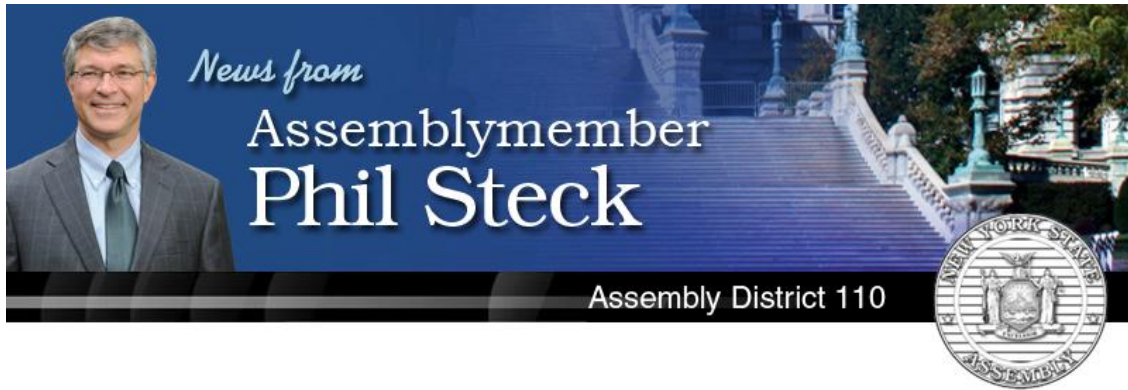




Across the 110th District, I continue hearing from residents who are feeling the pressure of rising costs. From higher energy bills and housing expenses to the cost of childcare and healthcare, affordability remains one of the biggest challenges facing middle-class families.

In this edition of my newsletter, I share updates on the work I am doing in Albany to address these issues and advocate for policies that put working families first. I am also launching a new video series called *Affordability in Action*, where I will break down some of the biggest drivers of rising costs and outline the steps I am taking to make New York more affordable.

You will also find updates on legislation I have passed in the Assembly to protect New Yorkers on social media, my continued advocacy on issues ranging from universal childcare to protecting consumers, and highlights from events and initiatives taking place throughout our community.

As always, my office is here to help. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need assistance with a state issue or have ideas you would like to share at [518-377-0902](tel:518-377-0902) or SteckP@nyassembly.gov.

Best,
Phil Steck

Legislative Updates

Affordability in Action: Your Energy Bills

I am launching a new video series called *Affordability in Action*, focused on the rising costs that are putting pressure on middle-class families across the 110th District. Each

installment will break down a key driver of the affordability crisis and outline the concrete steps I am taking to address it.

The first video in the series focuses on energy costs, an issue many of you have contacted my office about following recent increases in National Grid bills. Yesterday, I met with the staff at the Public Service Commission to better understand the factors driving these issues and to make sure the concerns of my constituents are clearly being brought forward.

In this episode, I discuss my legislation to add two consumer protection advocates to the Public Service Commission so middle-class families have a stronger voice in rate decisions. I also explain why dependence on imported natural gas and oil continues to drive up prices (New York produces no fossil fuels and must pay market prices), why green energy is not the cause of rising bills, and how New York's 100-year-old power grid should be modernized. I should note as well that in colder winters, market prices rise due to the increased demand, and that furnaces also work harder to maintain comfortable interior temperatures, costing you more.

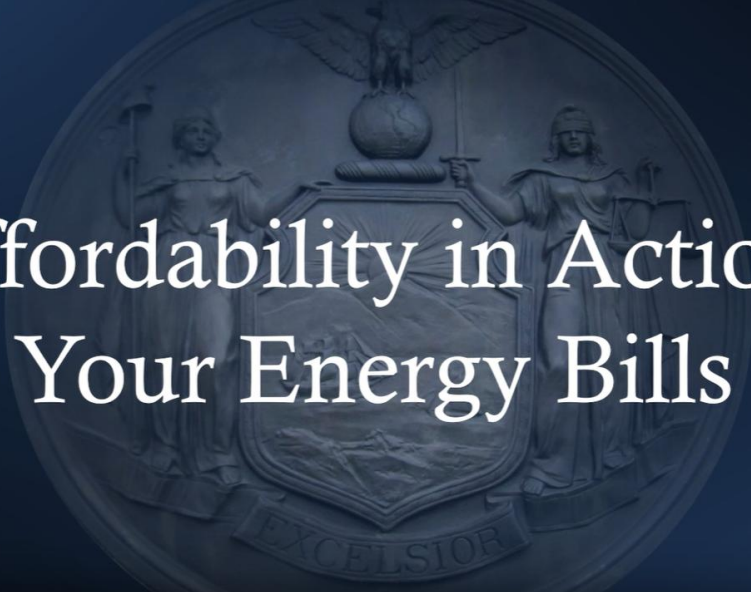
We've had the Public Service Commission since 1907. As structured, it will not contain costs. Interestingly in the last decade, when so-called market-based reforms were all the rage, we went to a system where power producers independent of the utilities compete to provide energy for our power grid, which is managed by the New York Independent System Operator. This "reform" did not result in lower prices and in some states led to fraud, as was the case with the infamous Enron scandal. There is only one solution — the State must invest in modernizing our power grid, as FDR did in the New Deal. We cannot afford to leave it to the private sector alone.

