



A Message from Assemblywoman Sandy Galef

Be an Informed Voter

Learn about the six constitutional amendments on the ballot in November

Fall 2013

Inside this issue...

Page 2

Learn about constitutional amendments

Page 3

New legislation important to you

Page 4

January 2013 Survey Results

2 Church Street, Ossining, NY 10562 • Phone: 914-941-1111 • Fax: 914-941-9132
Email: galefs@assembly.state.ny.us • Website: www.assembly.state.ny.us

Like me on Facebook

Dear Constituent,

I am so happy to report that for the third year in a row, we were able to deliver an on-time budget in Albany. Additionally, state funding for schools increased by an average of 4% this year, with most schools in my district receiving even more. We were also able to keep our budget within a two percent increase, just as we have asked of school districts and municipalities.

This year was one of the most successful I have had in Albany in terms of bills I sponsored getting passed by both houses of the legislature. Some were reform oriented (a bill for a paperless legislature to bring us into the twenty-first century), others were home rule messages from my municipalities or counties to help them move forward with their local plans, and some were health and safety oriented.

Specifically, I was pleased that my boating safety bill passed in both houses, as well as the ban on smoking in playgrounds which was signed into law. I will continue to fight for women's issues and the Women's Equality Act which came so close to passing, with its positive vote in the Assembly. As we see gridlock at the federal level and how it impacts us daily, I am mindful that we need to continue to work together in a bipartisan fashion to achieve gains in all areas of government.

Our governor has worked hard to bring us together and find compromise on important issues that benefit our economy, our neighborhoods, families, and schools. I look forward to continued productivity with Governor Cuomo at the helm. In this newsletter, I have highlighted some of the significant legislation that passed this session.

In November, all of the voting public will have the opportunity to vote yes or no on six constitutional amendments at the state level. I have included descriptions of each of these in the newsletter, and will be hosting a forum focused on different aspects of the casino gambling amendment to help you become an informed voter. I will also discuss some of the other amendments on the ballot in November as well. I hope you can join me on Tuesday, October 8th from 7-9 p.m. at Cortlandt Town Hall. I look forward to seeing you then.

Sincerely,

Sandy Galef
Member of the Assembly

Assemblywoman Galef hosts Be an Informed Voter

Learn about the six constitutional amendments on the ballot in November

Tuesday, October 8th, 2013
7:00-9:00 p.m.

Cortlandt Town Hall

1 Heady Street, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567

CASINO GAMBLING

Gary Pretlow

New York State Assembly Member, 89th Assembly District
Chair, Assembly Racing & Wagering Committee

Heather Jung

Director of Government Affairs, Business Council of New York State

John Ravitz

Executive Vice President, Business Council of Westchester

Jim Maney

Executive Director, NY Council on Problem Gambling

David B.

Gamblers Anonymous

JUDGES' TENURE

Alan Scheinkman

Administrative Judge, 9th Judicial District

Denise Kronstadt

Deputy Executive Director, The Fund for Modern Courts NY



I recently joined Governor Andrew Cuomo and my colleagues when he signed START-UP NY legislation, which we passed earlier this year, that will provide tax-free incentives for businesses located on or nearby SUNY campuses to encourage more synergy between education, research, and business and to create new jobs.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

On Election Day in November, New York voters will vote on six constitutional amendments that passed both houses of the state legislature in two separate legislative sessions. These amendments cover a broad range of public policy and affect all voters in New York. I encourage you to carefully consider each amendment and make an informed decision before going to the ballot box. I also hope that you will do research beyond the brief summaries that are provided below and attend my public forum highlighting the different aspects of some of these amendments. (See page 1 of this newsletter for more information).

Allowing casino gambling in New York (A.8068/S.5898/Governor Program #2)

Currently, New York allows gambling only through the state-operated lottery system, betting on horse races, and “racinos.” This amendment and a legislative framework, which will go into effect along with the amendment, would authorize the construction of seven casino facilities, and provide regulations regarding where they may be built and how they may operate.

Raising the retirement age of New York high court judges (A.4395/S.886-A)

Judges on the New York Court of Appeals – the highest court in New York – may currently only serve until the age of 70. This amendment will raise their retirement age to 80. It will also allow Justices of the Supreme Court of New York to preside over hearings and conduct standard court business until the age of 80. Currently, they too must retire from deciding cases at 70, and may assist the court (but not decide cases) until 76.

Expanding civil service credit for veterans (A.4359/S.1562)

This amendment would change the formula used to calculate civil service exam test scores for disabled military veterans. It would grant extra points to those veterans currently employed by the civil service, and therefore confer upon them a higher hiring priority should they seek promotion or transfer to another branch of the civil service.

