



Assemblywoman
Dana Levenberg

Assembly District 95



July 2023 E-News



Fourth of July celebrations around the district

Liberty and Justice for All

I hope that everyone had a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July! I know that it was a fraught one for some of you who have reached out to express dismay over recent Supreme Court decisions that make it feel like we are losing decades of progress toward freedom and fairness. Please know that I am working hard in Albany and here in the district to ensure that New York protects liberty and justice for all residents. The legislation we have pursued this term is in line with this mission, as well as my personal mission of building healthy communities in every sense of the word - environmentally, economically, physically and mentally, all through the lens of equity.

Highlights from the 2023 Legislative Session

My first legislative session was quite a productive one! In total, I was prime-, co- or multi-sponsor of 71 bills that passed both houses of the Legislature this session. **Eight of my prime-sponsored bills passed both houses - more than any other first-year member of the Assembly!**



Speaking in the Assembly chamber during debates on bills.

My prime-sponsored bills ranged from big bills like the “Save the Hudson” effort to protect our communities during Indian Point decommissioning, to narrowly-tailored legislation intended to make things easier, safer and better overall for local governments and our residents. I also co-sponsored some major, high-impact bills that passed this session. These bills will make New York greener, fairer, safer and more prosperous for all, and I am proud to have played a role in getting them passed. The Governor has until the end of the year to take action on bills passed by the legislature and it remains to be seen how many will be signed into law. My staff and I, along with my colleagues in the Legislature and many advocates, are working hard to stress the importance of each bill to the Governor’s office.

Prime-Sponsored Legislation Passed

Controlling our waters & marine economy

A7208: Relates to decommissioning nuclear power plant discharges into the Hudson River

A7442: Extends the authority of the Department of Environmental Conservation to manage and protect whelk and conch

Addressing municipal priorities

A5274: Expands the residential parking system in the village of Cold Spring

A6101: Creates an exemption for the Buchanan Engine Company No. 1

A6570: Expands the residential parking system in the village of Croton-on-Hudson

A7478A: Relates to residency requirements for the village clerk/treasurer and deputy clerk for the village of Cold Spring

Supporting our libraries

A5266: Sets the number of petitioners necessary to call for a vote on the budget of a registered public or free association library

Expanding wedding day options for all couples

A2901: Designates lay individuals as one-day marriage officiants in order to solemnize marriages



Speaking at a rally in Albany; defending my bill, A7208 during debate; discussing a bill with a colleague in the Assembly chamber.

A word about one of these major bills, the Equality Amendment (A1283). This is a constitutional amendment that you, the voter, will need to approve next November if it is to pass into law. If passed, it would add sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy to the existing list of classes that are protected against discrimination in civil rights. Remember to flip your ballot over to consider this question next year.

Looking ahead, I will continue to focus on cost of living issues, particularly relating to housing and home energy costs. I am already working with state colleagues in neighboring districts to address housing issues, in consultation with local municipal leaders. We must find ways to increase our housing stock and make housing more affordable. This is both a moral and economic imperative for New York; without addressing this issue, we will not be able to retain many of our essential workers. This is also a public safety issue; high rates of housing instability and evictions are known to cause spikes in crime. Working together, with many of this year's lessons in mind, I believe we can find ways to protect homeowners and renters and enable people of all ages and walks of life to make a home here.

Major Bills Passed

- The Equality Amendment
- All-Electric Buildings Act
- Build Public Renewables Act
- Lead Pipe Right to Know Act
- Cap and Invest
- Increases to the Minimum Wage
- Child Tax Credit Expansion
- New Shield Law for Women's Healthcare Providers
- Clean Slate Act
- New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies



Speaking at press conferences in support of A7208, nicknamed the "Save the Hudson" bill. This bill will give New York State more control over what goes into our waters and when.

I am also keen to pass legislation like the New York Home Energy Affordable Transition (NY HEAT) Act as soon as possible. This legislation would cap energy bills at 6% of a low- to middle-income household's monthly income, end New York's remaining fossil fuel subsidies, and develop a transition plan to reduce the state's reliance on natural gas. The wildfire smoke and other air quality issues plaguing us recently are just one more reminder of the urgent need to address climate change and reduce our carbon emissions.

Indian Point

One of my main areas of focus this year has been the decommissioning of Indian Point. More than 1,000 constituents have reached out to my office about this issue. Nearly everyone who has contacted us about this is concerned about Holtec's plan to discharge more than one million gallons of treated nuclear wastewater into the Hudson River this year. I take your concerns very seriously.

New York State needs to retain more control over what goes into our waters and when. You may have already heard by now in the news that the Assembly passed my bill, A7208, which will ban this type of discharge in connection with a decommissioning nuclear power plant. Thank you to everyone who has reached out and spoken out about this issue, and to all of the advocates who have lobbied hard on behalf of this bill and continue to work toward its final passage. State Senator Pete Harckham and I are urging the Governor to sign this bill into law, and also working with state agencies to ensure that our communities' needs are respected throughout the decommissioning process.



Left to right: in downtown Ossining with NYS Secretary of State Robert J. Rodriguez and Ossining Village Mayor Rika Levin; with State Senator Pete Harckham and staff at CHHOP and Fred's Pantry; with Putnam County Legislator Nancy Montgomery and Beacon City Councilmember Justice McCray at the re-opening of Breakneck Ridge.

Roads Update

We are continuing to make progress when it comes to fixing the roads in the district. In 9A news, the corridor study that will focus on the stretch that starts at Route 9 in Ossining and runs through Briarcliff is under way. The study will define and analyze existing conditions and develop feasible solutions for the roadway's problems. The final deliverable will be a set of recommendations that can be advanced to engineering and construction when future funding is secured. That report is expected in February of 2024. My office is participating in the Transportation Partnering Committee composed of local municipal staff, elected officials, and other stakeholders.

