

Happy Holidays!
From
Assemblymember
Didi Barrett



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December 2022

Dear Neighbor,

As this year comes to a close, I am writing to wish you a happy and healthy holiday season and to share with you some of the highlights of our 2022 legislative session.

We all know how challenging these last few years have been, but **my team and I have worked hard to support our constituents** and to bring significant resources back to the district to ensure that our schools, families and communities can continue to bounce back stronger than ever.

Earlier this year, the state budget delivered record funding for our public schools. And here in the district, we secured special funding for Dutchess Community College students who are housing insecure and a major grant to make the workforce-ready construction trades program at Columbia-Greene Community College accessible to more students – traditional and nontraditional. **For our towns and villages, I secured more than \$2,000,000 to support first responders, recreation programs, libraries, infrastructure improvements and ADA-compliance.**

To help address inflation and the impact it has had on our wallets, we **suspended the state gas tax through the end of the year and we set aside \$250 million to help New Yorkers catch up on utility bills.** We accelerated middle class tax cuts and enhanced STAR rebate checks to support working families in the Hudson Valley.

I am pleased to report that the governor just signed my bill requiring the state Department of Agriculture and Markets to develop guidance and educational materials on the use of “agrivoltaics” to support green-energy production, like solar fields, while also protecting our vital farmland (Ch. 629 of 2022). Farming is such a critical economic driver for the Hudson Valley – and NY State – and it’s essential to ensure the viability of the agriculture economy as we work to meet our climate goals.

Governor Hochul also signed three of my bills that support local food production, restaurants and tourism. These measures expand the popular Dutchess Wine Trail (Ch. 245 of 2022), allow Hyde Park’s Culinary Institute of America (CIA) to train students to manufacture beer, spirits, cider, wine and mead (Ch. 345 of 2022) and authorize establishments with the proper licensing to sell shochu, a popular Korean beverage (Ch. 255 of 2022).

I have been honored to serve as the first woman to chair the Assembly Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, and proudly helped make history this year by **spearheading the creation of the first ever New York State Department of Veterans’ Services, a cabinet-level state agency that will serve as a one-stop shop for veterans and their families** to better navigate and access the programs and services available to them. Two more of my bills, which the governor signed into law on Veterans Day, include the creation of a searchable database of veteran memorials across the state (Ch. 588 of 2022) and the designation of U.S. Route 20 as the New York Medal of Honor Highway (Ch. 381 of 2022), which links New York with the other states, from Oregon to Massachusetts, through which Route 20 travels.

I hope you have a holiday season filled with friends, family, love and laughter. I am so grateful for the opportunity to continue to represent you and this beautiful Hudson Valley district in the New York State Assembly.

Warmly,



Didi Barrett • Member of Assembly, 106th District



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