



Assemblywoman

STACEY PHEFFER AMATO

Legislative and Community Report for the 23rd Assembly District

YEAR AT A GLANCE 2023

Dear Neighbors,

As your proud New York State Assemblywoman, I'm dedicated to representing the interests and wellbeing of Assembly District 23, which is comprised of Ozone Park, Lindenwood, Howard Beach, Hamilton Beach, Broad Channel, Rockaway Beach, Belle Harbor, Neponsit, Breezy Point, Far Rockaway, Bayswater, Edgemere, and Arverne. With 78 Assembly bills passed this year that I sponsored or co-sponsored, and 26 bills I've had signed into law, my office has been hard at work pursuing legislation that will make a difference in your life.

As the new Chairwoman of the New York State Assembly Committee on Governmental Employees, I have had the honor of ensuring the continued legislative well-being of our first responders and all governmental employees across the State, along with constituents in our district. The New York State Assembly Committee on Governmental Employees serves as the leading legislative authority on all public employees in New York, including retirees. In this role, I have presided and facilitated legislation and policies for public employees that range in pensions, retirement benefits, and health insurance.

Inside this edition of the 2023 Legislative and Community Report for the 23rd Assembly District are updates on bills that have passed the Assembly, imperative budget information that will affect our community and important events I have had the pleasure of being a part of throughout the year.

Your input, thoughts and opinions are of the utmost priority to me as I head back to Albany for our next legislative session. Thank you for all the time you've taken to share your thoughts with my office.

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 or by calling my office at 718-945-9550.

Sincerely,

Stacey Pheffer Amato | Member of Assembly, 23rd District

2023 LEGISLATIVE AND COMMUNITY UPDATES

Investing in Education



Our schools, administrators and teachers have been working diligently throughout the year to ensure the well-being of our children. It is my job as a legislator to help allocate the funding necessary to secure that success. Through the 2023-24 State budget, I helped secure:

- \$34 billion in general support for public schools, 9.4% increase from the 2022-23 school year;
- \$99.6 million in aid to public libraries;
- \$134.6 million to expand free meals statewide. More students across the state will now have access to free breakfast and lunch at school, which will help both students and their families;
- \$30 million to expand mental health services for school-aged children;
- No tuition increase for SUNY and CUNY schools

Celebrating Summer Readers

At the end of each school year, I bring a Summer Reading Challenge to all the schools in my district. One of my favorite times of the year is when I get to visit each school and present the Summer Reading Awards to all the hard-working students. It's a moment of pride for the students and I'm happy to honor their great work!



Strengthening Our Health Care



Keeping health care available and accessible to all New Yorkers is always a major priority. In addition to the monumental \$1 billion investment in mental health care this year, my efforts in the budget included:

- Expanding Medicaid benefits for more than 7.8 million low-income New Yorkers;
- \$120 million gross investment to expand the Medicaid buy-in program; an additional \$500 million for distressed and safety-net hospitals like St. John's Episcopal Hospital in Far Rockaway;
- \$36 million gross investment to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for medical transportation; and an additional \$60 million to support the 988 Suicide and Crisis Hotline



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Representing You In Albany

Cross Bay Bridge Resident Rebate

I have kept my promise by bringing forward the Queens Resident Toll Rebate Program for the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge. This program will be enacted starting February 2024. I worked tirelessly to get this access for my constituents, and all Queens residents who utilize E-Zpass by passing legislation and securing the needed funding.

\$5 LIRR at Far Rockaway Station



The Far Rockaway LIRR Station will finally be part of the CityTicket program. After years of advocating, Far Rockaway and the entire Rockaway Peninsula are being recognized just like every other neighborhood in the City.

- Riders buying a ticket from the LIRR Far Rockaway Station to Penn Station (or other Zone 1 stations like Grand Central or Atlantic Terminal) will now pay only \$5 during off-peak hours and \$7 during peak hours.
- You can purchase a Far Rockaway CityTicket at the Far Rockaway LIRR ticket kiosk or through the mobile TrainTime app by sharing your location. Senior citizens and individuals with disabilities can purchase their Far Rockaway CityTicket on board the train.



Working to Prevent Childhood Drowning



I have worked diligently to prevent childhood drowning and am honored that my bill was signed into law, which will require all new parents to watch a brief video on the dangers of childhood drowning (Ch. 588 of 2023). As drowning is the number one cause of death in children under 4, this video will educate new parents to the dangers of drowning that can occur by leaving a toddler unattended in or near two inches of water, like what can be found in bathtubs, buckets or toilets. Through this legislation, the State of New York is committed to saving lives!

