



Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo 2015 CONSTITUENT SURVEY RESULTS

1) *Do you support additional emphasis being placed on student test scores as part of teacher evaluations?*

Yes – 644 (22.2%)
No – **1846 (63.3%)**
Undecided – 373 (12.8%)

The state budget included language requiring the State Education Department (SED) and the Board of Regents to create a new process for the evaluation of teachers. The system is supposed to be ready by June 30th, with school districts needing to implement it by November 15th. Almost everyone believes the time frame is too short and that the entire approach is too dependent on test scores. The Assembly recently passed legislation that I co-sponsored that would build in more time allowing all stakeholders the chance to design an approach that works for teachers and students alike.

2) *Should certain vaccinations be mandatory for all children (e.g. measles, mumps, rubella, polio, tetanus, diphtheria, and hepatitis)?*

Yes – **2386 (81.8%)**
No – 298 (10.2%)
Undecided – 207 (7.1%)

There has been a push by some lawmakers for legislation that would allow for an exemption against immunizations for certain philosophical reasons. The bill that would create such an exemption, A943, is currently in the Assembly Health Committee. Many health professionals have expressed concerns over allowing parents to choose to not have their children vaccinated. This is a sensitive issue which certainly will require thoughtful debate as bills related to it are considered by both the Assembly and the Senate.

3) *Do you support a labeling requirement informing consumers that a product is made with genetically modified organisms (GMOs)?*

Yes – **2528 (86.6%)**
No – 191 (6.5%)
Undecided – 178 (6.1%)

The Assembly bill requiring the labeling of GMOs (A617) is currently in the Assembly Codes Committee and the Senate version (S485) is being reviewed by the Committee on Consumer Protection. Many farmers have expressed concerns over this bill for a number of reasons; GMOs have helped produce better yields on crops and have also produced pest-resistant crops that result in less chemicals being used. However, there are many questions about the effects GMOs have on food safety, and many consumers want to know what is included in the products they are purchasing. The overwhelming response on this survey shows how much interest there is in requiring this type of labeling.

4) *Have you purchased locally grown foods or products in the last year?*

Yes – **2640 (90.5%)**
No – 223 (7.6%)
Undecided – 29 (0.9%)

Part of being an informed consumer is knowing where our food comes from. We have many producers in our community and buying local certainly helps our economy. We are actively growing our agricultural economy in the Southern Tier, so your interest is very important. Please continue supporting our farmers markets, restaurants, and stores that feature local ingredients, along with the many new microbreweries and other homegrown businesses.

5) *Do you support 'death with dignity' legislation allowing terminally-ill patients to ease their suffering through physician-assisted suicide?*

Yes – **1836 (62.9%)**
No – 556 (19.1%)
Undecided – 408 (13.9%)

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This is a very sensitive issue that has had trouble gaining support in the Legislature. Religious leaders as well as advocates for the disabled have been vehemently opposed to it. Others, however, believe aid in dying is a way of avoiding pain and suffering at the end of life. Assembly bill A2129 is currently in the Assembly Health Committee and is without a Senate companion bill. Without legislation in both houses, the bill will be unable to make it to the Governor for consideration.

6) *Would you support the location of a well-protected indoor medical marijuana grow facility in the Southern Tier?*

Yes – 1664 (57%)
No – 891 (30.5%)
Undecided – 335 (11.5%)

The State has begun the medical marijuana licensing process by accepting applications. There are several criteria that must be met by applicants in order to be awarded one of the five licenses, including detailed plans for security, growing procedures, and marketing. Each licensee will be allowed four dispensaries in different parts of the state. A local grow facility would act as an economic stimulant for the community by creating jobs and increased commerce. There is a lot of interest in placing a grow facility and a dispensary in the Southern Tier.

7) *Last year legislation was passed to allow the sale of novelty fireworks, such as sparklers and poppers, in New York counties that pass an ordinance permitting their sale. Do you support such an ordinance being passed in Broome County?*

Yes – 1763 (60.4%)
No – 848 (29.1%)
Undecided – 274 (9.4%)

While larger fireworks are still illegal in New York, customers who wish to purchase novelty fireworks are driving across the border to Pennsylvania. This revenue would stay in Broome County if the County Legislature were to pass a resolution allowing the sale of these types of fireworks. It is my understanding that at this time the County Legislature does not intend to take up such a resolution due to fire safety concerns. As the prime co-sponsor of the legislation, I will continue to advocate for this and other approaches that keep business on this side of the border.

8) *Do you support modifications to the New York SAFE Act, such as repealing a provision that limits firearms to be loaded with no more than seven cartridges?*

Yes – 1182 (40.5%)
No – 1342 (46%)
Undecided – 343 (11.8%)

While a bill that would completely repeal the SAFE Act has been introduced, it has not gained support by the majority in either the Senate or the Assembly and is unlikely to pass. There are, however, four bills in the Assembly that would amend some provisions of the SAFE Act. For example A5630/S2612 would repeal the provision that limits firearms to be loaded with no more than seven cartridges in a ten-cartridge magazine. A5628/S2611 would bypass background checks in instances where firearms are gifted to relatives. These bills are gaining support, but still face an uphill battle.

9) *Do you support the legalization of mixed martial arts in New York State?*

Yes – 1098 (37.6%)
No – 1082 (37.1%)
Undecided – 681 (23.3%)

In years past, the mixed martial arts bill never made it to the floor of the Assembly for a vote. This year, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie has indicated that he would bring it to the floor if the majority conference supports it. Some members still have misgivings about the sport due to its violent nature. Amateur MMA events already take place in New York State, including Broome County. Many believe that regulating the sport in New York will bring safer competition, in addition to increased tourism and economic activity. A new version of the bill is being drafted that would include greater protections for fighters by providing resources to help them deal with serious injuries.