



Assemblywoman STACEY PHEFFER AMATO

Legislative and Community Report for the 23rd Assembly District

YEAR AT A GLANCE 2021

Dear Neighbors,

I'm proud to represent you in the New York State Assembly and will continue to work tirelessly on behalf of Ozone Park, Lindenwood, Howard Beach, Hamilton Beach, Broad Channel, Rockaway Beach, Belle Harbor, Neponsit, Breezy Point, Far Rockaway, Bayswater, Edgemere, and Arverne.

2021 reaffirmed what we already knew about our community: that we are resilient, strong, and will always come together as a community during times of adversity. With vaccination rates increasing and COVID-19 restrictions easing, we are steadily moving back towards normalcy and recovery. 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 jobs and an education system that prepares our children for a bright future.

Inside this edition of the Summer 2021 Legislative and Community Report for the 23rd Assembly District are updates from over the past year, and other items of interest to neighbors. 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, or by calling my office at 718-945-9550.

Stacey Pheffer Amato

Member of Assembly, 23rd District

2021 LEGISLATIVE AND COMMUNITY UPDATES

Investing in Education

Schools are not just places to learn, they are communities that help our children grow, develop new skills, and find interests and passions that will stick with them for the rest of their lives. From Pre-K to graduation day, our children's education is one of the most formative elements of their upbringing. This year, we fought to increase education funding to record levels in public and non-public schools.

Every child, no matter where they live, deserves a quality education, and through the NYS budget my office has voted to secure:

- \$29.5 billion in education funding for public schools, an increase of \$3 billion – or 11% – over the previous year;
- \$924 million for Universal Pre-K Funding, a \$105 million increase from the previous year; and
- \$40 million for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math in non-public schools, a \$10 million increase from the prior budget and a record level of funding.



Pheffer Amato Visiting the Torah Academy for Girls New York State Fair.

- \$42.6 million for the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP);
- \$38.6 million for the Education Opportunity Program (EOP); and
- \$33.7 million for Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK).



Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato with Students of Raising Hope Day Care.



Pheffer Amato Giving Remarks at the JHS 202 Middle School Graduation.

Higher Education

Our students need to know that we always have their backs, and that doesn't end when they graduate from high school. Higher education is a critical step to building a bright and successful future, and we can help ensure a college degree is within reach for every one of our young New Yorkers. Through the budget, the Assembly secured cost-saving measures, and funding increases for programs that make college more accessible for all including:

- A rejection of any proposed tuition increases at SUNY and CUNY campuses;

Providing Relief to Tenants, Landlords, and Homeowners

The pandemic highlighted many of the struggles that middle class families face on a day-to-day basis. That's why I fought to ensure that middle class tax breaks aren't delayed any further and advocated for

Continued on next page

our homeowners by securing an income tax credit to taxpayers with incomes under \$250,000 that have property tax burdens that exceed 6% of their income. Additionally, the state legislature has passed legislation that will:

- Combine federal and state efforts to provide \$2.3 billion for rental assistance, as well as \$100 million in state aid to provide for hardship cases for landlords and renters that are outside of federal eligibility;
- Create the Emergency Rental Assistance Program which can provide up to 12 months of rent arrears accrued on or after March 13, 2020, up to 12 months of utility arrears, and up to three months of prospective rent assistance for those who are rent burdened (or paying 30% or more of their income toward rent) if needed to ensure housing stability; and
- Fund the version of the Federal Mortgage Relief Program in New York State which will provide assistance to owners of one-to-four-unit properties secured by a mortgage and requires at least 60% of funds to be used to assist homeowners with incomes less than the AMI.



Pheffer Amato Presenting Grindtime Skate Shop with her May 2021 Small Business of the Month Award.

