



Dear Neighbor,

The 20th century has been described as the American century. Not only did we have limited destruction of the American homeland in World War II, but our ability to assist the world in its reconstruction built strong alliances that benefitted our standing in the world. The post-war era powered our economic growth by shifting our war economy into peace time jobs. These included civilian aviation jobs in airplane manufacturing; the new interstate highway construction generated jobs across the nation and greatly improved transportation for the movement of goods, while the GI Bill created a new, more expansive generation of college graduates.

These were seen as societal improvements that benefitted people in all parts of the country. They were viewed as the common good and were paid for out of a widespread tax base that was substantially higher than we have today. The notion of our shared commitment to each other has changed over time. Political rhetoric has denigrated the role of government and undermined the public's confidence in government's ability to do the job. At the same time, the resources allocated to government have eroded.

Federal tax rates in 1960 for what were viewed as middle class tax brackets for a married couple earning between \$28,000 and \$32,000 was 47% and by 1970 that same bracket had dropped to 39.975%. Though incomes may have risen and the brackets changed by 1980, a joint income of \$35,200 to \$45,800 paid a tax rate of 43%. I outline these changes to point out that the ability of the government to provide for the essential upkeep of our infrastructure, for health care, for education, for basic scientific research, etc. that has traditionally benefitted our collective lives has dropped, despite our population growth. One could argue that the needs of our society increased at the same time we were limiting government's ability to pay for these essential aspects of shared responsibility.

In the recently passed Federal tax overhaul, we see another dramatic reduction in taxes which will be in effect for this current tax year. For example, the federal tax rate for a joint return with taxable incomes between \$77,400 and \$164,999 is 22% and only 37% for incomes over \$600,000. A study by the Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that this tax plan will reduce revenue to the Federal Government by \$1.46 trillion over 10 years. Similar diminished tax treatment has occurred in New York State. In 1976, when our state's population was 17,835,000, the top personal tax rate was 15.375% and by 2007, when our population had grown to 19,254,000, our top rate had dropped to 6.85%.

It is important for us to understand that some of our basic societal needs must be shared costs. Mass transit cannot be left to wither on the vine because there are people who can afford to travel without it. We cannot let our school buildings deteriorate because there are people who can afford a private education. Our public hospitals cannot be allowed to fail because there are people who can afford concierge care. We are witnessing the dismantling of many federal responsibilities and it has resulted in marches in the streets. A part of this dismantling is the race to the bottom in our tax policy and it is time for that race to come to a halt.

In the absence of Federal protections and policies, states are picking up the slack. While New York did not enact a millionaire's tax this year, there is no doubt that it is a fundamental step towards being able to provide the services that New Yorkers deserve and need.

Sincerely,

Deborah

State Budget Highlights

In March, the Legislature and the Governor came to an agreement for New York's 2018-19 budget. My Assembly majority colleagues and I fought to craft a budget that fairly and equitably distributed funds across the State. Due to a divided Legislature and the outsized influence the Governor exerts on the budget process, some difficult compromises needed to be made. Here are some highlights of this year's budget:

Hudson River Park

The Hudson River Park was created 20 years ago, but unfortunately is still not completely built. In this budget, we take a significant step towards its completion with the inclusion of \$50 million in capital funding for park construction. It is a good step, but it is intended to pay for capital build-out while a major part of the expense has been repairing storm damage and keeping up with maintaining a heavily used park. We can never build ourselves out of the ongoing expense of this waterfront park. Historically, the State and City have provided matching funds of significant quantities, and I hope that the Governor and Mayor recognize the true long-term cost of the park is also a public responsibility and should not be shouldered solely by commercial developments in the park.

Standing Up to Federal Tax Changes

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 rewards corporations at the expense of larger states, like New York. Included in the budget are new measures to insulate New Yorkers from some of the harm of these federal changes. Measures include the creation of state-operated charitable contribution funds aimed at improving education and health care. Donations to these funds can be claimed as deductions on state and federal taxes. Additionally, 85% of these donations will also count as a state tax credit, since individuals can no longer claim the full amount of their state taxes on their federal returns. School districts and local governments may also create similar funds that will allow for property tax deductions. Additionally, employers may now opt-in to a new Employer Compensation Expense Tax in order to mitigate the effect of the elimination of the full state and local tax deductibility for individuals.