I have outlined proposals to have the state invest directly in upgrading the grid, including reinstating the Stock Transfer Tax to generate revenue for infrastructure improvements so ratepayers are not left covering the cost themselves, which is how the New York system currently works. Without this change, the delivery fee will continue to rise. I also discuss ensuring that high-volume data centers and similar facilities pay their own energy expenses and advancing greater transparency in utility billing.

At the end of the day, green energy will only reduce cost. Our dependence on imported gas and oil is at the heart of the problem. The wind, the sun, and thermal energy are free (the Northern Europeans, in a climate like ours, have used all three successfully). Sure, there will be costs in converting to these technologies. But that is why the State must step in and fund that conversion.

Energy is only one piece of the broader affordability challenge. In the coming weeks, I will also release videos addressing housing, grocery costs, and healthcare expenses.

I encourage you to watch the first video and continue sharing your ideas with my office as we work to make New York more affordable for everyone.

The background of the header image is a dark blue gradient. In the center is a large, faint, circular seal of the New York State Assembly. The seal features two female figures flanking a central shield, with an eagle perched atop a globe. The word "EXCELSIOR" is inscribed on a banner at the bottom of the seal.

Affordability in Action: Your Energy Bills

Affordability in Action: Your Energy Bills

Statement on Universal Childcare

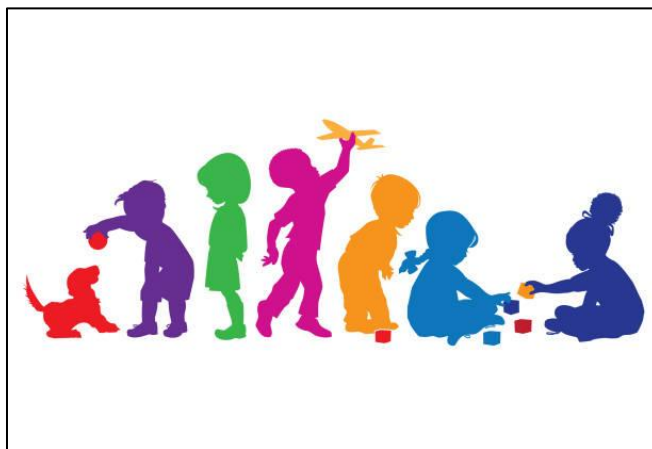
Since I was first elected to the New York State Assembly in 2012, I have been an outspoken supporter of true universal childcare. Childcare must be universal not just for New York City, but also for upstate New York. Families in my district need affordable and accessible childcare just as urgently as families anywhere else in the state. The Governor's proposal may be a way to appease Mr. Mamdani so he can fulfill one of his campaign promises, but it is my duty to stand up for my constituents to make sure we receive the same benefits for our families.

Too often, proposals are rolled out in New York City with the promise that upstate will follow. These promises are made but never work. During my first term, then Governor Cuomo launched a universal pre-k program in New York City with the promise that it would expand to upstate eventually. This never happened. It was a false promise and, as a result, my district has a limited lottery system that leaves too many families without childcare options, forcing them to go to private pay as an expensive alternative.

I am a proud co-sponsor of Assemblymember Hevesi's legislation that would create a statewide universal childcare program (A5899). Not only will this legislation create a universal childcare program for all of New York, but it also ensures that our childcare workforce is well paid and that childcare facilities are available in communities that do not have existing childcare facilities.

If New York State is serious about supporting our working families, strengthening our childcare workforce, and addressing the affordability crisis, the State budget must include Assemblymember Hevesi's proposal.

