

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

COMMITTEE ON
AGING

EXCELSIOR

CARL E. HEASTIE
SPEAKER

HARRY B. BRONSON
CHAIR



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on Aging

COMMITTEES
Education
Labor
Transportation
Economic Development, Job Creation,
Commerce and Industry

HARRY B. BRONSON
Assembly District 138

840 University Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607

December 15, 2020

Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to present the 2020 Annual Report of the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging. The work accomplished during the 2020 Legislative Session reflects the commitment of the Committee and myself to protect the health, safety, independence, and quality of life of New York's older adults.

This year has been unprecedented as the state is dealing with the financial, economic and health implications of the crippling COVID-19 global pandemic. Due to the nature of the virus, older adults, especially those with pre-existing conditions, are at a higher risk of developing severe illness from the virus. To examine the impact COVID-19 has had on nursing homes, the Aging committee, in conjunction with the Health Committee and the Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigation, conducted two joint virtual hearings with the Senate on August 3 and 10. The Committee heard testimonies from stakeholders and families across the state on improving systems, procedures and practices to reduce the transmission of this deadly disease.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for their continued support during this difficult time in our state's history. Finally, Mr. Speaker, thank you for your leadership and support of our legislative initiatives to better protect New York State's older adults.

Sincerely,

Harry Bronson
Chair, Committee on Aging

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGING**

Harry Bronson, Chair

Committee Members

Majority

Peter J. Abbate, Jr.
Carmen E. Arroyo
 José Rivera
 Philip Ramos
Michael G. DenDekker
Edward C. Braunstein
 Latoya Joyner
 Charles Barron
 Brian Barnwell
 Billy Jones
Tremaine Wright
Monica P. Wallace
 Inez Dickens
 Alfred E. Taylor
Daniel A. Rosenthal
 Steve Stern
Mathylde Frontus
 Karines Reyes
 Catalina Cruz
Simcha Eichenstein
 Charles D. Fall

Minority

Jacob Ashby, *Ranking Member*
 Mark C. Johns
 Karl Brabenec
 Nicole Malliotakis
 Douglas Smith
 Joseph P. DeStefano
 Michael W. Reilly, Jr.
 John J. Salka

Majority Staff

Maria Volpe-McDermott, Assistant Secretary for Program and Policy
 Felicia Harris, Legislative Analyst
 Benjamin Decker, Associate Counsel
 Max Sevor, Committee Clerk
 Abigail Mellon, Program and Counsel Executive Secretary

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I. COMMITTEE JURISDICTION

The New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Aging has jurisdiction over legislation affecting the quality of life and independence of New York's older adults. The Committee has legislative and budgetary oversight of the New York State Office for the Aging's programs. The Committee also reviews certain legislation providing property tax relief for older adults.

The Committee works to ensure essential services are available to older adults so they may be able to enjoy a high quality of life as they age in their communities. This includes the following programs: the Community Services for the Elderly (CSE) Program, the Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP), Caregiver Resource Centers, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP), Wellness in Nutrition (WIN) Program, Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program (MCCAP), the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Senior Respite programs, Social Adult Day programs, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NNORCs), the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program, the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) program, the Foster Grandparent program, the Elder Abuse Education and Outreach program, and locally based Meals-on-Wheels programs. The Committee also has legislative and budgetary oversight of the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program, which is administered by the New York State Department of Health.

During the 2020 legislative session, 70 bills were referred to the Assembly Committee on Aging. The following report details the major budgetary and legislative activities and accomplishments of the Assembly Committee on Aging during the 2020 legislative session.

II. STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The 2020-21 enacted state budget provided funding for many programs dedicated to protecting the health, safety, independence, and quality of life of older adults, as well as providing assistance to their caregivers, families, friends, and communities.

A. BUDGET SUMMARY CHART

In the 2020-21 Budget, the Legislature provided General Fund support for programs including:

