalities in the upgrade of drinking water systems and wastewater treatment facilities.

In addition, the budget increased the appropriation to the Environmental Protection Fund to \$300 million, which included several million dollars dedicated to clean water projects.



Federated Conservationists of Westchester.

## LOCAL CAPITAL GRANTS – \$325,000 FOR NEW TARRYTOWN FIREBOAT

Assemblyman Abinanti secured funds for several capital projects in the 92nd District. The grants are supported by appropriations in the budget for the New York State and Municipal Facilities Program and the Community Capital Assistance Program. Among the grants secured was \$325,000 for a new fireboat for Tarrytown.

Properly equipping Tarrytown's marine unit is crucial to the health and safety of all those who are in and around the Hudson River.

The Tarrytown Fire Department responds to boating accidents, construction accidents and suicides from the bridge. The marine unit was the first to respond to the March 12th 2016 tugboat tragedy near the old Tappan Zee Bridge.



Tarrytown's twenty-year-old fireboat will be replaced by a larger modern-equipped fireboat.



# Around the Community



Thornwood Fire Company #1.



Matilda Cuomo's NYS mentoring program in Elmsford Schools.



Dobbs Ferry Fire Department Inspection.




Workers at a local bottling plant.



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*Assemblyman*  
**TOM**  
**ABINANTI**  
*Reports to the People*

Fall 2017

Dear Neighbor,

*I have been privileged to represent you in the Assembly for the last seven years. I have been a strong advocate for policies that address our suburban needs and concerns. I’ve tried to use state government to make a difference for our community.*

*This is my first report to you since our 2017 legislative session. I highlight a measure designed to keep property taxes down. I explain parts of the state budget that are particularly relevant to our residents. I note how some state monies are assisting a local community to meet local needs.*

*In my next newsletter, I will describe some of the other issues that we addressed that are of particular importance to those of us who live in Greenburgh and Mount Pleasant.*

*If I may be of any assistance to you, please don’t hesitate to contact my office.*