I will continue to be a strong voice to make sure upstate communities are included in any universal childcare proposal because childcare is only universal if it supports every child in New York. This is consistent with my philosophy of government. Like Bernie Sanders, who I endorsed in both 2016 and 2020, universal childcare, health insurance, pensions, and post-secondary education should be benefits of citizenship. Like Bernie, I agree that nothing is "free." But we have the means to pay for all of these. We just lack the political will.



Social Media Protection Bill Passes Assembly Unanimously

The New York State Assembly passed my bill [A8022](#) unanimously requiring social media companies to respond to a lawfully issued search warrant within 72 hours. It could not be more fitting that this happened on the eve of Safer Internet Day.

The concept for this legislation originated with Martin Ping, who lost his 16-year-old grandson, Avery Ping, after he connected with a drug dealer on Snapchat and obtained MDMA laced with fentanyl. After Avery's death, it was discovered that law enforcement had issued a warrant for the dealer's Snapchat account eight weeks earlier. However, because Snapchat failed to respond in a timely manner, the dealer remained active on the platform and continued to deal drugs while the investigation was stalled.

In response to Avery's tragic death, I introduced bipartisan legislation that will require social media companies to comply within 72 hours of receiving the warrant. By imposing

this requirement, law enforcement will be able to obtain critical information needed to keep New Yorkers safe on social media.

I want to thank Martin for his passionate advocacy in ensuring that what happen to Avery does not happen to more New Yorkers.



Response to Governor's Tax Credit for Fanatics

As Chair of the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, I strongly disapprove of the Governor's announcement today that Fanatics Sports will be receiving \$5 million in Excelsior Jobs Program tax credit [1]. It is deeply troubling that the Governor is choosing to subsidize a sports betting platform with taxpayer dollars while the executive budget provides only a 0.1% increase for the Office of

Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS), which supports prevention, treatment, recovery services, and confidential resources for individuals struggling with sports gambling addiction across New York. It is even more concerning that this is happening while an increasing number of New Yorkers, particularly young men, have been developing problem gambling addictions since the legalization of sports betting in 2022.

In October, I co-chaired a hearing with Assembly Racing and Wagering Committee Chair Carrie Woerner, where we heard expert testimony about how sports betting platforms are structuring their operations to target vulnerable individuals and increase the risk of gambling addiction. These companies should NOT be rewarded for this behavior with taxpayer dollars. In response to this outrageous decision, I will be introducing legislation

prohibiting sports betting companies from receiving Excelsior Jobs Program tax credits. Instead of using \$5 million in taxpayer dollars to subsidize a global company that profits from vulnerable New Yorkers, the Governor should be allocating that money to OASAS to help treat problem gambling.

This announcement only furthers my push in the New York State Assembly to not only establish guardrails on sports betting platforms but also protect New Yorkers from developing a sports betting addiction through malicious practices by these companies. The simplest way we can do this is to pass my legislation that would prohibit sports betting platforms from advertising during sporting events (A8925). By reducing the number of commercials for these platforms, New Yorkers will have less exposure to these advertisements and in turn, protect those struggling with a gambling addiction.

I urge Governor Kathy Hochul to reverse this decision immediately and invest more in OASAS programming so we can protect New Yorkers from problem gambling.

[1] <https://www.governor.ny.gov/.../governor-hochul-announces...>



Advocating for Medically Fragile Children

Families in our medically fragile community continue to face extraordinary challenges due to the ongoing shortage of private duty nurses. For years, this shortage has left

vulnerable children and adults without the consistent in-home care they depend on, placing immense strain on families who are already navigating complex medical needs.

I remain committed to advocating for solutions. Recently, we were encouraged by the Department of Health Commissioner, Dr. McDonald's willingness to review the Complex Care Assistant bill [A464/S4462](#) and to collaborate with my office on ways to move forward. This legislation would establish a Complex Care Assistant role to help support medically fragile individuals while New York works to strengthen and grow the nursing workforce.

The nursing shortage now affecting hospitals has long impacted the private duty nursing system. In fact, it prompted a state study that led to legislative changes and rate enhancements in 2022. Yet in 2026, the need is greater than ever and there are still not enough nurses to meet demand.

Families cannot wait for long term workforce solutions alone. The need is immediate. The crisis is now. I will continue working to ensure that parents of medically fragile children receive the support and care they are entitled to.



