



# NEWS From Assemblymember John T. McDonald III

Summer 2023

## 2023 Post NYS Budget and Legislative Session

This year the Legislature passed a \$229 billion budget and I took on a new role as Chair of the NYS Assembly Governmental Operations Committee. To say it was a busy year is an understatement. Out of the 96 bills that I sponsored this year, 22 bills passed both houses of the NYS Legislature, 5 passed the Assembly only, and 54 bills that I cosponsored have passed both houses. In addition to my legislative duties and responsibilities, I continue to focus on providing exceptional constituent services and helping people navigate government agencies to get the answers that they need.

As always, feel free to reach out to me with any concerns you may have or assistance that you may need. I believe in public service in the truest sense and that means I am elected to work for you, an honor that I never take for granted.

Thank you for your valuable input on legislation that I sponsor and other bills that came up during the legislative year. As always, I look forward to hearing about the topics that you care about.

Sincerely,

Assemblymember John T. McDonald III, RPh

Assemblymember McDonald welcoming the 2023 Waterford-Halfmoon girls soccer team State Champions to the NYS Assembly Chamber



## Notable Bill that I Co-Sponsored and Passed Both the Senate and Assembly (*Pending Decision by the Executive*):

### • A.6115 Paulin/S.5512

#### Enacts the Lead Pipe Right to Know Act

The purpose of this legislation is to make information about the number and location of lead pipes easily accessible to the public and decision-makers, so that state and federal resources can be secured and efficiently targeted to support local efforts to get the lead out of New York's drinking water by removing all lead pipes.

Assemblymember McDonald speaking at press conference advocating for additional lead pipe remediation funding in the NYS Budget





# Highlights of Legislative Accomplishments

## McDonald Bills that Passed Both the Senate and the Assembly (Pending decision by the Executive):

- **A.5477A/S.5781A**

### Relates to income earned while working at the polls

Election Poll Workers and the STAR Exemption and Credit Legislation: Boards of election across New York State rely on poll workers for election day operations. Many of these poll workers are retired senior citizens who are on a fixed income and the additional income from working on poll sites puts them over the income thresholds for the STAR property tax exemption. This bill seeks to address this issue and allow people to continue to work as poll workers without the concern of losing their STAR Credit or Enhanced STAR Exemption. As we have expanded voting options with early voting, we have not addressed the historical challenge of attracting more poll workers. This legislation will prevent penalizing those who have stepped up to fill the void to make sure polls are open and staffed accordingly.

- **A.6568B/S6714B (Thomas)**

### Establishes the New York state organized retail crime task force

Retail Crime Legislation: This bill would create an organized retail crime task force that will review current laws and provide legislative and regulatory recommendations to help prevent retail crime, enhance consumer protections, and address the economic impact in New York State.

- **A.5200B/S.2099C (Harckham)**

### Enacts “Matthew’s Law”

Fentanyl test strips bill: “Matthew’s Law” honors the memory of Matthew Horan, a Westchester resident with substance use disorder who died at age 30 of a fentanyl overdose in November of 2020. His sister, Kailey Horan, has requested making fentanyl testing kits more accessible after her brother ingested the drug unknowingly. This bill authorizes pharmacists to dispense drug adulterant testing supplies, also known as test kits.

- **A.5786/S.4152 (Gianaris)**

### Relates to lobbying for the confirmation of persons to state office

Good government and transparency bill: This legislation addresses the reporting loophole for lobbying in the legislative law to include all nominations and confirmations for a position subject to confirmation by the senate. Currently, state law is entirely silent on the requirement of lobbyists to report who is paying them and how much when lobbying on such nominations and confirmations. It is imperative to the operation of a responsible democratic government that such information be publicly and regularly disclosed.

- **A.6779A/S.6337A (Breslin)**

### Relates to the administration of certain medications by a pharmacist

This bill authorizes pharmacists to administer long-acting injectable medications for the treatment of mental health and substance use disorders. New York was the last state in the country to authorize pharmacists to administer long-acting injectable medications. This legislation is needed to provide greater access to treatments for mental health and substance use disorders.

- **A.463A/S.2677A (Breslin)**

### Requires notice of adverse step therapy determinations

The purpose of the bill is to require health plans to establish a notice of adverse determination related to step therapy protocol determination and to provide information on how the patient or prescribing health professional can appeal said determination if they desire.

- **A.4720/S.5664 (Kennedy)**

### Relates to public employees’ supervision, examination, review, and determination of acceptability of public works projects performed by contractors

Public employees have the experience and expertise to make sure that projects in New York State meet the standards that have been agreed to. By requiring their presence on site, and final approval, there is a greater level of protection afforded to the residents of the state.

## Notable McDonald Bill that Passed the Assembly Only

- **A.7154**

### Adult Vaccination Registration Legislation

This adult immunization reporting bill will assist various health care providers in providing care since they will have accurate information on a patient’s vaccination status when considering whether a patient needs a particular vaccination. This registry reporting requirement, which patients can opt out of, will prevent duplicate or unnecessary vaccinations.



