



COMMUNITY NEWS

from Assemblyman

J. GARY PRETLOW

89th Assembly District

Throughout this legislative season, the New York State Assembly strived to pass comprehensive bi-partisan legislation to meet the diverse needs of

every community in New York. I am proud to have worked extremely hard with my colleagues to craft a consensus on many pressing issues our state faces.

NEWS YOU SHOULD KNOW



ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Autumn may have blessed us with extra sunshine and warmer-than-average temperatures this year, but that doesn't mean that winter is going to be as kind to us. As New Yorkers, we're all too familiar with the harsh weather the season can bring, as well as the high bills that come with it. Fortunately, the **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** can help cover those costs.

HEAP, a federally funded program, provides financial assistance to both renters and homeowners and can be used to help cover the costs of electricity, propane, natural gas, wood, oil, kerosene, coal or other heating fuels. Eligible families can also apply for funds to help pay for home heating equipment and repairs.

Eligibility for **HEAP** relies on a number of factors, including income, household size, primary heating source and whether a member of the household is under the age

of 6, over the age of 60 or permanently disabled. For the upcoming winter, a family of four that has a household income of up to \$4,457 a month may qualify for help. Applications are now being accepted and please know that assistance is granted on a first-come, first-served basis. This year, households can receive up to \$726 in assistance. An extra emergency payment is also available to households that are out of fuel or going to have their service shut off. Applications for an emergency benefit open on January 2, 2018.

You can learn more or apply for **HEAP** by visiting www.mybenefits.ny.gov; contacting your local Social Services Department; by calling the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Hotline at 1-800-342-3009 or you can call my office at (914) 667-0127 and we can send you the application.

ELDERLY PHARMACEUTICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE PROGRAM

The Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage program (EPIC) is a program administered by the Department of Health and helps thousands of income-eligible seniors age 65 and older to supplement their out-of-pocket Medicare Part D drug plan costs. Seniors can apply for EPIC anytime of the year and

it's easy to join the program.

If you would like to receive more information or would like to apply for EPIC, please call my office at (914) 667-0127 and we would be glad to send you an application.

FAMILY PAID LEAVE

Family always comes first. We drop what we're doing to be by a loved one's side in a time of need and make sacrifices for them in an instant; but unfortunately, selfless actions like those can come with a harsh price tag for far too many people. It can be the difference between food on the table or an empty fridge because for so many New Yorkers, a leave from work simply isn't an option. That's about to change when the state's new **Paid Family Leave Program** begins on January 1, 2018.

Under **New York's Paid Family Leave Program**, almost all workers will be eligible for paid family leave benefits. This is a drastic improvement over the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, which only offers unpaid leave and covers just 60 percent of the workforce.

New York's program is being phased in, ensuring employers have enough time to adjust and implement it. In 2018, workers will be eligible for eight weeks of job-protected paid leave at 50 percent of their average

weekly wage up to 50 percent of the statewide average weekly wage. In 2019, it will increase to 10 weeks of leave at 55 percent of the worker's average weekly wage up to 55 percent of the statewide average weekly wage, then to 60 percent of the worker's average weekly wage up to 60 percent of the statewide average weekly wage in 2020. By 2021, it will rise to 12 weeks at 67 percent of the worker's average weekly wage up to 67 percent of the statewide average weekly wage.

Together, we are building a stronger New York State. Progressive policies like paid family leave serve as an example across the nation of what we can do to support working families and ensure equal opportunity for all. If you would like additional information about the state's **Paid Family Leave Program** and how it could affect you, call the **Paid Family Leave Helpline** at 1-844-337-6303.



COMMUNITY SWIMMING IS BACK IN MOUNT VERNON

On November 4, 2017, I along with members of the Mount Vernon City School District had the great opportunity to celebrate the grand reopening of the Mount Vernon High School Swimming Pool.

According to a 2010 study reported by the United States Swimming and Research Center, 70% of African Americans and 60% of Hispanic children are unable to swim or have very little swimming abilities. This distressing statistic convinced me to secure \$1,000,000 so that all in the community can have access to a safe, high quality swimming facility.

The facility will be available to the entire Mount Vernon community. The district is planning to offer free, year-round swimming lessons as well as offer training programs for students who are interested in becoming life guards.



SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR HEALTH FOCUS ON STROKE

As a longtime advocate of good health and my ongoing efforts to protect the wellbeing of our families, I find it my duty to continue to bring attention to some of the illnesses that many people are facing but are unaware of.

