

Dear Friends,

I had the opportunity to spend a couple of days in Albany this week, only the second time I have been up there due to COVID-19 restrictions requiring most business to be handled via Zoom. It was wonderful to spend time with some of my colleagues, and I was fortunate to be up there on a day that two very important pieces of legislation passed, setting safe staffing standards in hospitals and nursing homes across the state.

This week the legislature also passed, and the Governor signed, an extension of the residential and commercial eviction moratorium, which will allow those individuals and businesses hit hardest economically by the pandemic additional time to get back up on their feet.

Yesterday, some of my colleagues and I joined [ArtsWestchester](#) as they officially reopened their gallery and announced the kickoff of the #RestartTheArts initiative. I am so pleased that the funding the organization received in this year's state budget has allowed them to launch this very important effort.

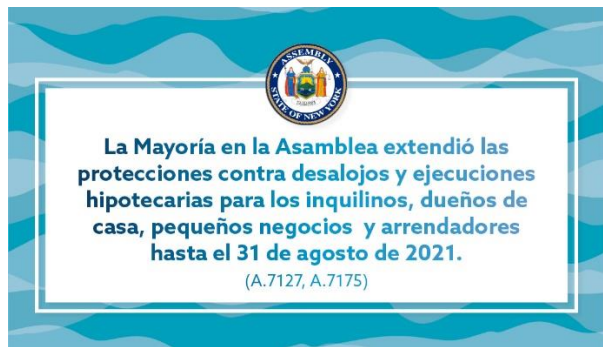
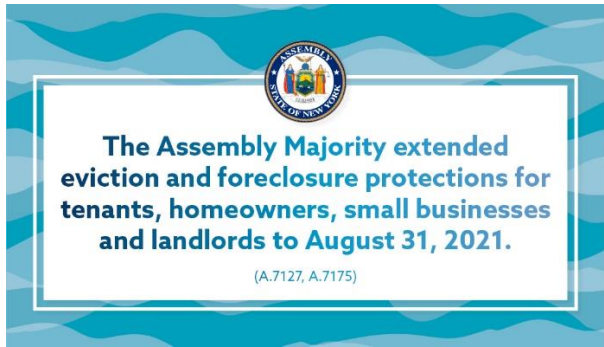
Finally, it turns out that the beginning of May is a good time to celebrate! Our nation's teachers, nurses... and, of course, our mothers.

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## **Residential & Commercial Moratorium Extended**

We are making great strides in New York on the vaccination front. Nearly 60% of adult New Yorkers have received at least one vaccination dose. All state-run facilities are [now open for walk-in appointments](#) for anyone 16+.

And while our economy is on the rebound as more businesses reopen, there are still many individuals, families and businesses that are struggling economically. To that end **the legislature passed, and the governor signed, legislation [extending the moratorium](#) on residential and commercial evictions until August 31, 2021**. This will provide the extra time necessary for the state to distribute the [\\$2.4 billion in federal and state aid](#) provided in this year's budget to aid renters and landlords.

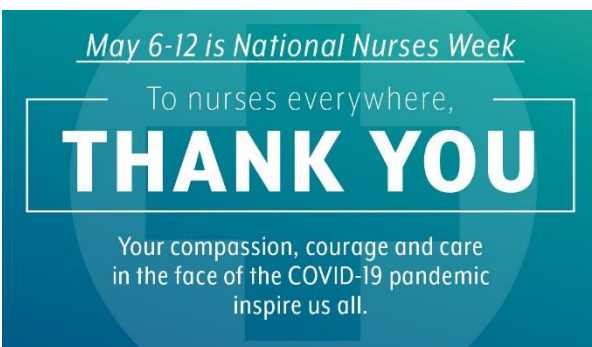


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## Safe Staffing Legislation Passes In Time for National Nurses Week

Thursday was the beginning of National Nurses Week. It is therefore fitting that this past Tuesday the legislature passed **long overdue [legislation setting safe staffing standards](#) at hospitals and nursing homes across the state.**

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated several issues in our health care system, understaffing being one of the most serious. But make no mistake, this was not a new issue... for many health care workers, being forced to care for more individuals than they could safely handle was a common problem. However, the pandemic laid bare the severity of the issue and we owe it to these brave workers – who from Day 1 of the pandemic put their own health on the line to help others – to learn from the experience and do the right thing.



