

MOVING NEW YORK FORWARD

NY PAID FAMILY LEAVE PROGRAM



Starting January 1, 2018, The Paid Family Leave Program will become available to hard-working New Yorkers. One of the most comprehensive plans in the nation, individuals who have been employed for at least six-months will be able to take time off to care for an infant or a family member with a serious health condition. The plan may also be used to help to ease the burden placed on families when earners are called into active military service.

The plan initially offers 8 weeks of leave payable at 50 percent of an employee's average weekly wage, up to 50 percent of the statewide average weekly wage, and by 2021, provides up to 12 weeks of leave payable at 67 percent of the employees average weekly wage, up to 67 percent of the statewide average weekly wage. This program is funded entirely through a small payroll deduction from each employee.

For more information visit, <https://www.ny.gov/programs/new-york-state-paid-family-leave>

MTA

Members of the Assembly Majority from the MTA region met this summer to address challenges regarding transportation in and around New York City. We had productive conversations with representatives of the MTA, as well as advocates and discussed a number of different options to address these issues.

Our primary concern is to ensure customers have a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation system. We are having ongoing discussions to determine how to address these issues, including how to properly fund the MTA which is a critical economic driver in New York State.

We look forward to working with our partners in government to develop both short- and long-term solutions to challenges that are plaguing this critical transportation network.



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FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN



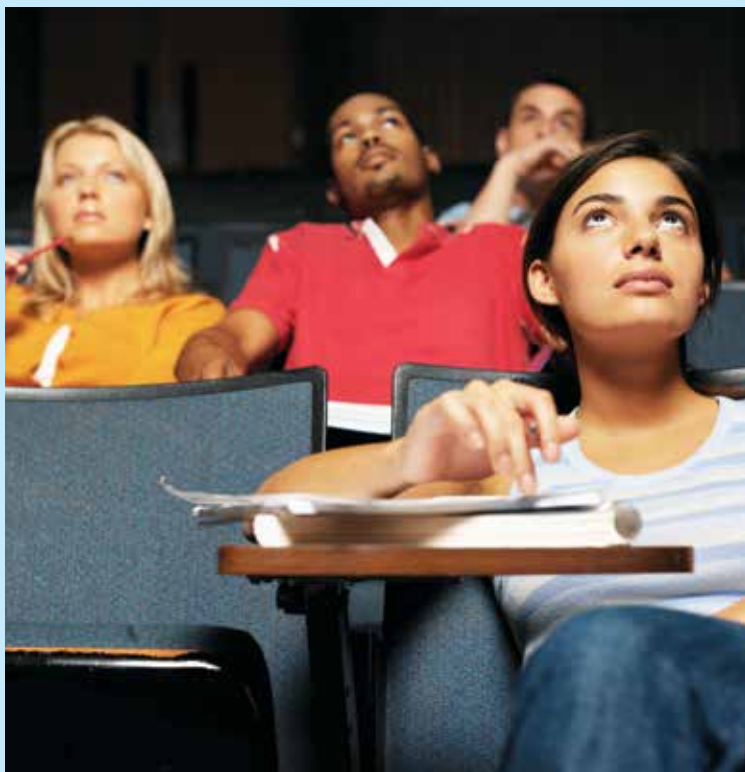
The Assembly will work on a joint effort with Governor Cuomo to support full-day kindergarten in next year's budget for all school districts in New York that still maintain half-day programs.

Experience has shown that full-day kindergarten gives children a head start and allows them to grow and thrive in so many ways.

Over 700 New York school districts provide full-day kindergarten, but a handful of districts do not. It is imperative to provide the funding necessary so these schools can make the transition to full-day programs with little or no impact on their overall budget.

Expanding full-day kindergarten in New York is fundamental to eliminating the educational gap and helping our students gain the confidence they need to achieve long-term academic success. For many children, kindergarten is their first school experience and they truly need a full day of instruction to ensure they are able to perform at grade level early on and get a head start towards literacy.

DACA



President Trump's decision to repeal the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy is a devastating blow to our reputation as a symbol of freedom. In New York State, this decision will impact some 42,000 beneficiaries who are already pursuing a career or contributing to our economy to fulfill their American Dream and better their future.