Allowing New York to sell land to NYCO Minerals, Inc. (A.7974/S.4688)

NYCO Minerals, Inc., a large local employer in an economically depressed area, operates a wollastonite mine in Lewis, Essex County, New York, which is currently reaching depletion

(wollastonite is a non-toxic mineral used in ceramics and asbestos replacement). The State has negotiated to sell a 200 acre tract of currently preserved land to NYCO Minerals so that their operations may continue. In exchange, NYCO would provide at least 200 acres of newly preserved land to New York valued at a minimum of one million dollars. The report attached to the legislation found that the value of the 200 acres offered by NYCO to the State would probably be worth less than one million dollars, so NYCO would most likely be required to provide more than 200 acres of Forest Preserve to New York.

Resolving a land dispute in Upstate New York (A.7684/S.4689)

Private parties, including businesses and families, in the townships of Totten and Crossfield Purchase in Long Lake, New York, have been in a land dispute with the State of New York for over one hundred years. This amendment would allow the legislature to resolve the dispute by allowing those living on disputed property to opt in or opt out of a settlement, which consists of them paying the state to purchase an equal amount of land elsewhere that will benefit the Adirondack Forest Preserve. If a property owner opts out, litigation will continue until the matter is resolved.

Extending debt limit exception for sewage facilities (A.3632/S.4065/ State Comptroller #16)

A constitutional amendment was first enacted in 1963 in order to encourage counties, cities, towns, and villages to participate in the State’s sewer construction assistance plan without affecting their debt limit spending. This program, which along with state grants provides significant funding and support for the construction of modern sewer systems, has been extended every 10 years by constitutional amendment since its first passage. The current amendment would extend the program until 2024.



NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR THOSE RECEIVING BASIC STAR EXEMPTION

If you are a homeowner who has been receiving a Basic STAR exemption, new legislation meant to protect you against the costs of inappropriate or fraudulent exemptions is now in effect. Soon, you will have to re-register with the NYS Tax Department to receive your Basic STAR exemptions for 2014 and subsequent years. Seniors receiving Enhanced STAR exemptions will not be affected, and the Enhanced STAR registration process will remain the same. Specific information on Basic STAR re-registration will be mailed to you by the NYS Tax Department in late September/early October with your unique STAR code needed to process your re-registration. The fastest and easiest way to do this is through the Tax Department’s website. The deadline for re-registration is December 31, 2013. Once these mailings have gone out to homeowners, you will also be able to contact the Tax Department to receive your STAR code, or to re-register by phone. For more information call 518-457-2036 or visit the NYS Tax Department website at www.tax.ny.gov. For first-time Basic STAR registration, you will still file with your local assessor’s office.

NEW LEGISLATION IMPACTING YOU

Improving boating safety in New York (A.3471-A/S.1639-A)

Since 2007, I have been working to pass legislation that requires all those operating motorized vessels to obtain a boating safety certificate. This legislation matters deeply to me, especially in light of the death of a constituent in the summer of 2012, a death that could have been prevented had the operator of the boat been trained in boat safety. This year, I was able to bring this legislation to the Assembly floor, where it was passed and will be sent to the Governor for his signature. Although the requirement applies only to those born after May 1, 1996, I encourage anybody who will operate a boat to obtain a boating safety certificate before they enjoy the waterways of New York.

Early this summer I attended a boat ramp dedication in honor of Ossining resident Bryan Johnson, who was killed in a boating accident in 2012. I was joined by my colleagues, local elected officials, Bryan's family and boating safety proponents to encourage Governor Cuomo to sign my boating safety legislation.



New York Innovation Venture Capital Fund (A.3009-D/S.2609-D/2013-14 fiscal year state budget) (Chap. 59)

Although New York State's universities rank second in research spending in the country, New York attracts a disproportionately low number of venture capital investments. The New York Innovation Venture Capital Fund will provide seed funding to start-ups and businesses that are located in New York and in the early stages of forming. To ensure that this start-up money is being spent properly, these businesses must show that they will provide a lasting benefit to New York's economy.

New York's Legislature stops printing (A.7868/S.4417)

As we entered the twenty-first century, a century of innovation in technology, I introduced a constitutional amendment that would update the government's legislative operating system. Currently, Members of the Assembly and State Senators must receive all legislation on their "desks" on paper. In practice, this means that large amounts of time, paper, and money are used every year printing and re-printing legislation. This amendment allows legislation to reach the desks of legislators through a legible electronic format by electronic means. This year, I was able to get this amendment through both houses.

