



Assembly Member **HARVEY EPSTEIN**



74TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT • REPORTS TO THE PEOPLE • MAY 2025

Dear Neighbors,

Recent actions taken by the federal government are threatening democracy and flying in the face of the values we hold as New Yorkers. I am as committed as ever to standing up for what we know is right and fighting against attacks on our civil rights.

While the federal government pursues cuts and policies that raise prices for everyday New Yorkers, I am working hard to pass legislation to lower the cost of living. In this budget, we stood up for working-class New Yorkers by expanding childcare support, reducing the cost of attending CUNY, and providing free lunch for all students in New York public schools.

We are also confronting the mental health crisis head-on with short- and long-term solutions. We must build more supportive housing and expand the mental health clubhouse model. Additionally, we must ensure that trained mental health professionals are responding to 9-1-1 calls for individuals in crisis. We know that people are in need of safe, stable environments to receive resources and treatment, find community, and better their lives.

To kick off spring we hosted a legal services clinic at our office, provided free breast health screenings, hosted an Earth Day celebration in Stuyvesant Square Park, brought a shredding truck to East Midtown Plaza, and collaborated with the Loaisida Center to feed 150 families for the April holidays.

Read on to learn about what was included in the state budget, upcoming events, our Summer Reading Challenge, and more!

Sincerely,

Harvey

Celebrating Earth Day

Thank you to everyone who joined us at our second-annual Earth Day Celebration! Despite the rain, we quickly distributed countertop composting bins and resources to constituents. The demand exceeded our supply, so we hope to obtain more bins in the near future to give out to our community members. We also worked with Bio Bus, the Lower East Side Ecology Center, Grow NYC, high school students at East Side, and volunteers from SPNA to have a great event.

We also gave out three proclamations for Earth Day! We honored Troy Mack, who was integral to the restoration of the LES II basketball court, and created mini libraries and planters in our community through his work with the New Leaders Council. We also recognized Atsuko Quirk for her work promoting sustainability in NYC schools through Cafeteria Culture, which she founded. Finally, we honored the Stuyvesant Park Neighborhood Association for their dedication to making their park a great green space for the community to enjoy!



Budget Update

I'm proud we adopted a budget that reflects many of the priorities we fought for and that focuses on making our state more affordable. While the federal government is pursuing misguided policies that are harming everyday New Yorkers, I have been focused on passing a budget that makes life easier for everyday people. This budget makes investments and policy changes in key areas like housing, healthcare, childcare, mental health services, education, and the environment that will protect and uplift New Yorkers.

I led campaigns on several initiatives that I am happy to report made it into the budget:

- A bill that preserves thousands of units of expiring affordable housing and creates more permanently affordable housing
- Restored \$4 million in funding for enhanced support for students with disabilities
- Increased the overall budget of the Environmental Protection Fund from \$400 million to \$425 million and created a new \$5 million funding line for statewide composting
- Established a bell-to-bell cellphone ban, which will ensure that students can fully engage in classroom activities without the temptation or disruptions that technology might cause
- \$4 million for an abortion provider training program
- Reduced property taxes to no more than 5% of the Annual Shelter Rent for Mitchell Lama properties, saving over a million dollars for families residing in Mitchell Lama properties in our district

No budget is perfect. I worked hard to get policies that represent our values included and fought back against the ones that don't. As we turn to the remainder of the legislative session, I will keep fighting to make our city and state more affordable and safer.

Here are some budget highlights of things I fought for this year:

Housing

- \$50 million for the Housing Access Voucher Program to support individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This will be the first state-based Section 8 voucher.
- Increased funding for Statewide Eviction Prevention Legal Services by \$20 million for a total of \$55 million
- Maintained a \$40 million investment in the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP)
- Over \$1 billion towards City of Yes initiatives in NYC, including some listed below
- \$500 million for new construction and preservation of affordable housing
- \$200 million in new funding for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)
- \$140 million for Mitchell-Lama Preservation
- \$25 million for the New York Housing for the Future Co-Op program
- \$25 million for the New York Housing for the Future Rental program

Public Safety

- \$30 million for supportive housing for adults, youth, or young adults exiting the justice system, and \$20 million for supportive housing for the elderly
- \$20.5 million in additional funding for an additional 200 inpatient mental health beds
- Establishes the Office of Gun Violence Prevention within the Division of Criminal Justice Services
- \$8 million in additional funds for the Daniel's Law Pilot Program to create the Behavioral Health Crisis Technical Assistance Center, which will act as first responders to mental health crises, with \$2 million for implementation. This will help us revamp our 911 system to help ensure mental health professionals respond to mental health episodes
- \$6.6 million for mental health clubhouses, which provide wrap-around services for people with serious mental illness. We expect this will fund 7 new clubhouses

