

## Assemblyman Weprin co-sponsors historic bill to increase minimum wage to \$9.00 an hour

The 2013-14 state budget increases the state's minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour by 2016. The wage will gradually increase over the next three years from \$7.25 to \$8.00 per hour on Dec. 31, 2013; to \$8.75 on Dec. 31, 2014; and then to \$9.00 per hour on Dec. 31, 2015. The increase to the minimum wage will directly benefit 925,000 New Yorkers currently earning below \$9.00 an hour, which is over 10 percent of the state's employed population.

Assemblyman Weprin along with the Assembly Majority has led a strong fight to increase the minimum wage, voting last year to increase it to \$8.50 per hour and voting twice again this year to raise it to \$9.00 per hour. The issue has become a hot-button topic nationally, and with over 80 percent of New Yorkers showing their support for an increased minimum wage, the Assembly delivered the results that hardworking families expect and deserve.

More than 80 percent of New Yorkers polled in January support efforts to raise the minimum wage. The change will directly benefit 925,000 New Yorkers currently earning below \$9.00 an



hour – over 10 percent of the state's employed population. Corporate profits of low-wage employers are experiencing record growth, making it a good time to raise the minimum wage.

## Legislation extending property tax relief for city co-op and condo homeowners passes

Landmark legislation championed by Assemblyman David Weprin to provide hundreds of thousands of New York City homeowners with significant property tax relief and create new affordable housing was passed by an overwhelming majority in both houses and was signed into law by Governor Cuomo.

The legislation (A.3354) will cut taxes for the vast majority of condominium and cooperative owners who pay a disproportionate share of the city's property tax burden. The bill will also expand the city's affordable housing stock by requiring devel-

opers of certain projects to set aside a predetermined number of units for low or moderate income housing.

The bill expands New York City's condominium and cooperative real property tax abatement program by phasing out benefits to non-primary residences and spreading the benefit to homeowners and units that are owner-occupied. The value of the tax abatement will be phased in over three years based on the assessment of the home.

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



Assemblyman

**DAVID I. WEPRIN**

**Reports to the Community**

**SPRING 2013**

*Serving the partial or entire communities of Briarwood, Bellerose, Bellerose Manor, Fresh Meadows, Glen Oaks, Hillcrest, Holliswood, Jamaica Estates, Jamaica Hills, Oakland Gardens, Queens Village, Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, and Utopia.*

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## The New York SAFE Act includes crucial aspects championed by Assemblyman David Weprin

On Jan. 15, 2013, legislation championed by Assemblyman David Weprin in the weeks after the deadly Christmas Eve shooting on Dec. 24, 2012 in Webster, N.Y. by a convicted felon who illegally obtained firearms to commit this deadly act of violence, became law as part of the New York Secure Ammunition and Firearms Enforcement Act, a comprehensive gun control package that made New York the first state in the nation to enact new gun control legislation after the horrific elementary school shooting in Newtown, Conn. in December.

Assemblyman Weprin's bill to increase criminal penalties for legal or illegal gun owners who knowingly allow their firearms to be used during the commission of a Class A or B felony, introduced



just before the new year, has been incorporated into the gun control package. This means stiffer criminal penalties for firearm straw buyers whose weapons are later used to commit serious crimes in New York State. Assemblyman Weprin, a co-sponsor of the original Assembly bill to toughen Kendra's law, supports this important strengthening of Kendra's law, which empowers judges to order mentally ill patients to receive outpatient treatment. The new law will require mental health professionals to report to local mental health officials when they believe that a patient is likely to harm themselves or others.

Law enforcement would then be authorized to confiscate any firearm owned by the patient.

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the new 24th Assembly District of New York! As of January 2013, I am privileged to be your Assemblyman representing the communities of Briarwood, Bellerose, Bellerose Manor, Fresh Meadows, Glen Oaks, Hillcrest, Holliswood, Jamaica Estates, Jamaica Hills, Oakland Gardens, Queens Village, Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, and Utopia. Our office is now centrally located at 185-06 Union Turnpike, Fresh Meadows, New York 11366 to ensure that I am as accessible to you as possible.

Also, during this legislative session we have once again passed an early adoption of the state budget, providing a balanced spending plan that delivers for hardworking New Yorkers. The budget addresses fundamental issues facing our families, including my longtime commitment to increasing the state's minimum wage and providing our schools the necessary funding for our children to receive a quality education. By stimulating job creation and bringing tax relief to middle-class families and small businesses, we are ushering in a stronger, more successful economic recovery throughout New York.

As we move forward during the legislative session, I will continue to fight for our community to ensure we have the resources to thrive in 2013 and in the future. Now that the new 24th district lines have taken effect, I welcome all new communities to our family and I look forward to continuing to fight for those communities I have represented previously.

I am always here to address any issues or concerns you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact my district office for more information regarding any of the items listed. I look forward to hearing from you all and I wish you well.

