



Dear Friends,

I'd like to start off today's newsletter with some good news: as a passionate advocate for meeting the climate crisis head-on, **I am honored to have received a [100% rating from the New York League of Conservation Voters \(NYLCV\)](#) on their 2021 State Environmental Scorecard.** The annual scores are based on support for legislation that the NYLCV has deemed as priorities. These priorities are identified in consultation with "partners from environmental, environmental justice, public health, and transportation groups..."

I have worked with the NYLCV for 13 years and have the highest regard for their effective advocacy and the significant role they have played in making New York State the nation's leader in environmental protection. **You can read the [full scorecard here.](#)**

While on the topic of the environment, early last week I was up in Albany for a hearing of the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee, to examine the impact of neonicotinoid pesticides on pollinators and the environment. More on that below...

But first, I'd like to discuss eligibility for a COVID-19 booster, as there has been some confusion on this front.

[COVID-19 Booster - Am I Eligible?](#)

First of all, it is important to note that **ONLY those who received the Pfizer vaccine are currently eligible for a COVID-19 booster.** Assuming you have received the Pfizer vaccine, and it has been **at least six months** since you received your second shot, the individuals listed below are eligible to receive a booster:

As per CDC guidance, the following individuals **SHOULD** get a booster -

- New Yorkers 65 and older
- Residents in long-term care settings
- New Yorkers 50-64 with an underlying medical condition

The following individuals **MAY** receive their COVID-19 booster, based on their individual benefits and risks -

- New Yorkers aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions
- New Yorkers aged 18–64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of their occupational or institutional setting

The Pfizer booster is [readily available](#) at many local pharmacies and medical groups. You can also [make an appointment](#) at many of the State-operated COVID-19 vaccination facilities, including at the Westchester County Center. While walk-in appointments are available for the booster, [scheduled appointments](#) are encouraged.

Learn more by [clicking here](#), where you can also find out more information on the difference between getting a booster and getting a third shot.

Committee Hearing on Pesticides

Last week I participated in a public hearing of the Assembly Committee on Environmental Conservation, of which I am a member, which examined the impact of neonicotinoid pesticides on pollinators and the environment. I left that hearing even more convinced that **the Assembly needs to follow the State Senate in passing the [Birds and Bees Protection Act](#)**, which provides for a partial ban on neonicotinoid pesticides. As a cosponsor of the legislation, I heard with grave concern medical and environmental experts who testified to the harm neonicotinoid pesticides cause not only to birds and honeybees (disturbing enough as it is upsetting the food chain), but also to children. Indeed, **Dr. Philip Landrigan – a pediatrician and professor of biology at Boston College specializing in environmental health – described children as “uniquely vulnerable” to these toxic chemicals, testifying that “even tiny doses can cause harm, especially to the brain and nervous system.”**

The [legislation](#) prohibits the sale of corn, soybean or wheat seeds coated with neonicotinoids commencing January 1, 2024, unless no acceptable alternative exists. Commencing July 1, 2023, the legislation prohibits the pesticide application or treatment to outdoor ornamental plants and turf, except for agricultural commodities. It also requires the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to perform additional studies on these pesticides, to determine whether to impose further conditions to protect pollinating bees or any bird species. Finally, it directs the DEC to work with the Department of Agriculture & Markets, as well as Cornell University (which has closely studied this issue) to identify practicable and feasible alternatives to the pesticide by January 1, 2023.

(Note: you can view my remarks and questions during the hearing, by [clicking here](#).)

My Visit to the Prospector & The Importance of "Sparkle"

Last Thursday I had the absolute privilege of visiting [The Prospector Theater](#), located in Ridgefield, CT. My staff and I met with Executive Director Mike Santini and Board Member George Greczylo, as well as Andrew Tedder, a member of my disability advisory committee who played an instrumental role in getting the theater off the ground. As Chair of the Subcommittee on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities, I wanted to visit the Prospector to see what lessons might be gleaned from the incredible operation they have put together.

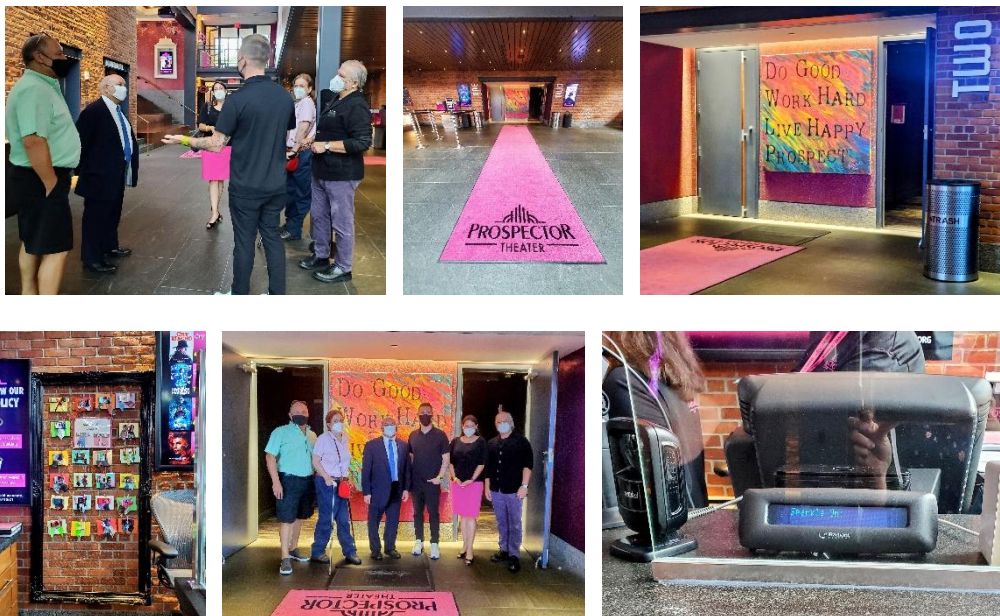
Opened in 2014, the Prospector is dedicated to providing competitive and integrated employment to people with disabilities. With just over 100 "Prospects" (as employees of the theater are known as), approximately 75% of its workforce self-identify with a disability.

