



Reports to the Community

Spring 2019

Serving the partial or entire communities of:

Briarwood, Bellerose, Bellerose Manor, Fresh Meadows, Glen Oaks, Hillcrest, Hollis Hills, Holliswood, Jamaica Estates, Jamaica Hills, Oakland Gardens, Queens Village, Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, and Utopia.

A Message From DAVID I. WEPRIN



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am excited to greet you all this spring. The 2019 legislative session has gotten off to a productive start. Both houses of the legislature in Albany have passed a record number of bills that have been stalled for many years and the momentum is continuing. So far, important bills regarding voting reform, gun control, and the Child Victims Act have been taken up and passed by both houses of the legislature.

Once again, the State budget was passed on time. Major pieces of the budget included criminal justice reforms such as the elimination of cash bail for most misdemeanor and non-violent felony offenses and changes to the discovery process to speed up trials. Education aid was also increased by \$1 billion from the previous fiscal year to \$27.86 billion in General Support for Public Schools. Additionally, \$18.4 billion in Foundation Aid was allocated to help fund under-performing schools. The final budget also restored \$641 million in cuts to Medicaid, which includes funding for hospitals, nursing homes, and pharmacy benefits.

However, congestion pricing was also included in the budget. I voted in opposition to Budget bill A2009-C, which included sections to create a congestion pricing zone tolling cars entering Manhattan below 60th Street. This plan is essentially a tax on middle class commuters and small businesses. It will penalize millions of middle class New Yorkers, especially those living in transit deserts like Eastern Queens. I plan to continue working to ensure Queens' residents needs are reflected with the implementation of this tax.

As your representative in Albany, I have worked to make sure that the budget reflects the needs of our community. As we continue our work in the post-budget season, please feel free to contact my office with questions and concerns, or just to voice your opinion on legislation. It continues to be a pleasure to represent our community in Albany. As the session progresses, my colleagues and I will continue to work to build a better New York for all.

If you have any questions or concerns about the budget, or any other issue that you would like to share with me, please do not hesitate to call my Fresh Meadows or Richmond Hill offices at 718-454-3027 or 718-805-2381, or email me at weprind@nyassembly.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,

David I. Weprin
Member of Assembly

Historic Voting Bills Passed



Assemblyman Weprin speaks in the Assembly Chamber.

Assemblyman Weprin was a co-prime sponsor of the seven-bill landmark voting reform package which passed the Assembly in January. These reforms will help all New Yorkers exercise their constitutional right to vote. Prior to the enactment of this package, New York ranked 42 out of 50 states for low voter turnout due to its arcane voting laws.

To give New Yorkers more opportunities to vote, the Assembly passed a law establishing early voting in New York State, which will take place during a nine-day period before any general, primary, run-off primary, or special election. The Assembly also passed laws to subject limited liability companies (LLCs) to the existing aggregate contribution limits that apply to corporations and require LLCs to disclose membership interests, instruct boards of elections to automatically transfer voter enrollment for New Yorkers who move from one county to another, consolidate the state's election calendar by combining the state and federal primary election dates to the fourth Tuesday in June, and allow 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Assemblyman Weprin joined Creedmoor Psychiatric Center Executive Director Dr. Martha Adams Sullivan to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the facility with staff members and the community in January. At the event, Weprin stated that we have come a long way but there is still work to be done to right injustice in our communities. The monument to Dr. King in front of Building 40 is one of the few monuments on public display in his honor in our city.



Assemblyman Weprin speaks outside of Creedmoor Psychiatric Center on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with Executive Director Dr. Martha Adams Sullivan.

Opposing Hate

Assemblyman Weprin spoke out against antisemitism and hate crimes at the Bukharian Jewish Community Center's Rally Against Hate in February alongside Council Members Barry Grodenchik, Rory Lancman, Donovan Richards, Costa Constantinides, as well as former Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, and founding member of the Bukharian Jewish Union David Aronov. The rally brought awareness to a hateful incident in Forest Hills late last year in which a Bukharian student, David Paltielov, was targeted and attacked. At the rally, Weprin presented a proclamation to Waleska Mendez, a soup kitchen volunteer, who intervened and stopped the group of attackers.

