



# Assemblywoman STACEY PHEFFER AMATO

## 2019 Legislative Update and Community Events Invitation

### YEAR AT A GLANCE

*Dear Neighbors,*

*It has been my honor to represent you during the 2019 New York State Assembly Legislative Session this past year. I will continue to work tirelessly for each of you in Ozone Park, Lindenwood, Howard Beach, Hamilton Beach, Broad Channel, Rockaway Beach, Belle Harbor, Neponsit, Breezy Point, Arverne, Far Rockaway, and Bayswater.*

*Inside this edition of the 2019 Legislative Budget Report for the 23rd Assembly District are updates from the passage of the State budget, legislative victories and priorities for the upcoming 2020 Legislative Session, along with other items of interest to neighbors.*

*As always, I am committed to making our neighborhood a safe and healthy place to live, work, and raise a family with a focus on building an economy that generates good jobs and an education system that prepares our children for a bright future. Your thoughts, input, and other important issues are valuable to me, and I welcome your viewpoints. Please feel free to contact my office by phone, email, or social media, and sign up for our regular email updates by sending a note to [amatos@nyassembly.gov](mailto:amatos@nyassembly.gov), or by calling our office at 718-945-9550.*

Stacey Pheffer Amato  
Member of Assembly, 23<sup>rd</sup> District

## 2019 UPDATES



Pheffer Amato hosts a press conference to announce the expansion of the Resident Rebate Program for the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge to All Queens Residents.

### Expansion of Resident Rebate Program for the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge to All Queens Residents

The Rockaway Resident Rebate program at the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge (CBB) will be expanded to all Queens County residents starting in spring of 2020. The necessary funding to expand this program was secured in both houses of the Legislature, with the help of Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., during the 2019-20 budget negotiations, utilizing the Outer Borough Transportation Account, which was established as part of the surcharge on for-hire vehicles passed last year. This is a HUGE victory not only for the residents of The Rockaway Peninsula, but for all the hardworking families and small businesses of Queens.

### Protecting our Environment

The 2019-20 state budget provides \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to preserve our natural resources. The budget also provides \$23 million in clean energy tax credits to encourage the use of clean and alternative energy. Moreover, there has been an increase in our states historic investment in clean water to \$3 billion to address emerging contaminants, replace lead drinking water service lines, and repair aging water mains and sewer lines.

The New York State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Ch. 106 of 2019) also passed through the legislature. The act:

- Sets goals to combat climate change, including: reducing greenhouse gas emissions 85% by 2050, producing 70% of the state's electricity from renewable energy systems by 2030, and producing 100% of the state's electricity without emissions by 2040.

- Establishes the New York States Climate Action Council to keep the state on track with its goals.
- Authorizes renewable energy projects in public low-income housing statewide.
- Promotes environmental justice and sets aside 35% of the overall benefits of spending on clean energy and energy efficiency for projects in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Our children and grandchildren are counting on us to take action now to protect the planet. In New York State, we're leading the fight against climate change and putting us on a path toward a greener, more sustainable future.



Pheffer Amato presented NYS Assembly Citations to the Channel View Robotics team who won the First Tech Challenge Qualifying Tournament at John Dewey High School.

### Fighting for Our Children and Schools

The 2019-20 budget looks out for our children and ensures that our schools have the resources they need. The budget provides:

- \$27.8 billion in education funding, an increase of \$1 billion or 3.7% over last year.
- \$618 million increase in Foundation Aid, for a total of \$18.4 billion, to help ensure quality education for every child.
- \$848 million to pre-kindergarten grants to help more kids get started on the right foot.
- \$30 million on uncollected lottery winnings earmarked for public schools.

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- \$250 million in Community Schools Aid to provide vital support to at-risk kids and their families.

## Critical Health Funding

The budget provides \$641 million in Medicaid Restorations and an additional \$34 million in Public Health Programs. Although the state is faced with limited resources, the Assembly remains committed to making sure New Yorkers have access to the vital services they need. The approved budget restores \$550 million in Medicaid cuts, including \$222 million for a two percent rate increase for hospitals and a 1.5 percent increase for nursing homes, \$190.2 million for the 0.8 percent across-the-board Medicaid claims cuts, and \$137.8 million for the hospital Indigent Care Pool. The budget plan would also enable fair drug pricing by prohibiting pharmacy benefit managers from engaging in spread pricing and by adding additional transparency. Other critical public health investments include:

- \$16 million in contingency funding for potential changes to Federal Family Planning grants;
- \$4 million for the prevention of maternal mortality; and
- \$500,000 for the Diversity in Medicine program.

The plan also expedites the award of \$300 million in capital funding to support health care facilities.