Public Schools

The budget increases education aid by nearly \$1 billion, including a \$618 million increase in Foundation Aid, which is aimed at more fairly allocating resources throughout the State. Included in this funding is \$50 million to assist schools with high numbers of

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State Budget Highlights (continued from page 1)

English language learners, homeless students, struggling schools, and in other high-needs areas. Also included is \$15 million to expand pre-K programs.

Transportation

The budget includes a full funding of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) Subway Action Plan – a total of \$835 million to be split by the City and State. This funding will go a long way in making overdue repairs and enhancing subway performance. Additionally, a long-term funding stream for New York City public transportation was created by establishing a surcharge per ride of \$2.75 on for-hire vehicles, \$2.50 on yellow cabs, and \$.75 per person for pooled trips below 96th Street in Manhattan. This compromise comes short of my desire to reduce congestion by a cap on the maximum number of for-hire vehicles that can operate in Lower Manhattan. In addition, I support extending tolls to all East River Bridges.

Higher Education

As the Chair of the Assembly's Higher Education Committee, I take particular pride in New York's higher education system. The Assembly took the lead in restoring \$23.8 million to the various opportunity programs, which are extremely successful in improving graduation rates for students who are academically and economically disadvantaged. Community colleges at SUNY and CUNY will receive a \$100 increase in funding per full-time equivalent student. The budget also includes funding for the second year of the Excelsior Scholarship Program and the Enhanced Tuition Assistance Program to reduce tuition costs for students. We restored critically important supports such as childcare centers on SUNY and CUNY campuses without which many single parents would be unable to pursue college.

Combating Sexual Harassment

As our country continues to grapple with the persistent harassment women endure, firm actions need to be taken to end this injustice. The budget includes anti-sexual harassment protections that ensure that employers have comprehensive policies to combat sexual harassment in the workplace, bar confidentiality clauses in any settlement except when specifically requested by the victim, allow state or local government to recover payment made to a victim of sexual harassment directly from the harasser, and ban mandatory arbitration agreements for claims of sexual harassment.

NYCHA

State funding for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) increased by \$250 million, almost doubling the previous funding level. This funding will dramatically improve the lives of NYCHA residents by going toward desperately-needed boiler repairs and other safety measures.

Animal Shelter Funding

The budget also included an additional \$5 million in a capital funds matching program for the Companion Animal Fund. These are funds for which animal shelters can apply and use towards updating or acquiring new facilities or equipment.

As with any budget, we didn't get everything we wanted, and compromised to accept things we didn't want. I look forward to continuing to work on these, and other important issues, such as the Reproductive Health Act, stronger gun control laws, essential traffic safety improvements, and many other critical concerns during the remainder of the Legislative Session.



I am honored to have interviewed and voted for Judith Chin and Chancellor Betty Rosa (not pictured) to continue to serve on the Board of Regents. The continued expansion of Regents who are experienced educators is fundamental to optimizing our education systems.



At this year's Joint Budget Hearing on Higher Education, the Assembly majority and I held firm in our support for New York's nationally-recognized opportunity programs, increased funding for our community colleges, and for the state to live up to its financial obligation to the SUNY and CUNY systems.

Sustaining Advocacy

In the last year, I have witnessed a swell of activism by my constituents and by people throughout the country. Those of us who believe in smart, forward-thinking policies that promote equity and justice, have been bombarded by an onslaught of assaults on immigrants, the environment, and the poor and middle class. I have been moved that while the news has left some with feelings of despair, it has also spurred action, and I have been left energized and inspired by the collective organizing and actions of those in our community and beyond.

At the same time, I know that activism is taxing, and that as more and more people become engaged it is essential that people organize themselves in ways that effectively marshals their resources and energy so that they have maximum impact. In times like these, when destructive policies are announced or scandals are uncovered daily if not hourly, this can be especially difficult. As soon as you land on an issue you want to lend your voice to, a new issue sprouts up; it's easy in this context to get spread thin, and to burnout. It's also easy to neglect the kind of long term work that often is what leads to effective advocacy.

The truth is that real change is almost always a long process. It requires the kind of attention and vigilance that can be incredibly difficult to sustain even in relatively calm times. As a legislator, I

know that getting a good bill passed that incorporates the work of advocates and ensures, to the extent possible, that there won't be any negative unintended consequences is generally a years-long process. For example, the Assembly first passed a bill legalizing same sex marriage in 2007; it had taken decades to reach that milestone, and we still did not see the bill get passed in the State Senate or signed into law until 2011, after years of additional advocacy and strategizing.

