

ASSEMBLYMAN

Andrew Hevesi



Summer 2014

Dear Neighbor,

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your elected representative in the State Legislature. The articles in this newsletter are a small sample of the issues and goals we have been able to bring to fruition over the last several months.

I would encourage you to participate in our Legislative E-mail program. This program allows you to interact with myself and my staff concerning current and proposed New York State policies before they are adopted. If you would like to join, please contact my office at hevesia@assembly.state.ny.us. In addition, my office is always available to assist with any issues or concerns that you may have. Please feel free to stop by or call us at (718) 263-5595.

I look forward to continuing to work on behalf of our neighbors and community. Thank you again for the privilege of being your representative.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hevesi
Assemblyman 28th A.D.

Hevesi and Coalition Secure Another \$3 Million in State Budget to Upgrade Polluting Freight Locomotive

For the second consecutive year, Assemblyman Hevesi secured an allocation in the state budget to upgrade an antiquated engine of a freight locomotive, owned and leased out by the Long Island Rail Road. Building on the success of last year's pilot program, this year's allocation will continue to move New York State in the direction of becoming one of the nation's leaders in environmentally sustainable freight rail technology.

The \$3 million in funding will go towards refining the locomotive's engine, and fitting the train with components that meet the highest current US Environmental Protection Agency standards. The upgraded locomotives will significantly improve emission standards, reducing the train's adverse environmental and community health impacts as they travel through our neighborhoods.



Assembly Member Hevesi Co-Sponsors CUNY College Access Workshop

Earlier this year, Assemblyman Hevesi, Assemblyman Miller, Councilwoman Crowley, and Senator Addabbo hosted aspiring college students and family members at an informational session by the City University of New York (CUNY) on its academic programs and application process. The presentation included information on financial aid and scholarship opportunities at CUNY's 19 undergraduate colleges and was held at the Shops at Atlas Park in Glendale.

Assemblyman Hevesi Hosts Drive to Assist Glendale Food Pantry

Assemblyman Hevesi, Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, and The Shops at Atlas Park, are hosting a food drive this summer to assist with restocking the Glendale Food Pantry. We encourage everyone in the community to consider making a donation to the pantry, which serves our friends and neighbors in the community. If you would like to donate, please bring canned foods and non-perishable items to either

the Assemblyman's District Office, located at 70-50 Austin Street, Suite 110, Forest Hills, NY 11375, the Council Member's office, located at 71-19 80th St, Suite 8-303, Glendale, NY, 11385, or at The Shops at Atlas Park, at any of the Summer on the Green events, or at the Subway sandwich shop located in Atlas Park. All items that are collected will be donated, and will go toward supporting individuals in need.

Assemblyman Hevesi Requests Restoration to Child Welfare Funding

Assembly Members Hevesi and Lupardo submitted a budget request to the Speaker of the Assembly calling for the restoration of funding for Child Welfare Services in the 2014 State Budget. The letter came following a joint oversight hearing investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of two children while in child protective services custody in Erie County, as well as a third fatality in Staten Island while the child was under the care of New York City's Administration for Children's Services. Testimony from participants of the hearings highlighted the nearly \$20 million in reimbursement cutbacks over the last several budget cycles and the resulting agency resource depletion. The joint budget request called for a permanent reinstatement of adequate funding levels to ensure proper protective/preventative service delivery for children within the protective services system in New York State.

Assemblyman Hevesi Introduces Legislation to Expand Administration of Children Services Access to Court Databases

Assemblyman Hevesi has introduced legislation (A.9992) which would expand New York City's Administration of Children Services (ACS), the city agency charged with ensuring the health and safety of children in protective custody, access to important databases, and to equip caseworkers with the tools that they need to keep our most vulnerable children safe. Currently, ACS only has access to information regarding the criminal convictions of a person charged with caring for a child. This has limited protective workers from accessing other important information, such as prior arrests. This legislation would grant caseworkers more access to criminal history databases, including history of arrests. If passed, child protective caseworkers will be able to better assess potential dangers to a child and can make more appropriate recommendations on whether that person is safe to acquire guardianship.



Assemblyman Hevesi speaks to the faculty of Forest Hills High School about the importance of recognizing the warning signs of Human Trafficking. Through an ongoing partnership with the LifeWay Network, an organization providing safe housing for women survivors of human trafficking, Hevesi presented the educators with information about how the state is working to combat this horrific crime and what can be done to identify warning signs and report suspected cases of human trafficking to the proper authorities.

Hevesi Introduces Legislation to Assist Survivors of Domestic Violence

Recognizing the importance of aiding victims of domestic violence, Assemblyman Hevesi has introduced legislation that would require a report to be produced by the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, in conjunction with the State Commissioner of Health, and the State Commissioner of Criminal Justice Services, detailing various programs that are aimed at assisting survivors of this violent crime, and potentially implementing them statewide. Currently, Erie County is home to the only Forensic Medical Unit (FMU) dedicated to domestic violence in New York State. The full-time Registered Nurses that work in this unit document and photograph patient injuries using high-tech digital camera equipment. The usage of this technology can save victims from the trauma of testifying at a trial against their abuser. The FMU documentation is allowed in court, with conviction rates almost 100% of the time. This report would allow state domestic violence experts to assess adding FMU's in other areas of New York State.



