



A Message From
DAVID I. WEPRIN



Dear Friend and Neighbor,

Spring is finally here, and it certainly was a winter to remember. Throughout the entire season, heavy snowfalls and bone-chilling wintery days did not seem to let up, but that never stopped us from moving forward either. With the City's hardworking Sanitation and Transportation personnel on the front lines, and my office staff constantly handling constituent calls for assistance, the 24th Assembly District proudly answered all snow and ice related requests.

Once again, as your local advocate in Albany, I will do everything I can to ensure that our district is more prosperous and resourceful than ever before. This means I will be fighting hard for funding to rebuild our local roads and highways that were heavily damaged from road salt and constant plowing during the rough winter months, to expand more after-school programs for our children, and to pay for vital services for our community's most vulnerable populations: the seniors and the disabled.

As always, you can count on me to be your voice in Albany. Together, we can further build and strengthen our community bonds. Please contact either of my offices to let me know how I can be of further service to you and your family.

Yours sincerely,

David I. Weprin
Member of Assembly

Serving the partial or entire communities of:

Briarwood, Bellerose, Bellerose Manor, Fresh Meadows, Glen Oaks, Hillcrest, Holliswood, Jamaica Estates, Jamaica Hills, Oakland Gardens, Queens Village, Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, and Utopia

Legislative Appointments and Budget Recap

I am excited to announce that this past March, I was appointed by Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie as **SECRETARY to the ASSEMBLY MAJORITY CONFERENCE**; part of the Assembly Majority Leadership team. Coupled with that added leadership duty and responsibilities, was my recent appointment as a Member of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, as well as my re-appointment as Chairman of the Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities, I am going to keep on fighting so that you get the resources and benefits you deserve. That has been my top priority from Day One, and it will continue to be my number-one priority as long as I have the privilege of serving you as your Assemblyman.

On March 31, we approved a \$150 billion budget for New York State that increased funding for our state's education programs by \$1.6 billion to a record high of \$23.5 billion. This is the fifth year in a row that we had a NYS Budget in place on April 1. To that end, I applaud the new Assembly Speaker for his negotiating skills and for being a true advocate for all New Yorkers. As Chair of the People with Disabilities Task Force, I am especially happy that the 4201 Schools, schools for the blind, deaf, and disabled students will receive an increase of \$2.3 million. An additional \$500,000 was added for CUNY LEADS, an academic and career program for students with disabilities at the City University of New York—totaling \$1.5 million, and there was a \$1 million increase to the independent living centers in our state—totaling about \$13.4 million. This truly was a monumental budget session with an historic ethics reform package.

IN MEMORY OF GOVERNOR MARIO CUOMO



Pictured: (l-r) Future NYC Councilman Mark Weprin, Governor Mario Cuomo, and future Assemblyman David Weprin at Mark Weprin's college graduation ceremony from University at Albany-SUNY in 1983 where both Mark and Governor Cuomo were the Commencement Speakers.

On New Year's Day this year, New York's beloved former Governor Mario Cuomo passed away after battling an illness for many months. Even before becoming governor, Mario Cuomo always wanted to make New York a better place, not just for himself, but for everyone, including the underprivileged and the working class. In essence, he was a true fighter for the unheard voices. I began my career in public service as Deputy Superintendent of Banks during Cuomo's first administration. To me, Mario Cuomo was a mentor, a neighbor, and a friend. He constantly helped guide me to be a better public servant. May he forever rest in peace, and may his memory be a blessing for us all.

Assemblyman Weprin in the Community



As part of his outreach efforts as Chair of the Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities, Assemblyman Weprin attended the Queens Council on Developmental Disabilities' annual legislative breakfast event held on March 20 in Downtown Flushing. There, the Assemblyman offered comprehensive updates on the ongoing budget negotiations and discussions in Albany, as well as answered questions from several advocates and community liaisons.



On February 1, Assemblyman Weprin presented a NYS Assembly proclamation to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan (*center*), Ambassador Dnyaneshwar Manohar Mulay (*left*), and other senior Indian delegation members at Lincoln Center in New York during their launch event of the 'Friends of MP' initiative.

The initiative, in association with the Consulate of India in New York, was launched to stimulate, amongst its well-wishers and friends—especially those who live outside Madhya Pradesh—ideas and thinking for its progress.



Pictured: Weprin (center) with (l-r) Kimberly Hill; Director of the Assembly's People with Disabilities Task Force & Lindsay Miller; NYAIL Executive Director.

On February 11, Assemblyman David Weprin was recognized by the New York Association on Independent Living for his ongoing work and commitment for the many disabled populations in New York State.

Assemblyman David Weprin was joined by Assemblyman Mike Miller (*left*), State Senator James Sanders (*right*), and dozens of community advocates and religious leaders at a press conference about the Religious Garb Bill.

The Religious Garb Bill, sponsored by Assemblyman Weprin, passed overwhelmingly in past legislative sessions in the Assembly, and will continue to be a priority bill this year. Senator Sanders is the Senate sponsor of the bill. This bill requires employers to respect employees' religious beliefs and dress, allowing for religious attire to be worn in the workplace.



