



ASSEMBLYWOMAN

PATRICIA A. FAHY

Legislative & Community Report to the 109th Assembly District



Dear Neighbor:

I'm proud to continue to represent you in the New York State Assembly and will continue to work hard for each of you in Albany, Bethlehem, Guilderland, and New Scotland. Inside this edition of the Legislative and Community Report to the 109th Assembly District includes updates on the recently passed 2014-2015 state budget, highlights from the past few months within the district, and interesting information you and your family may find helpful.

I am committed to making our region an increasingly wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family, with a focus on building an economy that generates good jobs and an education system that prepares our children to have a bright future.

Your thoughts on these important issues are valuable to me and I welcome your viewpoints. Please feel free to join me at a future community coffee event, contact my office by phone, email, or social media, and sign up for our regular email updates by sending a note to fahyp@assembly.state.ny.us.



Assemblywoman
PATRICIA A. FAHY

ASSEMBLYWOMAN FAHY WORKING FOR YOU

Allowing for community service in place of suspension in schools: I introduced legislation to allow for community service to be an option in place of suspension of students in public schools. Giving districts and school officials flexibility from state mandates to remedy violations that take place within schools is critical to providing students alternate pathways, and this bill has been endorsed by the NYS Council of School Superintendents. Community service, when used appropriately, can be a more constructive and productive option than suspension. It would allow the student to give back to the community and hopefully learn something in the process.

New environmental legislators' caucus: I joined 30 state legislators to create the New York State Caucus of Environmental Legislators, chaired by Assemblyman Brian Kavanagh. Protecting and preserving our state's natural resources for future generations is nothing short of essential. I'm proud to be one of the founding members of this caucus and look forward to collaborating with fellow state legislators to increase advocacy for critical environmental and energy issues facing the New York State.

Specialized Career and Technical Diploma (CTE). It is important that high school curriculums reflect that there are numerous pathways to success. I recently joined over 65 of my colleagues in the Assembly in sponsoring legislation (A.819a/S.0817) which would revise the current diploma standard in New York State to include a new, specialized Career and Technical Diploma (CTE) that will train students for employment in manufacturing and high-tech fields. This will provide flexibility and offer choices for students in preparing for future career success.

Restoring wages to M/C employees. Management/Confidential (M/C) employees comprise nearly 9,000 employees in the state, with over 4,000 here in the Capital Region. Our efforts continue to assist these employees whose wages have been frozen for the past five years. Some of the secretaries, clerks, and administrative professionals have had salary increases withheld while the



Assemblywoman Fahy and NYS DEC Commissioner Martens participate in National Bike to Work Day.

vast majority of state workers have received increases. As a former M/C employee, it is simply unfair and unreasonable for the families of qualified and experienced M/C employees to be singled out, and punished financially—while fellow employees working in the same title have received raises, and I continue to advocate strongly on their behalf.

Guilderland receives funding to support heroin addiction recovery efforts. I joined Attorney General Schneiderman and Albany County officials in announcing that the Guilderland Police Department will be the first department in the state to receive award funding through the Community Overdose Prevention (COP) Program, which provides funds to equip and train officers with Naloxone kits, which can be used as a heroin antidote.

The increasing prevalence of illegal substances such as heroin in our neighborhoods and communities is nothing short of devastating to their users and their families. With Attorney General Schneiderman's leadership on this issue, police departments such as Guilderland's are now better prepared to combat heroin use through COP funding.





Assemblymembers Fahy and McDonald are joined by librarians, library board members, and volunteers from the Upper Hudson Library System, which received an increase in funding due to this year's state budget.

The New York State Legislature approved the 2014-2015 state budget recently, the fourth on-time budget in a row, to start the new fiscal year. Again, the budget is a series of compromises and serious trade-offs, where progress has been made on a number of fronts, though, I would have preferred more re-investment into our communities. The spending plan totals \$138 billion and continues the state's fiscal discipline by holding spending growth to less than two percent for the fourth consecutive year. Enclosed are highlights from this year's budget. For more information, visit <http://publications.budget.ny.gov/budgetFP/enacted1415.html>.

TAX RELIEF

This year's budget provides property tax relief for homeowners via a two-year property tax credit provided a local government and school district stay within (or "freeze") the two percent property tax cap. To benefit for a second year, schools and localities would have to propose a detailed cost-cutting plan. This measure will save homeowners some costs over the next three years, though the bulk of the savings will be in high housing cost areas downstate and are projected to save taxpayers over \$1.5 billion over the next three years. Also, the increase the Assembly requested for local government through **Aid to Municipalities (AIM)** funding did not prevail in the three-way agreement though it would have provided needed direct assistance for localities.



Assemblywoman Fahy joined legislative colleagues and education advocacy groups in calling for additional aid for education.

EDUCATION

The 2014-15 state budget increases school aid by \$1.2 billion, or 5.4 percent, which is \$551 million over the Governor's proposal. Included with this increase is \$251 million in additional funding for Foundation Aid and \$602 million in restorations to the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), helping to reduce the negative financial impact on schools from cuts five years ago. I am pleased (and relieved!) that each of the schools districts I represent did better than average, which should go a long way toward restoring the funding lost in GEA five years ago.

