



Assemblyman CHARLES D. FALL



Legislative and Community Report - 61st Assembly District - Fall 2023



Dear Neighbors,

It continues to be my pleasure and honor to serve as your New York State Assemblyman for the 61st District. This year has been particularly special as I was appointed Assistant Majority Leader, a role I am deeply honored to hold. My interactions with thousands of North Shore residents, attendance at various community events, and visits to our local public schools have been immensely fulfilling.

As your Assemblyman, I am dedicated to enhancing our community's living and working environment. I firmly believe in the power of collaboration between public servants, community and faith-based leaders, and residents in bolstering the economic vitality of our borough, city, state, and country.

My commitment to improving public safety, enhanced transit services, ensuring the safety and resource availability in our public schools, advocating for youth and senior programs and services, and supporting mental health and substance use disorder initiatives remains steadfast.

As I take on this new leadership role, I am even more dedicated to working with you on the North Shore and representing your interests in Albany. I am excited about what we can accomplish together in the coming year.

Charles D. Fall
Assistant Majority Leader
New York State Assembly,
District 61

Transportation: Current Legislative Focus & Future Outlook

The securing of the resident toll rebate for the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge in the state budget is a monumental win for Staten Island residents. This outcome ensures that the hard-fought efforts to maintain affordable toll rates for our community have not been in vain. By keeping the effective toll rate at \$2.75, significantly lower than the standard bus fare rate, we are directly addressing the financial concerns of our residents. This achievement is particularly significant considering the previous threats to the program's existence. Our steadfast commitment to advocating for this discount underscores our dedication to the economic well-being of Staten Island families. It's a testament to the power of persistent, unified advocacy and a clear demonstration of our community's resilience and influence.



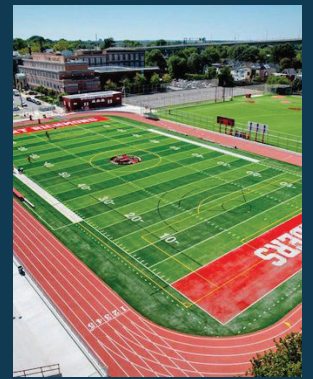
Additionally, our success in excluding speed cameras from this year's budget should not be understated. While safety on our roads is paramount, the implementation of speed cameras on the Verrazzano Bridge and the accompanying fines can place an undue burden on our residents. It's essential that any revenue generated from such measures in Staten Island be reinvested back into our local transportation and infrastructure. I've argued that the funds collected from these cameras, which amount to over \$10 million, should directly contribute to the improvement of our transportation network, including the long-demanded Bus Rapid Transit and the extension of the HOV lane on the Staten Island Expressway.

It's important to note that while we've achieved significant progress with the resident toll rebate and the omission of speed cameras in the FY2024 budget, there's still more work to be done. We must continue to advocate for transportation solutions that address the unique needs of Staten Islanders. As we move forward, my focus remains on ensuring that our residents are not disproportionately burdened and that our community receives the infrastructure improvements it urgently needs. The journey is ongoing, and I am committed to tirelessly working to ensure that Staten Island's voice is heard and its needs are met in all aspects of state governance.

Looking ahead as we approach the next fiscal year, I am focused on advancing bill A03396, which proposes a toll exemption for Staten Island residents crossing the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge. This bill is a significant step towards alleviating the financial strain of commuting for our constituents, who endure some of the longest travel times in the country. Our initiative is specifically designed to benefit Staten Island residents using personal, non-commercial vehicles linked to a New York E-ZPass account. This targeted approach ensures that the relief provided is directly felt by those in our community. Building on the foundations of the existing Staten Island Residents discount program, this bill aims to further reduce the commuting costs for our residents, reinforcing our commitment to enhancing their daily lives and economic stability. The implementation of this bill in the upcoming fiscal year would mark a major achievement in our ongoing efforts to support and advocate for the unique needs of Staten Island families.

Exciting News from Port Richmond High School

We are absolutely thrilled to celebrate the grand opening of Port Richmond High School's brand-new, cutting-edge athletic complex, valued at \$20 million! We can't help but feel a warm sense of pride as we reflect on our humble contribution to this fantastic endeavor, all in the name of fostering student athleticism and well-being. Our hearts swell with gratitude as we extend a huge shout-out to Principal Greenfield, the NYC School Construction Authority, NYC Public Schools, and, of course, our incredible parent advocates for their unwavering support throughout this journey! Thank you for being part of this incredible milestone. Together, we're shaping a brighter future for our students! As a reminder Port Richmond High School is a community school that is open to everyone! A special shout out to Superintendent Marion Wilson for her efforts!