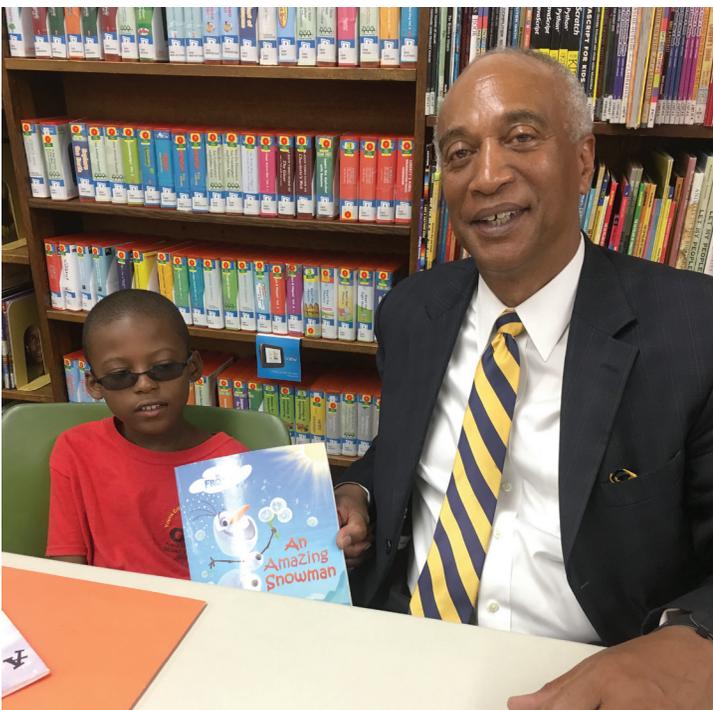
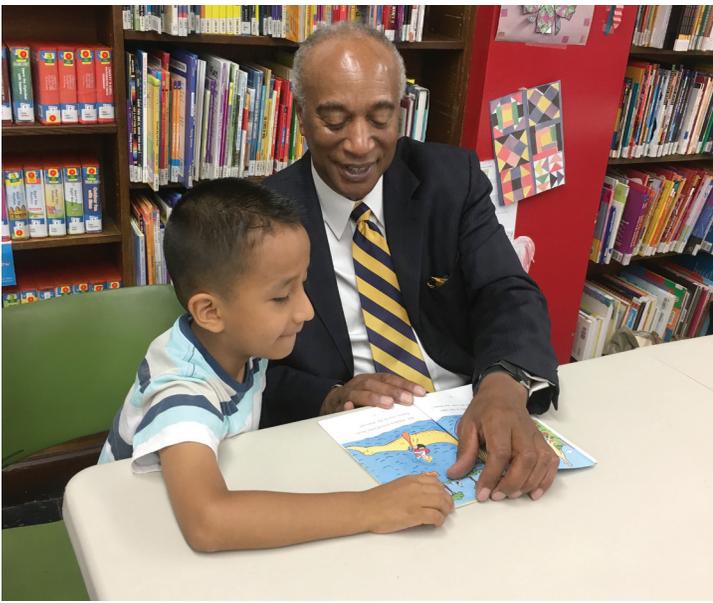
According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States, behind heart disease and cancer, and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in adults. About 600,000 new strokes are reported in the U.S. each year.

Although stroke is a disease of the brain, it can affect the entire body. The effects of a stroke range from mild to severe and can include paralysis, problems with thinking, problems with speaking, and emotional problems. Patients may also experience pain or numbness after a stroke.

Every minute counts when someone is having a stroke so it is very important to recognize the signs and call 911 immediately. The warning signs of a stroke (a type of cardiovascular disease) include: sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body; sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, sudden and severe headache with no known cause.

The best treatment for stroke is prevention. If you smoke, quit. If you have high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes or high cholesterol, getting and keeping them under control will greatly reduce your chances of having a stroke.

89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



DID YOU KNOW?

It is still a law for our young men to register for the **Selective Service System**. All men who are United States Citizens or Aliens living in the United States and are between the ages of 18 and 26 years old are required to register with the Selective Service.

If men do not register by the age of 26, they can be prosecuted, and if convicted, face very large fines.

Those men that fail to register, if not prosecuted, will become ineligible for Student Financial Aid, United States Citizenship, Federal Job Training, Federal Jobs and Federally Backed Loans (FHA, etc.).

For more information and to register online contact www.sss.gov. Please contact my office if you would like for us to mail an application to you.

CLIP AND RETURN



Your questions or comments are important to me. If you have any concerns or issues you would like to discuss with me, please indicate and return to:

Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow, 89th District
6 Gramatan Avenue, Suite 201, Mt. Vernon, New York 10550

Name:

Address:



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**J. Gary
PRETLOW**

WINTER 2017

Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow



DISTRICT OFFICE: 6 Gramatan Avenue, Suite 201 • Mt. Vernon, New York 10550 • 914-667-0127
ALBANY OFFICE: Room 845 Legislative Office Building • Albany, New York 12248 • 518-455-5291
Email: pretlowj@nyassembly.gov