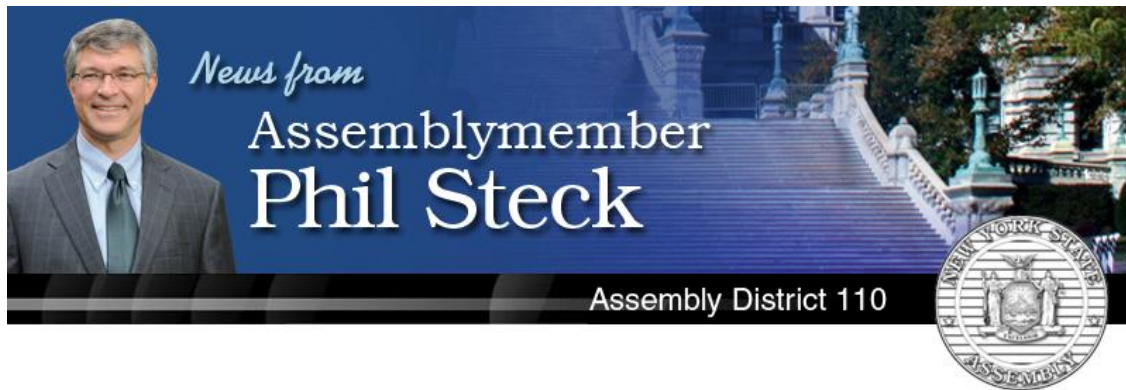




I have been hearing the same thing again and again from people across our community: everything costs more, and too many decisions are being made without enough consideration for how they affect everyday New Yorkers. That reality is shaping the work I am doing right now in Albany and beyond.

In this newsletter, I am sharing updates on legislation I am advancing to protect workers, improve public health, and push back against practices that make life more expensive or less fair. I also include my perspective on federal actions, from immigration enforcement to foreign policy, and why those decisions matter locally here in New York.

You will find highlights from recent interviews and an op-ed on affordability and the Stock Transfer Tax, new laws that are already in effect, and examples of how my office continues to partner with local organizations and municipalities to strengthen our communities. I have also included helpful information and resources that I hope you will find useful.

Thank you for staying engaged and for continuing to share your concerns with my office. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you. Please feel free to reach out to my office with any questions or concerns at [518-377-0902](tel:518-377-0902) or SteckP@nyassembly.gov.

Best,
Phil Steck

Legislative Updates

Talking Budget and Affordability with WRGB

I appreciated the opportunity to sit down with Tom Eschen on WRGB CBS 6 News to discuss the state budget, affordability, and the very real pressures families across New York are facing.

With rising costs for housing, health care, energy, and food, we have a responsibility to look honestly at sustainable ways to fund essential services without placing additional strain on working New Yorkers. That is why I continue to advocate for reinstating the Stock Transfer Tax, a practical tool that can help address budget constraints while ensuring Wall Street pays its fair share.

These conversations are critical as the budget comes together, and I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss solutions that put everyday New Yorkers first. Watch the full interview below.



One Fair Wage and Ending Subminimum Wages

I was proud to join One Fair Wage, advocates, workers, and my colleagues at the State Capitol to call for real solutions to New York's affordability crisis that mean higher paychecks and dignity for every worker.

As the sponsor of legislation to eliminate subminimum wages for workers with disabilities, I am committed to ending an outdated and unjust practice that allows some New Yorkers to be paid less simply because they have a disability. No one should earn a subminimum wage, regardless of ability or occupation.

Eliminating subminimum wages is a critical step toward real fairness and affordability. It recognizes the value of work, affirms dignity, and helps ensure economic growth is shared more equitably. In fact, the Commissioner of the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities testified to the merits of this legislation last week. I am proud to stand with a broad coalition pushing for a living wage for all, and I will continue fighting this session to ensure every worker in New York is treated with the respect they deserve.