Assemblyman Hevesi and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz at the Austin Street Fair earlier this year.

Assemblyman Hevesi Passes Groundbreaking Oversight Legislation

One of the first pieces of legislation Assemblyman Hevesi authored as Chair of the Oversight, Analysis and Investigation Committee passed in both the Assembly and Senate and is now on its way to the Governor's office to be signed into law. This bill is the first change in law emerging from a new ongoing legislative initiative that is specifically aimed at making government more efficient. The New York State Assembly Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigation, in coordination with other standing committees, is undertaking a comprehensive review of tens of thousands of reporting requirements currently written into every area of New York State Law. The purpose of this extensive review is to enhance government efficiency. Our staff is actively looking to eliminate unnecessary reporting requirements and, by extension, some other statutorily required activities by various agencies, municipalities, and other political subdivisions that no longer serve the purpose for which they were originally placed into statute. After the first several months of this review, it has become clear that many of these requirements are outdated, duplicative, or unused and therefore no longer necessary. This bill is the first in what is projected to be a very long series of repeal bills that address these superfluous sections of law.

Assembly bill A.7187 repeals reporting requirements and several other provisions pertaining to The Board of Railroad Commissioners and its related proceedings. The initial enabling legislation and the overall practices of this board are outdated, fading in practice at the end of the 19th Century. The bill also repeals the provisions of the general municipal law with regard to the temporary state commission on local government ethics and its reporting requirements. The commission sunset in 1993; however, legal references and cross-references have left these reporting requirements scattered throughout the general municipal law, resulting in various agencies and commissions having to still abide by these requirements.

Another of Assemblyman Hevesi's bills, drafted as a result of this undertaking, unanimously passed the Assembly on June 19th of the 2014 legislative session. Assembly bill A.9090 would allow state agencies the ability to view municipalities single audit filings electronically to be in compliance with the federal Single Audit Act of 1984, which will reduce burdens on local government entities. All local government entities that receive federal dollars in excess of an aggregate sum of \$500,000 annually must file a single audit with the federal Clearinghouse and appropriate state agencies to account for the expenditures of those funds pursuant to the federal Single Audit Act of 1984 and Circular A-133, put forth by the federal Office of Management and Budget. Currently, local government entities must file with the federal government, and then individually with each state agency that acted as a conduit of federal funding for a related purpose. The majority of localities required to file these audits receive an assortment of smaller grants adding up to \$500,000 for a variety of purposes, and they are therefore required to file multiple documents with various state agencies.

The federal clearinghouse, a digital repository for single audit documents that all federal agencies access online, allows entities filing an audit to designate other authorized users of their documents. This legislation would require municipalities to designate the state agencies that they would be filing their audits with in addition to their submission to the federal clearinghouse as authorized viewers to satisfy their state filing requirements electronically. This simple change will improve government efficiency by saving municipalities and local governments time, staff resources, and money in both printing and mailing costs, while still satisfying their responsibilities to the federal government and ensuring that the appropriate state agencies continue to have access to the audit information that they must receive under federal law.



Assemblyman Hevesi conducting the swearing in of members of the Glendale Property Owners Association.

Hevesi Legislation Helps Prompt Reform of Smartphone Safeguards

As a response to the growing epidemic of smartphone and tablet theft in New York State, Assemblyman Hevesi introduced legislation calling for a change in industry safety standards. The bill, A.09070, would provide the public with safeguards in situations where their smartphones or tablets were lost or stolen. This safeguard, commonly known as a 'kill switch,' would allow the purchaser of the device to remotely disable the product.

The resale value of the product would thereby be reduced, and simultaneously discourage future theft of such devices. Earlier this month, influenced by this legislation, smartphone and tablet manufacturers agreed to adopt a nationwide industry standard paralleling the goals proposed by Assemblyman Hevesi and his colleagues, making the manufacturers of these products more accountable, while providing greater protection for consumers.

Assemblyman Hevesi Co-Hosts Bike Helmet Giveaway and E-Cycling Event

On Sunday, May 18th, Assemblyman Hevesi, along with Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz and the 112th Precinct, gave away a total of 753 bike helmets in an effort to promote riding. On the same day, and in affiliation with the Lower East Side Ecology Center and the Forest Hills Jewish Center, their offices held an electronic recycling event. The event yielded participation from 119 different households, and nearly two tons of recyclable electronic waste were collected.

State Raises SCRIE Eligibility Limit for Seniors to \$50,000

After the recent passage of the FY2014-2015 New York State Budget, and for the first time in close to five years, the eligibility cap for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) will be raised from \$29,000 to \$50,000. The program helps reduce the cost of rent for New Yorkers 62 years and older. The recent increase will take effect on July 1, 2014. For more information, feel free to contact the Department of Finance's Correspondence Unit at (212) 669-3155.

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

- ✓ Worked with the Department of Buildings and the NYC Housing Authority to remedy multiple faucet leaks in a constituent's apartment.
- ✓ Helped a constituent complete an application and secure Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) funding.
- ✓ Helped constituents get trees inspected to make sure the local environment was being cared for in a safe way.
- ✓ Helped a constituent navigate the Department of Motor Vehicles so they could obtain a Driver's License.
- ✓ Worked with the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene to explain the Medicaid system to constituents.



ASSEMBLYMAN
**ANDREW
HEVESI**

Reports to the People

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