Supporting Our Businesses

Small businesses, and the people they employ, have been particularly impacted by this pandemic, and the budget plan puts these hardworking entrepreneurs at the forefront of our recovery through the Pandemic Recovery and Restart Program. Additionally, through the state budget, the legislature has worked to help small businesses grow by including measures that:

- Create new state tax credits to support industries and fields that were hit hard by the pandemic through the Pandemic Recovery and Restart Program, including:
 - \$35 million in restaurant return-to-work tax credits for eligible independently-owned restaurants in New York City and Red and Orange Zone-designated areas;
 - \$100 million in New York City musical and theatrical production tax credits; and
 - The restaurant credit is advance-able in the upcoming year to provide immediate aid.
- Extend the Farm Workforce Retention Credit for another three years, which is a refundable tax credit for farm employers and owners of farm employers.



Pheffer Amato Urging "Fred's Law" to Be Signed by the Governor at a Press Conference.



Pheffer Amato Touring the West Pond Restoration Site at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.

Protecting Our Environment

Preserving the environment for future generations is one of the critical issues of our time, and we took action to preserve and protect our environment throughout the last year. Urged by the advocacy of our community, I pushed to finally end PSE&G's relationship with LIPA and towards a truly public utility – one that works for the people, not for corporate shareholders. Additionally, through the budget we secured more funding for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and record funding for environmental infrastructure. Funding in the budget includes:

- \$500 million for clean water infrastructure;
- \$300 million for the EPF; and
- \$100 million to fund restoring previously hazardous waste sites.

This year's budget also advances a \$3 billion Environmental Bond Act – to be put in front of voters on the ballot in 2022 – to help reduce flood risks, protect shorelines, and improve water quality.



Pheffer Amato Participating in the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Rocco's of Roc Beach.

Strengthening Transportation and Infrastructure

This year, the legislature invested billions of dollars in strengthening and repairing crumbling public transportation in this state including:

- \$3 billion toward the \$54.8 billion 2020-24 Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Capital Plan, which is a total increase of \$20.9 billion, or 62% over the previous plan;
- \$236.1 million in operating assistance for the MTA, including \$98.1 million in funding that was withheld in 2020-21;
- \$20 million for electric buses;
- \$1 million for electric vehicle charging stations;
- An additional \$50 million for PAVE NY, which is used to rehabilitate and repave local roads and bridges, improving safety for drivers; and
- An additional \$100 million for the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), bringing the total to \$538 million.

Honoring Veterans and Protecting First Responders

Our country is eternally grateful for the brave men and women who choose to protect and defend our city, our nation, and the freedoms we enjoy. The final budget helps ensure that veterans get essential support they need to overcome hurdles and make the transition back to civilian life as smooth as possible.

This included:

- Extending the Hire-a-Vet tax credit, which offers a tax credit for employers who hire veterans, for two additional years; and
- Restoring \$4.505 million and includes an additional \$495,000 for the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project, for a total of \$5 million, a program for veterans who have returned home with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and other mental and behavioral health issues.



Pheffer Amato Speaking with Veterans During a Memorial Day Service.

Protecting St. John's Episcopal Hospital

Earlier this year, with united support from our community and partners in government, my office fought to stop a New York State Department of Health proposal to turn St. John's Episcopal Hospital into a micro-hospital, and dramatically reduce their hospital bed capacity. Not only did we stop the plan, but we ensured that the hospital had all of the financial support they needed to maintain the high quality care they provide to our community. The hospital was at the center of the pandemic when it first began, and we will always be thankful and grateful for the entire St. John's team for their dedication to our community.



Pheffer Amato Attending the St. John's Episcopal Hospital Health and Wellness Fair.

Defending Affordable Healthcare, Public Health Programs, and Mental Health Resources

We are in the midst of a public health crisis most of us could never have imagined. That's why ensuring access to quality healthcare and mental health resources has become even more crucial. This year, the state legislature passed bills and funded programs that would:

- Increase the budget to the state Department of Health by \$3 billion, bringing the total to \$96 billion;
- Restore \$542 million to Medicaid;
- Allocate \$32 million to support treatment and prevention of opioid use disorder, including Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT); and
- Restore \$3.48 million for the New York City Department of Education Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialist (SAPIS).



Pheffer Amato Distributing Turkeys Provided by the Far Rockaway Colts for Families in Need.