Here in New York, immigrants are an integral thread in the fabric of our daily lives. That is why the Assembly Majority will continue its fight for policies that protect our immigrant communities, like the New York State DREAM Act. We also fully support the state's initiative to take legal action against this destructive decision that will doom these children to an uncertain fate. The Assembly Majority stands ready to continue protecting immigrant New Yorkers, but we also demand that our representatives in Washington stand up to Trump's divisive agenda and take swift action to protect our nation of immigrants.

IMMIGRATION PROTECTION



For many years, the Assembly Majority has called on Congress to act on immigration reform and create a meaningful path to citizenship. Each year, more and more families are pushed into the shadows of our society, vulnerable and afraid.

Last session, the Assembly passed the New York State Liberty Act to protect the well-being of our law-abiding immigrant communities and to ensure their access to state resources and support services.

The Assembly Majority will not stop advocating for immigrants. They are members of our diverse communities, our friends and neighbors, and above all, they are New Yorkers whose livelihoods and well-being have been compromised because of the political stalemate and hostilities around immigration reform. Protecting our country's borders does not require using fear to intimidate honest, hard-working people who have made this country their home.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The Trump administration delivered a massive blow to women's health care in October by allowing even more employers and insurers to exempt themselves from covering contraceptives. Unlike the Trump administration, the Assembly Majority firmly believes that reproductive health choices should be made exclusively by a woman and her doctor — never her employer.

The Assembly Majority recognizes that by ensuring women are able to have control over their family planning decisions, outcomes improve for everyone. Access to contraceptives has allowed women to achieve greater success in education and the workplace, which we know means healthier and more financially secure families.

For years, the Assembly Majority has fought to pass legislation that would protect the reproductive rights of women in New York State, including legislation to expand insurance coverage to include more contraceptive options than currently is required under federal law. We are committed to increasing access and options for women, not restrictive and regressive policies that eliminate them.

For far too long, women's reproductive health rights have been under attack in this country. The Assembly Majority recognizes the need for progressive federal action that respects a woman's right to make her own health care and family planning decisions. New York will never move backwards. No matter what happens, we will continue to lead the charge on this issue by advocating for women's complete autonomy over their bodies and choices.



NEW CHAIR OF WAYS OF MEANS

Assemblywoman Helene E. Weinstein (41st AD, Brooklyn) was appointed to serve as chair of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee. In a historic step, Ms. Weinstein becomes the first woman to chair the committee.

Helene is one of the longest-serving members of the Assembly. She has made immeasurable contributions to the residents of New York State and her vast experience in the People's House and extensive knowledge of the state budget process will guide the Assembly Majority as we continue to pursue our Families First agenda.

"It is my privilege to accept the chairmanship of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee," said Assemblywoman Weinstein. "As the first woman to chair this committee, I am humbled by the historic opportunity to lend new perspective and solutions to the needs facing our families and communities. I have always believed that diversity in leadership is critical to achieving a government that is both inclusive and responsive to today's challenges."

GRANTS ACTION NEWS

I encourage my constituents to visit the Grant Action News link below which offers information on state, federal, and private grants.

This is a monthly publication that is available on the NYS Assembly website.

<http://nyassembly.gov/gan/pdfs/201710.pdf>

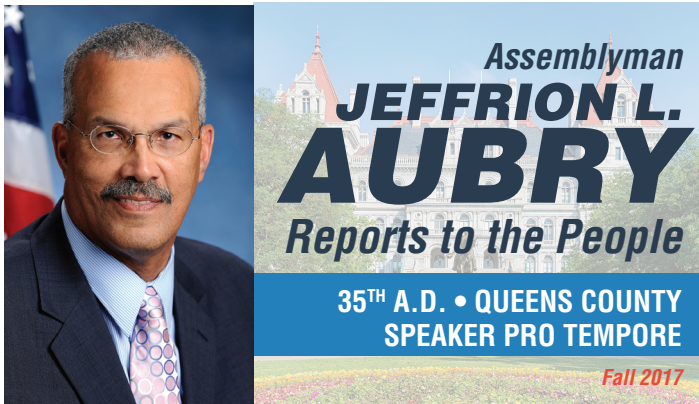
IN SYMPATHY

My colleagues and I were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Assemblymember Michael Simanowitz.

A proud father of four, Mike was a public servant in the truest sense who served his community and the state of New York with dedication and passion. I will especially remember Mike for his quick wit and intelligence. I am proud to have called him my friend. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Jennifer and their four children.



New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



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