Assemblyman Weprin also joined Council Member Rory Lancman for a co-naming ceremony in March memorializing 168th Street between Highland Avenue and Gothic Drive as JMC Way in honor of the Jamaica Muslim Center. The Mosque is the largest by population in New York City. The co-naming took on special significance due to the fact that a terrorist attack on Mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand happened hours earlier. At the ceremony, Assemblyman Weprin noted that Queens is united against hate and Islamophobia; and that JMC Way will be a reminder that our communities shall not be divided by hate.



Assemblyman Weprin presents a proclamation to Waleska Mendez with David Paltielov. Photo provided by Mark Hallum/Queens Courier/Schneps Media.



Assemblyman Weprin speaks to the Jamaica Muslim Center Community at the co-naming celebration.

Religious Garb Bill

Assemblyman Weprin, Senator John C. Liu, and many religious freedom advocates stood on the Assembly steps to announce Assembly passage of A04204, "The Religious Garb Bill." The legislation, which prohibits discrimination against religious attire and appearances, was introduced in 2011 by Weprin and has passed the Assembly each year since 2013. The bill is intended to protect the rights of all New Yorkers regardless of religion in the workplace and was inspired by the case of Kevin Harrington, a Sikh operator for the MTA, who was ordered to remove his turban or deface it with a MTA logo. No New Yorker should have to choose between their job and religious obligations. On April 9, 2019, the Senate version of the Religious Garb Bill, S4037, sponsored by Senator John C. Liu, passed unanimously for the first time in the Senate and will now go to Governor Andrew Cuomo for his signature.



Assemblyman David I. Weprin and Senator John C. Liu stand with Dr. Dilip Nath, Founder and President of the New American Voters Association (NAVA), Rokeya Akhter, Executive Director of NAVA, and members of NAVA on the Assembly Staircase.

Improving a Dangerous Intersection in Richmond Hill



Assemblyman Weprin stands at 129th Street and Jamaica Avenue with NYC Department of Transportation Queens Deputy Borough Commissioner Albert Silvestri, Community Board 9 District Manager James McClelland, Transportation Chair Kenichi Wilson, 102nd Precinct Sector A NCO's Frank Lasala and Nandpaul Persaud, staff member Harpreet Singh Toor, and Renato Bernal. The site was the location of a fatal accident and DOT will be investigating safety improvements that can be implemented.

Red Flag Bill



Assemblyman Weprin watches with Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul, Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, Senators Brad Hoylman and Monica Martinez, Assemblymembers Marcos Crespo, Al Taylor, Judy Griffin, Steven Otis, Harvey Epstein, Linda Rosenthal, Taylor Raynor, and Nathalia Fernandez as Governor Andrew Cuomo signs the Red Flag Bill.

In February, Assemblyman Weprin joined Governor Andrew Cuomo for the signing of the Red Flag Bill. The new law allows the courts to issue an order temporarily seizing the firearms of anyone raising "red flags" such as violent behavior. The law was introduced in response to the Parkland, Florida shooting in which the perpetrator was able to buy a firearm despite exhibiting dangerous warning signs. This is the sixth gun law passed in the state of New York in response to the series of gun violence that has plagued the nation, and this law makes New York the first state in the nation to empower its teachers and school administrators to prevent further school shootings by pursuing court intervention.

Fighting Hunger

Assemblyman Weprin helped to fight hunger twice this year with the help of community partners and constituents. In January, with the assistance from the American Pakistani Public Affairs Committee, Assemblyman Weprin collected food and toiletries to help furloughed federal employees and donated the items to the Morris Brown A.M.E. Church Helping Hand food pantry in Jamaica. Assemblyman Weprin and members of American Pakistani Public Affairs Committee were able to collect and prepare about 100 bags to support the furloughed federal workers affected by the longest government shutdown in history.

In February, Assemblyman Weprin also donated boxes of food to City Harvest at their facility in Long Island City. Assemblyman Weprin's office managed to collect various non-perishable items over the holiday season from generous constituents in his district to benefit food insecure New Yorkers. Still, Jim Dunne, Director of Warehouse Operations at City Harvest, expects that the need of food will continue to grow. Hunger is a large problem in the City and almost 1.2 million New York City residents are not getting enough food to sustain a healthy lifestyle. Many rely on supplemental nutritional resources. In Assemblyman Weprin's district, over 10% of residents in Community Boards 8, 9, and 10 rely on SNAP.



Assemblyman David I. Weprin and City Harvest Director of Warehouse Operations Jim Dunne offload donations into the warehouse.