The budget also incorporates recent legislation passed only in the Assembly that helps fix the seriously flawed implementation of Common Core standards and takes a step toward reducing "high stakes" testing in the classroom. It protects students from unfair consequences based on test results, ends the data sharing contract with **inBloom** and helps secure sensitive student data.

One disappointment is the budget's failure to address a statewide problem with **community college chargeback** costs. A community college is able to recoup part of the student tuition from each county where the students reside. I will continue to work to address local inequity between counties on this issue.

Also included in education funding are:

- ✓ \$40 million for pre-K programs outside of New York City;
- ✓ \$16 million in additional support for Non-Public Services in CAP (the Comprehensive Attendance Program);
- ✓ \$14.2 million in restored support for Teacher Resource Centers; and
- ✓ And \$5 million in additional support for Libraries.



Congressman Tonko and Assemblywoman Fahy talk with unemployed New Yorkers on the effects of recently losing their unemployment insurance.

JOB CREATION

In an effort to attract more businesses to the state and create more local jobs, the budget provides tax incentives to manufacturers looking to set up shop in New York. One such incentive eliminates the income tax on manufacturers, saving businesses \$193 million starting in 2014-15, creating jobs and revitalizing the economy.

The budget further relieves manufacturers by offering a tax credit equal to 20 percent of their property tax cost. Businesses that were worried about locating or expanding in New York will no longer face burdensome property taxes that discouraged them previously. This will save manufacturing businesses another \$100 million each year starting in 2015-16.



Assemblywoman Fahy and Congressman Tonko are joined by local area high school students as Google announced they will make the Albany Institute of History and Art's collection available online.

T SUMMARY



Assemblywoman Fahy joins Mayor Sheehan and community members in opening the restored Madison Theater in Albany's Pine Hills neighborhood.

EXPANDING THE NY WORKS PROGRAM

The state will expand the NY Works program to encourage businesses to hire unemployed, disadvantaged youth, ages 16 to 24, by connecting it to community colleges. Tying the occupational training component of the NY Youth Works Program to the Job Linkage Program will help encourage more employers to hire inner-city youth.

MAKING ROADS BETTER

The budget includes \$438.1 million for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs) and dedicates an additional \$40 million in funding to help local governments repair local roads and bridges impacted by the harsh winter.



Assemblywoman Fahy joins Attorney General Schneiderman and Albany County officials in announcing the first round of Community Overdose Prevention (COP) funding to the Guilderland Police Department.

PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FINANCING

A new enforcement unit will be created within the state Board of Elections that will have independent authority to investigate violations of the Election Law via a Chief Enforcement Counsel. The budget legislation also strengthens disclosure requirements for independent expenditures for communications which refer to, and advocate for or against, a clearly identified candidate and are communicated to a general public audience.

RESTORING PUBLIC TRUST IN PUBLIC SERVICE

The enacted 2014-15 state budget includes provisions to increase transparency by toughening anti-bribery laws and creating four new crimes of corrupting government. These new crimes may be used to prosecute public servants and persons acting in concert with them for schemes to defraud or schemes to steal from the state or other governmental entity.

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

The budget also provides \$3.9 million to support the payment for early intervention services, which are critical in helping infants and toddlers with developmental delays that can be remedied early on with appropriate care.



Assemblywoman Fahy speaks before a performance by Farnsworth Middle School in Guilderland at NYSSMA's day at the Empire State Plaza.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND

The budget continues a commitment to protecting New York's environment for future generations by increasing funding to the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) by \$9 million—for a total of \$162 million. In addition, the budget plan also provides \$92.5 million to support capital investments in our state parks.

IMPROVING TRANSIT

Upstate transit systems will be provided a total of \$178.7 million, an increase of \$5.1 million, plus a commitment for additional aid that will track the growth of the Upstate sales tax.



Assemblymembers Fahy and McDonald welcome a new business, Bake For You, into Albany's DelSo neighborhood.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Please visit my Assembly website for job announcements and listings, and send us a note if you know of a job opening.

PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION

Did you know Albany has a public access channel? ChannelAlbany broadcasts from Channel 18 (or 116.3), presenting content made from residents and organizations within the City of Albany. The studio is in the Albany Public Library's main branch and is open to the public. For more information, email channelalbany@gmail.com or visit channelalbany.tv.



NYSSBA FRESHMAN LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR

Joined by Bethlehem School Board Member Lynne Lenhardt, Assemblywoman Fahy was honored by the New York State School Board Association as Freshman Legislator of the Year.



Assemblywoman Fahy and Mayor Kathy Sheehan at the Historic Albany Foundation's Moveable Feast.

COMMUNITY COFFEE

Assemblywoman Fahy hosts Community Coffees at local businesses and organizations in the 109th Assembly District. These events are a wonderful way to get to know the Assemblywoman's staff as well as get updates from the New York State Legislature. Join our email list and check the office's social media outlets to find out when the next Community Coffee will be coming to a neighborhood near you.

CAPITAL DISTRICT ASSEMBLY UPDATE

Tune in every Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. on Channel 17 (for Time Warner Cable subscribers) for the next episode of Capital District Assembly Update, co-hosted by Assemblymember McDonald and me. You can also access previous episodes and clips on my Assembly website.



ASSEMBLYWOMAN
Patricia Fahy

Reports to the People

Assemblywoman Patricia A. Fahy

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