My chief of staff attended the first public engagement session for the study on June 21, and I am pleased to hear it was well-attended. For those who were unable to attend that session, know that there will be additional opportunities for public engagement. You can also feel free to send written comments to the Department of Transportation, via email to Sandra.Jobson@dot.ny.gov or regular mail to:

Sandra Jobson, NYS Department of Transportation
4 Burnett Boulevard
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

In more 9A news, thank you to everyone who submitted comments regarding the proposed repaving project on Route 9A. Like many others, including the Briarcliff Manor Board of Trustees, I encouraged the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) to consider expanding the project area south to include the stretch of 9A that runs through Briarcliff. I will update the community when we know more about that project.



Left to right: visiting artists at Peekskill Open Studios; with members of the Cortlandt Town Board and Croton Village Board at the Croton Summerfest Parade; with County Legislators Catherine Borgia and Margaret Cunzio at the State of the County address.

Though 9A is the road my office hears about most often, please know that I am continuing to advocate for all of our state roads to get the attention they need. Since taking office, I have learned that NYSDOT Region 8 has the highest density of state roads in the state and the worst-rated ones. That needs to change. My colleagues in the Assembly's Transportation committee tell me that they are looking at new approaches, such as funding according to a formula that accounts for the density of state roads in a region, to create more equitable funding. I will continue to push for any changes that will improve our roads.

Additionally, this year's budget included a big increase in funding for local road repairs. I am pleased to announce that Assembly District 95 has received approximately \$2.3 million in funding from the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program, also known as CHIPS. Each municipality in our district received increases in CHIPS funding ranging from 10-14%, outpacing inflation. Some of our municipalities will also benefit from additional funding through State Route NY, a program through which local governments that have taken responsibility for portions of US- and State-signed touring roads within their boundaries are reimbursed for the costs of maintenance.

The most recent list of proposals from NYMTC also included paving and sidewalk improvements for Westerly Road in Ossining, plans to rehabilitate the structure that carries Half Moon Bay Drive over the railroad in Croton, and progress on the Route 9 Road Diet in Ossining. Overall, I am very happy to see infrastructure funding coming to the district, and look forward to more projects coming down the pike.



Left to right: with two of our Yorktown Eagle Scouts at the Henkin Court of Honor; at this year's "Follow the French" commemoration in Yorktown; at I Love My Parks Day along the Croton Aqueduct

Upcoming Events

A reminder about some upcoming events hosted by my office:

- Croton residents: weather permitting, I will be hosting Outdoor Office Hours at Senasqua Park in Croton on **Wednesday, July 12 from 2:00-4:00 PM**. I will announce additional dates for other locations soon.
- Rain or shine, I will be hosting a 2023 Legislative Session Debrief on Zoom on **Wednesday, July 12 at 6:30 PM**. Learn more and ask questions about the legislative session that just ended. Register using the following URL: <https://bit.ly/2023SessionDebrief>.
- Join me at Cortlandt Town Hall on **Wednesday, July 26 from 9:30 - 11:30 AM** for [Sustaining Our Seniors](#), my annual Senior Forum. Attendees will enjoy breakfast, entertainment, information, and an electric vehicle demonstration as well as resources from partners such as New York-Presbyterian, Sustainable Westchester, the offices of the Attorney General and State Comptroller, and more.

There will also be Environmental Bond Act Listening Sessions coming up this summer. These sessions are an opportunity to learn more about the types of projects the Bond Act will fund and share your input. [Click here to register for the virtual meeting coming up on Wednesday, July 26 from 6-8 PM](#). There will also be an in-person meeting at the Westchester County Center in White Plains on Tuesday, August 15 from 1-3 PM. [Click here to register](#).

Attorney General Spotlight

My office partners with the office of Attorney General Letitia James to share a monthly item of hers in our e-news. Below, read more about the Attorney General's efforts to protect consumers through the Health Care Bureau Helpline, including how to access it.

News from New York State Attorney General Letitia James

July Highlights

Attorney General Letitia James released a report detailing the work of her Health Care Bureau's Helpline, documenting more than \$1.5 million in restitution and savings for New Yorkers in 2022. In that year the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) Health Care Helpline handled 2,309 consumer complaints and provided another 1,722 consumers with information or referred them to an appropriate agency for assistance. The Helpline resolves disputes from payment processing errors to wrongfully denied benefits. The Helpline can provide simple interventions or launch lengthy investigations, sometimes leading to large settlements that provide restitution for patients.



Complaints addressed through the Helpline in 2022 included consumers who received bills for COVID-19 testing when it should have been free of charge; a hospital that charged a patient twice as much as its initial written estimate; a claim that was denied for a sick infant who needed a transfer to a hospital that could provide a higher level of care; and a claim for a needed MRI that was denied. Complaints received by the Helpline are also an important means of identifying larger or persistent problems in the state's healthcare system.

Any consumer who believes that they may have been treated unfairly by a health care provider, Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), insurance plan, or health related business should contact the Office of the Attorney General's Health Care Helpline by calling 1-800-428-9071 or going online to

formsnym.ag.ny.gov/OAGOnlineSubmissionForm/faces/OAGHCHome.

To read more about the Attorney General's other efforts, visit our website at ag.ny.gov

That's all for now. For more frequent updates, be sure to follow me on social media - I am @AMDanaLevenberg on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and now Threads! Until next time, be safe and healthy.