To help their Prospects succeed, the Prospector looks for the "sparkle" in each of their employees – what they love to do, what their passion is – and they translate that into appropriate roles at the theater. Moreover, they make sure their Prospects have the tools they need to be successful in those roles, not letting their disabilities stand in the way.

And what a theater! If you haven't been, I encourage you to visit. The facility is beautiful, fun, whimsical, and staffed by people who clearly love their jobs.

And it should be noted, the dedication to serving people with disabilities doesn't end with the employees. Every aspect of the theater was built with customer accessibility in mind. From the technology available to those with hearing and visual impairments, to seat design, to anything and everything to make sure that no customer is unable to enjoy the movie due to a disability.

It was an incredible visit for me and my staff. I look forward to keeping in touch with The Prospector as I move forward with the subcommittee, to see how we can translate their successes into helping people with disabilities in New York find more gainful employment.



Nominations Due MONDAY - Businesses that Excel in Providing Opportunities to People with Disabilities

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. As Chair of the Subcommittee for Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities, I especially would like to highlight this month.

Since taking office in January, I have met with many advocates, parents of children with disabilities, and people with disabilities themselves. There are many barriers and obstacles for this community and one of the largest ones is employment opportunities. There are so many people that want to work but are unable to find employment. We have also met with some companies that made it their mission to hire people with disabilities, even creating jobs for this sole purpose.

I would like to recognize these businesses and shine a spotlight on them to bring awareness to this issue, and also to encourage others to follow in their footsteps. **Please help me by [nominating businesses](#) within the 93rd Assembly District that you feel excel in hiring and nurturing people with disabilities.** The towns of the 93rd District are Bedford, Harrison, Lewisboro, Mount Kisco, New Castle, North Castle, Pound Ridge, North Salem, and approximately half of White Plains (please reach out to us and we can confirm the business's district).

[Please click here to download the application.](#) **The due date is THIS Monday, October 4th.** We will announce the winners at the end of October.

Reminder! Internship Opportunity

We are seeking dedicated and proactive interns for our district office, to provide assistance (under direct supervision) with administrative projects and legislative research. Our district office is located in Mount Kisco.

Currently, we have staff AND interns in the office, but we also have staff and interns working entirely remotely, although in-office interns are preferable. We practice social distancing and wear masks in the office, and we keep the number of people in the office at one time limited. The hours are flexible, especially for remote work.

Our office has a small staff, so other tasks and duties may arise in addition to the ones listed below.

Main Responsibilities

In the office: Data entry, email organization, answering phones, research, making phone calls, and assorted other office duties and tasks

Remotely: Research (on bills, issues, the district, etc.), making phone calls

Please note that this internship is unpaid; however, if an intern's school will allow for school credit, we are happy to work with them to obtain it. **Please send resumes and cover letters to my Chief of Staff, Heather Lackey, at Lackeyh@nyassembly.gov or call her at 914-244-4450 with any questions.**



Happy Hispanic Heritage Month! **National Hispanic Heritage Month is a time to celebrate the rich history, diverse cultures and great contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.** It is celebrated September 15-October 15, a period that coincides with the anniversaries of the independence of many Latino countries such as Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

During National Hispanic Heritage Month, I would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations that have made an immense impact in the Hispanic Community in my district, a community that continues to grow and enrich not only the 93rd AD, but all of Westchester County. **Organizations such as [Latino U College Access](#), [Neighbors Link](#), [Community Resource Center](#), [El Centro Hispano](#), and the Westchester Hispanic Coalition play such an important role in the Hispanic Community.**

As a grandchild of Italian immigrants, I believe that the achievements and successes of the United States would not be possible without the communities of immigrants that have made the United States their home. And of their children who bring us into the future.

Not just during this month, but at all times, let's continue to celebrate the achievements and contributions of Hispanic Americans.

As always, if there are any issues that you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at burdickc@nyassembly.gov (or simply reply to this email). **Please also follow me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for the most up-to-date information.**

Miss any of our previous newsletters? You can [find them here](#).

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Burdick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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