Assemblyman David I. Weprin stands with Morris Brown A.M. E. Church Helping Hand food pantry program director Ruth Roseborough, American Pakistani Public Affairs Committee (APPAC) members Ali Rashid, Ali Najmi, and others.

Opposing Congestion Pricing

In March, Assemblyman David Weprin, Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte, and Council Member Barry S. Grodenchik joined community advocates at the base of the Queensborough Bridge in Manhattan to oppose congestion pricing before the state budget passed. However, despite the Assemblyman's opposition to Budget bill A2009-C, congestion pricing was included in the final budget. The proposed plan delegates toll setting authority, as well as details on toll exceptions that will affect thousands of commuters and small businesses to a duo of unelected bureaus, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, and the soon-to-be-created Traffic Mobility Review Board. Assemblyman Weprin has been fighting against congestion pricing, effectively a tax on middle class commuters and small businesses, since it was first proposed a decade ago during the Bloomberg Administration.



Assemblyman Weprin, Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte, and Councilmember Barry Grodenchik speak about congestion pricing.

188th Street

Assemblymembers David Weprin and Nily Rozic joined Council Members Barry S. Grodenchik and Costa Constantinides to stand with the West Cunningham Park Civic Association, the Fresh Meadows Homeowners Civic Association, and concerned residents at the intersection of 188th Street and 81st Avenue in January to press for the remediation of the damages caused by Verizon on 188th Street in Jamaica. Since 2017, 32 private water service lines on the east side of 188th Street between 73rd Avenue and Grand Central Parkway have failed because of stray voltage underneath the street. The elected officials strongly urged Verizon to responsibly address this matter in a timely manner for the safety of the community and the financial well-being of the residents. Assemblyman Weprin also announced the introduction of bill A5254, which would require public utilities to repair or replace all damaged residential lateral sewer and water pipes where such damage was caused by a utility company.



Assemblymembers Weprin and Nily Rozic, Council Members Barry S. Grodenchik and Costa Constantinides, West Cunningham Park Civic Association President Elaine Young, and Fresh Meadows Homeowners Civic Association President James Gallagher, Jr. address the problems on 188th Street.

Yeshiva Har Torah 30th Annual Scholarship Dinner



Assemblyman Weprin presented an Assembly Proclamation to Yeshiva Har Torah's 30th Annual Scholarship Dinner posthumous honoree Mr. Harvey Kaylie, a"n. His widow, Gloria Kaylie, and two grandchildren accepted the award as Yeshiva Har Torah Executive Director Ed Fox, President Ari Gross, Vice President of Finance Alan Steinberg, Head of School Rabbi Gary Menchel, and Principal Peshah Kletenik stood by their sides.

Yeshiva of Central Queens 78th Anniversary Scholarship Dinner



Assemblyman Weprin presented Assembly Proclamations to the honorees of the Yeshiva of Central Queens at their 78th Anniversary Scholarship Dinner. The Assemblyman recognized Guests of Honor: Drs. Joshua and Rachel Sisser and Rabbi Todd, and Dr. Eve Sullivan, Educator Award Honoree Rabbi Moshe Hamel, and Alumni Award Honoree Randi Beeber-Luxenberg.

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



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St. Patrick's Day

Assemblyman Weprin celebrated Irish culture by marching in the 20th annual St. Pat's For All Parade in Sunnyside and Woodside in March with Attorney General Letitia James, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, and many other elected officials. The parade was the first of its kind to be all inclusive, welcoming LGBT groups and anyone who wished to participate. The parade began in 1999 when a few marchers, who wanted to carry a gay rights banner in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, were denied permission by the parade committee. In the following years, the St. Pat's For All parade proved so popular that the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee allowed LGBT presence to march in its parade.



Assemblyman Weprin, Attorney General Letitia James, and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney march down Skillman Avenue in Woodside.

Child Victims Act



Assemblyman Weprin joined Governor Andrew Cuomo in February to sign the Child Victims Act. The new law will allow survivors of childhood sexual abuse to hold abusers criminally and civilly liable allowing victims the opportunity to seek justice. The law would not be possible without the work of Senator Brad Hoylman, prime sponsor Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, former Assemblywoman Marge Markey, and the many child advocacy groups.

Assemblyman Weprin stands with Child Victims Act prime sponsor Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal and local Rabbi Barry Kornblau of the Young Israel of Hollis Hills/Windsor Park at the bill signing ceremony.