Assemblymember Steck speaks with Dr. James V. McDonald, MD, MPH, Commissioner, New York State Department of Health during a joint budget hearing on Health and Medicaid

In the Community

Improving Cell Service in Colonie

Over the past several months, many of you reached out to me about dropped calls and poor cell service in Colonie. I heard your concerns loud and clear and took action.

I shared your reports directly with Verizon, T-Mobile, and AT&T and pushed them to address these issues, which are not only a daily inconvenience but also a serious public safety concern.

I am pleased to share that providers are now moving forward with projects to improve coverage and capacity across Colonie and nearby communities.

Planned 2026 improvements include:

- A new macro cell tower on Albany Shaker Road near Green Meadows Lane
- A new macro cell tower on Watervliet Shaker Road
- New small cell antennas along Sand Creek Road
- New small cell antennas along Osborne Road and Albany Shaker Road

These upgrades will help reduce coverage gaps, improve call reliability, and expand 5G service throughout our community.

Thank you to everyone who spoke up. Your input is making a difference and helping deliver real improvements for Colonie residents.

A MESSAGE FROM ASSEMBLYMEMBER PHIL STECK:

CELL PHONE COVERAGE IMPROVEMENTS ARE COMING

PLANNED 2026 IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE:

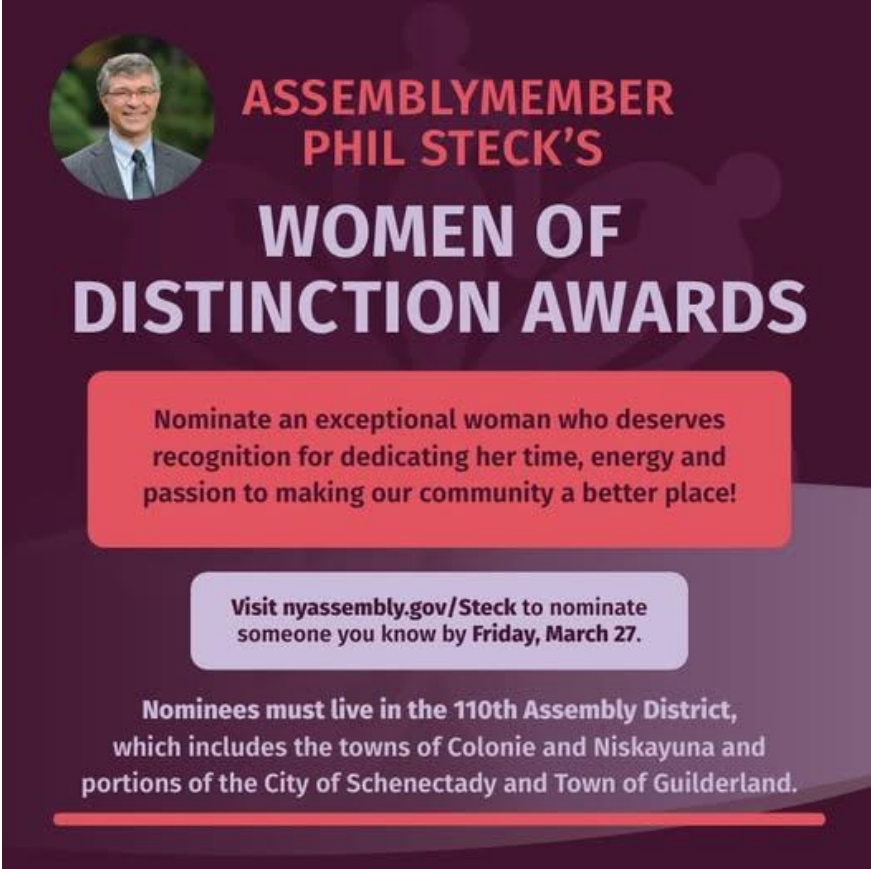
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Nominations Open for Annual Women of Distinction Awards

Every year, I have the privilege of recognizing women across our community who make a real difference through their leadership, service, and compassion. Many of these contributions happen quietly, but their impact is felt every day.

If you know an inspiring woman who lives in the 110th Assembly District, I encourage you to nominate her [here](#). I look forward to celebrating this year's honorees in May.



**ASSEMBLYMEMBER
PHIL STECK'S
WOMEN OF
DISTINCTION AWARDS**

Nominate an exceptional woman who deserves recognition for dedicating her time, energy and passion to making our community a better place!

Visit nyassembly.gov/Steck to nominate someone you know by Friday, March 27.

Nominees must live in the 110th Assembly District, which includes the towns of Colonie and Niskayuna and portions of the City of Schenectady and Town of Guilderland.

