



Assemblywoman

# STACEY PHEFFER AMATO

Legislative Budget Report for the 23rd Assembly District

SPRING 2018



Dear Neighbors,

I'm proud to represent you in the New York State Assembly and will continue to work tirelessly on behalf of Ozone Park, Lindenwood, Howard Beach, Hamilton Beach, Broad Channel, Rockaway Beach, Belle Harbor, Neponsit, Breezy Point, Far Rockaway, Bayswater, Edgemere, and Arverne.

Inside this edition of the Spring 2018 Legislative Budget Report for the 23rd Assembly District are updates from the passage of the 2018-19 State budget, legislative priorities for the remainder of session, and other items of interest to neighbors.



As always, I am committed to making our neighborhood a safe and healthy 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 for a bright future. Your thoughts, input, and other important issues are valuable to me, and I welcome your viewpoints. Please feel free to contact my office by phone, email, or social media, and sign up for our regular email updates by sending a note to [amatos@nyassembly.gov](mailto:amatos@nyassembly.gov), or by calling our office at 718-945-9550.

Sincerely,

Stacey Pheffer Amato  
Member of Assembly, 23rd District

## SPRING 2018 BUDGET UPDATES

**Investing in Public Education** – The best education plants the seeds for a future that's building the imaginations of our kids. Our students deserve to learn not only how to read and write,

but also how to think critically and creatively. The 2018-19 State Budget ensures every student, no matter where they live, or what barriers stand in their path, has those opportunities by providing a total of \$26.6 billion in education funding. That's an increase of \$914 million — or 3.6 percent — over the previous year and a 36 percent increase since 2012. This includes a \$618 million increase in Foundation Aid for a total of \$17.8 billion.



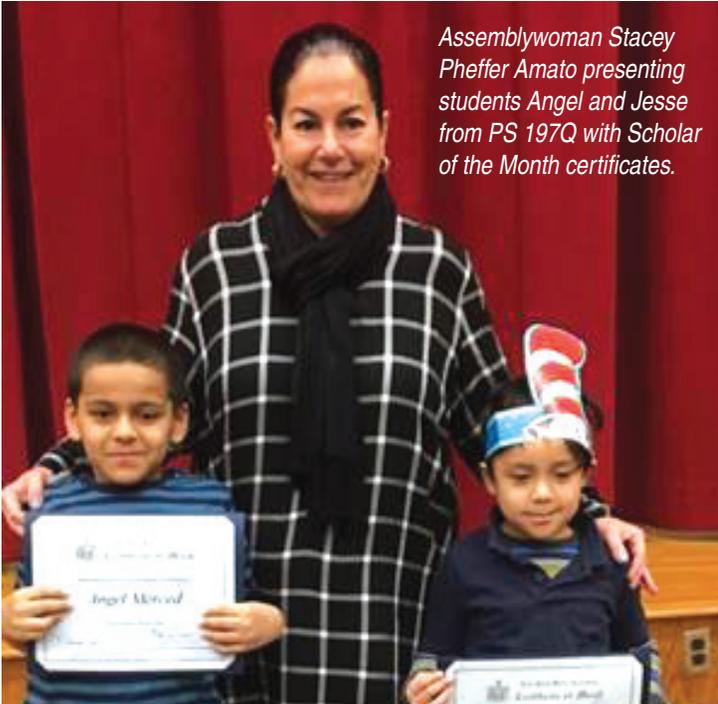
To support students in underserved communities, it includes a \$50 million increase to help high-need schools, including struggling schools, districts with large numbers of English Language Learners (ELLs), and districts with increasing numbers of homeless students become community schools. In addition, the budget increases the minimum community schools funding amount from \$10,000 to \$75,000. The budget goes further to support ELLs by including \$2.8 million in increased support for students who face language barriers, as well as \$2 million for bilingual education grants for a total of \$17.5 million, and \$770,000 for training programs to increase the number of teachers providing bilingual and multilingual education. It also invests \$10 million in a second round of Empire State After School awards, providing after-school care for over 6,000 students. The funding will be directed to districts with high rates of childhood homelessness so that more children have a safe place to learn and grow outside of the classroom.

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In recognition of Women's History month in March, Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato honored seven trailblazing Queens Women of Distinction.

Pictured (left to right): Marie Persans, Maureen McGee, Lisa Neumann, Felicia Johnson, Maria Asaro, Sophia Skeans, and Elizabeth Stoehr.



Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato presenting students Angel and Jesse from PS 197Q with Scholar of the Month certificates.

**Higher Education** – The affordability crisis in higher education grows starker every year, preventing far too many New Yorkers from achieving their college dreams. The budget provides substantial funding for state schools and the Excelsior Scholarship program because a student’s ability to pay should never determine where their educational journey ends. This year’s budget invests in these critical programs so that more young New Yorkers have the resources they need to thrive at the college level and land good-paying jobs after graduation.

The 2018-19 State Budget also invests heavily in SUNY and CUNY schools, to increase community college-based aid across the state. The budget:

- Allocated \$12.1 million to SUNY, and \$6.3 million to CUNY schools, and increases community college-based aid by \$100 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student;
- Restores \$1.1 million to SUNY, and \$902,000 for CUNY Child Care Centers;
- Allocated \$118 million to support approximately 27,000 students in the Excelsior Scholarship program, which makes the SUNY and CUNY schools tuition-free for New Yorkers who earn less than \$110,000 this year.