Supporting Workers

- Fully pays off the state's unemployment insurance debt and increases benefits from the current \$504 per week to \$869 per week, and then to 50% of the state's average weekly wage starting October 2026

Higher Education

- \$410 million in additional capital for SUNY projects, totaling \$2.5 billion, an increase of 1.2 million over last year, to improve their campuses

- \$85 million in additional capital for CUNY projects, totaling \$582 million in funding
- Expands the Tuition Assistance Program to include part-time students taking up to 3 credit hours per semester
- Creates the New York Opportunity Promise Scholarship, which will provide free community college tuition, including the costs of books, fees, and applicable supplies, to students aged 25-55 pursuing careers in high-demand fields at CUNY and SUNY community colleges
- \$2.1 million restoration and \$714,000 increase for the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP)

Supporting Arts & Culture

- Fully restores \$20 million in operating grants and \$40 million in capital grants for arts organizations to the New York State Council on the Arts
- Includes \$150,000 for a new pilot program supporting social workers in libraries
- Adds \$1.7 million for library operating aid for a total of \$106.3 million, and adds \$10 million for library capital grants for a total of \$44 million

Public Transit

- Fully fund the MTA's Capital Plan to invest \$68.4 billion in accessibility upgrades, make services more reliable, and upgrade the existing infrastructure
- Makes changes to the Payroll Mobility Tax, which will generate \$1.4 billion annually to fund the MTA by taxing big corporations and easing the financial burden placed on small businesses

Criminal Justice

- Allocates \$7.2 million to the Office of Special Investigations to form a new division to focus on allegations of staff misconduct in state correctional facilities
- Creates a body-worn camera program for correction officers, security staff, and civilian staff in DOCCS
- Allocates \$15 million to support the changes to discovery for a total of \$135 million and to ensure cases are not dismissed based on technical reasons

Environment

- Allocates \$250 million for zero-emission transportation, including \$50 million for electric vehicle fast charging stations
- Includes \$1 billion "Sustainable Future Program," including funds for building decarbonization projects, thermal energy networks, zero-emission transportation, electric school buses, and \$200 million for renewable energy projects

Education

- Invests an additional \$5 million for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), totaling \$57 million, connecting kids with summer jobs to help them learn important life skills while earning a paycheck
- Provides \$340 million to establish a state-wide universal school breakfast and lunch program so that no student goes hungry
- Funds Foundation aid at \$26.4 billion, an increase of \$1.4 billion, and a guaranteed increase of at least 2% over last year for every school district across the state, and increases funding for schools with a large population of English Language Learners (ELL)

Supporting Families

- Directly provides money to New Yorkers in the form of Inflation Rebate Checks as detailed below:
 - Married filers: \$400 for incomes up to \$150,000, \$300 for incomes \$150,000–\$300,000
 - Single filers: \$200 for incomes up to \$75,000, \$150 for incomes \$75,000–\$150,000
- Cuts income tax rates for approximately 8.3 million low and middle-income taxpayers
- Invests \$2.2 billion in childcare, an additional \$400 million from last year to ensure that localities have the resources to keep childcare subsidy enrollment open
- Establishes the BABY Benefit pregnancy allowance, providing public assistance recipients with a one-time, \$1,800 cash benefit following the birth of a new child to purchase critical supplies

Free Upcoming Events

Assembly Member Harvey Epstein

YOU'RE INVITED:

HANG WITH HARVEY

LET'S CHAT ABOUT YOUR LEGISLATIVE & COMMUNITY CONCERNS & QUESTIONS!