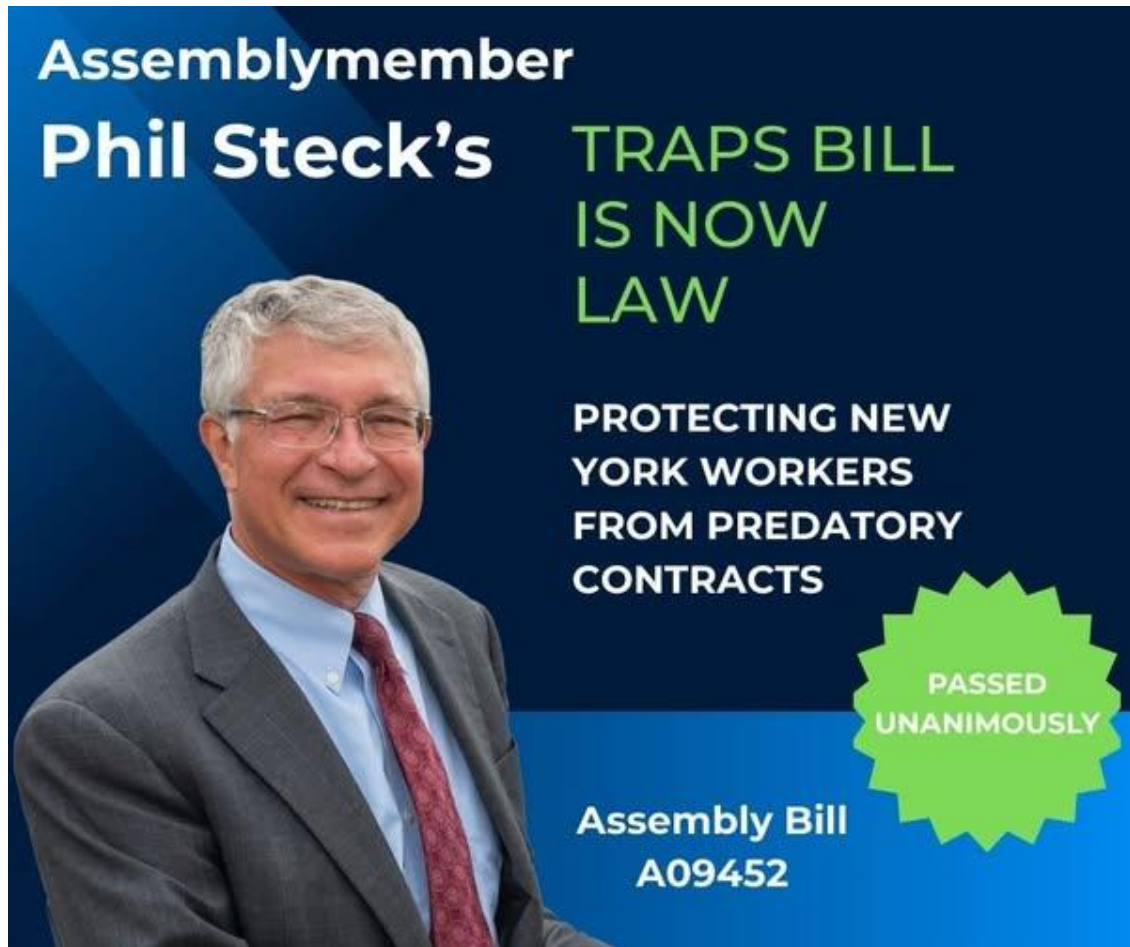


TRAPS Bill Signed Into Law

I am proud to share that my TRAPS bill is now law in New York. For too long, some employers have used Training Repayment Agreement Provisions to trap workers in low paying or unhealthy jobs by threatening them with thousands of dollars in debt if they try to leave. These provisions often involve little or no real training and function like noncompete agreements that suppress wages and limit opportunity.

This law was inspired by a constituent who trusted me with her story and made it clear that what she experienced was wrong. No worker should be trapped in a job by employer created debt disguised as training.

With this new law, New York is making it clear that predatory employment contracts have no place in our state. Workers deserve fairness, transparency, and the freedom to leave a job without fear of financial punishment. I am grateful to the advocates, labor organizations, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle who helped pass this legislation unanimously. [You can learn more about the new law in this article by Ted Remsnyder of the Daily Gazette.](#)



Stock Transfer Tax Op Ed

Thank you to The Daily Gazette of Schenectady for publishing my op-ed on New York's growing affordability crisis and the need to rethink how we fund our future.

In the piece, I draw on the lessons of Franklin D. Roosevelt and explain why government must once again step up when working families are being squeezed by rising costs. I also outline why the Stock Transfer Tax is a fair and cost-effective way to invest in clean energy and modern infrastructure without placing additional burdens on ratepayers and the middle class. You can read the full op-ed below.