## Ensuring Everyone is Counted in the 2020 Census

The 2020 Census will have major implications on the future of our state. Each person not counted costs New York thousands of dollars in federal aid, putting the funding we need to maintain our hospitals, schools, and transportation infrastructure at risk, as well as the size of our congressional representation. We need to ensure every person is counted – there’s too much at stake. The 2019-20 state budget includes \$20 million to promote the census and to assist with funding for local outreach efforts. Neighborhood organizations not only know their communities best, but their members are trusted and will be better able to motivate people to participate.

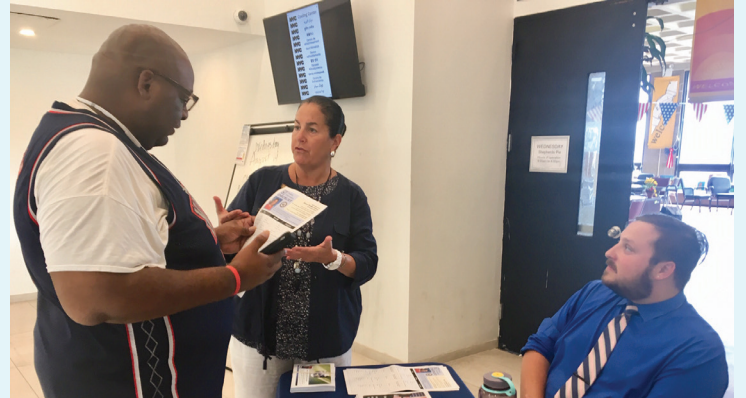


Pheffer Amato attending MS 137’s Career Day.

## Protecting Tenants and Ensuring Safe, Affordable Housing

As the cost of living continues to outpace wage growth, we must ensure our families aren’t priced out of the communities they helped build. Our budget makes critical investments to protect and expand

affordable housing statewide for homeowners and tenants alike and helps ensure every New Yorker has a safe, affordable place to call home.



## Supporting Homeowners and Seniors

To help more New Yorkers remain in their homes, the state budget provides \$20 million for the Communities First program to fund foreclosure prevention assistance. It also requires lenders to provide 90 days notice to homeowners facing foreclosure and makes settlement conferences mandatory. The budget includes a \$15 million increase for Expanded In-home Services Program (EISEP), which offers non-medical, in-home services such as personal care and housekeeping, for a total of \$65.1 million. Seniors helped make New York the vibrant and diverse state that it is today, and it’s our responsibility to support them as they age. The budget expands access to critical services to ensure seniors can remain in their homes surrounded by family and friends for as long as possible.



## Early Voting and Modernizing our Voting System

To help ensure every New Yorker has an opportunity to participate in our democracy, the Assembly passed a law establishing early voting during a nine-day period before any general, primary, run-off primary or special election to make voting more accessible (Ch. 6 of 2019). The budget also makes primary voting hours consistent across the state, requiring all counties to have polling sites open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Giving New Yorkers more flexibility and time to cast their votes should boost participation in our elections. Voting should be an easy and convenient process. No one should have to jump through hoops to vote or miss out on the opportunity to make their voice heard on vital issues that will impact their life. The state budget enacts an electronic voter registration system through which voters can register and have their application submitted to the appropriate local board of elections online.



Pheffer Amato celebrating the 1st anniversary of the Rockaway Beach Broadcasting Company Radio.

## Making the Property Tax Cap Permanent, Keeping Taxes in Check

The 2019-20 state budget makes the 2 percent property tax cap permanent, limiting the annual growth of local property taxes to 2 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is lower. Implemented in 2012, the tax cap has saved New York property taxpayers \$24.4 billion statewide. Making it permanent will provide taxpayers with predictable tax bills from year to year and guard against skyrocketing double-digit hikes. The 2 percent property tax cap was set to expire next year. The budget also continues the phase in of middle-class tax cuts. We drew a line in the sand with the cap so that families wouldn't be priced out of their homes and to make our state more business friendly. The cap makes New York more affordable, helps seniors stay in their homes, and has saved homeowners thousands of dollars.



## Helping our Veterans Get Ahead

While the brave men and women who fought for our country have a vast array of skills and invaluable experiences, there are times where they may need assistance when they come home. The budget honors the immense sacrifices made by our veterans by restoring more than \$1.6 million to various programs that will help these heroes begin new chapters of their lives. These vital programs help veterans use their diverse skills to find gainful employment, connect them to needed resources, and provide legal and other services to low-income active-duty members so that veterans and their families are supported in their transition back to civilian life.

The funding includes:

- \$500,000 for the NYS Defenders' Association;
- \$200,000 for Helmets to Hardhats;
- \$200,000 for Clear Path for Veterans;
- \$125,000 for Veterans of Foreign Wars; and
- \$100,000 for the SAGE Veterans Project.



Pheffer Amato joins NYC Parks Commissioner Silver and community leaders at the grand opening of Sunset Cove in Broad Channel, Queens.