Connecting with our neighbors in Battery Park City

A privilege to engage with the remarkable individuals of the Gateway Plaza Tenants Association. Working closely with these passionate residents has not only allowed me to better understand the unique challenges we face, but also to collaborate on effective solutions that benefit our entire Lower Manhattan community. Their insights and active involvement are invaluable in shaping a vibrant and inclusive future for Battery Park City

Milestones in Motion: Transportation Victories



New Railway Cars: This is a momentous day for Staten Island as we welcome the new MTA R211 railway cars. I'm filled with pride for the role I've played in advocating for this modern and efficient SIRR service upgrade since 2019. It's a significant step forward in making Staten Island more connected and accessible.

New Staten Island Ferry Contract: Kudos to the unsung heroes of our city's transportation system! These dedicated workers deserve fair wages as a fundamental right, not just a privilege. Our Ferry Workers deserve the best and their new contract is a significant step forward! Let's celebrate their vital role in keeping our city connected and advocate for the recognition and compensation they rightfully deserve. A well-compensated workforce means a happier and more vibrant city!

Free Bus Routes: Exciting news! Staten Island's S46/96 and Manhattan's M116 bus route is now fare-free until March 2024, bringing cheer and connectivity to every resident. This isn't just about transportation; it's a commitment to a brighter, more connected future for all. Join the ride!



Fortifying Community Centered-Wellness

Through partnership with the Majority Conference, a significant allocation to the Northshore YMCA demonstrates that our commitment to community well-being knows no district boundaries. Such partnerships underscore the collective dedication to the betterment of all our residents. Progress is best achieved together.

Strengthening Public Safety

Public Safety is a priority that resonates deeply with my commitment to serve the community, as safety is the foundation upon which all other aspects of a healthy society are built. Whether it's through supporting law enforcement, advocating for effective crime prevention programs, or engaging in community outreach, my focus on public safety is driven by the conviction that every individual deserves to live in a secure and peaceful environment. The recent gun buyback event, a collaborative effort with the NYPD and the District Attorney's Office, marked a significant stride in our mission to enhance public safety. This initiative successfully removed over a dozen firearms from circulation, a crucial step in our ongoing efforts to curtail gun violence in our community. Public safety remains a paramount priority because it forms the bedrock of a stable and prosperous community.



Insights in Education

I've had the honor of visiting numerous schools across the 61st district and I am continually reminded of the vital role education plays in our community. Each classroom visit renews my commitment to ensuring that our education system receives the support it needs to thrive. Witnessing the bright, inquisitive eyes of students eager to learn, the dedication of teachers who go above and beyond, and the involvement of parents and community members has reinforced my belief that education is not just a priority, but the foundation of a prosperous society. As I continue to serve, I am devoted to advocating for policies and resources that will provide our children with the quality education they deserve, because our future depends on their success. Education is more than a priority; it's a responsibility that I hold close to my heart, and I am committed to nurturing the potential of every young mind in our district.

Reflecting On Our Community's Strength at the 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony



We came together at RUMC to commemorate the solemn occasion of 9/11. The resilience and unity displayed by our community are a powerful testament to the indomitable spirit of the American people. We stand firm in our commitment to NeverForget those we lost on that fateful day, and we will always honor their memory. Thank you for joining us in paying tribute to the heroes and loved ones we hold in our hearts forever.

Remembering the Remarkable Legacy of Eric Eugene Garvin



Eric Eugene Garvin's legacy is one that time will never fade, and it will forever serve as a source of comfort and inspiration to all who had the privilege of knowing and loving such an incredible individual. We celebrate his life, his contributions, and the enduring impact he has had on our community.

Sheltering Hope Through Supportive Housing

Thrilled to have cut the ribbon for the new Project Hospitality Community Supportive Center located in the heart of Port Richmond. This center will provide disadvantaged individuals in our community with essential resources and support. As a firm advocate for social welfare, I am particularly proud to have been instrumental in securing the necessary funding that helped turn this vision into a reality. The establishment of this center represents not just the physical manifestation of our commitment to the community, but also a symbol of our collective dedication to fostering a supportive environment where every individual has the opportunity to access the care, assistance, and resources they require. It's a step forward in our journey to build a more inclusive and compassionate community, where every resident, regardless of their background or circumstances, can find support, hope, and the chance to thrive.



Celebrating Diversity

What a joy it was to march alongside the vibrant community at the Staten Island Mexican Independence Day Parade, Africa Day Parade, Pakistani Heritage Day and Black Heritage Day! It was a wonderful reminder of the incredible beauty found in our diversity and the strength of our united community. Let's continue to celebrate our rich tapestry of cultures and traditions. Together, we are stronger!



An Honorable Evening Celebrating Ramadan with Distinguished Guests

A heartfelt thank you goes to Governor Kathy Hochul, Mayor Kathy Sheehan, and Councilman Owusu Anane for our 5th Annual Iftar Dinner, commemorating the sacred month of Ramadan.

A heartfelt thank you goes to my colleagues and the entire Muslim community of New York for coming together to share in this special occasion.