Sincerely,

David I. Weprin  
Member of Assembly

## Assemblyman Weprin co-sponsors groundbreaking, comprehensive Gun-Safety Law

*NY SAFE Act bans assault weapons, closes loopholes and cracks down on gun violence ravaging communities across the state*

Assemblyman Weprin co-sponsored a comprehensive gun-safety law in an effort to curb the devastating gun violence that has ravaged New York State and the country (Ch. 1 of 2013). The law is entitled the NY SAFE Act (Secure Ammunition and Firearms Enforcement Act).

### **STRONGER GUN-SAFETY MEASURES**

The NY SAFE Act strengthens New York's existing assault weapons ban to prohibit military-style weapons that include one or more features that increase the lethality of a weapon. In addition, there would be a grandfather clause for owners of legal semi-automatic assault weapons provided they apply to register them with the state police within 1 year and 90 days of the effective date of the new law and undergo a background check. Such registrations must be recertified every 5 years.

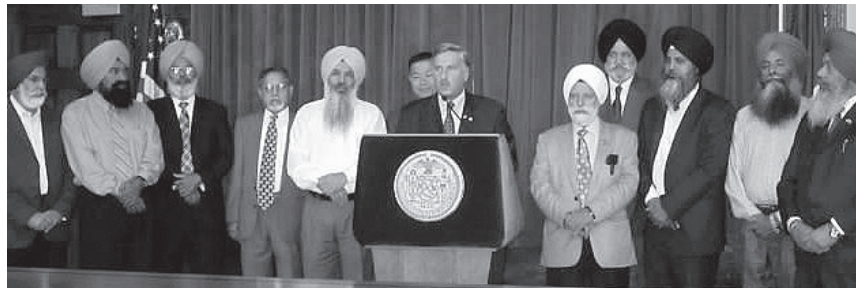
Additionally, the NY SAFE Act limits ammunition to 7 rounds per magazine. Individuals currently possessing magazines with a capacity of more than 7 and up to 10 rounds can continue to possess such magazines, but are prohibited from loading them with more than 7 rounds.

### **INCREASING CRIMINAL PENALTIES**

The Assembly's legislation would increase the existing penalty for possession of a loaded firearm from 3.5 years to 5 years imprisonment when the defendant is also convicted of a drug sale or violent felony offense as part of the same charge. Additionally, the penalty for possession of an unloaded firearm in this situation would increase from a class A misdemeanor to a class D felony.



## Assemblyman Weprin Fights to End Workplace Discrimination Against Religious Attire



Assemblyman Weprin recently re-introduced a bill (A.864) to prohibit discrimination against religious attire including facial hair. This would also specifically cover Muslim women and Hasidic Jews as well as members of the Sikh community. Assemblyman Weprin wants to protect the rights of both uniformed employees, and all New Yorkers from discrimination by allowing them to wear, and to protect them against discrimination for wearing any sort of religiously motivated or mandated garb or appurtenances, including beards, so long as such garb or appearance does not pose a hazard to that person or the public.

An individual should never have to choose between their place of employment and their religious observance. In order to promote understanding and tolerance in our state Assemblyman Weprin believes that we must make sure that individuals see people of all ethnicities, religion and color working as our firefighters, police officers and MTA workers.

# Assemblyman Weprin and the Assembly adopt an early state budget that helps hardworking New Yorkers

*Budget increases minimum wage and education funding, creates jobs and cuts taxes for middle-class families and small businesses*



*Assemblyman Weprin congratulates Governor Andrew Cuomo after Budget is adopted.*

Assemblyman Weprin announced the passage of the 2013-14 state budget, which closes a \$1.4 billion budget gap and increases the state's minimum wage, bolsters education funding, invests in critical job creation programs and cuts taxes for middle-class families and small businesses. The spending plan totals \$141.3 billion, which includes federal funds for Superstorm Sandy cleanup and the adoption of the Affordable Care Act. Absent the federal funding, the budget totals \$135.1 billion, an increase of \$1 billion, which is below 1 percent spending growth.

## INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL FUTURE

The 2013-14 state budget increases school aid by \$436 million over the executive's budget proposal, or a \$936.6 million increase over last year. The spending plan also increases community college base aid by \$150 per-FTE student for the second year in a row. The budget also includes \$25 million for full-day and half-day pre-kindergarten grants. This new investment will allow for more full-day pre-K programs across the state and additional half-day pre-K slots.

The 2013-14 state budget allocates \$8.28 billion to New York City Schools, an increase of \$363.9 million over last year and \$184.3 million more than the executive's budget proposal. The budget also restores \$240 million to New York City schools' base funding levels for the 2013-14 school year and ensures that a teacher evaluation system will be in place in subsequent school years, which will prevent students from being penalized in the future.



## KEEPING NY AFFORDABLE FOR MILLIONS OF HARDWORKING FAMILIES

To continue providing a fairer tax system in New York, the 2013-14 state budget extends the current tax rate first implemented in 2012, locking in the lowest tax rate for middle-class families in 60 years. Approximately 4.4 mil-

lion taxpayers, more than 99 percent of those filing statewide, benefited from \$690 million in tax relief stemming from the tax restructuring, which is why this multi-year extension is so critical for hardworking families.

