

T H E
CORWIN
CHRONICLE
A P R I L
2 0 1 0

in this issue:

- > Constitutional Convention Forum
- > New “Wine in Grocery Stores”
Proposal Falls Short
- > Jane’s Voting Record



Assemblywoman Jane Corwin
8180 Main Street
Clarence, NY 14221
(716) 839-4691
corwinj@assembly.state.ny.us

Albany Office:
721 LOB
Albany, NY 12248
(518) 455-4601

Send Jane a message
on facebook!

Dear Neighbor,

The year began with the state mired in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. With the budget deadline only days away, I wish I could say we were close to putting us back on the road to recovery. Unfortunately, in Albany, things do not always go as planned.

This year’s budget process is especially challenging. Special interests continue to have far too much influence. Turmoil in the Executive Branch has created an even more toxic environment, and one inclined to leave Upstate out in the cold.

I remain undeterred, for there is far too much on the line. I am pushing for more transparency in state government and will work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to demand accountability from legislative leaders. We need a budget that will reduce spending and alleviate the burden on Upstate taxpayers and small businesses.

We can’t tax our way to prosperity. Attracting good-paying jobs to Upstate requires state government to rethink its priorities. Passing an on-time 2010-11 State Budget that focuses on jump-starting the Upstate economy – not special interests and New York City priorities – should be our primary concern.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, or would like to receive additional information, please contact my district office at (716) 839-4691.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane L. Corwin".

Jane L. Corwin

Over 200 Residents Flock to Forum on Constitutional Convention

“A ‘People’s Convention’ would allow New Yorkers to take back state government from special interests and career politicians and pass the type of meaningful reforms necessary to get our state back on track.”

On February 17, I was pleased to join Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb to hold a public forum at Union Pleasant Avenue Elementary School in Hamburg to discuss the benefits of holding a Constitutional Convention – a constitutional provision that would allow ordinary citizens to pass essential reforms to state government.

This was an educational event aimed to inform, and by that measure it was a rousing success. State government is clearly broken, and if there was ever a time for residents to say enough is enough, it is now. A “People’s Convention” would allow New Yorkers to take back state government from special interests and career politicians and pass the type of meaningful reforms necessary to get our state back on track. This event was a great chance for us to answer questions and concerns. If the enthusiasm of the participants was any indication, momentum is clearly on our side.

Under state law, state government is required to present voters with the opportunity to hold a Constitutional Convention every 20 years. The last time it was offered, in 1997, voters turned down the initiative. New York has held constitutional conventions in 1777, 1801, 1821, 1846, 1867, 1894, 1915, 1938 and 1967.

In accordance with state law, once a Constitutional Convention is called, individual citizens would be elected as non-partisan delegates to vote on essential reforms to our State Constitution. These “people’s delegates” would be granted the power to pass essential changes to our constitution, including adopting a state spending cap, banning backdoor borrowing and unfunded mandates, instituting term limits, passing comprehensive ethics reform, and establishing an independent and non-partisan redistricting commission that can ensure fair and free elections.

In all, 201 ordinary citizens would be elected delegates. Current elected officials and lobbyists would be barred from running.

Your Thoughts?

What do you think of holding a Constitutional Convention? Which reforms would you like to see passed in the coming year? What are your most important issues?

Please fill out a brief response, clip, and mail the form below back to my district office. You can also e-mail your suggestions to corwinj@assembly.state.ny.us.





New “Wine in Grocery Stores” Proposal Falls Short

For the second year in a row, Governor Paterson’s \$134 billion budget proposal includes another attempt to allow grocery stores to sell wine and liquor. Included in this year’s legislation, however, is new “compensation” for small liquor stores meant to offset the onslaught of competition from retail grocery giants such as Wegmans and Tops. The new measures, although well-intended, do not accomplish this goal. Liquor stores, which under New York State Law have been forced to stay small and limit their product lines, would be forced to compete against much larger retail outlets that benefit from a larger consumer base and a greater diversity of products. The legislation, if passed, would create an uneven playing field and could put small businesses at risk, all during a time of economic uncertainty.

A recent op-ed in the Buffalo News paints the new wine in grocery stores proposal as a fair and advantageous initiative that would bring in revenue dollars for the state and compensate liquor stores for lost revenue. In the face of an over \$9 billion deficit, squeezing a significant population of small-business owners to generate \$93 million in tax revenue is penny wise and dollar foolish.

The “compensation” outlined in the proposal includes permitting liquor stores to sell additional items like cheese and other products relating to wine and liquor, allowing a store to maintain multiple sales outlets, and providing each liquor store with an additional transferable license. Each of these ideas appears helpful on the surface, but, looking at it from a business person’s perspective, proves to be short-sighted. The notion that a small liquor store could compete with wildly popular grocery stores like Wegmans in selling food products is severely misplaced. Secondly, there is a small number of liquor stores that have the resources and capital to branch out to a second location. The credit crunch most small businesses are experiencing today renders this option useless. These apparent compensation measures amount to nothing more than window dressing for the same anti-small business, short-term revenue grab that was eventually stricken from last year’s enacted budget.

The proposal could be improved to address the current shortsightedness if it provided liquor stores time to develop product lines and capital structures to accommodate this David-versus-Goliath type of competition. As a former small-business owner, I believe it would take years of concerted effort and a more forgiving economic climate to level the playing field and give liquor stores a fighting chance to compete. Historically, small businesses are the segment of the economy that leads us out of recession. New York State should allow that to happen by encouraging small businesses, not making it more difficult for them to compete.

“The potential loss of jobs would be more harmful to the state’s economy than the \$93 million it stands to gain in fee income.”

Thousands Participate in Tele-Town Hall

I’m thrilled to announce that over 1,400 local residents participated in my third tele-town hall event held on March 1. The topics discussed included ongoing budget negotiations, support for the School Resource Officer Program, Medicaid, tax relief for families, and a number of acute local issues.

Since I was elected, I have tried to find new ways to keep the lines of communication open between constituents and my office, and I think after this event, it’s clear tele-town halls are one of the best strategies to do just that.

Not surprisingly, residents are most concerned with pocketbook issues: keeping their jobs, paying taxes, and continuing to provide for their families. It was important to let residents know what I’m fighting for every day here in Albany and inform them of where I stand on these and other important issues.

Participants who joined the call totaled 1,468, a considerable increase from my first tele-town hall event held last September and far more than traditional town halls.

Jane's Voting Record

Key Votes: November-March



BILL	JANE'S VOTE
Creates the crime of Aggravated DWI with a child passenger now known as Leandra's Law (A.40008 of 2009).	YES
Prohibits the early release eligibility for class A-1 felons or any sentence imposed for a second child sexual assault felony offense (A.40005 of 2009).	YES
Authorizes municipalities to create a sustainable energy loan program (A.40004-A of 2009).	YES
Creates a new pension tier for the New York State and local employees and teachers retirement systems (A.40026 of 2009).	YES
Comprehensive Ethics Reform (A.9544 of 2010).	YES
Prohibits state employees from using or obtaining state property for private profit (A.9559 of 2010).	YES
Mandates that certain individuals afflicted with AIDS/HIV living in government-sponsored housing do not pay more than 30 percent of their income toward housing expenses and make taxpayers responsible for bearing the burden of all costs above the threshold (A.2565 of 2010).	NO

ASSEMBLY
Cortright
Jane

A legislative update