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM **MONDAY, JUNE 2ND** **BELLEVUE SOUTH PARK**

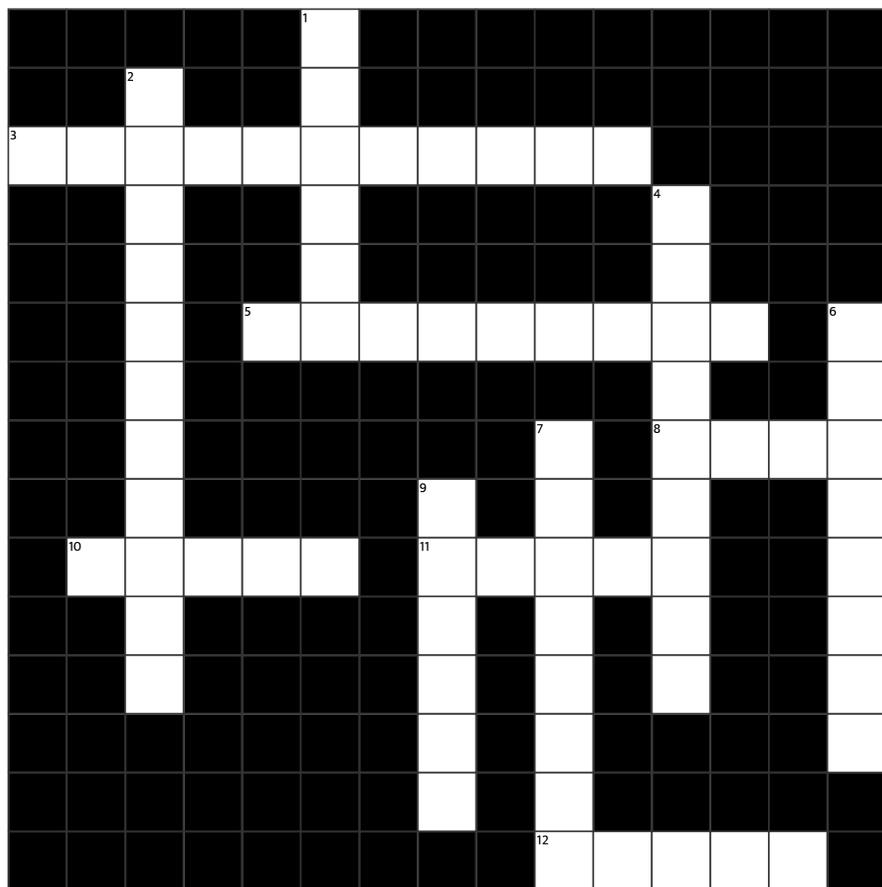
ASSEMBLYMEMBER HARVEY EPSTEIN'S

SUMMER SHREDDING

FRIDAY JUNE 6TH
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Outside of Team Harvey Headquarters
109 Avenue B

NO ELECTRONICS OR BATTERIES, PAPER ONLY.
PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT IF THE TRUCK IS FULL, WE WILL END EARLY.

CO-SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION
This event is free and open to the public.



Across

- 3 _____ Amendment to the State Constitution, Co-Sponsored by Harvey, passed in 2024
- 5 Our most popular events, _____ trucks
- 8 Law school Harvey attended
- 10 Harvey has passed over _____ bills in the Assembly
- 11 Harvey's rescue dog
- 12 Number of years Harvey has been in the Assembly

Down

- 1 We passed legislation to co-name the 23rd Street subway station after this educational institution
- 2 Annual event, feeding over 5,000 families for Thanksgiving since it began
- 4 Our Youth Council fought for and won NYC high school students right to get 4 free swipes a day on _____ year round and on weekends
- 6 Team Harvey's 2024 Halloween costume, inspired by a classic Disney animated film
- 7 Iconic park, home to our Movies in the Park Festival
- 9 Former community center we are advocating to return to community use

Answer key on back

Summer Reading Challenge

Students, Team Harvey challenges you to join our Summer Reading Challenge! Participants read for just 15 minutes a day for 40 days in July and August. If you do, you will win a pizza party with Assemblymember Harvey Epstein! To sign up and receive the reading tracker and materials, have your parent or guardian call (212) 979-9696 or email elliottc@nyassembly.gov.

Assembly Member Harvey Epstein's Summer Reading Challenge

Reading is fun!

Assembly Member Harvey Epstein Fights for Our Community



New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248

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Answer Key

- | Across | Down |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 3. Equal Rights | 1. Baruch |
| 5. Shredding | 2. Turkey Drive |
| 8. CUNY | 4. OMNY Cards |
| 10. Fifty | 6. Toy Story |
| 11. Homer | 7. Tompkins |
| 12. Seven | 9. CHARAS |

Keep Up with Team Harvey!

Subscribe to our weekly e-blast list to see upcoming community events, important neighborhood updates, the pet of the week, and so much more!

<https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Harvey-Epstein/eneews>