The spending plan also restores \$23.8 million to college opportunity programs, including:

- \$35.5 million for the Higher Education Opportunity (HEOP), which is \$5.9 million more than the executive budget proposal;
- \$32.2 million for the Education Opportunity Program (EOP), which is \$5.36 million more than the executive proposal;
- \$28.1 million for Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK), which is \$4.68 million more than the executive proposal;
- \$18.4 million for Liberty Partnerships, which is \$3.09 million more than the executive proposal;
- \$15.8 million for the Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP), which is \$2.6 million more than the executive proposal;
- \$11.9 million for the Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (C-STEP), which is \$1.99 million more than the executive proposal; and
- \$1.3 million for College Discovery, which is \$225,000 more than the executive proposal.



**Supporting Our Public Libraries** – Continuing New York’s commitment to local libraries, the budget provides a total of \$96.6 million, an increase of \$1 million over last year, and \$34 million to support library capital projects across the state.



**Investing in Families and Children** – As Chair of the Committee for Child Product Safety, my priorities include ensuring that our hardworking low- and middle-income families have access to high quality, affordable child care and early childhood education, as well as securing funding for vital programs and services to support our most vulnerable children and youth, our caregivers and families, and the dedicated individuals who work on the frontlines.



**Strengthening Child Care** – The budget invests close to \$80 million ensure safe, affordable child care, including:

- \$31 million for pre-licensure and annual licensing inspections for child care providers;
- \$17 million for conducting background checks on child care providers and staff members;
- \$15 million for infant and toddler care quality programs;

# BUDGET UPDATES

- \$12 million for ongoing training on health and safety programs;
- \$2 million for staffing systems changes;
- A minimum of \$10 million for new subsidized child care slots.



**Honoring Veterans** – To support our veterans, a total of \$1.96 million has been secured for community initiatives. These programs provide essential services to help lift up veterans and their families in their transition back to civilian life, as well as support current active-duty personnel and their families.

The funding includes:

- \$500,000 for the New York State Defenders Association;
- \$200,000 for Helmets to Hardhats;
- \$200,000 for Warrior Salute;
- \$125,000 for Veterans of Foreign Wars of New York;
- \$100,000 for SAGE Veterans Project;
- \$100,000 for Veterans Justice Project;
- \$50,000 for Vietnam Veterans of America, NYS Council;
- \$50,000 for the Research and Recognition Project;
- \$25,000 for the Veterans Miracle Center.

The budget also extends the Hire a Veteran Tax Credit for two years. Eligible employers can receive a tax credit of up to \$5,000 for each veteran hired, but that amount rises to \$15,000 for each veteran with a disability that is hired.



**Protecting the Environment** – The budget continues the Assembly’s commitment to protecting and preserving the environment. That includes the continuation of New York’s multi-year commitment to funding \$2.5 billion for the Clean Water Infrastructure Act to ensure all New Yorkers have access to clean drinking water. It also provides \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF).



**Sexual Harassment** – The state budget establishes a model policy of sexual harassment for all public employers, including legislation to ensure that employers across the state have comprehensive policies to combat sexual harassment in the work place. Moreover, the measure bars confidentiality clauses in any settlement except when specifically requested by the victim. It also allows a state or local government that has paid a victim for a sexual harassment claim on behalf of a public employee to recover payment from the employee responsible for the harassment. Further, it would ban mandatory arbitration agreements for claims of sexual harassment.



**Combating the Opioid Crisis** – To combat the opioid epidemic and create a road to recovery, the state budget makes investments in prevention, treatment and recovery services, including establishing a stewardship fund, which will be supported by a fee manufacturers and distributors registered to sell and/or distribute opioids in the state must pay.



**STAR** – To protect seniors’ hard-earned and well-deserved property tax relief, the budget once again rejects the executive proposal to freeze the STAR benefits at 2017-18 levels.

- STAR savings will continue to increase annually.

**Supporting the Health and Well-Being of Older Adults** – Seniors continue to play an integral role in the growth of our communities and the county. The budget:

- Invests \$2 million in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) and Neighborhood NORC. It will also allow the Office for the Aging to expand last year’s \$2 million Mortgage Insurance

Fund (MIF) allocation, which brings total additional funding for the programs to \$4 million.

- Funds a number of programs that provide important resources for seniors, including \$31.2 million for the Community Services for the Elderly program
- Include a \$100,000 for the Statewide Senior Action Council Patients' Rights Hotline, \$86,000 for the Foundation for Senior Citizens Home Sharing and Respite Program; and \$250,000 for the Older Adults Technology Center.
- Provides \$20 million in capital funding to support the establishment of 1,000 new assisted living program beds in underserved areas;
- Establishes the New York State Secure Choice Savings retirement program for private-sector employees. The program, administered by a seven-member program board and chaired by the Commissioner of Taxation and Finance, will allow New Yorkers to better prepare and save for retirement.

## FREE COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

**Naloxone Training with the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (NYS OASAS)**

August 8th • 6:00 pm • Rise Center • \*sign-up required\*

**NYLAG Van Outside Wave Crest Shopping Center**

July 13th • 10:00 am to 3:00 pm • \*sign-up required\*

**MetroCard Van**

August 31st • 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Lindenwood Shopping Center

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm Wavecrest Shopping Center

## KEY LEGISLATION

With two months still left in the 2018 legislation session, we still have a lot of work left and more bills to pass. Keep reading below for some of my bills I will be advocating for:

**A.08743** – Prohibits the imposition and collection of a fare, toll, rental, rate, charge, or other fee on the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge.

**A.10005** – Establishes a cashless tolling amnesty program.

**A.09804** – Requires school crossing guards at high schools.



New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248



Assemblywoman  
**Stacey Pheffer Amato**  
*Legislative and Community Report*

*SPRING 2018*

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## ASSEMBLYWOMAN STACEY PHEFFER AMATO

*Chair, Child Product Safety of the Consumer Affairs Committee*

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