



Dear Friends,

Veterans Day is a time to recognize our brave fighting men and women for the sacrifices they have made. It's also a day to renew our commitment to making sure they get all the support they deserve. For many of our soldiers coming home is the beginning of a new set of challenges as they re-enter civilian life and return to work, often while coping with physical and psychological wounds. New York

State is home to nearly 900,000 veterans. We have a moral responsibility to care for those who so courageously defended our freedoms. Read more below about legislation the Assembly passed to help support our veterans.



May you and your family have a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday!

~Ellen~

Legislation to Support Veterans

In the fight against veteran homelessness, the Assembly passed laws to help veterans find well-paid work, including tax credits for small businesses that hire veterans (Ch. 59 of 2013) and the Veterans Employment Act to help give veterans temporary staffing jobs in state agencies (Ch. 557 of 2013). This year, the Assembly passed legislation that would direct key state agencies to gather information on the state's homeless veterans and their children ([A.434](#)). In addition, New Yorkers can easily contribute to The Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund, by simply checking a box on their income tax forms ([Ch. 428 of 2014](#)).



Pictured: Veterans Day Parade Suffern, NY 2015



Honoring Ouida Foster Toutedon

I was thrilled to celebrate with members of the Berea Seventh Day Baptist Church as they honored Ouida Foster Toutedon executive director of Head Start of Rockland, Inc., for her 30 years of service

to children and families. Pictured: Director of Communications Mr. Spencer Chiimbwe, Pastor Roger Williamson, Ouida Foster Toutedon, Reverend Dr. Verlin D. Williams, Pastor of Union Baptist Church, White Plains, NY.

Opposing Increased Bridge Tolls

During a budget meeting in Albany, NYS Thruway Authority officials announced that tolls on the Tappan Zee Bridge would [not increase in 2016](#) and that a special seven-member advisory panel would recommend, by the middle of next year, whether to raise tolls for the New NY Bridge. I have adamantly opposed doubling or tripling bridge tolls. I will continue working with my colleagues to ensure toll increases are minimal and affordable. Read more [here](#).



Spring Valley Kiwanis Celebration



On October 25th Spring Valley Kiwanis Club celebrated 66 years of dedicated service in our community. Founded in 1949, with a focus on working with youth through Key Clubs in elementary, middle and high school, the Kiwanis awards four scholarships annually to graduating seniors. I was proud to be honored by this outstanding organization devoted to supporting youth of all ages.

Seniors and Housing

Rockland's population continues to grow older at an accelerating rate. In fact, according to the Rockland County Office for the Aging, we have close to 60,000 people who are over the age of 60. Through my years in the Assembly I have assisted in securing funds to our local home care agency to provide training for aides and will continue to fight for more affordable housing. My friends and neighbors at [Esther Gitlow Towers](#) recognize and feel this need for affordable housing all too well. It was wonderful to visit with them and members of the Board on Tuesday.



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