



ASSEMBLYMAN *Michael Cusick*



Year in Review

WINTER 2018

Dear Neighbors:

I hope this letter finds you well and that you've had a good year. As your representative in the New York State Assembly, I have been working hard every day to advocate on your behalf for positive change. This year we've seen some exciting developments for Staten Island and I want to thank you for your support.

This newsletter contains an update on district and legislative accomplishments from 2018. Do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions or comments. My office is located at 1911 Richmond Avenue. The phone number is (718) 370-1384 and my email address is cusickm@nyassembly.gov.

I wish you the best of luck in the New Year and hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

*Michael J. Cusick
Member of Assembly
District 63*



Two Staten Island Schools Receive Funding for Classroom Technology

This fall I was able to procure \$100,000 for two Staten Island schools for classroom upgrades this year. Public Schools 26 and 30 intend to use the additional funding for classroom technology upgrades.

Staten Island students deserve the very best classroom technology to help them learn, grow, and stay competitive in a changing world. This grant funding will enable our students to get their hands on some of the latest technology that will enrich their education.



Cusick Secures Funding for Oceanic Brush Fire Truck

In May 2018, I joined members of the Oceanic Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, the oldest volunteer fire company in the City, to unveil a new brush fire truck. It's important that Staten Island is prepared for brush fires that are known to occur during the summer. The new truck is outfitted with a roll cage, a 300 gallon water tank, 12 gallon foam-cell tank, and it comes with the ability to drive through eight feet of water. This \$100,000 grant will go a long way towards ensuring the safety of Staten Islanders during the warm months.



Funding for Nonpublic Schools Secured with Cusick Law Signed by Governor

This year, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law my legislation (A9903) ensuring nonpublic schools are not shortchanged through the state's education funding process. This is a positive step forward for the nearly 500,000 students across the state attending nonpublic schools.

Nonpublic schools are a critical support network for hundreds of thousands of students in New York. This legislation will prevent schools from losing out on funding they've already been allocated.

Until recently, the state Education Department calculated school aid based on five to five and a half hour school days. Now, SED has begun calculating instructional time

beyond the five and a half hour threshold without increasing the funding line to nonpublic schools. The result is a reduced reimbursement rate as the pie is divided by a greater amount of "instructional time."

My legislation would codify SED's traditional formula in an effort to protect the funding nonpublic schools have come to rely on.

No school should be penalized by adding instruction time over-and-above the five and a half hour cap. I'm proud to have advanced this common sense legislation and want to thank Governor Cuomo for recognizing the importance of this initiative.

Total Fitness Challenge Celebrates 10 Years

On November 19th I hosted the Awards Ceremony for the winners of my annual Total Fitness Challenge. This year marked the 10th anniversary of the Challenge, an Island-wide summer competition which encourages kids to stay active in the summer months through physical exercise and reading. The competition is open to all students from pre-kindergarten through the 8th grade.

As a lifelong runner and education advocate I believe it's important for young people to stay engaged physically and intellectually all year long. I'm encouraged to see so many Staten Island youths making the most out of their summers by exploring new worlds in books and in their own backyards.

Over 20 schools and nearly 300 students participated in this year's Challenge, which was graciously supported by Ocean Breeze Park & Athletic Complex, College of Staten Island, Fastbreak Basketball Center, Police Athletic League, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation, Kyle McAlarney, Varsity Coach of Moore Catholic High School, and many other members of our community.



Pictured are Total Fitness Challenge participants from Public School 29.



Delivering for NYCHA. During the past year, I've secured funding for projects at the New York City Housing Authority within my district to improve the quality of life and security for residents. At Berry Houses we've been able to furnish refrigerators and gas ranges for apartment units. Playground benches and other playground improvements are being installed at the Todt Hill Houses, and we've begun work at the Mariner's Harbor Houses to install secure doors in an effort to give residents peace of mind. I look forward to continuing to work with NYCHA residents on similar projects in the future.



In September I had the opportunity to speak with the New York Building Congress' Energy Committee on a variety of issues including the need for additional electric transmission infrastructure statewide and new electric generation projects in the works. I'm looking forward to continuing this important work on behalf of the City and State.

Cuomo Signs Cusick Bill to Support Innovative Energy Generators

Legislation I authored in the State Assembly that would incentivize the installation of clean, resilient, and local electrical generation facilities was signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

It's a good step forward for New Yorkers looking for reliable, affordable, and responsible solutions to energy production.

The legislation, A9651, would provide the same property tax incentives currently available for other low-emission energy products including solar, wind, and farm waste systems to flexible-fuel linear generation systems.

