

# THE MONTESANO MONITOR

Spring 2019

★ ★ ★ EXTRA ★ ★ ★



A Special Report from  
**Michael Montesano**

New York State Assembly  
Albany, NY 12248

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*Your Voice, Your Neighbor, Your Assemblyman*

## UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

### Assemblyman Montesano & Assemblyman Ra Blood Drive

**Wednesday, July 24 • 1p.m. – 7p.m.**

**Gold Coast Library**

50 Railroad Avenue, Glen Head, NY 11545

**Presenting donors will receive a FREE pair of Mets tickets courtesy of the New York Blood Center!**

For more information on these events or any state matter, please contact Assemblyman Montesano at 111 W. Old Country RD., Suite 202, Hicksville, NY 11801 \* (516) 937-3571 \*Montesanom@nyassembly.gov

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## The 2019-20 New York State Budget

In April, the Legislature passed a \$175.4 billion budget for New York's 2019-20 fiscal year, which many are saying is the worst they've seen in recent history. Some of the more unsettling things include a tax hike for car rentals, an increase in the Hollywood tax credit and a new tax on opioids, which could prove to be a huge concern for hospital pharmacies in particular.

Though the opioid epidemic, particularly on Long Island, is a growing problem, when used properly, opioids can help patients substantially. The new tax raises concerns for patients who need them most. The intent of this new tax is to require drug manufacturers and distributors to contribute as a way to address the opioid crisis, however I am concerned this tax will undoubtedly be passed on to the patients.

Not wanting to pay the tax, there have been rumors that companies won't ship into New York once the tax is imposed, which could cause backorders. This could prove to be a huge issue for pharmacies in hospitals where the drugs are needed for surgeries and relief for those suffering from advanced forms of cancer.

While funding was secured for schools and libraries across New York, the levels are not where they should be.

"Our libraries and schools deserve much better than what we have been giving them the past few years," said Assemblyman Michael



Montesano. "Libraries are currently being funded at a level in line with the year 2000. Our schools could use additional funding to improve facilities, keep programs alive that are otherwise cut due to limited funding and provide up-to-date technology and books to students."

Some of the more positive bills included in the budget were the restoration of funding to veterans' mental health programs such as the Joseph P. Dwyer Vet 2 Vet Program and making the property tax cap permanent.

**ASSEMBLYMAN MICHAEL MONTESANO**

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CARLE PLACE FARMINGDALE GLEN HEAD LATTINGTOWN BETHPAGE THE BROOKVILLES BAYVILLE EAST NORWICH HICKSVILLE LOCUST VALLEY MUTTONTOWN OYSTER BAY WESTBURY

## Montesano Fighting for Long Island to be Heard in Albany

### A Letter to the Editor from Assemblyman Michael Montesano: **The Wrong Way to Fix the MTA? Congestion Pricing**

Last time there was one-party rule in the State Legislature, they imposed an MTA payroll tax. This time around it's congestion pricing, which would charge vehicles traveling below 60th Street an undetermined fee. The goal is to decrease congestion within Manhattan and use the revenue to fix the broken subway system.



There are a few reasons I am against this legislation. The first being that this could place a substantial hardship on taxi and rideshare drivers because either they must pay the fee themselves, taking money out of their earnings, or force the fee upon their riders, potentially resulting in fewer riders utilizing their services. However we won't know if this will happen until the Traffic Mobility Review Board reports toward the end of November 2020. Secondly, this could affect the delivery business. Delivery services could be charged extra to get their products to their clients, most likely resulting in them raising their own fees in order to compensate.

Another issue I have with congestion pricing is we have passed something without knowing what the outcome will be. We have given the MTA complete control over this. We have no set fee for different vehicles or knowledge of exemptions. Would a person be exempt if they are going to a doctor's appointment? What about a funeral procession? Or a pastor rushing to the hospital to give last rights to someone on their death bed?

Yes, the subway is long overdue for an upgrade, but this is the wrong way to raise revenue to fix these problems. This is the MTA's mess and they need to figure out a more viable way to fix it without imposing yet another tax on New Yorkers.

### Plastic Bag Ban & Paper Bag Tax: **Helping Our Environment or Government Greed?**

As of March 2020, plastic bags will be banned from retail stores statewide in an effort to protect New York's environment. The ban was created through a deal struck by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins a few days before the passing of the budget.

While this might seem like a huge step toward helping our environment, not all legislators are happy with this bill, stating there are a lot of exemptions to the ban, allowing for the use of some plastic bags to continue.

"I'm supportive of the idea to protect our environment, what I don't support is another tax being enforced on New Yorkers," said Assemblyman Michael Montesano. "This is just a sugar-coated tax to make the state legislators in the Majority look good. They

haven't even eliminated all plastic bags. They are allowing for exemptions such as bags for deli cold cuts, to wrap uncooked meats and for customers buying produce, candy and grains in bulk. If they really wanted to help the environment they should eliminate all plastic and also paper bags, requiring people to bring their own reusable bags."



Counties will also have the option to impose a 5 cent fee on all paper bags, and a portion of the revenue would go into New

York's Environmental Protection Fund and to provide New Yorkers with reusable bags.

"This was also not a budget issue," said Montesano. "It was a policy-related item and should not have been included in this year's budget, especially because there were only three people who took part in this discussion."