Legislative Success:

This year, our office introduced 42 bills, ranging from increasing environmental protection in Jamaica Bay to securing more rights for folks with disabilities in healthcare facilities, and expanding water safety and education throughout our state. Below is a list of bills that passed the New York State Assembly this session:

A.453: Protecting Jamaica Bay

A.754-A: Banning the sale of whipped cream chargers to folks under 21

A.4685-A: Prohibits general hospitals from disallowing individuals with disabilities from having an essential support person accompany them for the duration of their hospitalization "Fred's Law"

A.7274: Extending Hurricane Sandy-related work permits for Breezy Point

A.7508: Relates to the improvement of operations in thoroughbred racing

A.7671: Mitchell-Lama Downsizing Reform – Signed into law

A.7734: Established Commission to Prevent Childhood Drowning in New York State

A.7755-A: Authorizes the retention of federal funds for special education programs for preschool children that are subject to tuition rate reconciliation

A.8027: Increases the number of Supreme Court Justices in the State – Signed into law



Pheffer Amato Catching Up with Senior Citizens at a Golden Age Event.



Pheffer Amato Greeting the New York State Assembly Chamber.

Water Safety Bill

This past legislative session, the New York State Assembly passed my bill (A.7734), which will create a statewide commission on childhood drowning. The bill, once signed, will be the first comprehensive study in our state to help develop a statewide pathway towards increasing water safety throughout New York State.

Mitchell-Lama Reform

Additionally, the New York State Assembly passed my bill (A.7671), which will create a streamlined and transparent process for Mitchell-Lama shareholders looking to upsize or downsize their apartments. This bill was signed into law by Governor Cuomo, and will help thousands of middle-class shareholders throughout the City of New York, and create an easy-to-follow process to secure a new apartment.

Mobile Office Hours

Throughout the summer, our office will be holding Mobile Office Hours where you can visit us and relay your concerns directly to my office, or just stop by and say hello. For more information on when and where our events will be, follow me on Twitter @Stacey23AD, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AssemblywomanStaceyPhefferAmato/, call my office at 718-945-9550, or sign up for my newsletter at amatos@nyassembly.gov.

Below are the dates, times, and locations of the first batch of Mobile Office Hours:

Thursday, August 12th, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Tudor Park: 82nd St. & 133rd Ave., Ozone Park

Thursday, August 19th, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Stop and Shop: 70-20 Rockaway Beach Blvd., Arverne

Tuesday, August 24th, 5:30 – 7:00 pm

Wavecrest Garden Apts.: Flagpole by Boardwalk, Far Rockaway

Thursday, August 26th, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

C-Town Supermarket: 107-66 Cross Bay Blvd., Queens

Tuesday, August 31st, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Ozone Park Library: 92-24 Rockaway Blvd., Ozone Park

Thursday, September 9th, 8:30 – 10:00 am

Broad Channel Bagel & Barista: 20-10 Cross Bay Blvd., Queens

Tuesday, September 14th, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

*Food Emporium, Lindenwood Shopping Center:
153rd Ave. & 83rd St., Howard Beach*

Saturday, September 18th, 10:00 – 11:30 am

*Wavecrest Garden Apts.: Flagpole by Boardwalk,
Far Rockaway*

Thursday, September 23rd, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Peninsula Library

Thursday, September 30th, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

7-11 A Seagirt Blvd. Lobby, Far Rockaway

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Assemblywoman
**Stacey
Pheffer Amato**

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN STACEY PHEFFER AMATO

Deputy Majority Whip, New York State Assembly Majority Conference

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

f <https://www.facebook.com/AssemblywomanStaceyPhefferAmato/> **t** @Stacey23AD

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

During COVID-19, our great team has been working to help serve our neighbors. If you have any concerns, please reach out to us and we will assist you:

Chief of Staff: Danny Randell, randell@nyassembly.gov

Director of Constituent Services: P'nina Gluck, gluck@nyassembly.gov

Education Specialist/Community Liaison:

Irene Dougherty, connollydougherty@nyassembly.gov

Legislative and Communications Coordinator:

Maura Avington, avingtonm@nyassembly.gov

Scheduler/Constituent Liaison:

Bernice Almonte, almonteb@nyassembly.gov

Constituent Liaison:

Gabby Breen, breenb@nyassembly.gov