Waterfront Barge Museum

Spent some time on the Brooklyn side of the 61st District with constituents and my colleague Assemblymember Rodney Hermelyn getting a tour of the Waterfront Barge Museum. For more info on this amazing museum, please visit: <https://waterfrontmuseum.org/home>

Direct Correlation Found Between Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Screen Time

A new study from Science Direct has found a direct correlation between obsessive compulsive disorder and screen time among children. Link to full study here: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1054139X22007224>

CPSC Warns Parents About Suffocation Hazards

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warns parents and caregivers of young children about the suffocation hazard presented by uninflated toy balloons and pieces of broken balloons.

Of all children's products, balloons are the leading cause of suffocation death, according to CPSC injury data. Read full safety alert here: <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/5087.pdf>

TheBlueCard Summer Reception

It was a pleasure to stop by the Museum of Jewish Heritage for the @TheBlueCard summer reception. I look forward to supporting their ever-growing list of programs and initiatives that serve Holocaust survivors and advance Holocaust education.



Community Resources

SYEP

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is the nation's largest youth employment program, connecting NYC youth between the ages of 14 and 24 with career exploration opportunities and paid work experiences each summer. For more information on the program and instructions on how to apply, go to application.ncssyep.com or call (800) 246-4646.

Workforce Information

The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce (www.sichamber.com)

Staten Island Business Outreach Center (www.siboc.org)

New York State Labor Law helps to protect employees in the workplace. Know your rights as a worker:

Workers' Compensation: If you are injured on the job, you can receive workers' compensation regardless of your immigration status. Contact the Advocate for Injured Workers for help at **800-580-6665**.

Fair Wages: Minimum wage and overtime laws apply to all workers, regardless of immigration status or payment method (cash, check, or off the books). Call **888-469-7365** to inquire about filing a claim if you're not receiving minimum wage or overtime pay for extra hours worked.

Financial Counseling

NYC Financial Empowerment Center provides free one-on-one financial counseling by NYC Consumer Affairs. Get help with debt, resources, student loans, and more. All sessions are over the phone during COVID-19. Schedule at www.NYC.gov/dca16.

Safety and Support

For domestic violence support, contact **Staten Island Family Justice Center** at **718-697-4300** or **Safe Horizon's 24-hour hotline** at **800-621-HOPE (4673)** for immediate help. You can also text confidentially at **844-997-2121**. For healthcare and addiction treatment, call **Brightpoint Health Center** at **855-681-8700**.

Legal Assistance

Staten Island Legal Aid Society provides quality legal help. Call **212-577-3300** for Criminal Defense or Juvenile Rights, **347-422-5333** for civil suits, and **888-663-6680** for Access to Benefits. For free COVID-19 legal assistance, visit legalservicesnyc.org or call 718-233-6480 (Mon-Fri, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm). LawHelpNY.org offers legal information, referrals, and chat assistance. Contact

by mail or email: **LawHelpNY**, c/o Pro Bono Net, 151 West 30th Street, New York, NY 10001, info@nylawhelp.org.

Veterans Services

Staten Island Veterans Center is here to support United States veterans in need. If you need to talk with someone confidentially, call 718-816-4499 Monday - Friday from 9:00 am-5:00 pm. 212-416-5350

Identity Theft

When someone illegally uses your personal information for fraud. If you're a victim, get help here: Identity Theft Victim Kit (<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0016-protect-your-identity-event-kit>).

NYS Homeowner Assistance Fund

Financial Assistance Available: If you're behind on your mortgage, in forbearance, or facing default on a reverse mortgage, or struggling with property taxes, water bills, maintenance charges, chattel loans, or other home purchase loan payments, you may be eligible for up to \$50,000 in assistance. Visit nyhomeownerfund.org or call **1-844-776-9423** to apply.

SNAP (Food Stamp Assistance)

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** can assist you during tough times. Check your eligibility at www.myhealthbenefits.ny.gov. Visit the SNAP enroller at MetroPlus Health Staten Island Community Office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, located at 238A Port Richmond Ave. Walk in during SNAP enroller hours or call 929-270-2181 between 9:00 am and 4:30 pm to schedule an appointment.

Mobile Food Pantry

The BJ House of Community and Richmond Senior Services are partnering to run a Mobile Food Pantry. Every first Wednesday 12 pm while supplies last. There is a walk-up, bring-your-own-bag pantry at 192 Corson Ave. To register for the mobile delivery, call **718-442-0923**, or email baituljamaat@gmail.com.

Help Your Neighborhood Schools

Interested in substitute teaching for the NYC DOE? Earn \$199.27 per day. Requirements: US work eligibility, a bachelor's degree, and a commitment to helping students. Learn more at <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/careers/substitute-teaching> or email llam@schools.nyc.gov for inquiries or to apply.

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



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