



Assemblyman

Andrew Hevesi

Spring 2016



Forest Hills • Rego Park • Kew Gardens • Richmond Hill • Ridgewood • Middle Village • Glendale

Dear Neighbor,

I would like to express my continued gratitude for affording me the opportunity to represent the 28th Assembly District. My staff and I remain dedicated to serving the needs of our community both in our district and in the State Capitol.

Last year, I had the privilege of being appointed Chairman of the Assembly's Social Services Committee. In that capacity, working with my staff, counsel, and budget analysts assigned to the committee, we have begun actively pursuing a number of initiatives designed to reduce poverty and homelessness in New York State, while saving taxpayers money.

In the final enacted state budget this year, we successfully created a \$25 million antipoverty initiative for 16 municipalities throughout the State that have extremely high concentrations of child poverty. One of the primary goals of this initiative will be to allow individuals on public assistance to qualify for locally designed state funded career readiness and job training programs that will enable families to get off of public assistance. Also in the budget, we eliminated the legal restriction for people on public assistance that stopped them from having a reliable automobile. That nonsensical statute kept many individuals from getting to work, particularly in communities upstate where public transportation is scarce, which in turn forced them to not be employed, lose their public assistance benefits, and wind up in much more expensive programs and shelters for the homeless. Finally in the budget this year, we changed the law so disabled public assistance applicants can have their personal doctors' evaluations count towards the development of appropriate work accommodations.

I have been spearheading the effort to create 35,000 units of supportive housing to reduce the number of homeless people currently residing in more expensive shelters. Supportive housing is a crucial part of our solution to end the homeless crisis in New York State, the worst crisis since the Great Depression. Supportive Housing reduces the use of shelters, visits to detoxification centers, hospitalizations, emergency room use, incarceration, and consequently, saves taxpayers money. For these reasons, after I organized 133 members of the Assembly to call for the development of 35,000 units of supportive housing, Mayor de Blasio committed New York City to create 15,000 and Governor Cuomo committed New York State to create 20,000. My staff and I are now actively negotiating the adequate funding of these new units.

On a different note, I am proud to report that at the end of 2015, Governor Cuomo signed into law one of the most comprehensive pieces of legislation I have written during my tenure in the Assembly, bill A.5056/S.3757. This bill creates within the Office of the State Comptroller an Electronic Fraud Prevention and Protection System using data analytics to identify and prevent fraud, waste and abuse throughout state government. This law is projected to save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

In the coming months, I will continue to work with my fellow committee members and colleagues in the Assembly and Senate as we address the issues that affect all of our neighborhoods.

As always, please feel free to stop by, call my office at (718) 263-5595, or e-mail us at hevesia@nyassembly.gov, with any concerns you may have. Thank you again for the privilege of serving as your representative.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hevesi
Assemblyman 28 A.D.

Assemblyman Hevesi Leads the Fight against Poverty in New York State

During negotiations for the FY 2016-2017 final enacted State budget, Assemblyman Hevesi pushed to revamp anti-poverty taskforces throughout New York State. As a result, Assemblyman Hevesi and his colleagues created a “banding” funding tier to allocate money to these taskforces based on the number of people living in poverty in each respective area of the State; which include Albany, the Bronx, Binghamton, Buffalo, Hempstead, and Rochester, amongst others. Municipalities with fewer than 5,000 individuals in poverty will be eligible to receive \$500,000; areas with between 5,000 and 10,000 individuals living in poverty will be eligible to receive \$1,000,000; between 10,000 and 40,000 individuals in poverty will be eligible to receive \$1,500,000; and places with more than 40,000 individuals in poverty will be eligible to receive \$2,750,000.

This program will be divided into two phases. First, a local not-for-profit organization will organize and coordinate the members of each task force, who will then determine the most pressing needs for their area, design a focused plan, and submit their strategy to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) for approval. The second phase will be the implementation of the comprehensive strategy agreed upon in the planning phase. These strategies include providing public assistance recipients with opportunities to participate in enhanced work activities that either provide recognized credentialing or job training; assisting families in poverty through specific services provided to parents and children; and addressing chronic homelessness or housing insecurity. As we have seen, the poverty levels in New York have been increasing for far too long, and Assemblyman Hevesi will continue to fight to help individuals and families become self-sufficient.