And what happens after we get these big wins? What many people overlook is that while passing legislation or getting a regulation changed is a major accomplishment, these accomplishments can often mean very little to people's everyday lives unless we ensure that they are fully implemented. Often, it is easy to believe that the press release or the bill signing is the end of a process, when in fact it usually marks the beginning. And it's essential that those who advocated for change continue to watch to ensure that those changes are executed fully, and that the implementation has the intended impact. There are many lobbying or special interest groups who wait until their opposition has lost interest and step in to exert their influence in rule making.

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Responding to the Gun Issue in America

The aftermath of the horrific school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida has inspired a national discussion about gun manufacturers, the National Rifle Association (NRA), the epidemic of mass shootings, and the government's response to and responsibility for these events. Since the tragic mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012, many states have updated gun laws to reflect the desire of their citizens, while also seeking to protect the population from an onslaught of gun deaths.

New York State passed the Safe Act, which I proudly supported, in 2013. This created a ban on assault style weapons and high capacity magazines. I continue to support increased gun control legislation that would require background checks on gun sales between private citizens at gun shows as well as requiring a license to own a firearm in the state. Some current bills have already passed the Assembly this year, all of which I voted for including; establishing a 10-day waiting period before any firearm can be sold to a purchaser who has not cleared a background check (A.2406), allowing family members or a doctor to report that an individual is a risk to themselves or others and prohibits firearm possession or purchase (A.8976-B), and a prohibition on the sale, manufacture or possession of bump stocks in New York (A.9958). These bills could further curb gun violence in New York and neighboring states by lessening access to dangerous firearms and modifications that make already harmful firearms more lethal.

In the absence of action by Congress and President Trump, private companies are responding to this crisis and building a customer base that wishes to see their values reflected in their choice of consumer engagement. Many companies have seen their tacit endorsement of the NRA called into question, regarding the sale of military style assault rifles like the AR-15 that has been favored by these mass murderers as their weapon of choice. Recently, Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart have committed to ending sales of these types of guns and many companies are reviewing their discount policies given to NRA members, much like Delta Airlines and Enterprise Rent-A-Car have done. Corporations are free of the claim that they are restricting the Second Amendment, precisely because they are not the government. They are free to make business decisions. While I am glad to see corporations take a firm stance and put values before profits, I hope that all elected officials will see the need for strong leadership and begin standing up to the NRA and the polarizing effect they have on America.

The gun industry is more pervasive throughout society. Even in our investments, such as an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), pension, or our private bank accounts, we can unknowingly invest in gun manufacturers or the NRA. Thankfully, the New York State Common Retirement Fund, a pension fund for public employees and teachers in New York managed by Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, divested from all stocks involved with the gun industry in January 2013 as a response to Sandy Hook. Currently, the fund does not

hold investments in companies whose primary source of revenue is in the manufacture or sale of firearms or ammunition. Many private investment companies and financial institutions can employ similar requirements that IRAs, Roth IRAs, and Individual Accounts not participate in mutual funds that invest in the firearm industry, and individual investors can safeguard their accounts with those desires as well.

Nonetheless many national banks have been investing in the firearms industry for years and are profiting from the rise in recent shootings. Since December 2012, the same month as the Sandy Hook massacre, Wells Fargo & Co., the third largest bank in the USA, financed over \$431 million in loans or bonds to American firearms or ammunition companies. Furthermore, they created a \$28 million line of credit directly for the NRA and handles a majority of the NRA's banking and accounting needs. Many banks have some



involvement with the gun industry and have been responding to the gun debate by divesting assets from direct investment with gun manufacturers. The most recent announcement comes from Citibank, which has stated it will not work with new retailers of firearms which do not abide by simple rules: no sales to anyone under 21 years of age, no sale of bump stocks, no sale to anyone without a cleared background check. It will transition away from existing retailers which do not adopt these rules. It is important to research and understand which financial institutions have a direct connection with the gun industry and find alternative sources for your financial needs when a moral issue

conflicts with a practical need like banking.

Unfortunately, even in New York, there are still those who lobby for reduced restrictions, including a provision to allow concealed carrying of guns, which would more likely endanger the lives of others, rather than be a means of protection. Currently, there is an effort to pass a conceal carry "reciprocity" bill in Congress, which would force states to recognize and authorize out of state conceal carry licenses across state boundaries similar to a driver's license. In New York City, where conceal carry is not allowed, we are at risk of being unable to protect our own citizens because of this federal intrusion. While the bill is currently stuck in the US Senate we must strengthen our gun laws in New York State to make sure that the NRA, and other advocates do not allow support of the Second Amendment to overshadow basic safety, protection, and the continuation of a free and safe society.