Steck: It's time for Hochul and DiNapoli to step on Wall Street's toes

In a 1934 Fireside Chat, FDR explained his new national economic program required "stepping on the toes" of "the comparative few who seek to gain position or riches by some short cut which is harmful to the greater good." In the 1980s, we stopped stepping

on those toes. We unleashed the “free” market and Wall Street.

The 1980s economic policy brought us a crisis of affordability: costs of food, energy, housing, health care, and post-secondary education spiraled out of control. This is dangerous. When average citizens lack disposable income, they cannot spend on goods and services, and so business stops producing. The decrease of aggregate demand can lead to depression. Even folks like Mitt Romney have sounded the alarm.

Many Democratic friends have responded by buying into retreat on green energy as unaffordable. Actually, new construction using green energy is less expensive than gas, and this will generally be true across the board in the long run. The concern is that retrofitting for electric, whenever that day actually comes, and it is not now, is too expensive for middle class people. If we rely solely on utilities to manage this conversion, the argument finds some support. However, just like FDR’s rural electrification program, government can make the transition painless.

Primary elections often promote new policies. Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado has endorsed the Stock Transfer Tax (STT), which would produce billions of dollars for funding green energy.

STT requires stepping on some toes, albeit some very tiny toes at 1/10 of 1 percent. The most vocal opponent of STT is the “Partnership for New York,” an influential, campaign-donation-friendly lobbying group. Their argument recalls an economic principle called elasticity of demand. Demand for a product like gasoline is termed inelastic. If you drive a gas vehicle, you must pay higher gas prices because no alternative product is available. The Partnership contends demand for stock is perfectly elastic, that is, buyers will forego New York due to even the tiniest increase in prices.

Perfectly elastic demand is rare. For example, investors often pay more to get the investment of their liking; other exchanges in the world have STT; and, when the Hong Kong tax was increased to a whopping 1.3 percent, Goldman Sachs Asian Markets denied investors make decisions based on a transfer tax.

Historically, the United States had numerous exchanges. STT existed in NY from 1905 to 1981. NY prospered, while the others folded.

Our State’s long outdated electric infrastructure sorely needs updating, even without movement toward clean energy. We are funding it by increasing costs on the ratepayers (us) and allowing utilities to profit off infrastructure. Nuclear power is the same, extremely costly and financed by ratepayers. Instead, the government must fund rebuilding with clean energy, as FDR did.

Governor Hochul was taunted with chants of “Tax the Rich.” When will she realize that STT is a more painless and more cost-effective method of raising the revenue? It is a sales tax paid predominantly by non-New Yorkers and residents of other nations.

Comptroller DiNapoli also needs to heed the call. It was recently revealed that Wall Street firms charged the pension funds \$11.3 billion for placing investments. The small amount STT would charge when investments are placed (it does not tax pension withdrawals) could easily be eaten by these Wall Street firms who want access to these lucrative contracts.

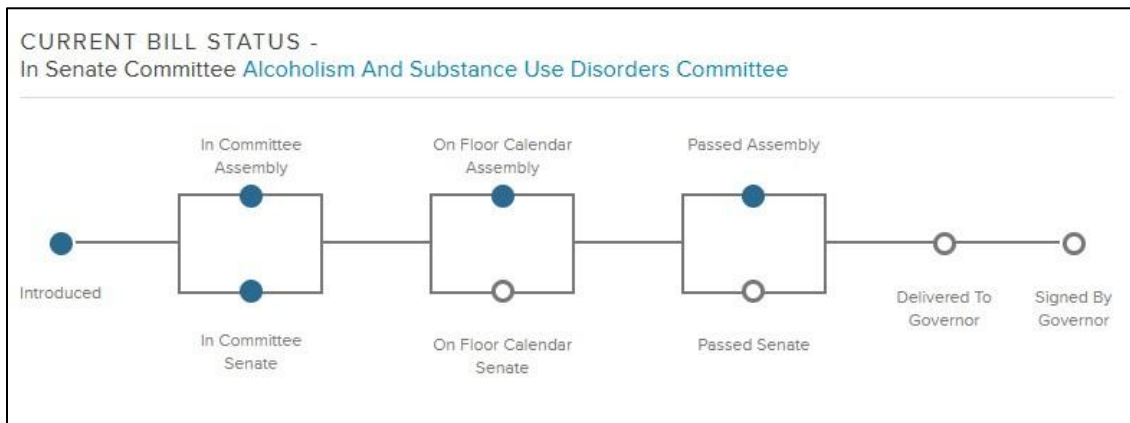
Too many of my Democratic friends are stuck in the 1980s. Bill Clinton famously sought to emulate Ronald Reagan to win. That strategy brought economic crisis and gradual decline for the Party. Talking about affordability is not enough. Government must use its resources to usher in a new era for the middle class, as FDR did.

Meaningful Progress on the First Day of Session

On the first full day of the 2026 legislative session, I was proud to pass important legislation in the Assembly. As Chair of the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, this bill is especially meaningful. It requires the Department of Health to make available any formulation and dosage of an opioid reversal agent approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration.

Advancing this measure on the first full day of session reflects months of work, collaboration, and a shared commitment to protecting public health and saving lives. It sets the tone for the work ahead this year.

[More information on the bill is available here.](#)



Federal Decisions, Local Impact

Phil Steck's Statement on ICE

Enough is enough. We have reached the point where it is necessary to abolish ICE. Abolish ICE does not mean an end to immigration law enforcement. It means that ICE is so corrupt that it must be replaced by a real professional trained law enforcement agency. Then we will have real immigration law enforcement rather than thuggery and creating an us-versus-them mentality where immigrants are scapegoated for a variety of problems they did not create. My constituents want immigration law enforcement but done in a professional, competent way, observing American values.

The "New York for All" legislation is correct in providing that New York State law enforcement should not cooperate with ICE because ICE is operating outside the bounds of the law. ICE takes action without any orders from a United States District Court Judge, a United States Magistrate Judge, or an Immigration Law Judge. Federal immigration law enforcement is entitled to full faith and credit only when there is a lawful order issued by those judges.

On the other hand, in all the states where ICE has been most active and most out-of-control, ICE has not had the cooperation of the law enforcement agencies of those states. The solution, therefore, is at the federal level in canceling funding for ICE and enacting an alternative.

Here are some of the actions I have taken on the issue of immigration enforcement.

- 1) Introduced legislation requiring ICE officers to identify themselves and supported demasking ICE
- 2) Called for the defunding of ICE on the grounds that it is a corrupt organization that needs to be replaced; however, the defunding bill did not pass due to the support of 7 Democrats, including two from NY, thus demonstrating the weakness of Hakeem Jeffries' leadership
- 3) Introduced legislation that local and state law enforcement cannot work with ICE unless they are presented with lawfully issued orders; ICE operates without appropriate legal authority; Supreme Court decisions favoring the Trump administration have enabled this practice
- 4) Participated in Troy and Colonie rallies protesting ICE
- 5) Denounced the practice of writing strongly-worded letters and called for the replacement of its chief practitioner Chuck Schumer as leader of the Democrats in the United States Senate
- 6) Discussed the issue at my recent Town Hall which was attended by about 100

constituents

Immigration enforcement and ICE are federal matters and are not issues that can be effectively addressed at the state level. Decisions about funding ICE must be made by our federal representatives, as state officials do not have the authority to defund the agency. We should have no illusions about what “New York for All” will accomplish.

That said, I am doing everything within my power at the state level to ensure New York has strong protections in place. I have introduced legislation aimed at safeguarding New Yorkers from the extreme and troubling tactics ICE has been using. I will continue to speak out against these practices and to clearly convey my constituents’ frustration and anger to the federal officials who do have the authority to act.



Phil Steck's Statement on Venezuela

The Trump intervention in Venezuela is nothing new. The United States has intervened 41 times in Latin America to change regimes. Most often, the interventions involved the overthrow of democratically elected left-wing governments and their replacement with military or right-wing dictatorships. The results of these interventions have typically been

the preservation of extensive poverty in the victim country by shoring up longstanding elites, economic exploitation by major U.S. corporations, mass killings of opponents of the change, and consequently emigration to other countries, often the United States itself.

The claim that this intervention is about drug trafficking is a ruse. Venezuela has never been high on the list of drug exporting countries, and right-wing regimes acting in concert with the CIA have used drug exportation to raise money either to enrich the leaders of the regime or to promote oppression of the population. Trump recently pardoned a right-wing leader of Honduras who was convicted of drug trafficking.

Another ruse is the claim that these interventions promote democracy. The United States is allied with numerous dictatorships throughout the world and has suppressed democracy whenever some party the United States does not like wins an election, such as when we fostered the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile when Richard Nixon was president.

This intervention is not a courageous act, but the act of a bully against a nation that poses no threat to the American people. We certainly cannot say that Maduro is worse than Putin, whom the United States has supported in various ways since the demise of Gorbachev.

Finally, this would not have happened if Venezuela did not have the biggest oil reserve in the world. Prior to the intervention, Trump notified the oil companies who are already positioning for a stake in Venezuela. This is yet another reason, in addition to the environmental one, why we need to move away from an oil-based energy policy.

I stand firmly against interventions of this kind. We have a crisis of affordability in this country. We should be focused on that, not overseas adventures.



In the Community

Utility Bill Increases

Over the past few weeks, I have heard from constituents who have expressed frustration with the recent increases in their National Grid bills. I am deeply concerned by these increases and stand with families who are struggling to keep up with rising energy costs. No one should have to choose between heating their home and putting food on the table, especially in the upcoming winter storm.

In response to the Public Service Commission voting to increase utility rates for consumers, I reintroduced a piece of legislation that would add two new members to the Public Service Commission that have a background in consumer protection and/or economic justice ([A1833](#)). It is imperative that members of the Public Service Commission consider how their actions will impact working-class families.



Local Swearing In Ceremonies

I was pleased to attend the swearing in of the Town of Niskayuna leadership team, including Supervisor Erin Cassady-Dorion, Deputy Supervisor Cory Ausfeld, and Town Council Members Sarah Bilofsky and Ashok Ramasubramanian. I look forward to continuing our work together.

In Colonie, I had the honor of swearing in Joel Weingarten and Julian Kovacs as Town Councilmembers and Jennifer Whalen as Town Justice. Congratulations as well to Alison

Thorne and Sara Fedele. Colonie is fortunate to have such strong leadership.



Supporting Mental Health Initiatives

I was proud to present a \$25,000 state grant to Jewish Family Services of Northeastern New York in support of the PREsilience initiative, which strengthens mental health resources for youth, teens, and adults across our region. This funding supports counseling services, community outreach, and youth mental health programming.



Capital District Tobacco Free Communities

Thank you to Capital District Tobacco Free Communities for a thoughtful and engaging conversation, including with Reality Check member Kaydence. I appreciated the opportunity to listen to concerns, hear ideas directly from young advocates, and discuss the importance of protecting public health.



Fort Hunter Fire Company

I was honored to attend the Fort Hunter Fire Company's annual banquet and to recognize the dedicated men and women who work every day to keep our community safe. Their service, commitment, and sacrifice deserve our deepest gratitude.



Celebrating Cardona's Market

I was proud to officially welcome Cardona's Latham Market into the New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry. Founded in 1945, Cardona's has served the Capital Region for more than 80 years and stands as a true example of the lasting impact family-owned businesses have on our communities.



Colonie Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner

It was a pleasure to attend the Colonie Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner and celebrate the local businesses that drive our economy and support families throughout Colonie and the Capital Region.



Tips & Information

Mobile Office Hours

Need help with a state issue or community resource?

Join my office for Mobile Office Hours today from 10AM to 1PM at Siena University, Sarazen Student Union Atrium, 515 Loudon Road, Loudonville. We can assist with unemployment, HEAP, housing, and other state-related concerns. Please park in front of Siena Hall.



Assemblymember
Phil Steck's



MOBILE OFFICE HOURS

Meet with a representative to have your questions answered or share concerns.

We're here to help!

Thursday, Feb 12

10am - 1pm

**Siena University
Sarazen Student Union Atrium
515 Loudon Road, Loudonville**

DMV Service Suspension

From February 13 through February 17, the New York State DMV will temporarily suspend all operations to implement a new technology system. Please plan ahead and complete transactions in advance. [More information is available here.](#)



Empire State Child Tax Credit

Tax season is underway. Eligible New Yorkers can claim the enhanced Empire State Child Tax Credit, providing up to 1,000 dollars per child under age four and up to 330 dollars per child ages four through sixteen. [Learn more here.](#)

Enhanced Empire State Child Tax Credit

delivers real relief for hardworking families



Assemblymember Phil Steck