Assemblyman Hevesi Convenes a Public Hearing for New York’s Veterans

This past fall, Assemblyman Hevesi, along with several of his Assembly Colleagues, speaking on behalf of the Assembly Standing Committees on Social Services, Veteran’s Affairs, and the Subcommittee on Women Veterans, held a public hearing to review and evaluate New York State’s role in connecting veterans with the benefits they have earned from their service to our country. As a result of the hearing, the legislators were able to identify multiple problems facing our veterans, which led to Assemblyman Hevesi’s introduction of legislation which will facilitate enhanced communication between the Veterans Association, State Agencies and non-profits regarding social service program delivery. The hearing

also led to \$1.62 million in restorations and additional funding for veterans being included in this year’s budget. These funds will be used in the following



Assemblyman Hevesi at hearing regarding veterans affairs

manner: \$500,000 for the Veterans Defense Program, which provides in-depth training, support and legal assistance to veterans and service members in the New York State criminal and family court systems; \$200,000 for Warrior Salute, which assists veterans coping with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and military sexual trauma; and \$200,000 for “Helmets-to-Hardhats,” a program which helps

connects veterans with career opportunities and helps ease the transition back into civilian life.

Assemblyman Hevesi Chairs a Public Hearing Concerning the Issues Facing New York's Elderly Population

Assemblyman Hevesi and several of his colleagues, representing the Assembly Standing Committees on Social Services and Aging, the Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force, and the Subcommittees on Community Integration and Outreach & Oversight of Senior Citizen Programs, held a public hearing this past November to examine the issues relating to rising poverty rates among New York's senior citizens, and to identify means to protect this population. Topics that emerged from the hearing included the vital need to adequately fund Naturally Occurring Retirement Supportive Service Programs (NORC-SSPs) and Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Programs (NNORCs). NORC-SSPs were developed to offer services to seniors



Assemblyman Hevesi conducts hearing to help New York's senior citizens

living in large building complexes, while NNORCs assist seniors living in residential areas consisting of single-family homes and buildings that do not exceed six stories. These programs allow seniors to remain in their homes and communities while providing them with supportive services, including health monitoring and case management, as well as activities to foster social engagement. As a result of the hearing and the work of the Assemblyman and his colleagues, the FY 2016-2017 final enacted State budget restored \$951,000 for NORC-SSPs and an additional \$700,000 for NNORCs. Assemblyman Hevesi has, and will continue to protect the well-being of New York's senior citizens.

Assemblyman Hevesi Changes the Automobile Resource Exemption so New Yorkers on Public Assistance can have Reliable Transportation to go to Work

One of the key components of Assemblyman Hevesi's efforts during this year's budget was the reform of the resource and assets tests for individuals on public assistance. Resource and Asset tests are designed to prevent individuals above certain thresholds from receiving public assistance. However, the automobile exemption only allowed individuals to possess a vehicle with a fair market value of up to \$4,650, a completely arbitrary and outdated standard. That level proved wholly inadequate to meet the needs of many working families and has been problematic, particularly in upstate New York, where driving is

often necessary to maintain employment. In the FY 2016-2017 final enacted State budget, Assemblyman Hevesi proposed and secured an increase in the automobile resource exemption for individuals when determining their eligibility for public assistance. A new, three year phased-in increase will result in a fair market value exemption limit of up to \$12,000 by April 1, 2018. This one critical change in the law will allow people to have cars they can rely on to go to work, increasing the chances of sustained employment and self-sufficiency.

Assemblyman Hevesi Works to Improve New York's Child Care System

Last Fall, Chairman Hevesi, Chairwoman Donna Lupardo, and several colleagues, representing the Assembly Committees on Social Services, Children & Families, and the New York State Assembly's Childcare Workgroup, convened three roundtable discussions to examine and evaluate the market rate system used to fund childcare programs in New York State, and the reauthorization of the Federal Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG). These hearings helped the legislators identify multiple issues facing New York's child care system, and begin working toward improving these programs for New York's children and families. Subsequently, Assemblyman Hevesi helped secure \$24.9 million in the FY 2016-2017 final enacted State budget to improve New York's child care system. This allocation included \$10.6 million for facilitated enrollment, which provides 12 months of child care subsidies for working and middle-income families; \$5 million for afterschool programs; and \$3 million for the Safe Harbour program, which provides support services for exploited youth.



Assemblyman Hevesi, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, and Deputy Mayor Richard Buery meet at P.S. 144 in Queens

Hevesi Secures Funds to create the Center for Healing Sexually Abused and Exploited Children

During this year's budget, Assemblyman Hevesi secured new funds to create the Center for Healing Sexually Abused and Exploited Children under the auspices of the experts of the Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA). The Center for Healing will serve children and adolescents who have experienced sexual abuse and exploitation including those who have been trafficked, or been forced into commercial sexual activity. Victims

who have been subjected to this type of profound and devastating trauma are at increased risk for post-traumatic stress, depression, teen pregnancy and drug use. Through advanced clinical and support services, the Center for Healing will help these children get back on a path to living healthy, productive lives. The long-term goal for

the Center for Healing is to become a national point of excellence focused on this vulnerable population.

ASSEMBLYMAN ANDREW HEVESI

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