These systems, which can be used for local microgrids and backup, can take different types of fuel and convert them into electricity using technology that ensures near-zero carbon emissions.

This technology has the potential to become an important tool for New Yorkers looking to design durable energy systems. New York's energy future will be heavily diversified. Technologies like this should have our full support so businesses and consumers have a broad range of clean technologies available to them to meet their energy needs.



I was proud to attend the dedication and launch ceremony of the Renewable Energy Pilot Program at the Blessed Sacrament Church. The program is a partnership between the Archdiocese of New York and ConEdison and will see solar panels installed at five church locations across the city.

Staten Island VETS Program

I am happy to continue to collaborate with the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce on the Staten Island VETS Program, a discount program for United States Military Veterans who live in Richmond County.

This program is our way of thanking veterans living on Staten Island for their service to our country and our community. Veterans will receive an identification card that – when presented at a participating business – will entitle them to a predetermined discount on goods or services.

Staten Island Veterans who are interested in the program should sign up at my office at 1911 Richmond Avenue, or call (718) 370-1384 with their discharge papers (DD214) to receive the Staten Island VETS discount card. This card will give veterans access to discounts at local businesses who have signed up for the program. Participants will receive a list of participating businesses that offer discounts at their establishment.

Veteran Service Law, Introduced by Cusick, Signed into Law

Earlier this year, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law my legislation that will connect veterans with services available at the state Division of Veterans' Affairs.

Staten Island is home to the largest veteran community in New York City and it's important for us to support the men and women who bravely served their nation.

The legislation, A1206, will compel state agencies to make an attempt to determine if people they're serving are veterans or related to a veteran. If they are, the state will now be required to advise that person of the benefits, services, and opportunities available to them through the Division of Veterans' Affairs.

This legislation is a common sense measure to connect veterans with services that already exist. Red tape is the last thing our veterans should have to deal with.



In October, I had the honor of attending the Seton Foundation for Learning's ribbon cutting ceremony for the Northfield Bank Life Skills Center in honor of Diane Cunningham. The Seton Foundation does great work educating students with special needs on Staten Island. Pictured with me is the first ever Miss Special Staten Island Teen, Kaylee Weiber, and Richmond County District Attorney Michael McMahon.

Annual Parking for People with Disabilities Awareness Campaign

Once again I am proud to have the opportunity to work with many local businesses to combat the misuse of handicapped parking spaces. During the holiday season, it's unfortunately common to find handicapped parking spaces occupied by people without the proper tag. Inconsiderate drivers are put on notice through my Parking for People with Disabilities Awareness Campaign thanks to volunteers who put up signs in conjunction with participating businesses. Any business looking to get involved should call my office, (718) 370-1384.

Please...
leave accessible
parking spaces
for people with
disabilities who
need them.



"I had the opportunity to stop by NYPD Precinct 121 with members of the Council of Jewish Organizations of Staten Island to hand out free turkeys for Thanksgiving. I want to thank everyone who stopped by to pick up a turkey and the many volunteers who came to help, including Precinct Commanding Officer Deputy Inspector Matthew Harrington, the 121st Precinct Community Council, Council of Jewish Organizations of Staten Island - COJO, and the office of Governor Andrew Cuomo."

Port Authority NY/NJ Staten Island Bridges Plan

I want to remind people to take advantage of the discounts offered at the Outerbridge Crossing, Goethals Bridge, and Bayonne Bridge. The \$6.25 per trip toll discount will kick-in once three Staten Island-bound trips are made on any of the above mentioned bridges within a calendar month. These discounts were instituted by the Port Authority in 2012 as a result of negotiations led by myself and Andrew Lanza. You must sign up if you have E-ZPass. For more information on how you can sign-up for this discount, please visit <https://www.panynj.gov/bridges-tunnels/e-zpass-ny-nj-sib.html> or call 1-800-333-8655.

New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248



Assemblyman

**Michael
Cusick**

**UPDATE
FROM ALBANY**

WINTER 2018

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Bridge Toll Discounts

Contained in the State Budget spending plan is the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge Rebate Enhancement, to provide a 24 cent rebate for Staten Island residents and keep the discount at \$5.50. In total, the budget provides \$13.8 million for the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge Rebate Program. The toll relief has been negotiated by myself and Senator Andrew Lanza for the past several years and has become a permanent discount in the State Budget.

STAR Property Tax Exemption

If you've recently bought your home or you've never applied for the STAR benefit on your current home, you may be able to save hundreds of dollars each year. You only need to register for the STAR credit once, and you'll continue to receive the annual benefit as long as you're eligible. Learn more at: <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/default.htm>