Pheffer Amato at her annual Women of Distinction Event.



Pheffer Amato stands proudly with the labor movement in Albany during Legislative Session.

## Sponsored Legislation

**A.1801-A:** This bill amends the New York State Education law to make a special provision for the observance of a “brief period of silence” each September 11 at the start of the school day in schools state-wide. According to the language in the bill, this would provide students with the “opportunity for silent prayer or for silent reflection” on the anniversary day. Currently, students graduating from high school as part of the Class of 2019 were just newborns in 2001, and soon enough there will be no students in the national public school system born at the time of 9/11. By mandating a brief moment of silent reflection every year, we may ensure that future generations will better understand this day and its place in our history. This bill was signed into Law by the Governor on September 10 and is effective immediately.



**A.7819-A:** This bill expands the NYC 9/11 first responders who qualify for unlimited sick leave and codifies their access into law. Those who risked their lives without hesitation running into those burning buildings and those who served by returning in the aftermath to save the lives of others, exposed themselves to dangerous chemicals and toxins that have lasting effects. This bill was signed into law by the Governor on September 11th.

**A.3593-A:** This bill increases the number of alternate physicians who may be appointed to serve as the medical board of the NYC Employees' Retirement System (NYCERS). Under the current law, appointing authorities cannot appoint physicians with enough specialties to meet the current needs of NYCERS members, many of whom apply for multiple claimed conditions resulting from exposure during World Trade Center (WTC) rescue, recovery and clean up (e.g., pulmonary, cancer, PTSD, etc.). As it stands currently, each Medical Board must consist of one physician from each of the three appointing authorities or agencies therefore leading to the possibility of not serving the many applicants who apply for multiple claimed conditions due to the lack of specialist on the Medical Review Board. The changes provided by the bill would allow an applicant to be examined by a Medical Board consisting

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## Upcoming Events

### MTA MetroCard Pop-Up Table/Van

Tuesday, October 29th / 10:00 am to Noon

Lindenwood Shopping Center

(82-35 153rd Avenue, Howard Beach, Queens)

Tuesday, October 29th / 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Outside the Wavecrest Shopping Center

(2-43 Beach 20th Street, Far Rockaway, Queens)

### Free Mammogram Screening for Eligible Women

Friday, September 27th / 9 am – 5:00 pm

Key Food parking lot 88-03 Rockaway Beach Boulevard

### Naloxone Trainings

Thursday, October 17th / Ozone Park Library

Thursday, October 24th / Peninsula Library in Rockaway Beach

Both events begin at 6:00 pm. The training's are hosted in conjunction with the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services. The sessions will teach participants how to recognize, respond to, and reverse an opioid overdose using Naloxone.

of physicians whose qualifications best meet the needs of the specific applicant. For example, if an applicant's claimed disability involves issues with the heart, as well as cancer, under this proposed legislation the applicant could be examined by a Medical Board that includes a cardiologist and an oncologist, regardless of what authority appointed them. By requiring additional availability of physicians and more flexible parameters in appointing a panel, it speeds the entire process of scheduling appointments, and overall processing of applicants. This bill was signed into law by the Governor on September 11.

**A.8096:** This bill amends the executive law as it relates to the powers and duties of local veterans' service agencies across the state. The bill would require local veterans' service agencies to assist veterans who are in the process of submitting an application for discharge upgrade to the Discharge Upgrade Advisory Board at the NYS Division of Veterans' Service. This bill seeks to help the veterans who are in the process of upgrading his or her military discharge by having the staff of the Local Veterans Service Agencies assist the veteran in completing their application for a discharge pursuant to the Division of Veterans' Services Discharge Upgrade Advisory Board standards of review. As state and federal governments move to streamline services so we can improve quality of service for those who have sacrificed so much, I am proud to make this modest, but important contribution. This bill has been sent to the Governor for his signature.

New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248

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Assemblywoman  
**Stacey  
Pheffer Amato**

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**YEAR AT A GLANCE**

## Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato

*Chair, Subcommittee on Child Product Safety*

*Member, Committee on Consumer Affairs and Protection, Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions,  
Committee on Governmental Employees, Committee on Racing and Wagering, and Committee on Veterans' Affairs,  
Member, Legislative Women's Caucus and Task Force on Women's Issues*

**Rockaway District Office:** 95-16 Rockaway Beach Blvd., Rockaway Beach, NY 11693 • 718-945-9550

**Howard Beach District Office:** 162-38 Cross Bay Blvd., Howard Beach, NY 11414 • 718-641-8755

**Albany Office:** Room 827 Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-4292 • **Email:** amatos@nyassembly.gov

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/AssemblywomanStaceyPhefferAmato/>

**Web:** <http://nyassembly.gov/mem/Stacey-Pheffer-Amato/>

