



Summer 2017

Dear Friends and Constituents,

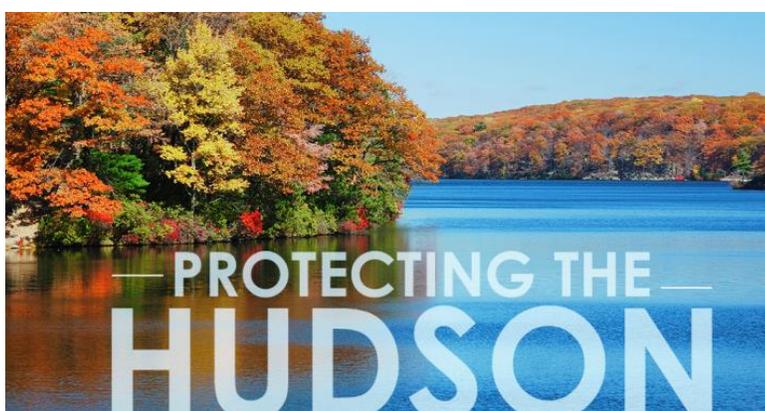
The Legislature's work this year ensures that our community will continue to enjoy the protections and revenues they have come to expect. I am pleased that the Legislature achieved a sensible resolution to many important public matters. You can find details on my [website](#) or by following me on [Facebook](#).

Kevin

## Hudson River Anchorages

Sharing the concerns of constituents over the proposal by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) regarding anchorage sites along the Hudson River, I joined colleagues in securing additional State and local oversight. When these proposed docking points were announced, I communicated with constituents on both sides of the River alerting them of the proposal and encouraging them to share their opinions during the official comment period.

I was proud to co-sponsor legislation, [A6825](#), that passed both houses and provides State oversight about where and how any petroleum vessel anchorage grounds might be sited. As of this writing, the bill is pending the Governor's consideration.



In late June, the United States Coast Guard announced that all future rulemaking decisions on the Hudson River Anchorage sites will be suspended until further notice. This will allow, at a minimum, for the proper time and consideration needed to assure that all of the issues raised will be vetted.

It is encouraging that the Coast Guard is taking a thoughtful approach to this issue rather than giving in to the whims of the petroleum industry. The U.S. Coast Guard's decision helps ensure that our beautiful Hudson River's multi-faceted history as our main artery for recreation, scenic beauty, commerce and an environmentally vital estuary will continue for generations.



## Insurance Committee Measures

The Insurance Committee, of which I am Chair, took up important bills that would preserve essential important health benefits and promote quality health care in New York.

- Legislation passed the Assembly to modernize insurance coverage for in vitro-fertilization procedures ([A2646b](#)), as well as clarify coverage for individuals suffering from eating disorders ([A6396b](#)). We await action by the Senate.
- I sponsored a measure ([A7611A](#)) to protect consumers when an emergency room charge is disputed in cases where the hospital is not in the insurance network. Hospitals and insurance companies would be required to submit to an independent dispute resolution process that would assure that health care consumers are not left to pay exorbitant charges.
- The Committee and I worked to streamline how insurance agents maintain continuing education credits ([A117A](#)) so agents will be able to have proper professional training in a manner which preserves consumer interest while eliminating impediments for local businesses.



Lobbying Albany for Protections against Eating Disorders

## Sales Tax and STAR Benefits

## Sales Tax

Central to the final days of the Legislative Session was a provision to provide a three year extender for local sales taxes. As county officials prepare for upcoming budget cycles, it will be helpful that they have a clear picture of the level of revenue they should anticipate receiving.

## STAR Relief

Following confusion and complaints by several homeowners in our community, I helped shepherd a bill ([A5969](#)) reforming the State School Tax Relief (STAR) Program through the Assembly. The legislation would roll back changes to STAR in order to provide homeowners with their deserved relief without delay.

Unfortunately, the Senate failed to pass this bill. The Legislature was ultimately successful in reforming the process during this year's budget. Provisions were agreed to that allow the New York State Tax Department to send out STAR checks with an estimated amount, thus reaching mailboxes more quickly. The new law requires the State to deliver the checks 30 days after their school district files their tax rolls with the State. If the refund comes late, the Tax Department will be forced to pay about three percent interest to the taxpayer.



Municipal officials must have a clear picture of the level of anticipated sales tax revenue in order to effectively plan.

## Comprehensive Contraception Coverage



Among my proudest moments over the past few months has been seeing those in our community and across the nation stand together to promote and protect women's rights and in particular access to reproductive health services.

For the second consecutive year the Assembly passed the Comprehensive Contraception Coverage Act ([A1378](#)), which I sponsor and co-authored with Attorney General Eric Schneiderman. This Bill protects reproductive rights by codifying provisions of the Affordable Care Act to provide access to family planning health care without cost sharing by the insured individual.

The Assembly also passed the [Reproductive Health Act](#) that will modernize definitions and enact the protections offered by Roe v. Wade here in New York State by moving abortion from the criminal code to public health law.

## Climate Change

The Assembly took action that would combat climate change. The measure, [A8270](#), sets ambitious environmental goals by requiring the Department of Environmental Conservation to create an action plan that would reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions. Further, the bill mandates that by 2030 fully half of all electricity consumed in New York State come from renewable sources.

