



Dear Friends,

We just finished our fourth week of session and are fully back in the swing of things. In addition to dealing with issues regarding legislation and the budget (more on that below), **now that we are back in Albany I have the frequent opportunity to meet with advocacy groups, as well as join many of them at events in support of legislation I hope to see passed this term.**

For instance, my colleagues and I resumed our advocacy for Medicaid equity. Medicaid currently reimburses hospitals 30% less than the cost of delivering care to Medicaid beneficiaries. This reimbursement gap hurts the patients and the hospitals that provide the care... and this disparity falls largely on black and brown communities. I joined in a rally with 1199SEIU, the Healthcare Education Project, and the Greater New York Hospital Association to advocate for Medicaid Equity in the budget debate.

I likewise joined a press conference to advocate for improvements to our system of treatment courts. Where appropriate and safe to society, these courts can provide treatment in lieu of incarceration to individuals with substance use disorders, mental health illnesses, and other disabilities. This path reduces recidivism, as well as the cost to the taxpayer. I also lent my continued support for Medical Aid in Dying legislation, which would provide a compassionate choice for those who wish to control their passing without pain and suffering when it is incontrovertible that they are in their last days.





This past week I joined a rally calling for the enactment of the New York Heat Act, which would align utility regulation and oversight of gas utilities with the climate and equity requirements under the state's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). I was also proud to join the sponsors of the Fair & Timely Parole and Elder Parole bills at a press conference on Tuesday. There we called on the Legislature and Governor to enact these two measures to improve community safety and provide for a fairer system of parole release consideration.



I continue to be so impressed by the hard work and passion of these advocacy groups and am honored to have an opportunity to stand with them, along with my colleagues, in support of these very important pieces of legislation.

On the home front, **last Saturday I participated in a Coffee & Conversation at the Katonah Village Library.** I was glad to hear from residents on a broad range of topics, including concerns about the Governor's proposed cuts in state aid to our school districts (more on that below), Bedford's plans for an expansion of the sewer system, and concerns over the suspension of the publication of the *Record Review* (and hopes that it will resume). My thanks to County Legislator Erika Pierce for organizing the event, and to County Executive George Latimer, Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins, and Bedford Town Supervisor Ellen Calves for their excellent participation.

Thank you most especially to everyone who took the time to join us.



Finally, I would also like to thank everyone who participated in yesterday's Westchester Delegation Budget Forum. If you would like to watch all or part of the forum, please [click here](#).

Budget Season Begins - **Unacceptable Cuts in Education Proposed**

Last week, Governor Hochul presented her proposed budget for fiscal year 2025, which runs from April 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025. We in the Legislature have a great deal of work ahead to negotiate on behalf of those whom we represent.

I first will touch upon some good news. Only a few months ago, wide budget gaps of \$9 billion or more were forecast. **Due to a strengthened economy, with revenue coming in much stronger, the gap has disappeared and a modest budget surplus is now forecast and reflected in the proposed budget.** The significance is that a harsh austerity budget, with cuts to critical NYS programs and our communities, can now be avoided.

I applaud the Governor for continuing her strong commitment to addressing the crisis in mental health through substantial funding. I also am pleased that the proposed budget includes funding for municipal planning grants for water quality and waste management projects, funds that I strongly advocated for.

However, my colleagues and I are baffled that – notwithstanding the brighter fiscal picture – the Governor presented harsh funding cuts for many of our school districts. In adopting the 2024 budget, New York fulfilled a pledge to fully fund Foundation Aid, the cornerstone of state support for public education. We reached a major milestone with this accomplishment, widely hailed as critical to maintaining excellence in public education while helping to hold down property taxes. **This year the Governor's budget significantly reduces aid to scores of school districts, including every school district in the 93rd Assembly District.** School districts are already facing rising inflation-induced costs and severe challenges. These cuts will force districts to raise taxes above the 2% tax cap and hit our communities hard. **This is unacceptable.** I will fight these cuts and for an enacted budget that retains our school districts' funding.

