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Assemblyman

Andrew Hevesi

Community Update

- **Forest Hills**
- **Rego Park**
- **Kew Gardens**
- **Richmond Hill**
- **Ridgewood**
- **Middle Village**
- **Glendale**

Summer 2018

2018-2019 State Budget includes new 'Fair Market Rent' Pilot Program to Combat Homelessness

The Final Enacted 2018-2019 New York State Budget includes a new \$15 million 'Fair Market Rent' pilot program, crafted by Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi. The Fair Market Rent supplement will be used to achieve stable housing for 240 at risk households in New York City and Rochester, including families that are about to become homeless or those who are currently homeless. This pilot program will cover 100% of the difference between the recipient's public assistance shelter allowance and the fair market rent standard (FMR) set by the federal government for a period of four years. This is the first state-funded rent subsidy program in New York State to provide a supplement at 100% of the Fair

Market Rent level for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness. \$13.5 million of the funds will be allocated to New York City to assist approximately 200 households and \$1.1 million will go to Monroe County to assist approximately 40 households. The remaining money will be used to contract with two non-profits to monitor, study, and assess the pilot program. As Assemblyman Hevesi continues the fight for his proposed statewide rent supplement, The Home Stability Support, he believes the 'Fair Market Rent' pilot will demonstrate that a rent subsidy program is the only way to stop the growth of homelessness in New York State.

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences and their long-term impacts

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are those traumatic events that shape how we look at the world. They include abuse and neglect, parental substance abuse, parental mental illness, and domestic violence, among others. Children that have experienced ACEs, especially repeated trauma, often exhibit physical changes in the pre-frontal cortex of the brain. It is the prefrontal cortex which serves as the control system for Executive Function (EF) skills, which include the ability to make decisions, self-regulate, set and achieve goals, and plan for the future. The changes in the pre-frontal cortex DO NOT affect a person's intelligence or general knowledge, nor are we defined or doomed by our ACEs. However acknowledging that we have them, and that we have the ability to mitigate their effects, is helpful in navigating the world we live and hope to succeed in. What is important to understand is that any child has the potential for success, if they are seen through the lens of "What's strong about you?" instead of, "What's wrong with you?"

There is mounting empirical data that proves that children who have ACEs, and the resulting executive function deficits, are exponentially more likely to have difficulty in school, become addicted to various substances, end up in the criminal justice system, become reliant on public assistance, and have their own kids who will experience ACEs. This is a generational cycle that costs taxpayers billions of dollars every year. We must change the way we view ACEs and how we address them.

That is why Assemblyman Hevesi introduced Assembly Bill A9565, which mandates that all direct-care domestic violence shelter staff receive state-approved training in Adverse Childhood Experiences and Executive Function skills. The bill, which passed the Assembly unanimously, will create a new, consistent training model to help front line staff recognize ACEs and executive function skills deficits in order to mitigate their effects on the long-term health and success of a population in which two generations have experienced trauma. This is just the beginning of incorporating science-based strategies into New York's social services public policy. We must also, slowly and carefully, begin to consider how to provide every adult who comes into contact with a child in a professional setting, from teachers to child care providers to law enforcement, training in recognizing ACEs and providing children and their families the tools they need to succeed despite these experiences. Our communities, our counties, and indeed our state and country will be stronger if we all focus less on the negative impacts of trauma and concentrate instead on building resilience and

giving these children the chance to succeed. We will have a more productive workforce, a healthier populace, more successful residents, and a huge reduction in costs for taxpayers. The unanimous passage of A9565 is just a first step.

Assemblyman Hevesi Fights to Protect Vulnerable Children in New York

During this year's negotiations for the Final Enacted 2018-19 New York State Budget, Assemblyman Hevesi, as chair of the New York State Assembly's standing committee on social services, fought vigorously against spending cuts throughout the human services sector. In one such instance, the Assemblyman led the fight to oppose Governor Cuomo's proposal to cut reimbursements for child welfare programs in New York City from \$449 million to \$320 million.

Child welfare programs provide essential preventative services for youth and families throughout New York and keep families together by de-escalating adverse circumstances that may lead to abuse and neglect. In 1995, Governor George Pataki enacted a cut on these reimbursements -similar to that which was proposed by Governor Cuomo in this budget cycle. This left local governments unable to adequately fund and administer preventative services, and as a result, more children in New York were abused, neglected, and moved into the foster care system. After observing these results, the state, in 2002, implemented a policy that is still in place today, which reimburses county and municipal governments for 62% of the total cost incurred for such programs. This reimbursement allows localities to effectively administer child welfare programs, and has dramatically decreased the amount of children in foster care, decreased expenses incurred by taxpayers, and decreased the amount of children that are abused and neglected in New York.

In light of the implications of the Governor's proposed cap on this reimbursement, Assemblyman Hevesi organized a coalition of foster care advocates, colleagues in the state legislature, and officials throughout New York to oppose and prevent these cuts from being implemented. As a result of this advocacy, the Governor's proposal was ultimately rejected in negotiations for the FY 2018-19 Final Enacted State Budget.



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