



Dear Friends,

With only a few days left before the adoption of the budget (*see below*), citizens come to Albany to make their case for funding. It's wonderful to have people back up here with their energy and enthusiasm – such a happy contrast to the empty hallways in the darkest days of the pandemic. With many of my constituents affected by and advocating for a number of important initiatives, I have been participating in press conferences and rallies to show my support.



**Yesterday may have been the peak point, and it was exciting to join in the effort.**

Late morning, I joined advocates, allies, and many of my colleagues in the legislature at a press conference to emphasize the need for a \$15 million Transgender Wellness and Equity Fund in the budget. This fund will provide important investments in the transgender and gender-expansive communities, to improve health and wellness outcomes.

Closely following was another press conference to promote the Clean Slate proposal, which would seal certain criminal records – following a multi-year waiting period – after those convicted have fully served their sentences and been released. Frequently, such individuals are turned away from jobs and housing, even years later, due to their criminal records. This proposal will allow many of those who have paid their debt, and have been law-abiding citizens since, to have the fresh start they need to be successful and productive members of society. Governor Hochul has proposed a version of Clean Slate in her budget proposal.



I then briskly made my way over to the Amtrak train station in Rensselaer, to join a festive and cheerful march over the bridge to the Capitol, advocating for the replenishment of the Excluded Workers Fund. This fund was set in place last year to provide relief for workers, including undocumented immigrants, who could prove they had worked prior to the pandemic, lost work because of the pandemic, and were ineligible or excluded from unemployment or other pandemic relief. The fund, now fully expended, provided vital relief while injecting money into the New York economy, including in the 93rd Assembly District.



Returning to my office, I was thrilled to meet with CUNY students who trekked up to Albany to meet with legislators. I recently joined with my Assembly colleagues to support increased funding levels in the budget for both SUNY and CUNY. For the many students living in my district who attend SUNY schools, the funding would provide for operating support, increases in tuition assistance, support for SUNY hospitals, aid to community colleges, and higher funding for mental health services and students with disabilities.



**Days like this are always a great reminder of the impact the NYS legislature has on so many, and why I am so grateful to have the job that I do.**

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## **Update: 2022-2023 Budget**

As I mentioned in my [previous email](#), March is when the Governor and NYS legislature come together to complete the budget in advance of the start of the state's fiscal year on April 1. Last week, both the Assembly and Senate released their "one-house budget" resolutions, in response to the Executive Budget released by Governor Hochul in January.

**My colleagues and I advocated for increased funding in several key areas that I am pleased to report are reflected in the Assembly's budget**, including increased funding for the environment, childcare, state-wide universal pre-K, CUNY & SUNY, pandemic relief, affordable housing, aid for those struggling with past due utility bills, gun violence prevention and mental health counseling. There is also increased funding for disability programs and services, victims' services, veterans' services, and legal services.

For more details on the Assembly's budget proposal, [please click here](#).

The next steps are negotiation and compromise, and I am confident that the legislature – acting in collaboration and cooperation with the Governor – will deliver an on-time, fiscally-prudent budget that will provide well for the needs of our communities.

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### **Virtual Meetings of Public Bodies**

**Governor Hochul extended by 30 days, to April 16, the Executive Order that allows public bodies (such as county and town boards, city councils, and school boards) to continue to meet virtually.**

During this extension, the state legislature (which is not covered by the Executive Order) will work with the Governor's office on legislation to make permanent some form of remote meeting capability. One of the "silver linings" of the pandemic is the dramatic improvement and availability of technology that allows greater participation by the public in the workings of their government. This is good for democracy.

On the other hand, while going forward it might be helpful to allow an elected official who is ill or disabled to participate remotely, we also need to take into consideration transparency and the need for constituents to have in-person access to their elected officials. I favor a hybrid approach, in which there must be at least a quorum of the elected body physically present at the meeting, with the public being able to fully participate either in person or remotely.

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### **Fair & Affordable Housing Opportunity: Lewisboro Commons Accepting Applications**

For anyone who might qualify, or knows of someone who might qualify, **applications for [Lewisboro Commons](#) are being accepted through May 13th** by the [Housing Action Council](#).

[Lewisboro Commons](#) provides fair and affordable 1, 2, and 3-bedroom rentals in the Goldens Bridge hamlet of the Town of Lewisboro.





[Click here](#) for additional information on income eligibility and to apply. **A public lottery for the units will take place on May 27 via zoom.**


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### **Attention Parents of School-Aged Children!**

If you have a school-age child and live in Westchester County, **please consider completing and sharing the Westchester Children's Association's [2022 Digital Access Survey](#)**. Developed in partnership with Pace University, it is available in English and Spanish.


**The survey is open until March 30, 2022.** No personal information will be collected so that all responses are kept anonymous.

**Westchester Parents!**  





*How well do you and your kids work or learn online at home?* 



Fill out our **Digital Access Survey** today!



SCAN ME

[wca4kids.org/survey](https://wca4kids.org/survey)     @wca4kids

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As always, 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](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) 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 style.

**DISTRICT OFFICE**

100 South Bedford  
Road  
Suite 150  
Mount Kisco, NY 10549  
914-244-4450

**ALBANY OFFICE**

LOB 326  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5397

Assembly District 93 | [burdickc@nyassembly.gov](mailto:burdickc@nyassembly.gov)