



Assemblywoman

Aileen M. Gunther

Summer 2013

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Dear Friend,

As always, thank you for giving me the great pleasure of representing you in the New York State Assembly. I'm dedicated to working as hard as I can to pass meaningful legislation in Albany and address any needs you have at home.

Each year, hundreds of people from Orange and Sullivan counties contact my office for assistance. There is an old saying, "No problem is too big or too small." I'm here to improve the lives of each and every person in the 100th District, from Circleville to Callicoon and everywhere in between.

Please feel free to reach out with any thoughts and concerns or if there is any way I can be helpful to you. I look forward to seeing you as I travel throughout Orange and Sullivan counties.

Sincerely,

Aileen Gunther
Member of Assembly



Pulse oximetry screenings for newborns (A.2316-B/S.270-B)

According to the American Heart Association, critical congenital heart defects (CCHDs) are the number one cause of defect-related death in newborns. A congenital heart defect occurs in about 9 of every 1,000 births in the United States, frequently, with no visible symptoms until after the baby goes home.

"I've met parents who, thanks to this simple, non-invasive test, will be celebrating their child's birthdays throughout their long, healthy and happy lives."

That's why State Senator Bill Larkin and I unanimously passed, and Governor Cuomo signed, legislation that would require pulse oximetry screening on newborns. The simple test is inexpensive and non-invasive. A small sensor is taped to a newborn's foot and, in seconds, abnormalities can be identified and addressed.

Providing mandate relief to fire districts (A.1629/S.5574)

I passed legislation that would increase the revenue threshold from \$200,000 to \$300,000 before a fire district is required to undergo an annual audit, which can cost up to \$7,000.

With the rising cost of providing fire protection, this legislation provides a small measure of relief to fire districts and taxpayers.

With Wendy Grossman, President of the Town of Walkill Volunteer Ambulance Corp. at the Touch-a-Truck event.



Fighting prescription drug abuse (A.1101-B/S.3944-B)

A 2010 study revealed nearly 7 million Americans abused prescription drugs. Among high school seniors, prescription and over-the-counter medications accounted for the most commonly used illicit drugs, with 1 in 12 admitting to non-medical use of Vicodin and 1 in 20 abusing OxyContin.

One of the best tools for preventing prescription drug abuse is to get unused and unneeded prescription drugs out of the home. Last year, the State took great strides to prevent drug abuse by passing I-STOP, which allows authorized law enforcement agencies to collect prescription medication. This year, I passed legislation that will allow pharmacies to voluntarily become a disposal site—making it that much easier to get rid of unused prescription drugs.



Brownie Troop 737, Junior Troop 403, and Cadets Troop 203 from Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson visited my Monticello district office. The young women spent time discussing New York State government to earn their "Inside Government" and "Government Fun" patches. I'm always happy to host young people who want to learn more about government.



Dr. Cecilia Escarra, the Executive Director of PRASAD visited my office to discuss their Children's Dental Health Program. Through their mobile dental health clinic, the CDHP delivers care to eligible children six months to 19 years. For more information on PRASAD CDHP, visit their website or call 845-434-0376.

Verizon VoiceLink



I was recently joined by Sheriff Mike Schiff, County Emergency Services Manager Dick Martinkovic, representatives from the Communications Workers of America, and other emergency service providers to raise awareness about Verizon VoiceLink.

The installation of VoiceLink service in Sullivan County is problematic, at best. Issues of reliability and accessibility to emergency services raise concern about public

safety. According to Verizon's terms of use, VoiceLink does not connect to medical monitoring systems, such as Life Alert, or home security systems.

Recently, Attorney General Eric Schneiderman filed a petition with the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) to stop Verizon from installing VoiceLink wireless phone service in Sullivan County and the Catskill region.

Assembly Mental Health Committee



In January, I was named Chair of the Assembly Committee on Mental Health. The committee directs the budgets of the Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASAS), and the newly created Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs and considers legislation that impacts the agencies and the people they serve.

As the only nurse in the New York State Assembly, I have a unique perspective. I'm honored to work on these important issues with my colleagues and, more importantly, the people and their families living with developmental disabilities and mental health issues, as well as the organizations that provide care.

We are at a critical time for mental health and developmental disabilities services in our state. This year, we restored a \$90 million cut to non-profit providers of developmental disabilities services. I also passed legislation that would create a task force on adults with autism, and create a fund to fight the stigma of mental illness.

Casino gaming referendum will be on November's ballot

After second passage of the Constitutional Amendment and passage of the enabling legislation, November ballots will include a referendum to allow casino gaming in New York.

Voting on the Constitutional Amendment on the floor of the Assembly.



Construction continues on Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine

In June, I joined Lieutenant Governor Robert Duffy to see the progress of the Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine, located at the site of the former Horton Hospital in Middletown.

Working with Mayor Joe DeStefano and college representatives, we were successful in getting \$1 million for the project through the Governor's Regional Economic Development Council. The new college will be a huge economic boost, not only to the City of Middletown, but to our entire region.