Help Save a Life

There is currently a nationwide blood shortage, and our hospitals are facing an urgent need for donors. That is why I am proud to host my 5th Annual Community Blood Drive with the American Red Cross and hope you will consider signing up to help save lives.

A special thank you to the Shaker Heritage Society for partnering with us and graciously hosting this important community event. Their support helps make efforts like this

possible. If you are able, please consider making an appointment and encouraging friends and family to do the same.

[Click here](#) and use sponsor code SHAKERHERITAGE to sign up.

**HELP END THE NATIONWIDE BLOOD SHORTAGE
AND SAVE A LIFE**

**ASSEMBLYMEMBER STECK'S 5TH ANNUAL
BLOOD DRIVE**

Friday, March 20 | 1 – 5 P.M.
Shaker Heritage Society
25 Meeting House Road
Albany, NY 12211

Registered donors will receive
a **\$15 E-GIFT CARD** from
the Red Cross. To register,
scan the QR code and enter
"SHAKERHERITAGE"
as the sponsor code.

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? CONTACT MY OFFICE ANYTIME!
Assemblymember Phil Steck | 1609 Union St., Schenectady, NY 12309 | 518-377-0902 | SteckP@nyassembly.gov

Celebrating Lunar New Year

Congratulations to the Chinese Community Center of the Capital District of New York and its president, Yunxiao Zhang, on hosting a wonderful Lunar New Year celebration. It was a great opportunity for our community to come together and celebrate this important cultural tradition, highlighted by a series of impressive cultural performances.



Stand Up for Recovery Day

I was honored to attend Stand Up for Recovery Day and show my support to those that treat those in recovery and those who are struggling with substance use disorder.

During the program, I spoke about the proposed state budget and the changes I am pushing for to better support this community. That includes increasing the COLA to 2.7% so providers can keep pace with rising costs and continue delivering critical services.

I am also advocating for the inclusion of my opioid settlement fund transparency bill in the budget, which would require state and local governments to clearly disclose how much opioid settlement funding has been spent and who has received those funds. New Yorkers deserve accountability and transparency when it comes to resources meant to address the opioid crisis.

Finally, I continue to push for meaningful funding for workforce recruitment and retention within Office of Addiction Services and Supports, similar to what is being proposed for the Office of Mental Health. Our recovery system is only as strong as the dedicated professionals who staff it.

Thank you to Friends of Recovery for organizing this important day and for your continued advocacy on behalf of recovery communities across our state.



Union Strong

I was proud to stand with Congressman Paul Tonko in solidarity with our hardworking letter carriers as they advocate for a fair contract that reflects the essential services they provide to our communities every single day. Our letter carriers are on the front lines in every neighborhood, delivering mail and packages in all weather conditions and keeping residents, small businesses, and seniors connected.

They deserve a contract that recognizes their dedication and the vital role they play in our economy and daily lives. I will always stand with working men and women fighting for fairness and respect on the job.



Visit to Siena University

I had the opportunity to host mobile office hours at Siena University, and I truly enjoyed the conversations with students and campus community members.

It is always valuable to hear directly from young people about the issues they care about most across New York State, from affordability and education to public safety and opportunity. Their perspectives help shape my work in the Assembly and ensure I am advocating for policies that reflect the needs of the next generation.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by to share ideas, concerns, and questions. My office is always here to help connect you with state resources and support.



Tips & Information

Mobile Office Hours

Need help with a state issue or community resource?

Join my office on Thursday, April 9 for Mobile Office Hours from 10AM to 1PM at Hibernian Hall in Schenectady. We can assist with unemployment, HEAP, housing, and other state-related concerns.



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, April 9
10am-1pm

Hibernian Hall
1748 State Street, Schenectady

Enhanced Energy Affordability Program

Families are feeling the pressure of rising utility costs, and I'm doing everything I can to ease the burden. Applications are now open for the New York Enhanced Energy Affordability Program (EEAP), which provides monthly assistance to help low- and moderate-income households manage their energy bills. Learn more and apply today: nyeeap.com

Helping New Yorkers save on utility costs



Unclaimed Funds

Don't leave your money behind! Each day, the New York State Comptroller's Office returns more than \$2 million in lost funds to New Yorkers. To check whether any of it is yours or to file a claim, visit: <https://ouf.osc.ny.gov/app/claim-search>

**UNCLAIMED
FUNDS**
MIGHT BE WAITING
FOR YOU!