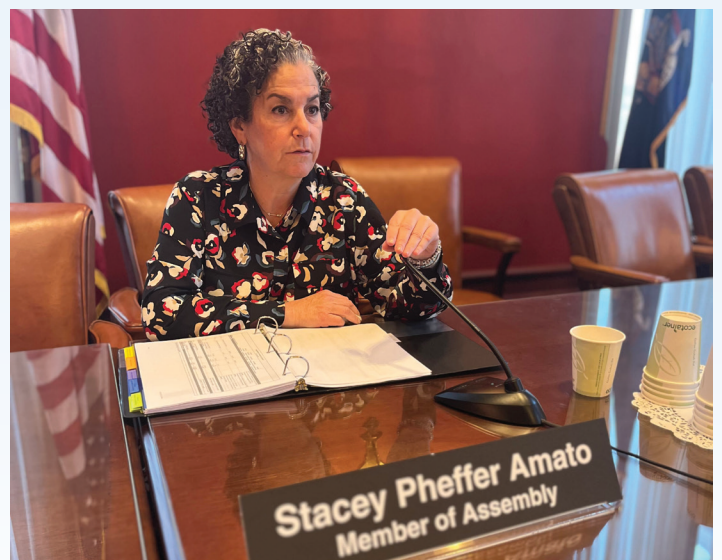


The Chairwoman's Corner

In 2023 I became the second woman in New York State history to be appointed Chairwoman of the New York State Assembly Committee on Governmental Employees. This year, the committee had an unprecedented level of success, and as of December, had over 26 bills signed into law. Below are the bills that will make a difference in the lives of all New Yorkers, and I look forward to passing more bills to help you!

A.4008	Pheffer Amato - Relates to accidental disability retirement for uniformed court officers and peace officers employed in the unified court system
A.4987A	Pheffer Amato - Relates to establishing a video on the dangers of drowning for infants and young children to be viewed by a parent and/or parents of newborn children
A.5136	Pheffer Amato - Relates to the calculation of final average salary for certain members of the New York state and local police and fire retirement system
A.6081	Pheffer Amato - Provides for accidental disability retirement for deputy sheriffs in Nassau county
A.6156	Pheffer Amato - Relates to reopening the age 55 improved benefit retirement program and the 25-year early retirement program to active and retired members and staff of the NYC council
A.6499	Pheffer Amato - Provides for special accidental death benefits for widows or widowers of certain deputy sheriff members of the New York city sheriff's department
A.6538	Pheffer Amato - Relates to a child care leave credit for New York city uniformed correction officers who are members of the New York city uniformed correction/sanitation revised plan
A.6571	Pheffer Amato - Modifies the retirement program for Triborough bridge and tunnel members
A.6651	Pheffer Amato - Relates to additional member contributions for certain members under the age fifty-seven retirement program
A.6806	Pheffer Amato - Provides for the continuation of state health benefit plans for certain survivors of employees of the state and/or of a political subdivision or of a public authority
A.6855	Pheffer Amato - Provides for additional requirements for issuing civil service examination announcements
A.6856	Pheffer Amato - Relates to the suspension or demotion upon the abolition or reduction of non-competitive or labor class positions in the state service; repealer
A.7112	Pheffer Amato - Relates to the compensation of deputy public administrators in the city of New York
A.7155	Pheffer Amato - Provides for crediting of probationary service
A.7156	Pheffer Amato - Provides for the automatic enrollment of employees of the city of New York eligible to join the New York city board of education retirement system

A.7157	Pheffer Amato - Provides home addresses of certain employees to employee organizations
A.7311	Pheffer Amato - Relates to dual memberships in certain New York city retirement systems
A.7379	Pheffer Amato - Relates to the "wartime service" requirement
A.7400	Pheffer Amato - Extends provisions of law relating to temporary investments by local governments
A.7414	Pheffer Amato - Relates to health insurance coverage for surviving spouses or domestic partners of members of the New York city fire department
A.7609	Pheffer Amato - Extends the temporary "commission to prevent childhood drowning"
A.7644	Pheffer Amato - Extends for two fiscal years the current 7% per annum statutory rate of interest used in valuing retirement system liabilities for the purpose of computing the amount of employer contributions
A.7668	Pheffer Amato - Updates certain death benefit provisions of the New York city employees' retirement system, the New York city teachers' retirement system, and the board of education retirement system of New York city
A.7679	Pheffer Amato - Includes thyroid cancer in the list of cancers presumed to be incurred in the performance of duty for purposes of disability retirement
A.7689	Pheffer Amato - Relates to service rendered by investigators and sworn officers of the waterfront commission of New York harbor
A.7766	Pheffer Amato - Provides for compensation and other terms and conditions of employment of certain state officers and employees; repealer; appropriation



Supporting Our Veterans

This year's state budget appropriated nearly \$30 million for the care of our state's veterans. We are forever grateful for their service to our country. The budget will help fund programs including:

- **Hire-A-Veteran Tax Credit:** Businesses hiring qualified veterans may be eligible for up to \$20,000 per veteran employed. Businesses must hire qualified veterans in New York State for one year or more for at least 35 hours each week to claim the tax credit.
- **Veterans' Property Tax Exemption:** Veterans can now benefit from property tax exemptions. The most common exemptions reduce the property tax burden of a wartime veteran by 15% to 25% if the veteran served in a combat zone. The deadline to apply for Veteran exemptions in NYC is March 15th.

I was also very proud to have my bill signed into law, eliminating the "Wartime service" requirement that prohibited many interested veterans from seeking employment in certain civil service roles (A.7379). This drastically expanded employment opportunities for our veterans.



9516 Rockaway Beach Blvd., Rockaway Beach, NY 11693



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ASSEMBLYWOMAN STACEY PHEFFER AMATO

Chairwoman of the New York State Assembly Committee on Governmental Employees

Rockaway Peninsula District Office: 9516 Rockaway Beach Blvd., Rockaway Beach, NY 11693 • 718-945-9550

Howard Beach District Office: 159-53 102nd Street, Howard Beach, NY 11414 • 718-641-8755

Albany Office: Room 839 Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-4292

AmatoS@nyassembly.gov • nyassembly.gov/mem/Stacey-Pheffer-Amato