



Assemblyman

**JOSEPH D.  
MORELLE**

Reports to the People

**DECEMBER 2010**

## A difficult year ends, a new one begins with promise

Dear Neighbor,

*I want to take this opportunity to reflect upon the difficult year that is coming to an end and also highlight issues of current interest as we move toward another legislative session in Albany.*

*Ever-rising deficits, the second-latest budget in history, and the ongoing political paralysis of the state Senate were only emblematic of the problems that further undermined the public's faith in state government this year. It's a frustration I share.*

*Yet 2010 was not without accomplishments. I worked with the Greater Rochester Enterprise and other state officials to secure more than 250 high-paying new jobs here in Rochester, New York, returned to a policy of prior approval for health care premium increases, and city school governance reform moved forward in the Assembly.*

*And I believe New Yorkers have a genuine sense of optimism that the incoming Cuomo Administration will fight for reform on a host of levels as it works to reduce the spending and taxation that have robbed our state of its economy vitality. I have opposed the past two state budgets, and it is my hope that I will be able to embrace the next one as a step toward a new era of fiscal accountability.*

*I look forward to working with the new governor and Lieutenant Governor-elect Bob Duffy in the New Year on these and many other fronts, and to serving you once again in the state Assembly.*

*My own legislative agenda in 2011 will include fighting for fiscal stability, a new era of jobs in an innovation economy, nonpartisan redrawing of legislative districts, a new law requiring DNA samples from individuals arrested for violent felonies, and a renewed effort to expand health care coverage for families dealing with autism.*

*As always, please feel free to contact me at my office, 585-467-0410, and by e-mail at [morellj@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:morellj@assembly.state.ny.us) with any questions or concerns you may have.*

*My best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year!*

Warmest regards,

Joe Morelle

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## The public's voice is heard on I-590/Rt. 104 changes



*Joe discusses Interstate 590 changes with state DOT engineer Dave Goehring.*

The reconstruction of Interstate 590 as it enters the Sea Breeze Drive corridor has been a largely positive project for our community, but it became clear this fall that several potentially critical problems existed with respect to 590's interchanges with Route 104.

Residents were most dissatisfied with the way southbound traffic was forced to quickly merge with traffic coming from Webster across the Irondequoit Bay

Bridge. In general, there was concern that the new lanes and striping configurations would lead to dangerous confusion, especially for drivers unfamiliar with the area.

I hosted a heavily-attended community forum on this subject at East Ridge High School on November 8, at which time Acting Regional Department of Transportation Director Bob Traver and other DOT officials heard more than two hours of public commentary.

I am pleased to report that just a week later, the DOT began addressing the great majority of these complaints, adding a half-mile to the length of the left lane from Sea Breeze Drive that merges with Route 590 South and restoring a second lane on 590 North from East Ridge Road to Titus Avenue.

When spring arrives, the DOT will also add a new lane extending from the Titus Avenue roundabout to the Ridge Road exit, and create a third northbound lane on 590 from the Route 104 west exit ramp north to Titus Avenue.

I want to thank Director Traver and his entire team for their rapid response, and also the many residents who took the time to contact my office and attend our public forum. We will continue to monitor the progress of the 590 project and keep residents updated.

## New consortium will hold down the cost of health care



*Joe joins town supervisors and other officials to announce the Finger Lakes Municipal Health Insurance Trust.*

On November 15, I stood with town supervisors and other community leaders to announce the Finger Lakes Municipal Health Insurance Trust, a consortium that will save property taxpayers millions

of dollars and ensure continued medical coverage for thousands of municipal employees and their family members.

Nine local municipalities and the Rochester Housing Authority have

entered a three-year contract with MVP Health Care, covering 1,200 contracts and more than 3,000 people. The projected savings to property taxpayers over the course of the contract is \$5.1 million.

As chairman of the Assembly's Committee on Insurance, controlling premium costs for both individuals and employers has been among my top priorities. That's why I was honored to assist the Health Insurance Trust navigate the state's insurance laws during its formation, and I want to thank all the members of the Trust for their partnership and hard work in making this announcement possible.

This is another example of how collaboration and creative approaches to governance can lead to innovative and cost-effective policies.

## Fighting for families touched by autism



*Joe speaks at a press conference announcing his bill in Albany.*

I was deeply disappointed when Governor Paterson vetoed a bill I sponsored that would have provided health care coverage for children affected by autism. Under my proposal, health insurers could not have denied coverage for clinically and established treatments that have proven effective in dealing with a condition that affects more and more New Yorkers every day.

Presently, there is a great disparity between the insurance options offered for many other childhood developmental disabilities and those available in the instance of an autism diagnosis. Too often, carriers refuse to pay for treatments on the basis that they are educational rather than medical in nature.

I am proud that this measure passed both houses of the state legislature unanimously, a fact that encourages me to continue this fight in the 2011 legislative session.

It is time to close the insurance gap that exists for individuals with autism and give hope to parents that their children can and will receive the best care available.

## Nonpartisan redistricting will put power in citizens' hands

One of the chief complaints about state government is that public policy is held hostage to insider politics. Many New Yorkers believe state elected officials have too little accountability to the taxpayers who foot Albany's bills.

In order to answer this criticism, I have cosponsored a bill calling for the creation of a citizen-based commission to draw new legislative district lines based on objective data and not the concerns of incumbents or political parties.

The process would include open hearings and fo-

cus on combining communities of interest within new district lines so that those interests are better served in the legislature.

The current approach to redistricting, which is controlled by lawmakers, allows elected officials to choose who they represent when it should be the other way around.

Of all the reforms necessary to restore faith in New York State government, I believe this is one that will truly put control back where it belongs, with the citizens of New York.

## IN THE COMMUNITY



*On Sunday, Nov. 14, the Town of Brighton announced plans to raise funds for a memorial honoring all Brightonians who have served in the armed forces of the United States. Here Joe is seen at the memorial's kick-off event with Town Councilman James Vogel, memorial sculptor Mary Taylor, and Mark Johns from project architect Bergmann Associates.*



*Joe was recently honored by St. Ann's Community senior home with its Partners in Quality Award, in recognition of his long-standing leadership on long-term care issues and for his dedication to serving seniors across our community and state.*

# COMMUNITY SURVEY

*As always, we want to hear from you and learn more about your concerns. I hope you'll take the time to fill out the brief survey below and return it to my office.*

**On a scale of 1 to 5, what issues matter most to you? (1 = most important, 5 = least important)**

Reducing state spending - 1 2 3 4 5

Property tax reduction - 1 2 3 4 5

Public employee pay/benefits - 1 2 3 4 5

Albany's political dysfunction - 1 2 3 4 5

Reform of state government ethics/campaign finance reform - 1 2 3 4 5

Health care affordability/accessibility - 1 2 3 4 5

Public safety/crime - 1 2 3 4 5

Nonpartisan legislative redistricting - 1 2 3 4 5

Add your own thoughts here (if you would like to receive updates on these and other issues from our office, please include your email address): \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

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**Assemblyman Joe Morelle  
1945 East Ridge Road  
Rochester, NY 14622**

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