Regarding the area of housing, while the Governor's budget includes proposals to stimulate housing growth in New York City, there is scant attention paid to the rest of the state. **Recognizing the desperate need for housing, especially affordable housing, my Hudson Valley colleague Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg and I will be introducing legislation that combines incentives and requirements, but without**

mandatory construction targets or suspension of local control. We also favor incentives for a regional approach through shared services with counties.

Despite these challenges, I am optimistic that the 2024 budget and legislative session will be positive for the people of the 93rd Assembly District and the State of New York.

A Major Step Forward for CCNW

A huge thank you to New York City and especially NYC Department of Environmental Protection Assistant Commissioner David Warne for transferring the Community Center of Northern Westchester's land and building title to the Town of Bedford.

Earlier this month, I celebrated this momentous occasion with CCNW Executive Director Clare Murray, DEP's Dave Warne, Bedford Supervisor Ellen Calves, and members of the CCNW Board of Directors. Located in Katonah, CCNW – which provides emergency help with food and clothing to those in need – now has a long-term lease with the Town of Bedford and can move ahead with its planned expansion, doubling the size of its building.

It's an exciting time for this incredible organization, which truly does so much for so many.



Welcoming Neighbors Link to Albany

It was great to meet with my friends from Neighbors Link on Tuesday in the Assembly chamber, who were in Albany to advocate for the immigrant communities they serve so well. Among the issues they were pressing for are the need for increased access to legal representation in deportation hearings, as well as operational and capital support for their offices in Mount Kisco and Ossining.

My colleague Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg, who represents Ossining, joined the meeting and introduced our guests on the floor of the Assembly.



Congratulations to Our Regeneron Scholars

Twenty-six Westchester students across 14 districts were named semifinalists in the Regeneron Science Talent Search's 2024 contest for research projects. Each semifinalist will receive \$2,000, as will the students' schools for each qualifying student. In all, 300 students from the U.S. and China were named semifinalists.

Congratulations to the following students of the 93rd Assembly District for being named semifinalists for their projects:

Byram Hills High School (*Armonk*)

Lily Anchin:

Investigating the immunophenotypic differences among T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia patients of distinct subtype, sex, and race in efforts to improve chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy

Benjamin Levy:

Using Machine Learning to Uncover Hidden Linguistic Differences within Online Mental Health Disclosures

between Men and Women

Jonathan Manowitz:

The use of what remains: Repurposing harvest waste from Romaine lettuce cultivation for cell-based meat production

Daniel Ndocaj:

Investigating the Potential of Optically Tunable Metasurfaces for Enhanced Detection of Fluorescent

Harrison High School

Lucia Lammers:

Colorimetric and Spectroscopic Analysis of Textiles Dyed with Local Invasive Plants Species and Waste-derived Mordants

Stella Perini:

Protective Effects of Resveratrol Following Repetitive Head Injury in Wild Type and Amyloid β 42 Drosophila Melanogaster Molecules

Horace Greeley High School (Chappaqua)

Anwen Cao:

An Exploration of mTOR in Epstein-Barr Virus: Evaluating the Effect of EBV Deubiquitinating Enzyme BPLF1 on mTOR Complex 1 and 2

Ultimately, two students from Westchester were named finalists (Thomas Cong of Ossining High School and Christopher Zorn of Irvington High School) and will move on to the next round, with 38 other competitors during a week-long competition in March in Washington, DC.

What an incredibly impressive group of young scholars. **Congratulations to them all!**

As always, **please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions or if there is any assistance we can provide.** You can always reach me at burdickc@nyassembly.gov or by calling (914) 244-4450. My staff and I are always ready to help. Please also follow me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for continued up-to-date information.

Miss any of our previous newsletters? You can [find them here](#).

Sincerely yours,



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