The budget extends this middle-class tax cut for three additional years and pays for it by requiring those making over \$2 million per year – less than 1 percent of all New York residents – pay their fair share.

## OFFERING TAX CREDITS THAT SPUR HIRING OF VETERANS

The 2013-14 state budget includes tax credits to boost employment among veterans, many of whom are suffering from joblessness. A newly established veterans' tax credit would be offered to businesses that hire veterans. For taxable years 2015 and 2016, this credit would be worth 10 percent of the wages paid to a qualified veteran during the first full year of employment or 15 percent of the wages if the veteran is disabled.

*"We have an obligation to help take care of the veterans who honorably served our country," Assemblyman Weprin said. "Veterans are among the groups hardest hit by unemployment. These tax credits will help them get back to work."*

## BOOSTING MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES AND SMALL BUSINESSES



The budget includes a \$365,000 increase to the Minority and Women-owned Business Development and Lending Program, for a total appropriation of \$1 million, and opens certain state programs to more small businesses. Over the past few years, New York State has secured its spot as a great place to do business, and the 2013-14 budget takes another step in the right direction. Our minority and women-owned small businesses (MWBs) are vital assets to Queens' economy.

Specifically, the budget authorizes MWBs and other small businesses to access "bridge loans" for procurement purposes from the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund. Bridge loans are short-term loans that allow businesses more time to work out a long-term financing plan.



## ASSEMBLYMAN WEPRIN ATTENDS THE SWEARING-IN OF A COURT OF APPEALS JUDGE

In March, Assemblyman Weprin attended the swearing-in of Judge Jenny Rivera, a former law professor of the City University of New York Law School and the newest serving judge on the New York State Court of Appeals. Also, Judge Rivera is the founder and director of the Law School's Center on Latino and Latina Rights and Equality (CLORE).



## ASSEMBLYMAN WEPRIN CELEBRATES THE LUNAR NEW YEAR!

On March 17, 2013 Assemblyman Weprin presented a proclamation to the Hakka Association in celebration of the lunar new year! 2013 is the Year of the Snake; one of the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac, the snake signifies cleverness and tenacity and is associated with the element of fire.

## Assemblyman Weprin meets with NYPD Deputy Inspector Thomas M. Pascale



On March 8, Assemblyman Weprin met with Deputy Inspector Thomas M. Pascale of the 106th precinct to discuss community policing, community affairs and crime prevention. The 106th Precinct is located in South Central Queens. The community council meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. at the 106th Precinct located on 103-53 101st Street, Ozone Park.

## Assemblyman Weprin votes in favor of a moratorium on hydrofracking in New York State

*Legislation delays issuance of certain natural gas drilling permits until May 2015, allowing for further research of potential risks*

In order to allow for additional time to examine further the potential public health risks and environmental safety concerns associated with the new natural gas drilling techniques proposed for the state, including high-volume hydraulic fracturing, the Assembly passed legislation that would delay the Department of Environmental Conservation's issuance of certain new natural gas drilling permits in New York until May 15, 2015.

The measure would place a moratorium on the issuance of permits for natural gas extraction in low permeability natural gas pools, like the Marcellus and Utica shale formations. This bill would help ensure the Legislature has adequate time to review the Department of Environmental Conservation's Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) once it is finalized.

Hydraulic fracturing – commonly referred to as hydrofracking – is a process used to extract natural gas by injecting a chemical cocktail and highly pressurized water into underground rock formations. There is concern that hydrofracking could contaminate clean drinking water supplies and cause damage to the surrounding environment.

“Until we have all the facts, it's not worth putting our families and the environment in danger,” Assemblyman Weprin said. “There is simply too much at risk.”

## Assemblyman Weprin calls for restoration of parental input and balance to the governance of the New York City public school system!

Assemblyman Weprin, along with dozens of parents, educators, representatives of UFT, and community education council members from across the city gathered at New York City Hall on February 3, 2013 to push Assemblyman Weprin's bill (A.792) to restore balance, professionalism, and parental input to the governance of the New York City public school system. This legislation will require that the New York City Board of Education be comprised of individuals appointed by several entities. This fact, coupled with the proposal that the Board appoint the city school district chancellor, will allow the Board to operate as an independent entity apart from the office of the NYC mayor. There will be checks and balances and a chance for public review of decisions made by the Board to ensure transparency and accountability.

This bill will restore a democratic system of checks and balances by changing the composition of the Board of Education. The Board of Education would continue to have 13 members. Each Borough President would continue to appoint 1 member. Each member would have to have a child in the NYC public school system. The City Council would appoint 4 members. The Mayor would appoint 4 members. Assemblyman Weprin's bill would create an independent NYC Board of Education. This new Board would have the authority to appoint the NYC Schools Chancellor and have control over educational policy. Parents and education professionals would



regain a greater voice in the education process.

Additionally this bill will allow those with a vested interest in education, such as parents of school children and those in higher education, to be directly involved in the policy creation and decision making of the education system.