Assemblymember McDonald, NYS Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, NYS Assembly Energy Committee Chair Didi Barrett, and NYS Assembly Committee on Science & Technology Chair Steve Otis tour New York Independent System Operator headquarters in East Greenbush, NY

# NYS Budget Highlights

I believe that on the whole this budget was crafted to address the concerns that New Yorkers have raised and is responsive to the daily issues that our residents face. It is balanced financially as well as balanced in principle as we continue to make progress in complicated areas such as energy policy and public safety.

## • Public Safety

On bail reform, we addressed concerns of judicial discretion while maintaining the guiding principles that individuals are innocent until proven guilty and poverty should not be a reason for someone to languish in jail. Critical to this effort was the renewed emphasis on assisting those with substance use and mental health issues by implementing a process where their release leads to appropriate treatment which is something that I have pushed for in the last three years as the prior bail reforms led to a marked decrease in drug court participation.

## • Energy Affordability and Sustainability

In the environmental area we focused on encouraging increased renewable energy supply and laying the groundwork for communities to have all electric buildings at a later date for new construction, provided we have a sustainable, reliable, and affordable supply and grid system. We also initiated Upgrade NY which is a new program where the State of New York will lead by example when it comes to building renewable energy, laying out a roadmap for 15 public university and buildings throughout New York State to participate with \$30 million being invested in the Capital Region for a geothermal project which will set the pace for the state to decarbonize public buildings. Through Upgrade NY the state will use its own resources and work with the labor community to help create and build middle class jobs.

## • Child Care/Education

I was pleased that this budget did not impose new taxes yet created a child care tax credit for families with newborns to children age four years old along with energy rebates to assist those in greatest need. We fully funded Foundation Aid for the first time since the program's inception in 2007 and invested in universal pre-kindergarten programs, ensuring that all New York schools and students receive equitable assistance. And, to support students' health, we delivered funding for free school meals.

## • Local Projects Funded

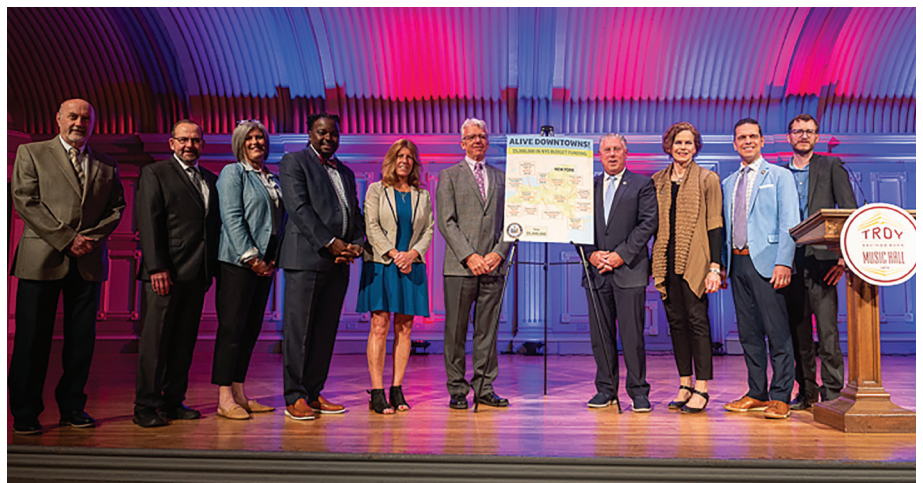
In addition to the larger picture items that will impact the entire state, I was able to secure funding for local projects and organizations in the 108th District including Monument Square in the City of Troy and a new program called Alive Downtowns! which will help support historic non-profit theaters such as the Palace Theatre in Albany and the Troy Music Hall. And I am especially pleased to once again increase CHIPS Funding (\$60 million) to help our local governments increase paving their roads and add \$40 million to the budget to assist the communities of Cohoes, Troy, Watervliet and Rensselaer through the Arterial Aid program which will assist in upkeep of the main thoroughfares throughout their communities.

## • Civil Service Exam Fees Waived

Beginning in July 2023 and ending in December 2025, NYS Civil Service Exam fees will be waived, as we work to increase our state workforce and allow those who are interested in applying for a civil service position to apply without having to pay an exam fee, increasing access to these positions.



Assemblymember McDonald tours the Industrie Apartments in Albany, a "zero-emission" apartment building under construction



Assemblymember McDonald, Assemblymember Fahy, Assemblymember Santabarbara and local elected officials announce Alive Downtowns! funding in the New York State budget at Troy Music Hall



Governor Kathy Hochul announcing \$10 million in Downtown Revitalization Initiative Funding for the City of Cohoes

# Funding Available Through the 2023-24 NYS Budget


The 2023-24 NYS Budget included various funding streams that will be administered through state agencies. Please sign up for my weekly newsletter to remain up to date when the applications are released.

You can sign up on my Assembly website here  
<https://nyassembly.gov/mem/John-T-McDonald-III/news/>.


**Need a speaker?** I am always interested in speaking to groups and hearing what people have to say in the district. We have found great success with virtual meetings. This has provided me the opportunity to keep in touch with constituents. If your organization is interested in having me as a guest or would like a legislative update, please contact my office at 518-455-4474. Thank you and I look forward to seeing you in the district!



New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248



NEWS From



Assemblymember

**John T. McDonald III**

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