Climate change is a reality. Although at times it seems the President and others want to refute this fact, the evidence is undeniable.

The measure passed by the Assembly reaffirms New York's leadership in protecting our planet. Across the 103<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District there are countless regional treasures. Whether it is the historic Hudson River, the Gunks, the bucolic character and open space of Ulster and Dutchess Counties or our gorgeous Catskills, we need to be proactive in working to ensure that these areas can be cherished by future generations.



The standards established by this legislation are reasonable when one considers the long-term effects of energy production and usage.

## Protections of Children



In the final days of Session the Legislature took important steps to advance a positive future for New York, passing Assembly bill [A5524b](#). Outdated laws were amended to raise the age of marriage to 17 years old from the previous age of 14. Subsequently, the Governor signed the bill into law.

In addition, the Assembly passed the [Child Victim's Act](#) that would extend the statute of limitations for victims of sexual abuse, bringing the opportunity for long-overdue justice for these individuals. While the Senate failed to act on this vital legislation, I will continue to press for passage once we are again in Session.

## Preserving and Enhancing the Catskills and the Hudson River Valley

The 2017 Session saw passage of legislation [A8301](#) to amend Article XIV of the New York State Constitution. If adopted, it would create a 250-acre land bank in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. The land bank will then be available to municipalities to address highway and bridge safety as well as water supply issues where no feasible alternative exists. To be enacted, the amendment must be presented to the voters for a final decision.

Now more than ever we need to do our part to safeguard our precious natural resources. At the same time, we have to make sure that the residents who call the Catskill Park their home have the ability to thrive. This includes the prospect of achieving access to high-speed broadband as well as the need to upgrade roads and bridges without damaging the surrounding environment.

This constitutional amendment strikes the delicate balance necessary for the Catskills to preserve the water, soil and air while enhancing public safety for the people who live there as well as for those who want to visit.



The communities of Ulster, Hurley, Olive, Woodstock and Shandaken will all have the opportunity to experience the positive attributions offered by the amendment.



The renewal of the Greenway reaffirms our commitment to protecting open space and green space and further facilitates community development in the Hudson Valley.

In addition, I lead the effort to renew the Hudson River Greenway. I sponsored legislation in the Assembly and then the New York State Senate passed legislation continuing the Hudson River Greenway. This assures that localities are indemnified for their participation for the next five years. The Greenway promotes the preservation of our natural resources and environmental treasures in the local region. The indemnity clause has been the key in getting every municipality in the Hudson Valley to sign on to the Greenway Compact, one of the greatest accomplishments in the State's environmental legacy.

I am pleased that the New York State Senate followed the Assembly and took action on the Greenway, which has been the most successful inter-municipal cooperative agreement in the history of the State of New York. This bill has been a priority since the beginning of session and now it will be going to the Governor's desk.

## National Conference of Insurance Legislators



I attended the Summer Conference of the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL). NCOIL continues to provide an objective, intelligent and useful forum for delving into difficult issues. This organization affords attendees a broad, national perspective on pressing issues that impact our lives. The meetings give legislators the tools and access to information they need to promote thoughtful policy in their home state.

Within the Association, I have the opportunity to intimately work to help preserve health care by chairing the Health, Long-Term Care and Retirement Issues Committee. I exchanged invaluable information with other officials from across the Country.

This year we conducted a panel with useful presentations that helped legislators grapple with what is driving health insurance premium rates. When considering such complex subjects, it is essential that all stakeholders have the opportunity to be heard and present their positions.

The panelists shared their insights with the

During the Health, Long-Term Care and Retirement Issues Committee, as Chairman of the Committee, I moderated a panel that included Washington State Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler; Barbara Klever, Vice Chair – Individual and Small Group Markets, American Association of Actuaries; Saamil Pandya, Senior Director, Policy & Research PhRMA; Bob Ridgeway, Senior Government Relations Counsel, AHIP; Daniel Blaney-Koen Seniro Legislative Attorney, American Medical Association Advocacy Resource Center and Dena B. Mendelsohn Staff Attorney at Consumers Union.

New York Legislators, including Senator Jim Seward, pictured above, also participated.

committee and offered possible suggestions about ways to reduce the cost of health insurance.

## Honoring our Community Members

During the 2017 Session, I was also able to recognize a number of fine individuals in the 103<sup>rd</sup> District.

We celebrated a local business with a resolution commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of KFC in Kingston and honoring its founder, businesswoman Darlene Pfeiffer.



**Darlene Pfeiffer**, entrepreneur and philanthropist.

The Assembly unanimously recognized local restaurateur and community activist Frank Guido for 35 years as the proprietor of several wonderful eateries and for his good work in and around Kingston.



Restaurateur **Frank Guido**.

I authored a resolution that celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and the decades of service and activism of noted area resident Annette Finestone.



**Annette Finestone**, 100, and Dorothy Goldsmith her sister, 97.

The Assembly paused to acknowledge the life and noteworthy achievements of Bruderhof Elder Johann Christoph Arnold. Pastor Arnold was known around the world for his work in promoting peace and understanding.



Senior pastor of the Bruderhof, **Johann Christoph Arnold**.

I am happy to report that each of these privileged resolutions were passed unanimously by the entire New York State Assembly.

### District Office

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