Assemblyman Weprin Welcomes Former NY Met and Hall of Famer Pedro Martínez to Albany

On February 26, the Hall-of-Fame-bound pitching legend Pedro Martínez stopped by the State Capitol in honor of a Dominican Independence Day celebration. During his visit, Mr. Martínez was recognized and honored as part of a Dominican Heritage Week and for his on- and off-the-field achievements in the communities, which have inspired countless Dominican-Americans throughout the nation.

Pedro Martínez is scheduled to be inducted into the Hall of Fame in July. The former New York Mets pitcher is only the second Dominican Republic-born inductee.



Assemblyman Weprin and Community Leaders Reject Move-NY's New Congestion Pricing Plan

At a press conference on March 1, Assemblyman Weprin was joined by the Queens Chamber of Commerce, Queens Civic Congress, Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free, and other community small business advocates to express strong opposition to Move NY's recently introduced 'Congestion Pricing Initiative,' also known as "Fair Plan." The plan would add permanent tolls (\$5.54 with EZ-Pass) to the four East River bridges: the Queensboro, the Williamsburg, the Brooklyn, and the Manhattan bridges, as well as along the entire 60th Street corridor in Manhattan. The goal of the plan is to, while reducing

the tolls on the outer major bridges, decrease the overall congestion levels in-and-around the city through the revenue collections. However, for many of the outer-borough residents who do not have alternative, effective transit systems nearby, they do not have other options but to drive. That is why the Plan is nothing but a renewed toll-tax scheme; it unfairly penalizes those residents and businesses that rely on driving their automobiles. Assemblyman Weprin called the plan a 'highway robbery,' which has no place in this city.



Assemblyman David Weprin and Councilman Rory Lancman presented proclamations from the NYS Assembly and NYC Council, respectively, during their attendance at the Young Israel of Jamaica Estates' 36th anniversary celebration. The YIJE has been at the forefront of delivering cultural awareness, Jewish education, and youth empowerment to countless families in Queens since its inception in 1978.

Both the Assemblyman and the Councilman congratulated this year's Guests of Honor (*left*) Judy & Zev Berman, and (*right*) Mazalit and Mordy Brandwein for their tireless work and dedication to make Queens a far better place for everyone living, working, and raising a family here.



Remembering the Two Fallen NYPD Heroes

In light of the heinous ambush and murders of two NYPD officers, Detectives Liu and Ramos of Brooklyn, Assemblyman Weprin visited the Sikh Cultural Society in Richmond Hill in February to pay tribute and offer his deep condolences to the families of those fallen, selfless heroes. The hardworking members of New York's Finest, like Liu and Ramos, are the reasons why New York City is still the safest big city in the nation. New York will never forget their ultimate sacrifices.



Education Highlights



Assemblyman Weprin joined Mayor de Blasio, Aimee Horowitz—the new executive superintendent for the School Renewal Program, and Neil Ganesh—the Richmond Hill High School principal on March 19 at a press conference to announce various improvements made at Richmond Hill High School, which was once considered one of the worst performing schools in the city. Thanks to the Mayor’s Renewal program, which injected about \$150 million in funding to those struggling schools, about 67% of all students at RHHS are now projected to graduate on-time; up from just 60% at this time last year. *Keep up the great work, Neil!*



Assemblyman Weprin and State Senator Leroy Comrie (*far left*) congratulated Dr. Lester Young, an Oakland Gardens resident and newly re-elected Regent, and Ms. Judith Chin (*right*) of Little Neck on her successful election to represent Queens as the new Regent. Ms. Chin is the first Asian-American to be elected to serve on the State Board of Regents and will join the 11th Queens Judicial District in April. *Wish you all the best, Judith and Lester!*



Assemblyman Weprin met and welcomed CUNY Chancellor James Milliken (*left*) and Senior Vice Chancellor Jay Hershenson (*right*) to the Assembly Chamber during the Joint Budget Hearing on Higher Education. Chancellors Milliken and Hershenson were visiting the state legislature to advocate for state funding for the expansion of online programs, digitalization of libraries, and critical maintenance of aging classrooms and buildings at CUNY schools.



Assemblyman

**DAVID I.
WEPRIN**

**Reports to the
Community**

SPRING 2015

Bill of Adoptee Rights

On February 10, Assemblyman David Weprin was joined by a dozen New York adoptee advocates and sponsoring Assemblymembers on both sides of the aisle. Together, they held a press conference to unveil the renewed Bill of Adoptee Rights (A.2901-2015), which currently has 94 sponsors in the Assembly. Weprin announced his commitment to continue to fight for the passage of the Adoptee Bill of Rights as a way to provide equal access to medical history and information to all adult adoptees in the State of New York. Currently, adoptees may only obtain original birth certificates through a cumbersome judicial process or by hiring an often expensive private investigator.