Program	Total
Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP)	\$65,120,000
Community Services for the Elderly (CSE) Program	\$32,051,000
Wellness in Nutrition (WIN) Program	\$28,281,000
Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)	\$4,027,500
Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NNORCs)	\$4,027,500
Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program (MCCAP)	\$1,767,000
Local Grants for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program	\$1,190,000
Grants for Transportation Operating Expenses for the Elderly	\$1,121,000
Grants for Providers of Social Model Adult Day Services	\$1,072,000
Grants for the Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)	\$1,000,000
Elderly Abuse and Outreach Program	\$745,000
State Aid Grants to Providers of Respite Services	\$656,000
Lifespan Elder Abuse Prevention Program – Enhanced Multi-Disciplinary Teams	\$500,000
Congregate Services Initiative	\$403,000
Caregiver Resource Centers	\$353,000
Association on Aging in New York State	\$250,000
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)	\$216,500
Older Adults Technology Services Center (OATS)	\$200,000
Matching Federally funded Model Projects and/or Demonstration Grant Programs	\$175,000
New York Foundation for Senior Citizens Home Sharing and Respite Care Program	\$172,000
New York Statewide Senior Action Council, Inc. – Patients’ Rights Hotline and Advocacy Project	\$31,500
Livable New York Initiative	\$122,500
New York State Adult Day Services Association, Inc.	\$122,500
Foster Grandparents Program	\$98,000
Home Aides of Central New York, Inc. Senior Respite Program	\$71,000
New York Statewide Senior Action Council, Inc. – Patients’ Rights Hotline and Advocacy Project	\$31,500

III. COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. Real Property Tax

In 1970, the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) program began offering eligible tenants at least 62 years old protection from future rent increases. In 2005, it was expanded to include qualifying tenants with disabilities under the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) program. These programs help eligible tenants living in rent-controlled, rent-stabilized or rent-regulated apartments in New York City stay in affordable housing by freezing their rent. In return, eligible landlords receive a property tax credit that covers the difference between the actual rent and what the tenant is responsible for paying at the frozen rate.

In addition, through the Senior Citizen Housing Exemption (SCHE) program, eligible homeowners age 65 and over who meet the program's income requirements can apply to receive a reduction in their property taxes.

A.9999 DenDekker; Chapter 58 of the Laws of 2020 (Item Z, Part XXX): This law extends the provisions of law that raise the income eligibility for the SCRIE and DRIE programs to \$50,000 for each head of household for two years until June 30, 2022.

B. Health

With a growing number of older adults living independently, it is becoming increasingly important to ensure that they can remain safe and healthy in their home and communities. It is the goal of the Committee on Aging to ensure programs and services are available that allow them to do so.

A.8993 Bronson; Chapter 55 of the Laws of 2020 (Subpart J, Part XX): This law would make amendments to Chapter 721 of the Laws of 2019 to require the Director of the State Office for the Aging (SOFA), subject to appropriation, to make available to designated agencies a training program for the purpose of raising awareness, removing barriers and improving services for older adults based on their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

IV. HEARINGS

A. Residential Health Care Facilities and COVID-19

August 3, 2020

10:00 AM

New York City, Westchester and Long Island

August 10, 2020

10:00 AM

Upstate New York

The Assembly Standing Committee on Aging, in conjunction with the Assembly Standing Committee on Health and the Assembly Standing Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigation, conducted two joint virtual hearings with the Senate on the impact of COVID-19 on residential health care facilities. The purpose of these hearings was to receive input from stakeholders across the State related to the distribution of medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE), safety inspections, and enforcement during the State of Emergency as well as the practices and procedures of residential health care facilities in responding to COVID-19. The hearings also sought to identify what steps could be taken to reduce the rate of infection and mortality rate in residential health care facilities and improve the outcomes and experiences of patients, families, caregivers, and providers.

The Committees heard testimony from the Commissioner of Health Dr. Howard Zucker, long term care ombudsmen, advocates, residential health care facilities and their staff, and families. Many of the witnesses addressed issues regarding: the social and emotional effects of prohibiting nursing home visitations, the distribution of PPE and COVID-19 tests to staff and residents, and the need for additional staff and resources.

V. OUTLOOK FOR 2021

COVID-19 has significantly impacted older adults, who are at a higher risk of developing severe illness if they contract the virus. The Committee on Aging is committed to understanding the financial, economic and health impact COVID-19 will have on older adults and will continue to work to secure adequate funding for services and programs that serve older adults and their caregivers, so that they can age safely, independently and comfortably in their homes and their communities.

APPENDIX A

**2020 Summary Sheet
Summary of Action on All Bills Referred to the Committee on Aging**

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD 3

	<u>ASSEMBLY BILLS</u>	<u>SENATE BILLS</u>	<u>TOTAL BILLS</u>
BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE			
TO CODES	1	0	1
TO JUDICIARY	0	0	0
TO WAYS AND MEANS	2	0	2
TO RULES	0	0	
TO FLOOR	3	0	3
TOTAL			
COMMITTEE ACTION			
HELD FOR CONSIDERATION	0	0	0
DEFEATED	0	0	0
ENACTING CLAUSE STRICKEN	8	0	0
REMAINING IN COMMITTEE	70	5	75
BILLS REFERENCE CHANGED TO:			
TOTAL	0	0	0