To ensure proper staffing levels, the legislation requires every hospital to form a clinical staffing committee, consisting of a variety of staff members who would work together to develop and oversee a safe staffing plan. Meanwhile, the Department of Health will implement safe staffing ratios for nursing homes. The legislature knows that every facility has its own unique needs and capabilities, and this collaborative approach allows those who know their patients and workforce best to craft a plan that works for everyone.

It is an indisputable fact that inadequate staffing has a direct impact on the quality of care our loved ones receive. These new standards will both improve patient care and provide greater support for health care workers. Enacting these safe staffing standards, and holding facilities accountable if they fail to comply with them, will also better prepare us for future emergencies as well as promote healthier working conditions.

As I mentioned earlier, this week was only the second time I'd been up in Albany due to the pandemic, and I couldn't be more pleased that I had the chance to vote in-person on such important bills. The legislation is now awaiting Governor Cuomo's signature, which is expected shortly.



*Click above to view the remarks I made following the passage of the safe staffing legislation*

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## **[#RestartTheArts](#)**

I was very pleased to join [ArtsWestchester](#) yesterday as they officially reopened their doors to the public and announced the kickoff of their **#RestartTheArts** initiative, funded by the continued support of the County and \$1 million in COVID-19 relief funds from the NYS budget. Kudos to CEO Janet Langsam and the whole ArtsWestchester team for the tremendous job they have done advocating for Westchester's arts community.

Restarting the arts in Westchester is so critical to returning to a sense of normalcy in the wake of the pandemic. As NYS Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins so eloquently stated at the event, "the arts touches everyone." The arts community in Westchester also provides thousands of jobs and tens of millions of dollars in economic impact every year. We have all felt its absence, and I am so pleased the funds from the state budget will allow for arts in Westchester to resume.

After the speaking program, ArtsWestchester reopened its doors and we had the opportunity to view their newest exhibition, "Together apART: Creating During COVID" created with the artwork of over 200+ artists and community members over the last year. I encourage you to visit this wonderful exhibit, which is free to the public (go to [artsw.org/togetherapart](https://artsw.org/togetherapart) to reserve your time).



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## Thanking Our Teachers

May 2–May 8 is also Teacher Appreciation Week.

Few professions were as affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as teaching. Teachers across the country were required to shift their entire way of educating our children, to ensure that our national health care crisis did not also become a national educational crisis. I have had the opportunity to tour some of the district's schools, and the measures that the teachers and administration have taken to continue to provide a safe and quality education to our kids is nothing short of heroic.

**Thank you today and every day to our teachers for all that you do for our children.** Your dedication is truly inspiring.





## Celebrating Our Mothers

As we all (hopefully) know, tomorrow is Mother's Day. Many who know me know that my mother Mary Burdick (née Maria Leticia Chiarulli) was a profound influence on me and specifically my keen interest in public service.



While both my parents were deeply involved in their community, it was my mother who – after raising three children and retiring as a librarian at the age of 70 – was asked to run for Borough Council and then elected Mayor in her mid-70s, a post she held until the age of 80. My mother was gregarious and beloved, with an abiding desire to serve the community as best she could – and she did so exceedingly well.

Today, I am equally inspired by my wife Illyria, who for thirty years was a social worker whose work ranged from the Archdiocese's drug and alcohol interdiction program for adolescents, to helping those in their last days in hospice. She is unassuming and modest about the many for whom she has provided enormous support. She has also been a wonderful mother to our three children, Bradford, Juliana and Margareta, and now grandmother to our 2-year-old granddaughter Nora.



**Wishing a very Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers, grandmothers, and surrogate mothers.** Although we were not able to celebrate together last year, I hope many of you get to spend the day with those you love.



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A final note, Anika Bobra, a 7th grade Byram Hills student, has been interviewing elected representatives to learn more about what they do. I was delighted to be on her podcast "Today I am Grateful" to discuss my work in the Assembly, including the accomplishments of which I am especially proud. I hope you will take a few minutes and [listen in!](#)



If there are any issues that you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at [burdickc@nyassembly.gov](mailto:burdickc@nyassembly.gov) (or simply reply to this email). **Please also follow me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for the most up-to-date information.**

Miss any of our previous newsletters? You can [find them here](#).

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Burdick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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