



NEWS *from* ASSEMBLYWOMAN DONNA A. LUPARDO



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Dear Neighbors,

I rarely send out constituent mailings, preferring to rely on news outlets and social media to cover the work I'm involved with on your behalf. I also provide a monthly eNewsletter to subscribers who want to keep up with my activities on a regular basis. We thought it might be helpful to send out this summary, of what I've been working on for the past couple of years, along with a reminder about how my office can be of assistance.

Our Director of Constituent Services handles numerous calls each day sorting out issues related to your interactions with state agencies like the Departments of Education, Health, Labor, Motor Vehicles, Transportation, and more. We also provide official recognitions for important occasions and celebrations.

On the legislative side, I meet with hundreds of constituents annually to discuss changes they would like to see to benefit our overall quality of life locally and across the state. And finally, I have initiated many local and statewide efforts designed to address long term problems and concerns in areas such as housing, workforce development, health care delivery, food insecurity and more. Hopefully this newsletter will provide you with an overview, along with opportunities for you to be in touch.

Donna A. Lupardo



Session Highlights

Each year, the State Legislature is in session for six months. During that time we work on the state budget and on legislative initiatives. My office receives thousands of emails about the budget and on matters the Legislature is considering. While I can't respond to everyone, I definitely take into consideration all of these communications. In addition to addressing your issues and concerns, I spent the bulk of the last Legislative session focused on several key issues outlined below. While progress was made, there is a lot more work to do in each of these areas.

#RescueEMS

In recent years, our ambulance services have struggled financially due to a variety of causes, all made worse by the pandemic. Last year, we were able to pass a law that will finally allow providers to receive payment for out-of-network services directly from insurance companies, instead of those payments being sent to the person who received the care (A.250). This year, working with colleagues from across the state, I helped coordinate a package of bills all designed to #RescueEMS. We were able to pass one of these bills, that when signed, will pay EMS for when a person is either treated in place or transported to a place other than a hospital (A.9102). Our next goal is to define ambulance service as "essential" under state law.



Nursing Homes

This is another critically important sector of our community that is struggling to stay afloat. Inadequate Medicaid reimbursement rates are causing many nursing homes across the state to reduce the number of beds, or close altogether. Staffing shortages and mandatory staffing requirements have added additional challenges. After near-constant advocacy, we were able to achieve a modest rate increase for them, but nowhere close to what is needed. Working with many of my colleagues we will continue to explain that when we lose nursing home beds, we put a strain on hospitals that may have nowhere to transfer a patient in need of long-term care. And when hospitals become backed up, emergency rooms become backed up.



Workforce Development

One of the things holding our community back is the lack of workers in key areas such as nursing, advanced manufacturing, child care, building trades, food service, and more. That's why investing in BOCES and our community colleges is so crucial. Last year, we announced that BOCES had received a \$1.3M grant to help address a shortage of trade workers and truck drivers. This year, SUNY Broome received funding for a new nursing faculty, along with resources to address student mental health concerns. And last year, the Governor signed my nursing bill which allows educational time spent using patient training simulators to count toward degree requirements, allowing for faster and more effective degree completion (A.3076).



Agriculture and Food

I am wrapping up my sixth year as the Chair of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture. It is a privilege to represent all of the hard-working people who work to keep our food supply chain going from farm to market. Locally, we have a lot to be proud of. The Agricultural Development Center, TASTE NY store and Regional Farmer's Market at Cornell Cooperative Extension are buzzing with activity, along with all the other local farmer's markets. Last year, we announced that a \$750K grant had been secured to expand the Commercial Kitchen at CCE to accommodate the many new food entrepreneurs who want to rent space there. Finally, in order to address food insecurity, I have directed grants to CHOW and helped start the Holiday Giving Box program along with our many community partners. The number of adults and children who are food insecure in Broome County is staggering and will require a long-term systemic approach.



Local Highlights

Our municipalities and not-for-profits provide services that support the health, safety, and well-being of our communities. They often struggle to afford equipment upgrades, building improvements, new technology, and more. I am fortunate to be able to tap into state resources that have helped pay for important improvements that these groups have requested. Here are some of the items that we accomplished together in the last couple of years.

Public Safety

- **Broome County Emergency Response:** \$325K to offset the cost of the new Mobile Command Center.
- **City of Binghamton Fire Department:** \$150K for the purchase of 30 new sets of turn-out gear, which need to be replaced every 10 years.
- **Town of Vestal Volunteer Emergency Medical Services** received two equipment grants totaling \$67,500.
- **Union Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (UVES)** received two equipment grants totaling \$67,500.
- **Village of Johnson City:** \$600K to purchase vehicles and equipment for the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments.
- **Village of Endicott Fire Department:** \$250K for the purchase of rescue equipment, including a new advanced rescue boat.
- **Village of Endicott Police Department:** \$350K for the recently opened Endicott Police Law Enforcement Training Center. This state-of-the-art center has a virtual reality training component, along with an upgraded firing range. It is used by multiple law enforcement agencies.



Quality of Life

- **Broome County Forum Theatre:** They received two \$115,000 grants for building renovations; part of our statewide initiative to protect NY's historic downtown theaters.
- **Broome County Veteran's Resource Center:** \$500K to support the development of a comprehensive Veterans Resource Center on the Northside of Binghamton, with an expected grand opening by May 2025.
- **Broome County, Grippen Park:** \$500K to support the major renovation of Grippen Park in Endicott, including the addition of an indoor track, pickleball courts, ice rink, and more.
- **City of Binghamton:** \$5M to help renovate the historic Boscov's building in Downtown Binghamton, located in the Court Street National Historic District. This building has served as a retail anchor since 1900 and is one of the few remaining downtown department stores in the state.
- **Rod Serling Memorial Foundation:** \$50K to help pay for a statue of Rod Serling to be placed in Recreation Park, Binghamton.
- **Town of Vestal:** \$650K to help offset the cost of the multi-million dollar Vestal Memorial Pool and Splash Park.
- **United Health Services:** \$300K to construct a playground at the site of their new Child Care Center in Johnson City.
- **Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environments (VINES):** \$250K to help with the construction of their new headquarters located on Susquehanna Street, along with an annual appropriation of \$75K from the Agriculture budget.



Keep in Touch

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Announcing that Roosevelt Elementary School will be able to access extra funds to renovate and reconstruct the school. Senator Webb and I included this item in the state budget.



Helped secure \$100K in the state budget for the Civil Air Patrol, NY Wing. I am proud to be a member of the CAP and to head the NYWG Legislative Squadron.