The senseless shootings and loss of life in Newtown, Las Vegas, Parkland, Aurora, and Sutherland Springs have finally energized the country and created a renewed determination to make us safer. I will continue to support gun control measures in New York State and work to make sure our state resources do not support the gun industry by proxy. We must continue to ensure that gun deaths end in our country and support the students who are leading the charge on this reform.

Sustaining Advocacy (continued from page 2)

This is the strategy that groups like the National Rifle Association (NRA) have long relied on; they know that after a major incident like a mass shooting, many Americans will be outraged and will call for gun control legislation. Those at the NRA also know that generally, many of those pushing for gun control may not sustain that passion for months, and NRA members and advocates can reassert their steady influence over the political process. This is why the recent March for Our Lives was so powerful; students who survived the Parkland school shooting joined together with diverse anti-gun violence activists from around the country to make their voices heard more than a month after the shooting.

They energized young people across the country (and many of us adults), and communicated clearly that the many marches across the country were not the end but the beginning, registering people to vote, instructing them on how to organize town halls on gun violence, and ensuring that their voices are heard not just now but far into the future. They're a model for the kind of engaged activism that helps make real change, and I hope we can all learn from them.

Democracy flourishes when all people are engaged. Passing bills and regulation changes is an imperative first step, but everyone needs to maintain their vitality to hold government accountable.

Researching the Implementation of Enough is Enough

In recent months, we have seen more and more media reports of the pervasiveness of sexual assault in society. Sexual assault has always been a serious problem, but it has been tolerated by far too many for far too long. People are rightly fed up with the ongoing acceptance of sexual assault as commonplace, and an increase in support for victims has encouraged many individuals to come forward and share their experiences with the hope of finding justice and empowering others. New York is committed to protecting our residents, and in 2015, took significant steps towards increasing supports for those who have suffered from sexual assault by passing essential legislation. Enough is Enough legislation, which I sponsored, addresses this issue on college campuses.

Enough is Enough became law in 2015, and requires colleges in New York State to follow a uniform policy when it comes to handling reports of sexual assault. The main points included in the legislation are:

1. A definition for affirmative consent: a knowing, voluntary, and mutual decision among all participants to engage in sexual activity;
2. An amnesty policy, so that students who report sexual assault are not disciplined for campus policy violations, such as alcohol use; and
3. The creation of a Sexual Assault Victims Unit within the New York State Police Department that is trained in responding to sexual assault related crimes.

Following the law's passage, my office sent a survey to a sample of independent colleges and universities in New York State in an effort to understand how the law was being implemented within

the backdrop of a society which is still grappling with these issues. A majority of the sample responded, without campus designation, and from these responses we concluded that the responding schools were aware of the Enough is Enough legislation as well as the newly created Sexual Assault Victims Unit. The law seems to have had a positive effect on schools due to increased reporting and greater use of services for sexual assault victims. We did not collect information on adjudications from each school, but we are considering this as an area for future research. Below, I wanted to summarize the main findings from our survey:

1. One-quarter of the schools reported more reporting on incidences, while most remained stable.
2. Slightly more than half of the schools reported no more detailed reporting.
3. Most schools already had an amnesty policy.
4. Almost all schools reported greater usage of school counseling services.
5. Just more than half of the schools had utilized the Sexual Assault Victims Unit of the New York State Police.

Addressing the issue of sexual assault is a challenging and complicated objective; however, doing more to protect students on college campuses is an important step in the right direction. I have supported and will continue to support legislation like Enough is Enough which aims to prevent sexual assault as well as support and protect those who have already been victimized. We cannot tolerate the acceptance of sexual assault as the norm, and I will continue doing all that I can to ensure that everyone feels safe and is free of harassment.

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Deborah Glick's



NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

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I was happy to convene a meeting between my elected colleagues in Lower Manhattan and representatives from Community Boards 1, 2 and 3 with State Liquor Authority Chair Vincent Bradley. We discussed ways to improve communication between the SLA and the community. Pictured from Left to Right: Terri Cude, Bob Ely, Carter Booth, State Senator Brad Hoylman, myself, Senator Brian Kavanagh, Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou.