

Winter 2023



Assemblyman **Fred W. Thiele, Jr.**



Reports to the People

Dear Friends,

The 2023 Legislative Session brought forth many budgetary and legislative accomplishments for the 1st Assembly District. I was proud to have 23 of my prime-sponsored bills pass through both Houses of the State Legislature. That is the third highest of the 150-member Assembly.

Highlights of my 2023 local priorities include:

Welcoming New York State Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie

New York State Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie joined me for a tour of the East End. This visit presented a valuable opportunity to showcase the unique beauty, agriculture, and thriving industries of the region, while engaging in discussions on the issues that matter most to the community. The Speaker announced a \$250,000 funding allocation to support the Bridgehampton Child Care and Recreational Center's Pre-K program and directed \$1.75 million to the Town of East Hampton to supplement funds raised by the Montauk Playhouse Community Center Foundation for the completion of the Montauk Playhouse's aquatic and cultural center project.



Bonnie Cannon, Executive Director, reacts to the Speaker's announcement of a \$250,000 funding award for the Bridgehampton Child Care and Recreational Center.



Montauk Playhouse Board members, Steve Tuma and Jennifer Carney Iacono, express their thanks for the \$1.75 million grant presented by Speaker Heastie to support the completion of an aquatic center and multi-purpose cultural space for the community to enjoy.

Modernizing Village Incorporation Procedures

The incorporation of a new village can have significant tax and fiscal impacts on taxpayers in both the proposed village and throughout the town in which a new village is to be located. However, the Village Law currently does not require any assessment of these costs before a public vote. This has led to disappointment and disillusionment as evidenced by the ultimate dissolution of two incorporated villages in my Assembly District.

Legislation that I sponsored, A.7754 and A.7761, was approved by the Legislature and will soon be sent to the Governor for consideration that will ensure voters have all the information necessary to make an informed decision before a vote on village incorporation is put to public referendum in the proposed incorporated area.



Legislative Commission on the Future of the Long Island Power Authority

The third-party management model that the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) has used for decades, currently with PSEG-LI, has failed time and again. Making LIPA the transparent and accountable public utility that the ratepayers have long deserved has been one of my top legislative priorities. Last year, I led the fight to establish the Legislative Commission on the Future of LIPA to develop and present to the Legislature an action plan to transition LIPA into a true public power provider. I was appointed a co-chair of the Commission by the Assembly Speaker.

After extensive public hearings and independent professional investigations, the Commission's final report returns to the original vision of public power when LIPA was created by the Legislature in 1986. The report demonstrates the potential to save over \$500 million over the next decade while reforming the LIPA Board through the appointment of five members by local governments and the creation of a Community Stakeholder Board. Accountability, oversight and transparency will be enhanced while eliminating costly outside management fees. These public benefits can be realized while still protecting the rights and benefits of our respected local workforce.

Legislation will have to be enacted in 2024 to implement the report's recommendations.

Helping East End Ocean Rescue Teams Recruit and Retain Volunteers

(Chapter #564 and #563 of the Laws of 2023)

My legislation was enacted to authorize the Town of East Hampton and the Village of Southampton to provide health insurance coverage for enrolled members of East Hampton Volunteer Ocean Rescue and Southampton Volunteer Ocean Rescue, respectively. This benefit is currently afforded to their emergency responder counterparts in the volunteer fire and volunteer ambulance services.



On June 8th, I was joined by Senator Kevin Thomas in welcoming Dawn Nappi to the State Capitol upon the passage of our legislation entitled "Angelica's Law." Dawn is the mother of Angelica Nappi, who was tragically killed by a driver operating a motor vehicle with seven prior license suspensions in 2008. If signed into law by the Governor, "Angelica's Law" will decrease from ten to five the number of prior suspensions imposed for moving violations needed to qualify for a Class E felony of aggravated unlicensed operation in the first degree.

Shelter Island Library - Saving Taxpayer Dollars

(Chapter #215 of the Laws of 2023)

Legislation that I sponsored was signed into law making the Shelter Island Public Library eligible to receive financing through the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York for capital improvement projects, including its most recent expansion plan approved by the voters on June 17th.



Library Director Terry Lucas explains plans to renovate the Shelter Island Public Library.



Congratulations to Chief James Kiernan (right) and the Southampton Town Police Department for being recognized at MADD's Recognition of Excellence Award ceremony in Albany on May 2nd as "Police Department of the Year" for their significant contributions to promote safety on our roadways, particularly in the areas of drunk and drug-impaired driving prevention. PO Keith Phillips (left) received Recognition of Excellence as a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE), and Sergeant Nicholas Badagliacca (not pictured) also was honored for his Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) enforcement efforts.

For the past several years, I have been sponsoring students selected by the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation to participate in the Students Inside Albany (SIA) Conference. This year, I joined Pierson High School's Isabelle Caplin (left) and Rachel Monaco (right) in the Assembly Chamber during the SIA shadowing event on May 22nd. Now a high school senior, Rachel is working part-time in my Sag Harbor office as a legislative assistant during the fall semester as she eagerly prepares to pursue a career in political science.



I was honored to be selected as AIA Peconic's first Community Award Recipient at the annual Design Awards Celebration at the Ross School in East Hampton on April 22nd. (Pictured with Frank Guittard - Photo Credit Rossa Cole)



On May 3rd, members of the Lupus Agencies of New York State were recognized by the New York State Assembly upon the adoption of a resolution I sponsored proclaiming May 2023 as Lupus Awareness Month.

Granting the Right of First Refusal to Manufactured Homeowners

Amidst the current severe housing crisis facing our region, I applaud the Governor for signing into law my legislation to expand manufactured homeowners' right of first refusal when the park in which they reside is put up for sale (Chapter #593 of the Laws of 2023). The new law affords residents a fair opportunity to purchase their park and provide housing security for their community.



Long Island Builders Institute (LIBI) held its annual lobby day on April 25th. I met with a contingency that brought the voices of almost 700 member firms to Albany in support of smart, healthy and targeted growth of our communities, industry and real estate on Long Island.



MHAAction's Lobby Day in Albany on March 9th with representatives Kay Green and Edison Rosendo.

113 Years and Counting -- "We Are Still Here!"

The governor has once again rejected the pleas of Montaukett Indians by vetoing my legislation (A.6919, Veto #61 of 2023) that would have reversed a 1910 State Supreme Court decision (*Pharaoh v. Benson*) that wrongfully declared the Montauk Indian Nation to be extinct while their leaders and 75 members of the nation sat in the court room. I have long fought to correct this injustice and will continue to work beside the Montauketts to overcome this latest blow that, ironically, was issued during National Native American Heritage Month this past November.



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Follow me on social media to keep up-to-date on state legislation and local happenings throughout the district!

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