Putting a Brake on Distracted Driving (A.7739/S.5656) (Chap. 91)

The Governor signed legislation to improve highway safety and help steer new and young drivers towards safer driving practices. The legislation increases penalties for texting and using a cell phone while driving for people who have permits and junior or probationary licenses. A first violation would result in a sixty day suspension. On a subsequent conviction within six months of restoration, probationary drivers would have their license revoked for six months, and junior license holders would have their permit or license revoked for an additional sixty days. In addition, this year fines were increased for violations of cell phone and texting laws for all drivers - imposing 5 points on the driver's license for those found guilty.

Cracking Down on DWI (A.2285-A/S.5859) (Chap. 169)

To increase compliance with interlock breathalyzer installation, this law was passed that will increase the time period that the interlock must be installed following a drunk-driving conviction from six months to one year. This law will also require offenders who claim they do not own a car and will not operate any vehicle during the one-year period to do so under oath in court. These steps are necessary to strengthen the existing laws and help prevent drunk-driving tragedies.

Stomping out smoking on playgrounds (A.4025/S.1643) (Chap. 102)



For six years, I fought to end smoking on playgrounds. Cigarettes have no place around young children, who are far more vulnerable to secondhand smoke than adults. This common-sense legislation extends what is already law in New York City to the rest of the state, banning smoking on all playgrounds in New York State, and protects all children in New York State from serious illness and exposure to a life-threatening habit.

In June, I held a press conference with anti-smoking advocates in support of legislation I will be introducing to ban the sale of tobacco products within 200 feet of a school building, or within direct sight of a school building to discourage the negative influence that easy access to these products has on our youth.

NEW LEGISLATION IMPACTING YOU (Continued)

Raising the minimum wage and enhancing weekly unemployment benefits (A.3007-D/S.2607-D/2013-14 Fiscal Year Budget Article VII) (Chap. 57)

This fiscal year's budget gradually raises the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$9.00 an hour over the next three years. Both houses also voted to approve an increase in weekly unemployment benefits, from \$405 per week to fifty percent of the state's average weekly wage.

START-UP NY creates tax-free zones (A.8113/S.5903) (Chap. 68)

START-UP NY will create tax-free zones for eligible businesses near SUNY & CUNY campuses, as well as private colleges and universities, in order to foster job growth in fields that promote technology, innovation, and economic development in New York. The state will waive all state taxes for ten years and all income taxes for employees from five to ten years for all eligible businesses.

Cooperative purchasing between political subdivisions (A.5119-A/S.3766-A)

This mandate relief legislation amends New York's General Municipal Law to allow political subdivisions, such as municipalities, school districts, and other governmental agencies, to "piggyback" on already existing contracts for equipment or services. With this cooperative purchasing in place, schools alone have estimated a savings of \$200 million a year.

SURVEY RESULTS FROM THE CONSTITUENT QUESTIONNAIRE

95th Assembly District • January 2013 • 695 Respondents

On the back of my January Newsletter I included a Constituent Questionnaire on a range of topics important to New York State. I received 695 responses. I thank all of those who responded. This input is of great value to me as I look to better serve all of you. The results showed respondents are in favor of: expanding early voting-64%; excluding apologies as admissions of liability in medical malpractice lawsuits-65%; extending the

statute of limitations for victims of child sexual abuse-88%; and creating a next-of-kin registry for cases involving automobile accidents-89%. Also, 69% of respondents said they believe the state needs additional measures regulating guns and ammunition. 58% of respondents were not in favor of additional fees for single use bags at supermarkets, and voters were split 49%/51% on the issue of open or closed primaries for our state.



A message from

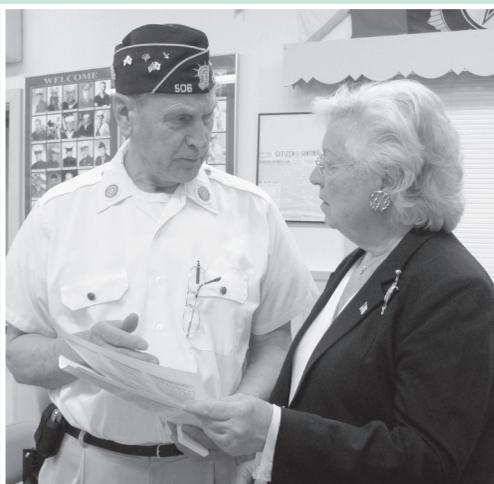
Assemblywoman

**SANDY
GALEF**

Be an Informed Voter

Learn about the six constitutional amendments
on the ballot in November

Fall 2013



I attended a press conference in May at the American Legion Post 506, announcing a new program that was included in the New York State budget to assist Westchester and Putnam in providing peer-to-peer services for returning military veterans by pairing veterans transitioning back into civilian life with fellow veterans. These veterans will act as counselors, who have a personal understanding of what returning veterans have gone through, and are in a unique position to help returning veterans.